

Milo Pyne
Interviewed by Perry Pike
Selected Quotes

I was 13 in 1963 and remember several things from the Civil Rights era. The use of segregation signage I remember best was the water fountains in the old Sears building where the health department is now. The water fountains were separate but for sure not equal!

I do recall the march on Washington of that year and how special it was. In Durham there were lots of demonstrations, and I remember the negative reaction of most of my peers in the white community. I remember the more brutal reactions of the power structure in Mississippi and Alabama.

Mayor Grabarek was present at a large meeting at a church where he spoke to Civil Rights demonstrators from the Black Community.

During the LBJ vs. Goldwater campaign, Dick Gregory came to town. This was in his early days as a black comedian. He said there was a meeting of the "Negroes for Goldwater" - and "those were 2 right-on cats" or something like that.

I remember more from 1965. Early in the year there was a demonstration in front of the downtown post office - and Joan Baez sang (I think I have a photo of this).

Later in that year (in the summer) the National convention of C.O.R.E. (Congress On Racial Equality) was in town. WRAL (Jesse Helms' station at the time) remarked (in the news not the editorial) how ironic it was that the convention and visitors' bureau made signs that said "Welcome CORE" (as they did for all conventions) when CORE had threatened to demonstrate against segregation in Durham.

Floyd McKissick Sr. was a high official in CORE, and so was James Farmer, who was later in Congress, I think. The convention voted to oppose the Vietnam War, and Farmer convinced them to reconsider the vote as I recall.

Also in 1965, Jack Preiss stunned the Durham white establishment by getting elected to the City Council (Ward 5?) against I. L. "Buck" Dean. I remember the somewhat inflammatory series of newspaper ads that came out - my favorite being "Voters of Durham - Do Not be Fooled Again by Dean".

Jack had the support of the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs (as it was then called), the Labor movement, and the Duke community. Dean was an old-line conservative politician (for whom the Durham Freeway is named), and it was quite a shock to the "Downtown Crowd" that he was beaten. This was one of the greatest upsets before when Wib Gulley was elected mayor in 1985.

When I was younger (1961-62) I was more aware of the Civil War centennial, which involved lots of display of the Confederate Flag of course. By 1963 I became aware that it was being used more

and more by the Citizens' Council and other racist and conservative white groups to oppose Civil Rights, and I realized that it was way more than just an historic symbol.

- Milo Pyne July 7, 2002