**Ellis Lark** (00:00): And as I was going home one day, I noticed that there was machinery moving dirt near the baseball park. And I asked dad, I said, "Daddy, what are they doing?" He said, "They're building a swimming pool." And I said, "What in the world is a swimming pool?" He said, "Well, they'll pour some cement and then they'll fill it up with water and you can go play." And so that was the building of the Honea Path swimming pool.

**Speaker 2** (00:52): The Chiquola Mill financed the pool as another form of recreation for its employees and their families. And it has been around for many generations.

**Lollis Meyers** (01:03): I remember when they was building the pool as a young boy. Daniel Construction Company built the pool and they started building the pool in 1946.

**Danny Hawkins** (01:12): The mill owned the pool. The mill built the pool for its employees. So if you were employed at Chiquola Mill, you were able to go there and swim.

**Speaker 5** (01:12): The pool is an impressive structure.

**Lollis Meyers** (01:26): The dimensions on that pool is 150 foot long and 50 foot wide. It's the same as an Olympic pool, except for if it didn't have the kiddy part broke in, you would have an Olympic pool. Also that pool holds 350,000 gallons of water.

**Danny Hawkins** (01:44): It's got the deep end separated from the shallow end by a little concrete walk there, which is very nice to keep the people who cannot swim up here on one end, and the people that can swim down here on the other end.

**Speaker 2** (02:00): The pool is now open for all residents of the area, but it wasn't always that way.

**Danny Hawkins** (02:05): Now as time went along, the mill started giving permission to the town of Honea Path that everyone can come swimming then. So if you lived in Honea Path, you could come. There was no charge for anybody to get in the pool when I was a lifeguard. Now that did change because we started selling a sort of ticket, if you will, or permission to come. It cost you $1 for the entire summer.

**Speaker 5** (02:30): Many young people learned to swim at pool.

**Lollis Meyers** (02:33): A boy pushed me off the 10 foot area of the pool and said, "You're going to have to swim or else." Well, I learned to swim right quick, right there.

**Ronnie Whitman** (02:42): When I was about eight years old, a real good friend of mine by the name of Ray Hill taught me to swim. You know, because prior to that you had to stay in the, we always called it a little part, in the shallow end. But once I learned to swim, then I could get over the deep end with everybody.

**Speaker 2** (02:56): They pool provided many hours of entertainment for the young people of the town.

**Ronnie Whitman** (03:00): We just went in. We would stand at the gate, waiting on them to test the waters and they'd open the gate and we'd go in. We would have to go into the bathhouse and take a shower. Not with soap, but just rent off. And then we'd go stand on the edge of the pool. Then one of the lifeguards blow the whistle and could jump in. And we'd play things like alligator tag, where we would stand at one end of the pool and then somebody would get in the water and we would dive in and we would have to try to make it past a certain point without getting tagged.

**Lollis Meyers** (03:32): They had a big high shoot de shoot down next to the kiddy pool. We used to slide down that and we'd just go and stay on.

**Ronnie Whitman** (03:43): It was a long slide and it was fun. But you had to be careful because the water wasn't really deep. So if you went down on your tummy, you wanted to make sure you kind of went shallow. If you didn't, you might carry a skin on your nose cause you might hit the bottom.

**Speaker 5** (03:59): Lifeguards were available to oversee the swimmers.

**Danny Hawkins** (04:00): My job was to protect people from swimming and my job was to protect people from injuring themselves or somebody else. Small kids would fall into water over their head and couldn't swim. So you could go in and help pull them out. You could actually help people learn how to swim.

**Ronnie Whitman** (04:18): I never knew anybody who had any major type injuries because lifeguards are real good about watching the children. They would blow the whistle. I mean, they were really good about it.

**Speaker 2** (04:27): Lifeguards protected the swimmers, but they also provided other services.

**Danny Hawkins** (04:31): Now, one of the things that we had to do with the swimming pool was keep it clean. Now, about once a month during the summer, we had to drain the pool, clean it a little bit and put new water in. You had to swim to the very bottom and they had two drains there about maybe 12 inches across and you had to pull them up. If you're at the bottom of a 10 foot area and you pull the drain out, all of a sudden it's just sucking water down like crazy. And if you had a body part too close to that thing, it would suck your body part in and you don't want to stay at the bottom of the pool for two days until it drains.

**Speaker 5** (05:18): When the mill closed down the owners turned the pool over to the town and it's regulation department.

**Lollis Meyers** (05:24): They donated the pool to the town of Honea Path and all the ball fields and all that property was donated to the town of Honea Path. So we took it and there was a lot of them wanted me to fill the pool in, because it cost so much to operate. It had too many fond memories to me and some other people in our town.

**Speaker 2** (05:45): The Honea Path mayor and town council are determined to keep the pool open.

**Lollis Meyers** (05:49): A pool's a real expensive item to maintain and keep up. And we're fighting right now to try to keep the pool open even longer.

**Danny Hawkins** (05:59): Everybody in Honea Path does not own a swimming pool. Everybody in Honea Path now has the opportunity to come swimming at the pool and everybody in Honea Path has the opportunity to come down there and get some exercise, learn how to swim, learn how to work with other people. So it's a great place to go and have fun and do things. So I think it needs to be open as long as we possibly can.

**Lollis Meyers** (06:21): I just hope we can see this pool stay open for many, many years to come for y'all sakes and for y'alls children's sake.