

Clubs Spell Out Way Of Life

By MARY ELLEN MEAD
Staff Writer

During one of her frequent visits to Detroit a number of years ago, Mrs. Ring Lardner, widely traveled wife of the famous writer, commented she had never been in a town that was more club conscious—a town where most social activity transpired within the plush walls of those meccas dedicated to selective membership.

As Birmingham-Bloomfield grew, much the same pattern was established, although suburban living prompted an informal concept as opposed to the austere splendor of our neighbor city.

GRANDDADDY OF them all, Bloomfield Hills Country Club, was chartered in 1909, founding fathers including such names as William T. Barbour, Edwin S. George, William B. O'Brien, George G. Booth, M. H. Chamberlain, John C. Donnelly, Milton A. McRae, William J. Chittenden, James T. Lynn, Arthur Pack, G. Bert Gunderson, John T. Shaw, Frank C. Root and Charles Stinchfield.

Primary activity of the club has been, and still is, golf. It has a wealthy membership (mostly automotive money)—reputedly one of the most expensive clubs in the country. It doesn't concern itself with the fripperies of youth (no tennis courts, no swimming pool, little accent on junior activities) but it does have a reputation for elegance and an excellent kitchen. It is one of few clubs in the area which accommodates overnight guests.

ON THE OTHER end of the scale is the baby of the district, the Birmingham Athletic Club. Now in its fifth year, its major philosophy is accent on youth. Financially, initiation and dues are compatible with the average incomes of young marrieds; activity-wise, its appeal is for those still young enough to swing a tennis racket, dive off a high board, roll a bowling ball or play squash. Its roster now boasts 330 members.

OAKLAND HILLS Country Club dates back to 1916 when it was organized by Joseph Mack, Norval

A. Hawkins, Howard A. Lovejoy and Ezra A. Jones, who selected the site of the course and assumed the preliminary work of organization.

Through the years it has maintained a reputation for being the top golf course in the area, having played host to four National Opens, the Women's National Amateur and the Women's Western Amateur. This summer the Carling's Open will be played in August, a new tournament drawing contestants from all over the world.

Personally speaking, one of Oakland's claims to fame is Margaret Russell, former newspaper woman now doing public relations, and a real threat on the course. The indomitable "Maggie" was woman's champion for 10 consecutive years, retired (from competition) graciously at a dinner given in her honor then shortly was re-drafted—for obvious reasons!

A. C. BRIGGS, A. A. Carson, M. J. N. Joyce, A. W. Kludt, R. B. Locke and J. L. Whitehead were among the first to recognize the 161 acres of land on the southwest fringes of Birmingham as the potential location of what is now the Birmingham Country Club.

The club was founded late in 1921, curtailed operations during the depression of the '30's, was re-organized in 1942 and has been growing ever since.

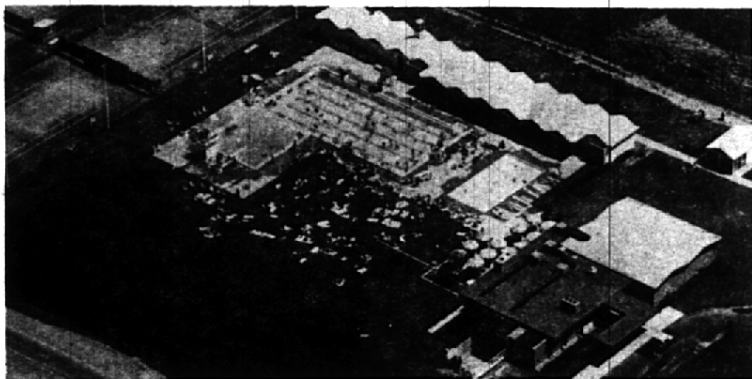
Golf remains the center of club activities, but a swimming pool was added in 1957 and an enthusiastic women's committee keeps things humming on the social front.

BECAUSE OF THE vision of a couple of Birmingham men back in 1954—two men who sold 50 families on investing in the renovation of a decayed golf course and a dilapidated clubhouse—Forest Lake blossomed into the glamour club it is today.

The super salesmen were Blaine Eynon and Fred Handren, responsible for helping establish the first new private club in the area in 25 years. Golf is of major interest to Forest Lake members—the LPGA Wolverine Open has been played there, also the LPGA Championship, and USGA has conducted a tournament—but there's also a lake



BLOOMFIELD HILLS COUNTRY CLUB
Oldest in area.



BIRMINGHAM ATHLETIC CLUB
Coming of Age.

for boating, a pool for swimming and courts for tennis. Membership now totals 285.

GOLF AGAIN, is of major interest at Pine Lake Country Club but, as at Orchard Lake, plenty of activ-

ities have been provided for every one—as a matter of fact, both clubs have long been tagged "family" clubs, with tennis, swimming and sailing part of the format for fun.

And for the horsey set, Bloomfield Open Hunt Club steps into the

picture with emphasis (more than ever, recently) on activity in the ring, cross country and fox hunting.

Organized in 1917, the club originally had less than 50 members. It now totals 245.

ST. JAMES' TOWN HALL

From Afternoon Teas To Show 'Biz'

By LAURENA PRINGLE
Special Writer

Ten years ago, the members of St. Anne's Guild, St. James Episcopal Church, swore off sewing and took to show business.

For the lifetime of the organization, its "Doll Tea" had been the main source of income for its pet projects. The teas had been beautiful. The dolls had been painstakingly executed. But, show biz sounded more exciting, and Birmingham needed a Town Hall lecture series as much as the ladies needed a change of pace.

If nothing else, the ladies of St. Anne's had heart—which you've got to have in the theater. At the time they hung up their thimbles and cushioned their needles, the lecture circuit was in a state of collapse.

MRS. T. NORVILLE Hubbard and Mrs. George Cary who tried to book the guild's first speakers for a five-date series starting Oct. 22, 1954, got nothing but brief from the agents of artists.

The girls were goaded maybe by the remark of Mrs. O. E. Pearson at the meeting in which the Town Hall project was introduced and voted into existence: "You mean you actually think Cornelia Otis Skinner would come to little ol' Birmingham?"—so they kept their requests and offers going.

It ended with Cornelia Otis Skinner not only showing up to open the Town Hall series on Oct. 22, 1954, but being the first of a long and talented speakers' parade that has included the late Eleanor Roosevelt, Bennett Cerf, Marguerite Higgins, James Reston, Dr. Werner Von Braun, Dr. Ralph E. Lapp, Dr. Margaret Mead, John Mason Brown, Dr. Norman Vincent Peale—and many more.

THE BIRMINGHAM Town Hall was not only a sellout in the first year, out its existence but has been a sellout every year since. It is the largest Town Hall of its kind in the nation and the only one in the United States to keep each of speakers for two-day performances.

It has come a long way from Mrs. Edward Hoenicky's basement to its present wall-to-wall carpeted office in St. James Parish House on Chester Street. It has had a waiting list each season and sells only season tickets.

AS OPPOSED to the once-a-year "Doll Tea" it is a year-around business, with someone always on duty to answer questions; replace lost, strayed or stolen tickets; rearrange seating; and keep the files.

"It is an expensive proposition," admits Mrs. Pearson, current president of Town Hall, "but a profit-

able one. We have realized at least \$129,000 clear for our charities here and in South America and for church expansion. We will make a substantial contribution to St. Anne's Mead."

The "Mead" is a home for the aged for which ground at 12 Mile and Southfield roads will be broken this summer.

Town Hall has come a long way from the stormy night before the 1954 opening, which the hospitality committee spent in a hotel lobby waiting for the speaker to arrive.



C. O. SKINNER
First speaker.

THE SPIRIT of that hospitality hasn't changed.

Birmingham Town Hall's speakers are the best cared-for in the world. They are chauffeured, fed, entertained (if they are care to be), accommodated in the finest style, even doctored if necessary. Composed Meredith Willson even got an impromptu backstage rubdown when he played up a storm and a healthy sweat during his piano performance.

And the performers have not been ungrateful. Jazz-playing Fr. Dustin held a private jam session for the committee which made the girls the envy of their teen-agers and all the jazz-lovers of Birmingham.

TIME MAGAZINE gave Birmingham credit for starting the 15 or 20 Town Hall series now in existence around the state—with the exception of Detroit. The Guild members are not quite sure of that, but they are sure they are the largest and have the heaviest mink-bearing attendance.

Suburbia's uniform of sweater and skirt and flats is taboo at Town Hall. Everyone appears in Sunday best, and no one misses the luncheon that always follows the lecture.

"We are proud," Mrs. Pearson says, "of our open-minded audience. All come to hear the most controversial speakers and subjects to

learn, not to dispute. In 10 years there have been practically no resentments or complaints."

BIRMINGHAM Town Hall takes special pride in its settings for the stage in the Birmingham Theater at each event.

All this time, Mrs. Paul R. Reed, Mrs. John D. Burke, Mrs. Arthur D. Chantler, Mrs. Norman James, Mrs. Clyde L. Hagerman and Mrs. F. D. Knoblock have bent their talents to make each setting different and individual to the speaker of the day, his topic or background. They have had lots of practice since October, 1954, when they needed among other effects a pail and mop and a whiskey case (empty).

Mrs. James S. Moon was first president of the Town Hall series, Mrs. George Cary, second, and Mrs. Donald Bay, fourth. Each team was for two years.

Not Hungry, Thanks

In 1879 James Peabody of Gilbert Lake and Ed Adams of Birmingham deposited 40,000 young white fish in Gilbert Lake. J. Allen Bigelow and James O. Beattie put 40,000 of the same species in Wing Lake and 60,000 in Walnut Lake. These fish were from the Michigan State Commission.