

5/22/22

### The Woman's Club of Roland Park Timeline

- Fall 1896 During an informal gathering at the Roland Park home of Isabella Parlett (102 Blithewood Ave, which is now 317 Oakdale Rd), 25-year-old **Hattie Goodrich Parlett** suggests forming a women's club in the neighborhood. The idea is well-received by all.
- Dec 9, 1896 The first official meeting of the club is held at the home of **Mrs. C. Pinckney Brown** (317 Woodlawn Rd). 28 women are in attendance. The constitution and bylaws are adopted and Anna W. Heath, a member of the Mt. Washington Lend-a-Hand Club, is chosen as president. Annual dues are \$2.00, with a fine of ten cents for absence and five cents for lateness. Mrs. John T. Graham (President of the Lend-A-Hand Club) christens the new club, "The Woman's Club of Roland Park."
- 1897 The club begins raising funds with a dream to erect a clubhouse in Roland Park somewhat similar to "**the Casino**" community hall in Mt. Washington.
- April 1897 The first **Cherry Blossom fete** is held at the home of Club President Anna Waldorf Heath (Fryer and Capron Avenues, which is now 401 Woodlawn Rd). This annual event is initially celebrated on various members' lawns, later on the clubhouse lawn. Proceeds from the fete are set aside for the building fund. Cherry Blossom fetes continue through 1918.
- June 1897 Regular biweekly meetings move from members' homes to a room on the ground floor of **Roland Park Hall** (Upland Rd and Roland Ave). Rent is \$20 per month plus utilities. At this time, there are about 150 homes in Roland Park, all with electricity and indoor plumbing. (90% of Baltimore City does not have indoor plumbing in 1897.)
- 1898 TWCRP joins with the Mt. Washington Lend-A-Hand Club to voice disapproval of **county fair side-shows**.
- June 1898 The Club begins raising money for the **Fresh Air Fund** in support of disadvantaged youth. The Club continues its relationship with the Fresh Air Fund for many years.
- Feb 1899 TWCRP campaigns successfully for street cars to have **covered vestibules** in order to protect motormen in bad weather.
- 1899 TWCRP becomes a charter member of the **Maryland State Federation of Women's Clubs**. TWCRP maintains a close relationship with the Federation until 1944. Three past presidents and two club members go on to become presidents of the Maryland Federation and two become presidents of the national organization. Through the years, dozens of Federation meeting are held at the Roland Avenue clubhouse.
- Jan 1900 The Club pushes to create an **ordinance against public spitting**. Members meet with the health commissioner to discuss.

- 1900-02 The Club campaigns against sweat shops and **inhumane work conditions**. Members personally visit at least 25 merchants to demand “white label goods,” apparel guaranteed to have been manufactured under hygienic and humane conditions.
- Dec 1900 TWCRP sponsors a clothing drive to support victims of the September 1900 **Great Galveston (Texas) Hurricane**.
- May 1901 Club **membership is at 82**, and the balance in the treasury is \$94.77.
- Nov 1901 TWCRP supports a book drive in Talbot County with a **donation of 305 books** and several boxes of magazines.
- Feb 1902 The Club endorses **2 bills to protect children**; one to establish a juvenile court and one for child labor restrictions.
- Fall 1902 The Roland Park Company requires the Club’s first-floor rooms at Roland Park Hall for its own use. Temporary quarters on the second floor are arranged and the long-talked-about **clubhouse becomes a necessity**. A site is selected at the corner of Roland Avenue and Ridgewood Road. The cost of the building lot is only \$3,500 (reportedly one-third less than the going rate for the land) thanks to the generosity and support of the Roland Park Company. Edward Bouton, the general manager of the Roland Park Company, is the husband of charter member Luella Bouton.
- June 1903 **The Roland Park Woman’s Club Building Company** is formed. Architects Ellicott & Emmart are chosen to design the new clubhouse and over \$5,000 is raised through the sale of bonds to members of the club. The Club considers a plan to increase its younger membership by building tennis courts on the lawn!
- Jan 11, 1904 The **new clubhouse** opens. The original building contains an auditorium with a small speaker platform and a fireplace, a “resting parlor,” an open porch, a basement kitchen and a second-floor apartment for rent. The walls are painted white and the woodwork is forest green. There is a wide veranda and terrace sloping to Ridgewood Road for 5 o’clock teas and open-air fetes.
- 1904 Almost immediately, the new clubhouse becomes **a hub of activities** in the community. Numerous Roland Park Civic League meetings, charity card parties, school graduations, dancing classes, wedding receptions and private parties are held at the WCRP clubhouse from 1904 until 1935. In consideration of the neighbors, all evening events end by 12:30 a.m. and music may not include drums!
- April 1904 The Club holds a leap-year subscription dance to benefit victims of **the Great Baltimore Fire** (Feb 7-8, 1904).
- April 1905 Two months before her 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, renowned American landscape architect **Beatrix Jones Farrand** sketches a plan for the Club’s gardens, including a tea house and a trellised bench for trolley passengers. It’s possible that Farrand has come to the area to meet with the Olmsted Brothers, who are laying out the landscape design for Plat 2 of Roland Park. The Club will rely heavily on Beatrix Farrand’s design when the gardens are upgraded more than 100 years later.

- May 1905 Commencement exercises for **Roland Park Country School for Girls** are held at the clubhouse. The school has recently moved to 210 Roland Ave (renumbered 4608) where it will remain until 1916. There are two pupils in the 1905 graduation class!
- Jan 1906 Club members embark on an extensive program to **teach Hampden and Woodberry mill children** to read.
- 1907 During the presidency of Mrs. E. W. Davison, the Club begins to offer a **Junior Membership** for girls 14-20 years old. Without a real Junior Department to support it, this program eventually dies out.
- 1907 TWCRP **donates a new piano** to the Roland Park Public School.
- 1908 The term "**Porch Class**" is used to describe Thursday morning lectures. The Club will use this expression up until Spring 1917.
- Nov 1908 Miss Ellen H. Perot begins offering **dancing class** at the clubhouse. Club member Claire von Marees Stieff will fondly remember attending Miss Perot's dancing class in 1913, when Claire is 12-years old.
- 1909 Members actively push for the building of a neighborhood community center in Hampden's West Park. The center will later be renamed **Roosevelt Park Recreation Center**.
- 1914 A **sun porch** is added to the south side of the clubhouse. On "club days" the sun porch is used as a dining area.
- 1915 Interest in **equal suffrage** grows. The club hosts numerous speakers and members debate the issue extensively.
- 1915 With membership now at 183, the Club decides to cease renting the upstairs apartment for a one-year test period. **A lending library** is established at the clubhouse with 157 books.
- 1916 Goucher College professor **Dr. Katherine Jeanne Gallagher** begins her monthly series of lively and well-informed lectures. Dr. Gallagher continues as a popular speaker at the Club for 30 years, until her retirement in 1947.
- April 1917 The US enters World War I. To assist in the **war effort**, the second floor of the clubhouse is offered to the Red Cross free of charge. TWCRP extends the hospitality of the Club to all servicemen's wives in the area. The Club subscribes to \$700 worth of **Liberty Bonds** and individual members subscribe to an additional \$59,500 in war bonds. Cash donations are collected to establish furlough houses and rest centers in France.
- Jan 1, 1919 Roland Park is annexed by **Baltimore City**. Many street names are changed to avoid confusion with other city streets. Club membership reaches its constitutional limit of 200 and a wait list is formed. Rent for the second-floor apartment is set at \$55/month.

- Oct 1919 The Club holds a public meeting to discuss creation of a **Community Kitchen**. A speaker from Evanston, Ill., presents the idea of a centralized meal-delivery service with origins in the WWI food conservation movement. The Roland Park Community Kitchen will officially open in the Upland Apartments building in January 1920. It closes in April 1921 because it cannot find a suitable permanent location.
- May 1920 The club begins to make donations to support the **Florence Crittenton Mission** for wayward girls.
- May 1923 The **membership limit is increased to 350**.
- 1924 The Club's first academic scholarship, a gift of \$250.00, is presented to a Goucher College student. The **scholarship program** continues for decades.
- Dec 1924 The Club holds a card party to benefit preservation of **the Baltimore Shot Tower**.
- Oct 1926 **The Garden Section** presents its first flower show at the clubhouse. Flower shows become an annual tradition for more than 50 years.
- April 1929 Club poet laureate **Helen Bayley Davis** publishes a collection of her poetry, *Moth Wings*.
- Oct 1929 A **bird bath** is placed on the club grounds in memory of renowned lawyer John E. Semmes (1851-1925). It is one of several bird baths placed around Roland Park by the Semmes family.
- Jan 1930 TWCRP purchases its **Stieff Grand Style piano**.
- June 1930 Club members canvass the greater Roland Park area in **Red Cross fund-raising campaigns**.
- 1930 The Club uses a \$100 prize won selling magazines to purchase Thomas Cromwell Corner's "**A Still Life**" **oil painting** of cherry blossoms. A long-time resident of Roland Park, Corner was a founding member of the Baltimore Museum of Art. The oil painting of cherry blossoms hangs over the fireplace in the auditorium for decades.
- Oct 1931 The Club endorses a bill in favor of **jury duty for women**.
- Fall 1933 Mrs. Herbert Gillespie becomes the first president of the newly formed **Juniors Department**. Mrs. Gideon N. Stieff acts as Senior advisor. Initial work of the group focuses on supporting the Roosevelt Recreation Center in Hampden. Over the coming decades, the Juniors thrive as a separate department of the Club. Limited to 50 members until 1950, it later grows to 150 members. In 1979 the group reorganizes as the Junior Committee. The Junior Committee continues until 2011.
- June 1935 The **Club chorus** expands to 60 singers. Chorus members sing at recitals, teas and receptions.
- Oct 1935 Following a contentious struggle with the Roland Park Roads and Maintenance Board, the WCRP proceeds with **plans to enlarge the clubhouse**. The front porch is enclosed and a permanent stage is built in the auditorium. The speaker's room,

flower room, rear hall and stairway are added to the back of the building. Apartment rental ceases and the Juniors Department gets a new clubroom on the second floor. The kitchen moves from the basement to its current location. The basement will be used for painting classes and small meetings.

The Club agrees to hold membership at 500 Seniors and 50 Juniors (550 members total) until 1950 and to wait 15 years before it embarks on any further expansion.

- Dec 1935 TWCRP has its annual Christmas party for the nursery school children at **Roosevelt Park Recreation Center**.
- Mar 1937 The Club urges the Maryland General Assembly to pass a series of bills to give **illegitimate children rights** under Maryland law.
- 1938 **The Batchelder tile fountain** is given in memory of Miss Clara Paine Gault. Clara, her sister Laura Gault Blick and her mother Sallie Johnson Gault were all members of the Club as early as 1918. In good humor, members name the fount "the Fountain of Youth." Through the generosity of the Club's 50-year members, the fountain is beautifully restored in 2017.
- Feb 1938 First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt receives 386 members of the Woman's Club of Roland Park in the Red Room of **the White House**. Club members travel to Washington by special train, where they are greeted by a fleet of one hundred White Taxis and a motorcycle escort which ushers them to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Feb 1939 The Club compiles an impressive list of 20 "**Pioneer Club Women**" who have been members of the WCRP for at least 35 years. Today we celebrate our 50-year members with an annual luncheon held in their honor.
- 1939 **The Council of Past Presidents** is created.
- May 1941 With strong endorsement from TWCRP, notable club member **Sara Anderson Whitehurst** is elected National President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs of America, an organization of almost 2 million women.
- Summer 1941 The painted walls in the upstairs dining room are upgraded to **wallpaper** featuring a large cabbage rose pattern in delicate colors. This wallpaper remains until 1961.
- Dec 1941 The clubhouse becomes a center for **Red Cross classes** and surgical dressings workshops, after the US enters **World War II**. The auditorium is made available for other war-relief work and the clubhouse is used as the neighborhood Civil Defense Shelter. Mrs. John T. Tucker does an outstanding job inspiring the Club in the war effort. An aggregate of nearly 100,000 hours of volunteer work is logged by the Club's 180 members. Over the next 4 years, tens of thousands of surgical dressings kits are prepared, packed and shipped from the clubhouse. In addition, the group sews clothing for the Happy Hills Convalescent Home for Children and the U.S. Marine Hospital.
- July 1943 As planned for in its charter, the **Roland Park Woman's Club Building Company** is dissolved after 40 years.

- 1946 The Club celebrates its **50<sup>th</sup> birthday** with a Jubilee pageant called, "A Revue – Through the Years." There are now 750 members of the club.
- 1947 Mrs. Gideon N. Stieff commissions Baltimore artist **Helen E. Ohrenschall** to create a silhouette with pen-and-ink background titled, "First Meeting."
- March 1947 Through **Save-the-Children**, the Junior Department sponsors 10-year-old Josephina M. L. Coenjarts, a poor Dutch child living in Gulpen, Holland. The group arranges several fund-raisers such as card parties, fashion shows and candy sales in order to send Josephina much-needed food, clothing and gifts. Support for Jose continues for many years.
- Fall 1948 Under the leadership of Myra Lehr, the **Dramatic Arts section** organizes at the Club and presents three plays during its first year. Active for more than a decade, the drama group performs dozens of plays, many of which are original works written by Club members.
- 1949-1950 **Grace United Methodist Church** is offered use of the clubhouse while extensive work is done on the church's own building. In gratitude, Dr. William A. Keese, minister of the church, presents the Club with a Duncan Phyfe mahogany dining table, which is now used as the president's table in the dining room.
- April 1950 The Junior Department sponsors a second child, **Peter Dardantakis**, of war-torn Piraeus, Greece, through Save-the-Children.
- 1951 With the 15-year ban on building expansion expired, the Club **enlarges the clubhouse** for the third time. The second-floor porch is enclosed to create the library.
- May 1951 The Baltimore **Flower Mart**, held each year in Mount Vernon, celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> year. TWCRP Junior Department participates actively in the annual fair by selling candy and flowers at their booth.
- 1951 Famed satirist and newspaper columnist **H. L. Mencken** entertains a "standing room only" crowd with a delightful evening program at the club.
- Apr 1954 The Junior Department sponsors 5-year-old **Tai Kwa Kim** of Korea through Save-the-Children. The boy's father had been killed when the Chinese invaded Korea. Club support continues for the boy for 13 years.
- May 1954 The Club screens a **color film** featuring highlights of the past year.
- 1955 TV author **Robert Shaw** speaks at the club.
- Summer 1961 **New wallpaper**, a Colonial Williamsburg fruit pattern incorporating pineapples (to symbolize hospitality), is installed in the dining room.
- March 1963 Past-president **Claire von Mares Stieff** becomes the first woman in the history of the Federal District Court of Maryland to be named foreman of a federal grand jury.

- 1963            **The Cox Memorial Scholarship Fund** is established through a legacy left by Lillian L. Cox, a Club member since 1920.
- 1963            The past presidents of the Club form the **Endowment Lecture Fund** to be used to fund an outstanding program each year.
- Oct 1963        The Garden Section offers a flower-arranging and table-setting demonstration at **Hutzler's Department Store**.
- Nov 1963        The Junior Department produces the "**Sweet Talk**" **cookbook** as a fundraiser for their annual welfare project. The November 22, 1963, benefit fashion show and card party event is interrupted by news that President John F. Kennedy has been shot while riding in a motorcade in Dallas. President Kennedy dies 30 minutes later.
- Apr 1964        "**Spanish Holiday**" is the theme for the annual flower show and tea at the Club.
- July 1964        TWCRP launches its "**Get Out the Vote**" campaign with a goal to achieve a 100% voting record for the 900+ members of the club.
- 1964            Past-president **Clara Tucker** receives the distinguished William J. Casey Award in recognition of varied and outstanding service to the Red Cross during World War II and beyond.
- 1965            14 members of TWCRP take a club-sponsored **trip to Spain and Portugal**.
- April 1967      After 16 years at the podium, past-president **Clara Boyd Cook (C.B.)** brings to an end her interesting series of talks entitled, "Discussion Invited." Mrs. Cook's series offers six lectures per season on a wide range of topics.
- Nov 1969        TWCRP Garden Section co-sponsors the "**Autumn Magic**" **flower show** with the Roland Park Garden Club.
- Nov 1969        The Junior Department offers its second cookbook, titled "**Second Billing**," as part of its annual welfare project. The Club has 150 Juniors members and about 800 Senior members.
- 1971            TWCRP celebrates its Diamond Jubilee (**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**). Mrs. Grafton Hersperger is president of the club.
- 1972            The Board elects to make potential members eligible for acceptance in the **Junior Department** after their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday and before their 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. Juniors can remain members of the Junior Department until age 38.
- Oct 1973        Programs chairman Mary Lou Beehler engages movie star **Ginger Rogers** to give a talk at the Club. A beloved past president of the Juniors Department, Mary Lou contributes to the Club's success for several decades.
- Jan 1974        **Mayor William Donald Schaefer** discusses "The New Baltimore" at the Club.

- Feb 1974 Lt. Commander **John S. McCain** discusses “What America Means to Me” during his talk at the Club.
- Dec 1974 The Woman’s Club of Roland Park, Roland Park Historic District, is listed in the **National Register of Historic Places**.
- Nov 1975 **Graham Kerr**, the “Galloping Gourmet,” speaks at the Club.
- Nov 1976 The Junior Department publishes “**the Sampler**” **cookbook** and offers it for sale as part of its “Spirit of ‘76” welfare project.
- May 1982 The Garden Section presents “**Rainbow Over Roland Park**,” the theme for its annual flower show.
- 1983 At the 1982 annual meeting, Dottie Stieff delights Club members with her puppets, “**Fanny and Freddie**.”
- Nov 1983 The Junior Department presents “**New Sweets and Old Styles**,” a fashion show featuring styles from 1896 to 1963.
- 1985 The Woman’s Club installs its **elevette**, financed by member donations.
- Apr 1987 Current “Second Lady” and future “First Lady” **Barbara Bush** gives a talk at the Club. A witty and engaging speaker, Mrs. Bush discusses literacy issues facing the United States.
- 1992 The **Jean Strahan Memorial Lecture Fund** is established by Dr. John F. Strahan to honor the memory of his wife, an active member from 1969 to 1983.
- 1992 Paul J. Gebelein, Jr., establishes the **VanSant/Gebelein Memorial Fund**, for Legislative and Civics programs, to honor the memory of his wife, her mother and her grandmother; three generations of Club members over an 88-year period from 1903 to 1991.
- Oct 1995 **The Honorable R. Sargent Shriver, Jr**, speaks at the club. His topic is “A Special Man for a Special Cause.”
- Jan 1996 Mayor Kurt Schmoke honors the Club with the **Community Partnership Award**.
- Jan 1996 **The Blizzard of 1996** dumps 22.5” of snow on Baltimore during a 2-day storm.
- 1996 The Woman’s Club of Roland Park celebrates its **100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** with a number of initiatives to refurbish the clubhouse. The exterior of the building is freshly painted. The auditorium is painted and the foyer receives a beautifully hand-painted memorial to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary dates. The dining room gets a make-over with handsome new wallpaper in a flowering vine pattern featuring cherry blossoms. The ladies’ room and the speakers’ room are also remodeled.
- 1996 The Stieff family commissions artist Frederic Schuler Briggs, who is the grandson of Baltimore sculptor Hans Schuler, to paint “**Tea at the Club**,” a gift to the WCRP in

honor of past-president Claire Stieff. The oil painting hangs over the fireplace in the auditorium.

- 1997      **The Mary D. McCormick Fund** is established by Mrs. McCormick to fund music programs at the Club. A 65-year member of TWCRP, Mary is known fondly as “Mary Piano.” She was a 1918 student of Peabody Conservatory, and often volunteered to play piano at churches, schools and nursing homes.
- 1997      **The Marion Mudd Memorial Fund** is established by Mrs. William C. Sieck to support community projects of the Club. Mrs. Mudd was an active member for 18 years.
- 2000      The Club offers **Great Decisions**, an 8-week discussion course on world affairs. Participation in this nation-wide program offered by the Foreign Policy Association continues to this day.
- March 2002      **The WCRP Clubhouse Foundation** is formed. In 15 years the Foundation raises over \$500,000 from members for the preservation of the building exterior and grounds. “A History of the Woman’s Club of Roland Park Clubhouse Foundation, Inc.” is published in 2019 to commemorate the Foundation’s accomplishments.
- 2003      **Justin Colebank** becomes our clubhouse caretaker. He continues to make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the Club to this day. Thank you, Justin!
- 2009      TWCRP begins hosting Roland Park’s **Spring Celebration**, an annual event open to the local community.
- 2009      The Club launches the **www.TWCRP.org** website to communicate up-to-date information on programs and classes to its members and to increase community engagement. The website gets a makeover in 2022.
- 2011      Heather Harvison, the founder of **My Sister’s Circle**, inspires the Club to get involved with her relationship-based program for mentoring middle school girls. Some members become mentors and others donate funds to support the organization’s efforts. The WCRP continues to actively support “Sisters Circle” to this day.
- 2014      The **Cherry Blossom Society** is established as a way to acknowledge and thank members for planned giving to the Club. A cherry tree is planted on the front lawn to commemorate the event.
- Spring 2015      The Club hosts **Roland Park’s House and Garden Tour** for the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage. 900 guests enjoy the hospitality of the Club and the event brings \$25,000 in ticket sales.
- Feb 2017      In a Thursday program, Mollie Lange introduces TWCRP to her work with the international **Days for Girls** organization. By October Mollie is guiding DfG workshops at the Club. Volunteers sew and assemble feminine hygiene kits that are distributed to girls throughout the world.
- 2017      The Club gains 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and the Foundation is dissolved.

- Spring 2018     **The Beatrix Farrand Garden Committee**, chaired by Sally Black Anthony, completes its years-long project to redesign and upgrade landscaping in the backyard.
- 2018             A custom-made, **black steel pergola**, a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gideon N. Stieff, Jr., is installed in the garden. The design echoes architectural features of the tea house imagined by Beatrix Farrand in 1905.
- 2020             During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Club begins **live-streaming** Thursday programs. This gives members and speakers the flexibility to participate virtually if they are unable to attend meetings in person.
- 2021             **The Woman’s Club of Roland Park turns 125**. 1896 – 2021. The Club commemorates the occasion with a bold new banner on Roland Avenue.
- Apr 2022        The Club’s needlework group creates hundreds of yellow and blue yarn “corsages” for a fundraiser to aid war-torn Ukraine. More than \$5,500 is donated to **Save the Children, Ukraine** from the drive.