

Civil Rights & The Monroe Country Club Pool

8 Negro Youths Refused Admission To City Pool

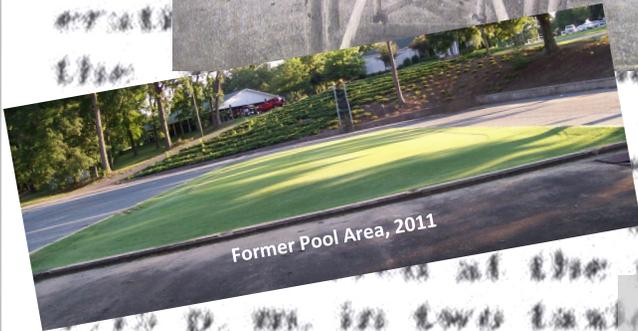
Eight Negro youths, led by a Negro man who called himself as Robert Williams, refused admission to the city pool.



1940, Photo From Rev. Drane



9-13-1981, Enquirer-Journal, p. 1, 1980 photo by Rick Crider



Former Pool Area, 2011

Background, 7-25-1957, Monroe Enquirer, p.1

“The swimming pool at Lake Lee will remain closed until further notice.” - Item 6, Monroe [NC] City County Minutes, July 5, 1961.

The swimming pool at The Monroe Country Club (Lake Lee) never reopened after that summer. (note: only the pool closed)

Built between 1935-37, Federal monies were used via the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.). The funds also helped build the nine-hole golf course and club house.

The Monroe Journal (9-17-1935, p. 1) announced it would be “a community affair, open to the people...of Monroe and Union County...”.

In the context of the times, the pool was not “open to the people” since black citizens were barred admission.

In July of 1957, Robert Williams, a native and NAACP leader, brought a group of black youth to swim at the pool. This is believed to be the first time Williams attempted to integrate a whites-only establishment.

The legalities of preventing anyone from using a facility constructed with federal aid were brought sharply into focus.

On June 25, 1961, Williams, again with a youthful group, tried a last time to desegregate the pool even though it was “closed to replace a defective chlorinator”. Per The Charlotte Observer (6-26-1961, p. 4A) a crowd of about 250 white bystanders along with law enforcement, gathered to view the picketers.

For more information, visit the Dickerson Genealogy & Local History Room and ask for the vertical files, UCVF: Williams, Robert; UCVF: Monroe Country Club or check out one of the Robert Williams’ biographies (921 Williams). - Written by Patricia Poland, rev2015 Monroe005

Monroe Country Club street address: 1680 Pageland Hwy, Monroe, NC

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