

Pool Filled With Fond Memories

By HELEN KNIGHT
If you drive out of Mooresville north on N.C. 801 just past the N.C. 150 intersection you will see an old sign for Brown's Pool. The pool isn't there any more, but for the Browns, and many other members of the community, the memories will always remain. For years, Brown's Pool was the

place to go for recreation in Mooresville. In addition to the swimming pool, there were also picnic facilities, and a dance hall that was later turned into a skating rink.
Frank Brown ran the center from 1940 until it closed, but it was his father, James W. Brown, who started the venture with the

idea of building a swimming pool for his family.
Originally, James Brown built two dams on his land, and piped spring water from the creeks into a pool that had a sand bottom and oak board sides. As his pool became more and more popular, he built a bigger one, and added an octagonal pavillion that could be used for picnics and square dancing.

The pool and pavillion were first opened to the public during the early 1920s. Later, a larger dancehall was added. A bath house was built with showers using gravity-fed water from the creek above. The grounds were sanded, and sunboards laid along one side of the pool.

In 1940, Frank Brown took over from his father, running the venture with his wife, Nell, and, as they got old enough, their children Bobbie, Jean, Martha, Mimi and Buddy.

About that time the dance hall was converted into a skating rink. The dance hall floor was topped with Oregon maple to make the skating surface. Every year, it had to be sanded and finished with polyethylene. The rink was heated by a coal stove and cooled with a huge fan. Music first was provided by an old Wurlitzer jukebox, though this was later replaced by a reel-to-reel tape recorder.

Brown and his wife opened the rink in three shifts, for the benefit of the people who worked different shifts in the mill. They

opened between 10 a.m. and noon, between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. They closed weekends because the pool had to be cleaned out and refilled, a process that took a couple of days.

In a recent interview, Martha Brown Major talked about the hard work involved in running the pool. During the summer, she and her siblings worked from 8 in the morning until 11 at night. They all worked together, responsible for such tasks as lifeguard duty, cleaning the bath house and sweeping the rink floor, which had to be done after each session. But the kids didn't mind the work.

"It was fun," she explained. "We were so lucky to have all that entertainment."

The Browns rented clamp-on skates for the rink, and towels and bathing suits for the pool. Nell Brown was responsible for washing the suits and towels. In the days before she had a machine, this meant hand washing in tubs behind the bath house. The Browns charged for the use of the facility, although never very much.

"I don't think it ever cost more than 35 cents to swim and 85 cents to skate," Martha Major said. "It never really was a profit-making thing. We just charged enough to break even and keep the place going."

The Browns had a varied clientele. School teachers brought the children to skate. End-of-school parties were often held there, where the children could swim, skate and picnic. Churches had parties there. During World War II, Army Air Corps cadets from Davidson College were regular visitors. The guys who went away to war used to write to 'Mom and Pop Brown.'

Frank Brown, who worked at the Mooresville Post Office 29 years, said he often had young people waiting for him after work, wanting a ride to the pool. It was, above all, a place for families to have fun together.

The Fourth of July was always a big occasion at the pool. Everyone went there to celebrate. The pool was open all day and the flag always was flying. Martha Major remembers it was a special day.

"People didn't have recreation like they do now," she said, "and that was a big treat to have the day off and be with their families."

Brown's Pool was also a popular place for courting. Many couples met and courted there.

"It was about the only place to go for recreation," Martha said, "except for the movies in town."

Many marriages came out of relationships that blossomed at the pool. In fact, Martha grew up at the pool with Bill Major, who became her husband. Her sisters, Jean and Mimi, met their future husbands at the pool. Her brother, Buddy, met his wife there too.

The pool closed in 1960 and the rink in 1975. Frank and Nell Brown's children grew up and left home and weren't able to help out. Now, the pool is grown over and the rink is empty, but the Browns have very fond memories of the family venture.

"It was a lot of hard work," Martha said, "but we thought we were having fun because Pop said we were. When I look back, I think how fortunate we were to have it."

Frank and Nell Brown would be very pleased to hear from former guests who have those fond memories. They still live on the top of the hill at the pool and rink.



Frank and Nell Brown share family memories



Today: vine-covered pool, foreground, bathhouse, right, and silent rink



Brown's spring-fed pool in the 30s, before bathhouse and rink

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"Although I Disagree With Everything You Say

I Will Defend Unto Death Your Right To Say It"

25c

Mooresville, N.C. (28115) Wednesday, April 17, 1991

First Baptist Church Plans Revival Services Next Week

Dr. Gene L. Watterson, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Shelby and president of the N.C. State Baptist Convention, will be the visiting evangelist during a four-day revival at Mooresville's First Baptist Church.

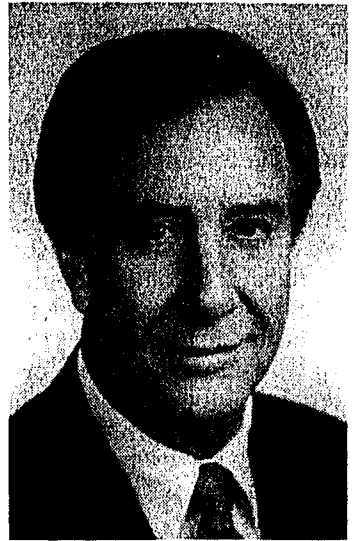
The special services will get underway Sunday, April 21, with services at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, April 22-24, services are scheduled for 7 p.m.

A native of Decatur, Ala., Dr. Watterson received his bachelor of arts degree from Howard College, now Samford University, and his master of arts degree from the College of William and Mary. He earned his bachelor of divinity and master of divinity degrees at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

His training in clinical counseling was at Central State Hospital in Petersburg, Va.

Prior to assuming his work at the Shelby church, Dr. Watterson served as associate pastor and minister of youth at the First Baptist Church in Warner Robins, Ga., pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, Va., pastor of First Baptist Church in Crestview, Fla., and pastor of Murray Hill Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla.

Dr. Watterson, over the years, has been active in N.C. State Baptist Convention activities, as well as numerous civic affairs, including chairing the Commission of Housing and Urban Redevelopment in Shelby.



DR. GENE L. WATTERSON

He was named Man of the Year by The Cleveland Times in 1990.

Dr. Watterson is married to the former Yvonne Caudle of Petersburg, Va., and the couple has three grown children and two grandchildren.

Dr. E. Harvey Rogers, pastor of Mooresville's First Baptist Church, joins members of the church in inviting the public to attend the services.

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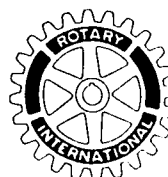
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APRIL 19, 1991

SAT., 10 AM-3 PM
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