

Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool

The Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool as told to Patchwork by Charles Lacroix.

Interviewed by Nick Choquette & Sharla Carter in the spring of 2003.

Chuck Lacroix has lived in Columbia County for 14 years. He has also lived in Bucks County near Philadelphia. He lives with his wife and 3 boys. He is a physical education teacher and teaches swimming at Central Columbia school district.

Lacroix has been working at the Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool for six years. He is the pool manager and works there because he teaches swimming and he wanted to work somewhere where there is swimming during the summer.

PATCHWORK: When was the Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool founded?

LACROIX: 1954

PATCHWORK: Who was Norris E. Rock?

LACROIX: He was the original manager of the pool, and he pretty much devoted his summer to the running of the pool here.

PATCHWORK: Why was the pool started in this location?

LACROIX: That's something we're not sure. We have asked a couple people and I think it's common sense that this is a good location. It's easy accesses.

PATCHWORK: How has the pool changed from when it was first built?

LACROIX: Well, they put a new baby pool in, and the original one had a spring up in the center of it. That became a safety hazard so they had to put a new baby pool in, and

they've also had to eliminate the high dive because off the depth of the water. It wasn't deep enough. I guess because of safety reasons they've had to make those changes here.

PATCHWORK: How much money does the town contribute to the pool annually?

LACROIX: Well, it is self-sufficient the pool is, so the town doesn't contribute money on a regular basis.

PATCHWORK: How much was the pool built for?

LACROIX: That's something we don't know; I couldn't find that out.

PATCHWORK: Was there ever a time when the pool had to shut down for a while?

LACROIX: No, we're happy to say in the summer time, we stay open regularly.

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PATCHWORK: Why was the high dive removed?

LACROIX: We said for safety reasons. The insurance company that insures the pool said that it's because of the depth. It needs to be thirteen feet to have a creative board, and it has to do with the plummet of the diver where they would go in an average dive and the depth of it at that point, it is several feet less than it should be.

PATCHWORK: When was the high diving board removed?

LACROIX: 1996.

PATCHWORK: Describe the services of the pool.

LACROIX: The services of the pool, we offer swim lessons, we have daycare. We have three daycare groups that bring their children here from one to three during the week. People can rent the pool for their parties, for group parties, we have churches that rent it, we have birthday, lots of birthday parties. We have the karate group that comes in and uses the shallow end for practice once a week. Let me think what else we have. We

have special needs kids that have access to it, we have low income families that we help to contribute so that they can use the pool by giving them a discount on memberships and on the bill and fee, and the university you now, we have college students that are in school in the summer time that are permitted to come and use the pool.

PATCHWORK: What are some of the jobs at the pool?

LACROIX: Obviously, life guarding. There's cleaning that is being done before the pool opens everyday to keep it as clean as we can, There's swim lessons being taught, there's a concession stand so we can employ people to supply food for the patrons.

PATCHWORK: Why was the name of the pool changed to the Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool?

LACROIX: I guess the answer would be he had such an impact. He was the original manager for years; he's basically a legend down here. The people that have been here for a while felt so highly about him that when he passed away, they felt that he had such an impact on the pool, and he was such an important roll in the pool that they changed the name of the Town Pool to the Norris E. Rock Memorial Pool.

PATCHWORK: When was the name changed?

LACROIX: After he passed away, that's when they changed the name.

PATCHWORK: How many pool goers do you have each summer?

LACROIX: All of them... that's a joke. It just depends on the weather basically. This last summer was probably the best summer. I've been working there for five years, this will be the sixth summer that I'm employed here as the manager of the pool. Last summer was the best summer we've had, and I think we averaged between two hundred and fifty and two hundred and seventy five people per day.

PATCHWORK: Is the pool as popular today as it once was?

LACROIX: From the people I've talked to, they would say no, and some of the reasons I think would be backyard pools. There are a lot more prevalent in the town here and so I think that is one of the reasons, but on a day where it is eighty five degrees or more, you can see why it is here. It's definitely getting its use, and I think it's good that people and kids have an opportunity to come to this if they don't have a backyard pool.

PATCHWORK: What type of lessons does the pool offer?

LACROIX: Swim lessons because it's so big it's great, but we're kind of at the mercy of the weather with the swim lesson, being that it's outside here it's not ideal some days, some mornings it's rather chilly. We have baby classes from anywhere to six months to two years old then we have young children lesson that go all the way up to eleven and twelve years old. Because it's so big, we can offer all those types of lessons.