

NOW, JUMPING BACK TO THE SWIMMING POOL

TIME: 2:02

SAMUEL T. BURRELL, SR.: Now, jumping back to the swimming pool . . . when we first started our competitive swim program, we were kind of a joke in northwest Georgia . . . Then after about the second year of competitive swimming, we were able to hold our own and we started defeating a lot of teams in this area, and we went all the way into Gadsden, Alabama, and Alex[ander] City, Alabama, and—we couldn't get anybody out of Atlanta, but Cartersville and Cedartown, two or three other places, where we did our competitive—Marietta was another one.

Of course, we trained our own lifeguards, and we sent them to Nashville . . . Two or three boys who went up there came back with water safety certification, senior lifeguards and that sort of thing.

We competed in area swim meets as far south as Albany, Georgia. I can't forget that one because they had swimmers there from Tallahassee and from Albany and Savannah. . . . But we were able to hold our own with that kind of competition.

And we had one boy, Herschel Strickland, who is now deceased, was the best swimmer that I've ever seen. He could do it all, those competitive strokes. . . . His best stroke was the butterfly. Nobody around had beat him in that, even in that area swim meet that we had down at Albany, Georgia. They had swimmers there, boys who were freshmen and sophomores there from West Virginia State and Albany State and FAMU all in that particular meet. In the butterfly and the breast stroke and the backstroke -- he beat everybody down there. He was just a kid in high school at that time.

So we felt pretty good about our competitive swimming program.