Lake was, nevertheless, once a big one.

In the years right after World War I, the U.S.L. farm was in the area where the present girls' dormitories are. The farm was where the band house is now located, and the Cypress Lake area was fenced in for use as a pig pen and feeding area.

Actually, if the band cauldrons made the swamp, Cypress Lake could take us even further back in time. They could tell us, perhaps, that once when the buffalo roamed the present campus and the Indians roamed supreme, the Cypress Lake area was covered with a lush growth that was like a sea of green broken at intervals by patches of trees that came to be called "islands." When the wind frolicked in the thick growth of grasses, the grains moved to and fro, and through them were a mass of restless waves and shadows now and then. The early settlers called this grass "gazooz." The lovely Cypress might say, too, that once on the ground where now they stand as tall, reaching towards the skies, it was not always the common area it is now. It was different, when first they shot up from the rich soil and grew tall and finally strong enough to survive the natural hazards of a forest primeval. Then they might tell of the confusing, times, when the fighting buffalo were quietly found by the rivulets of rain and snow, and a pond was formed that came to be called "bull holes." They planted rice in them and harvested it as it was needed, by cutting the rice with a scythe and scythe and then hauling the grain and seeds acquired from the Indians.

It could also be, "Dr. S. L. Solomny, U.S.L. superintendent of agriculture and associate professor of Horticulture, stated, "that this whole area was under water at one time, and, as it was settled, it drained into the Vermilion River."

When the old dairy farm area was purchased, the farm was moved off the main campus and put out at the newly acquired property. This was shortly after World War I, according to President Joel L. Fletcher, who was at the time the dean of the Agricultural College in the early twenties. Fletcher said, "it had the pigs and the barn moved, drained the area and beautified it." Fletcher also added, "What was once a pig pen became known as Cypress Grove."

President Fletcher recalled that it was then used as an open air theatre where travelling Shakespearean troupes like the Ben Greet Players performed. Dance classes of the college also gave performances here and commencement exercises were also held at the lake.

Fletcher said, "In the early forties, "Fletcher said, "the president of the agricultural faculty felt that water should be placed back as lack of it might hinder the growth of the Cypress."

Dean J. T. Arceaux stated that another reason for bringing water back into the area at that particular time was, because it was thought that during these war years there should be a reservoir of water.

A pump was set up, water was pumped back and the green area became known as "Cypress Lake." Dean Arceaux emphasized that it is really a natural Louisiana swamp area and that long range plans call for placing it in so that there would be growing in one spot all of the woody plants and many of the herbaceous plants found in Louisiana swamp areas. At the present time, he pointed out, it is necessary to try in the state to find all the different variations of swamp growth. The area with its moss and huge trees may be seen growing. To further enhance the natural beauty of the area, a park on the banks of Cypress Lake is now being formed.

"The "Ugly Duckling" became a beautiful swan and a pig pen is now a lovely Cypress Lake and display garden for rare swamp plants and trees.

"In fact," Arceaux pointed out, "our entire campus is an 'in use arboretum,' the only one in the state, for our trees and plants are there for beauty and for the education of our students, as well as the general public, since all plants and trees are labeled."

"This was not a workable plan," Nelson said, "and in 1955 Cypress Lake was discontinued as an official test garden for Louisiana Iris, etc.

However, some of the more beautiful and fine Louisiana native Iris are still found growing in the lake on the USL campus, and it is still maintained by the Society for Louisiana Irises as a display garden. In addition so many other swamp plants and trees may be seen here.

Among them according to Solomny, who is constantly seeking our more swamp plants for the lake, are Sweet Bay, Red Bay, Red Horse, Carolina Ash, Dalbon, Palmetto - with trunk, Awdia, American Sweet Gum, or Sweet Gum, Olive, water Tupelo, Tilti, Butternut, Spider Elder, Powellite, Yellow Thalia, Wild Rice, Climbing Farn and Wild Arrows.

Together with the beauty of Cypress Lake and its immediate surroundings, Solomny is now in process of making an attack on the banks of the lake nearest Hobard Bog.