

# House 'Personalizes' City, Says Mrs. Shain

By JULIE CANDLER

Like good stationery, Birmingham is "personalized," says the energetic lady who helped to engrave that personality upon the city.

She is the vivacious, civic-minded Mrs. Charles J. Shain. Her dynamic personality and ability to keep up with a fast-moving world have brought women to Birmingham Community House regularly for over 40 years to study international relations.

Birmingham is a city with a personality, she claims, because it has the Community House.

"WE HAVE a central, com-

pletely non-political, non-sectarian, personalized effort in the Community House," points out the well-dressed, well-informed supporter of "The House with a Heart."

"Its program brings together people who have all sorts of different convictions about things—it makes them good neighbors in trying to build up community life," says Mrs. Shain, whose own life has frequently centered around the Community House.

The widow of the former Birmingham mayor and druggist for whom Sham Park is named, she lives near the Community House at 813 Pierce.

SHE SHOCKED some conservative citizens of old Birmingham back in the Twenties when she and other civic-minded women proposed a Community House. The idea that the little village should need to construct such a building was inconceivable to many.

"It took four years of education," says Mrs. Shain, "before we dared try to raise the money."

During the four years, Mrs. Shain calculates that she spoke to meetings in more than 1,000 private homes.

She became the first president of the House, and led it through its organizational years from 1923 to 1930. After that, grateful citizens named a sunny Community House room with a fireplace, "The Ruth Shain room," in her honor.

EVEN BEFORE she became Community House president, she had begun leading the American Association of University Women's international relations study group.

It has brought a wider knowledge of world events to more than 800 women.



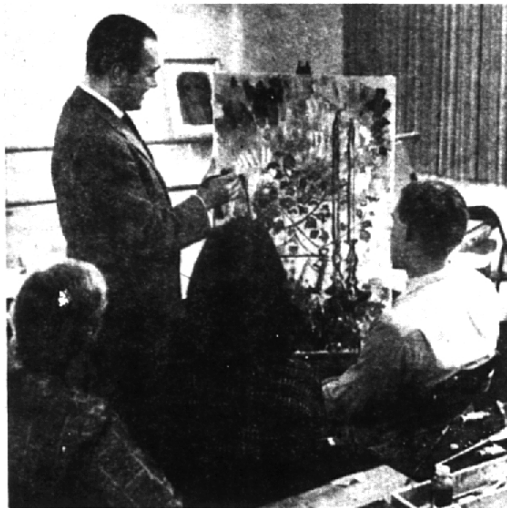
MRS. CHARLES J. SHAIN

A few have been participants ever since the group began meeting in homes in 1921.

While the popular study group celebrated its 40th anniversary at a breakfast last May, Mayor Florence E. Willett declared a four-hour moratorium on parking meters.

The moratorium benefited the hundreds who flocked to the Community House to honor Mrs. Shain that day. They presented their favorite international relations expert with \$1,000 to be given in her name to a worldwide charity.

RUTH SHAIN'S was a well-remembered honor. She had not only kept the discussions lively, up-to-date and interesting for 30 years, she also had seldom failed to lead a session personally in all that



## Learning to Paint

Instructor George Petkov offers suggestions to members of a painting class at the Community House. In addition to painting, fall and winter classes are offered in 20 other hobby and crafts at the Community House each year. Costs for such classes range from \$5.50 for course in gardening to \$20 for a course in silver.

## House Policy Assures A Beautiful House

By RUTH CARR

"The cooperation of the public in respecting the facilities of the Birmingham Community House is really tremendous. They are interested in it because it is their own," says Mrs. Effie Schaffer, executive director of the Community House.

Considering the number of people, 150,000 a year, that use these facilities there is very little abuse of the property.

This is largely due to Community House policy which is clearly defined by the staff and carried out by all those using the 10 attractive and well-kept rooms in the building.

**HOUSE RULES** — Prohibit smoking in the auditorium and lounges during meetings, dances or exhibits. Eating is permitted only in certain rooms and certain refreshments may be brought in.

The kitchen staff is glad to order or make whatever food or beverage (except beer, wine or liquor) a group desires.

Decorations may not be tacked or taped to the walls and must comply with fire department regulations. All the furniture is available for use but may not be moved without permission of the office.

Youth group activities are welcome when a required number of adults are present at the meeting.

**WEDDING RECEPTIONS** are served on a per capita basis and include maid service.

Groups giving teas may arrange for maid service and use the tea and coffee service, dishes and silver required. Paper table accessories and linens are available.

There is a movie screen, projector, sound box, public address system and piano for group use.

**LOCAL GROUPS** — Local organizations are not charged for use of rooms to hold regular business meetings and short programs, provided no remuneration is involved for other than food.

If holding a dinner, dance or dinner card party one-half the normal fee is charged for the rooms used for dancing and cards but no charge is made for the room the meal is served in.

**LOCAL PRIVATE GROUPS, INDIVIDUALS, LOCAL PARTISAN POLITICAL GROUPS** (when sponsoring one candidate) are charged for each room used and for dinner or luncheon meetings in the auditorium.

**PERSONS OR GROUPS** using the facilities for business purposes such as classes, exhibits or demonstrations are charged by the hour for the room used.

**ALL GROUPS** are assured routine janitor service and may have a free rehearsal time of a maximum of four hours.

**OUT OF AREA GROUPS—INDIVIDUALS—ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES** are welcome to use all the facilities and rooms

of the Community House for the full rental fee for each room per hour and for meals if served.

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time. Not a Tuesday was missed in the first 37 years.

With the group's 40th anniversary past, she thought of resigning as leader, then compromised instead. Now she conducts the discussions every two weeks instead of weekly. Along with that, she continues to be active in the important doings of the many civic groups to which she belongs.

SHE STILL boasts the Community House, which named her honorary president in 1946. When fund-raising time arrives, says Executive Director Mrs. Effie Schaffer, "she has always worked diligently to help."

Today the trim little lady who guided its beginnings says, "I have great faith in the Community House, which does the interesting work which many small cities lack."

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