



Monroe and West Monroe, Louisiana (Images of America)

Ouachita Parish Historic Interest Group, Dr. E. Russ Williams

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The city of Monroe, Louisiana originated in the late 1700s with The official beginning of the Ouachita Post. French settlers, including Don Juan Filhiol with his land grant of 1,680 acres from the King of Spain, came to this region and laid the foundations for a community once known as Fort Miro but incorporated as Monroe in 1820. West Monroe (formerly Trenton) would follow in 1889 and today the two towns are separated by a river but connected in preserving their shared history. "Silver sparkling water" and "Silver River" defined Ouachita to the early Native American tribes in Northwestern Louisiana. The Ouachita tribe members were indeed the earliest known inhabitants, living on the land before the establishment of Fort Miro and the bustling villages of the 1790s. Such growth and progress led to the appearance of railroads and plantation systems in the 19th century along with showboats and the adoption of Monroe's Charter. The 20th century brought the Ouachita Parish Library in 1916; the arrival of Delta Airlines in 1927; the first radio station, KMLB, in 1930; the opening of Louisiana Junior College, now University of Louisiana at Monroe, in 1931; the organization of the Little Theatre in 1932; and a wide variety of civic, cultural, and social opportunities for the residents of Monroe and West Monroe. Memories of such grand events are coupled alongside the fond recollections of everyday life in this unprecedented volume of vintage photographs.

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