

'Y' Served County In 1912

By DICK ZEMMIN
Staff Writer

Birmingham's YMCA, established in 1912 and an integral part of the city, provided the basis for the Oakland County organization.

Four Birmingham residents got together in 1912 and subscribed funds with which to hire a secretary for a Young Men's Christian Association to be formed "among the boys of the schools."

Under the guidance of George Brady, Charles Peck, Rev. F. F. Kraft and John Hanna, the local YMCA was born. First secretary was Martin Verburt, who served for five years. He was followed by Walter Turpening and George Kimball. Dr. John K. Ormond was president of the "Y" during its formative years.

THE 1920's brought a tremendous growth in the local "Y." On Oct. 18, 1920, the Birmingham YMCA was officially organized with Charles Shain as president and Bob Lynd as executive secretary.

Five years later, due to increased memberships, an industrial secretary was set up in Pontiac and, in 1927, the Royal Oak and Bloomfield townships were divided with Lynd in charge.

In 1930 the "Y" was incorporated as a nonprofit organization with G. A. Ziegler as president.

The YMCA has been a community-centered operation almost entirely since its origin in Birmingham, utilizing available facilities for its program.

THE ONLY exception to the rule occurred in 1930 when the organization leased the St. James Episcopal building after The Community House moved to its present location.

But, three years later, the depression plus the wish of the city to use the property, forced the "Y" to leave the building and put up quarters in the basement of The Community House until 1945.

In 1946, after a year of dormancy, the non profit Birmingham YMCA was dissolved and all assets and liabilities were taken over by

the new Birmingham branch of the Detroit YMCA.

In February of 1947, the "Y" moved to 139 W. Maple above LaBelle's store and, one year later, under Y. C. Smith, expanded its programs and club groups.

BY 1949, the Birmingham YMCA had grown to a total of 106 groups enrolling 1,579 people. The organization moved to the Quarton Building on W. Maple.

In 1950, a permanent building site, 240 by 273 feet, on Lincoln bordered by Floyd, St. James Park and Edgewood, was purchased.

Harold M. Kalbfleisch was elected chairman of the management committee in 1951 and, that same year, the group asked for a frame building to be built as the local headquarters.

The 30 by 70-foot ranch-type structure was dedicated on June 15, 1952, and the Birmingham "Y" enrolled the highest number of members in its history—1,468.

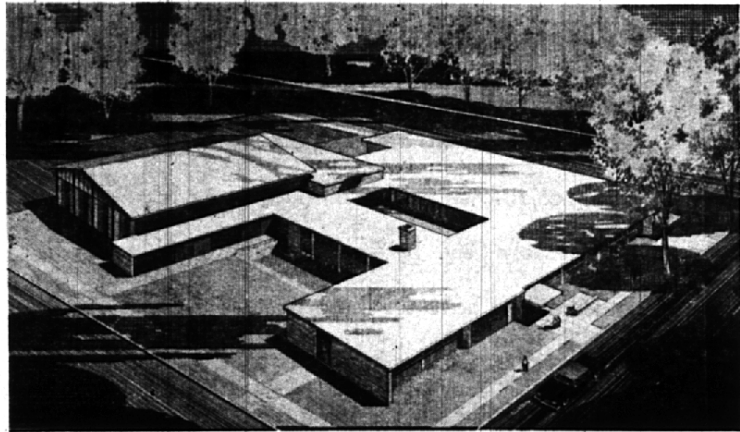
SINCE THAT time, the "Y" has continued to grow in numbers and scope. A 20 by 20 garage was added in 1953, Owen Manchester became executive secretary until 1962 when William Beck took over the position he now holds and Chet McLemore was appointed program director.

The local YMCA is presently in its most productive and growing period. The first permanent building at 400 E. Lincoln, a buff brick structure, was dedicated in 1959.

The organization inaugurated its capital fund campaign in 1963, a program designed to finance the building of a new gym, swimming pool, physical fitness unit and other facilities.

The first step, the financing of a gym, was made possible by a \$150,000 donation from Mrs. Charles E. Wilson. The structure will be named in honor of her husband. By April, the "Y" had received 1,117 pledges contributing \$302,907 toward the campaign. A goal of \$869,133 has been set.

IN ITS 52ND year of operation in the area, the "Y" served a total



ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF PROPOSED EXPANSION \$150,000 gift assures new gymnasium.

High Twelve Club: Service, Fraternity

An organization which qualifies as both a service club and fraternal group in Birmingham is the High Twelve Club.

Founded in 1942 with 25 members, the group is a service club of the Masonic order. Membership is open only to men who are mem-

bership of 5,463 in 1963, 3,514 of that number being youngsters. It is estimated that by 1970, the "Y" will serve 16,000 Birmingham people, and 168,000 from around the area. The budget for 1964 is in excess of \$92,000.

The many clubs, athletic teams, recreational facilities and social events sponsored by the "Y" throughout the year for young and old alike make the organization a vital link in Birmingham's growth and development.

bers of the Masonic Blue Lodge.

The organization's by-laws describe the group as "a luncheon club for men of Masonry, an hour of fellowship, absolutely free from selfishness or private gain."

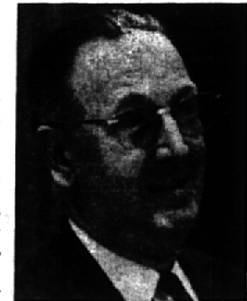
Norman W. Berry served as the club's first president and Walter A. Anderson, a past international High Twelve president, was also instrumental in its organization and is still an active member.

Because many of the club's 150 members work in the city of Detroit, the group became the first chapter in the nation to be allowed to meet in the evening.

In Masonic terms, "High Twelve" means high noon.

The club is an ardent supporter of Camp Oakland, Wolverine Boys' State, YMCA and The Community House.

Howard Coe is the president, while the vice president posts are held by William L. Scherer and Philip Cartwright. The secretary is Ray Hughes, treasurer, James Spence; financial secretary, Henry O. Wagner and I. W. Robertson is the international representative.



HOWARD COE '64 President

OLDER THAN THE VILLAGE

B'ham Masonic Lodge Dates To 1849

Birmingham's Masonic Lodge is older than the village itself.

When Birmingham was being incorporated in 1864, the lodge was observing its 15th anniversary.

Birmingham Lodge No. 44 F. & A. M. was formed in 1849, when William Brown and several other businessmen petitioned the Grand Lodge of Michigan for a local charter.

The petition was first refused because several of the men involved were already members of the Pontiac lodge. Finally the men agreed to drop out of the Pontiac Lodge and the charter was granted.

An upstairs room of the Jennings Building at the northwest corner of Maple and Woodward was selected as the site for the first meeting.

THE JENNINGS Building was the second structure north of the corner of Maple and Woodward on the west side of the street. The site is now occupied by Wilson Drug.

William Brown was elected the first master of Birmingham Lodge, a position he held until 1853 and again in 1870, '71 and '83.

Brown is the only man from Birmingham lodge to be elected grand master of Michigan. He was the top Mason in the state in 1882.

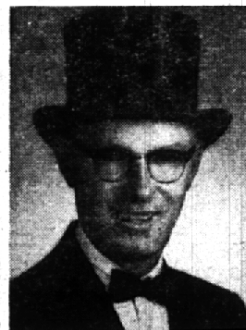
Friend Belding was named senior warden and Scriba Blakelee was elected junior warden. Roswell T. Merrill, Peter Dox, George W. Merrill and Dr. Ebenezer Raynald were the members to attend the first meeting.

The first petition for membership was received from William McKellop. A short time later the petition of Hugh McCurdy was received and acted upon favorably.

MCCURDY later moved to Corunna, where he became prosecuting attorney, probate judge and state senator. He established the Corunna Lodge and was elected grand master of Michigan in 1873.

Another early Birmingham Mason who achieved fame was Alanson Partridge who was also the town's first marshal. He served as master for 25 years.

In 1851 the lodge moved to the Hunt Building on S. Woodward, where the McBride Hardware stood for many years. The move to Woodward was made because many of the lodge brothers were afraid



CHARLES T. BUCHAN

the Jennings Building would collapse.

IN 1872 the lodge moved again. Allen J. Bigelow, who was also a Mason, contemplated building a new business block at Pierce and Maple and the lodge agreed to become a tenant.

Bigelow added a second story to the building and the lodge received a 99-year lease. The building was built on the corner of Pierce and Maple, where Shain's Drug Store now stands.

The lodge remained in the Shain Building for exactly a half-century.

Around the walls of the big hall, Wes Fain painted a series of allegorical figures meaningful to the Masons.

A Masonic Temple Association was formed in 1918 which resulted in the purchase of the present lodge at the corner of Forest and Woodward.

THE BUILDING, which was the J. Bert Peabody home, was built in 1878 by Birmingham banker Fred Ford. Its original cost was about \$4,000.

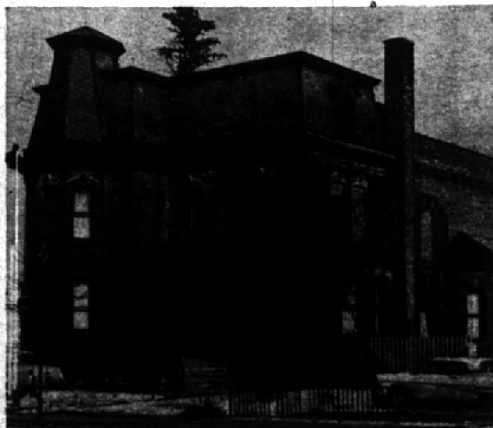
In 1923 the building was dedicated by the officers of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Michigan. Since that date the building has been the home of Lodge No. 44 and other Masonic groups of the Birmingham area.

During the summer of 1964 the lodge will leave the temple and move into new quarters at Woodward and Chesterfield in Bloomfield Hills.

THE OLD temple has been purchased by Birmingham realtor Howard Keating who will use it as an office.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new temple were held in April and the cornerstone was laid in early May. The first lodge meeting in the new building is scheduled for September.

Today, Lodge No. 44 has 680 members and is headed by Master Charles T. Buchan.



LODGE NO. 44 HOME SINCE '23
New temple planned this year.