

'Y' Week Brings Thoughts Of Past, Present, Future

Jan. 23, 1964 THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC 3-C

Now that Birmingham is in the midst of YMCA Week, (Jan. 19-23) it's the ideal time for a deeper probe into the ideals fostered by the group for the community. Ideally, the Y was organized to offer a gymnasium, swimming pool, dormitory, game room, camp and a variety of classes and programs for children and adults.

many firsts, among them: camping, created over 77 years ago—physical fitness, in 1906, using old cannon balls for weights—creation of the Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls—backing the drive for a shorter work week in 1886—origination of a night school program that became the forerunner of adult education, in 1900—innovators of basketball and volleyball. Established in London in 1844

and brought to Boston in 1861, it was not until 1912 when the Birmingham Y was founded, serving North Oakland county. This town was chosen because Birmingham was the oldest community in the area. The branch remained semi-dormant, however, until the early 1940's when it began to develop, the office being in the basement of the Community House.

IN 1947 the Birmingham Y became a member of the metropolitan Detroit association, and had as executive secretary Edwin F. Kirbert, whose office was moved to the second floor of 159 West Maple. By 1949, the Y's membership and activities program had grown to such proportions that a second move was made to offices at 144 West Maple, and the one-and-one-half acre location on East Lincoln

was obtained the following year.

IN JUNE of 1952, the white frame headquarters building was dedicated, and 1956 saw the erection of the present brick building. In September, 1962, Owen Manchester, executive secretary for past three years, turned over the reins to William Beck, who still holds the position. The Birmingham Y is a "family"

organization, boasting a membership of 4,486. The Indian Guide program in Birmingham is the largest in the state, and Beck estimates that there are more skiers in the 10-to-15-year age group than from any other Y in Michigan. BUT THE Birmingham branch is not ideal. There are no facilities for the housewife, or businessman to work

out or swim during the day, but the Y is making plans for the extension of its physical facilities here. Eighty per cent of the Birmingham Y's revenue comes from membership fees and building rental, and the rest from the United Fund. So far, 1,086 people have pledged \$296,934—still short of what is needed to complete the program, which will include a gym, swimming pool, locker room, handball courts, a d. massage room, but capital fund gifts are still being accepted. With the community's help, the Y will continue to expand and in turn serve more of the people with its increased facilities. All bears at birth are very small. An American black bear cub will be about eight inches long and weigh 10 ounces, while the mother may weigh over 200 times as much.

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