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Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America

Jeff Wiltse

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From nineteenth-century public baths to today's private backyard havens, swimming pools have long been a provocative symbol of American life. In this social and cultural history of swimming pools in the United States, Jeff Wiltse relates how, over the years, pools have served as asylums for the urban poor, leisure resorts for the masses, and private clubs for middle-class suburbanites. As sites of race riots, shrinking swimsuits, and conspicuous leisure, swimming pools reflect many of the tensions and transformations that have given rise to modern America.

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