

Club Highlights: Chronological List

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William R. Fleming, who built the club house, was one of the founders of the international engineering firm of Gannet, Fleming, Corddry and Carpenter. Two of the firms founding partners' wives participated in club activities. Mrs. W. Howard Corddry was president in 1952-1955 and Villa Carpenter took part in a musical presentation at the Diamond Jubilee of the club in 1973.

Highlights of club accomplishments and benchmarks through the years are listed below.

1898

Organized as a club with its object *“to increase the public interest in all matters relating to good citizenship, and to promote a better social order.”*

In its first year the club put sandboxes in several playgrounds.

1899

The club purchased 26 trash receptacles for downtown Harrisburg and urged City Council to pass a resolution making littering an offense.

1900

Men were engaged by the club and sent to Philadelphia to be trained as “White Wings” to keep Harrisburg city streets in order.

Club founder Mira Lloyd Dock delivers “City Beautiful” speech.

1901

The club publishes “Wake Up Harrisburg” which focused on the proper maintenance of existing parks and public squares, the planting of trees and protection of birds.

1902

The club plants John Bartram Bed of Native Shrubs in Reservoir Park.

The club engages a police matron for the County Jail (and pays her salary for several years). Later, the club hired an assistant police matron.

1903

The club investigates conditions surrounding the public water supply and has a drinking fountain installed in the city center which was iced during hot weather.

1904

Club members visited the jail and almshouse regularly to keep them clean and the walls whitewashed.

1906

Club arranges for the removal of toll houses from Front and Market streets to landscape the area and erect two columns from the Old Capitol building to beautify the approach to the city.

1908

At the club's urging, the dumping of trash and garbage on the river bank was prohibited by City Council and garbage collection was started.

1912-1920

The club mounted the following projects: early Christmas shopping, improved garbage collection, sewing implements given to poor women. The club also organized a Vigilance Committee to study entertainment and moving pictures, especially as they affect children. During these years the club members knitted over 500 sweaters for the Clothing Center for needy citizens.

1913

Club member Mrs. Morgenthaler founded the first P.T.A. in Harrisburg.

1914

The Civic Club of Harrisburg was bequeathed its permanent home.

The club waged a "**War against the Fly.**" The club realized that many diseases were spread by flies and so, to counter the numbers of flies in Harrisburg, advocated the killing of flies. It takes 7000 flies to make a pint of flies. The club paid 5 cents a pints for dead flies to protect the public. This year the club collected 800 pints of flies which were redeemed for the promised bounty.

1916

The second floor of the club house was renovated into a grand ballroom and stage.

1914-1918

During World War I the club house was used daily for Red Cross work in rolling bandages for military hospitals and as a place for entertaining servicemen (USO), including on one occasion, 100 "Blue Devils" from France.

1923

First free kindergarten is established in Harrisburg with the club paying the teacher's salary.

1928

The club urges that parking be prohibited on Front Street.

1941-1945

During World War II the club led a Community Canning Kitchen under the Council of Civil Defense. Club members also grew Victory Gardens and distributed seeds.

1947

The club chairs a Smoke Abatement Project, engaging a smoke engineer from St.. Louis, MO and presented a plan to lessen air pollution to City Council.

1950

With author Pearl Buck and others, club founder Gabriella Cameron Gilbert (Mrs. Lyman D.) was named a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania by Governor James H. Duff.

The club supported a ban on comic books by supporting a resolution of the Harrisburg City Council of Parent-Teacher Associations.

1959

The club establishes awards programs for high school high-achieving senior students and women volunteers who make notable contributions to the Harrisburg community.

1962

The club establishes a Great Books reading program for members and guests.

1966

The club sponsors a Windowbox Project for the purpose of beautifying the city and increasing neighborhood pride.

1968

The club commits to campaign for a face life of the Market Street approach to the city.

1970

Billy Lee Hart, deputy director of the state Crime Commission, addressed the club members about the “Challenges of Crime.”

Club members toured the Penn State Campus in State College, had lunch at the Nittany Lion Inn and then visited the Columbus Chapel in Boalsburg. The trip was \$7.50 all inclusive.

1972

As an Arbor Day project, the club began planting trees in Riverfront Park honoring club members and outstanding community volunteers.

1973

This year the club celebrated its 75th anniversary and honored past presidents at its April meeting. The club planted trees on Arbor Day near the club in River Part, honoring or memorializing all 25 past presidents.

1975

The club had a membership of 421 paid members.

1976

The club toured White Chimneys, an historic site at Gap (14 miles east of Lancaster), the only “museum in the country we know of that covers history of 200 years of one family in one spot.”

1977

The club sponsored presentations on “Gourds and Gourd Craft,” Crime Prevention” and “Earth’s Natural Resources” at the club house.

1978

This year the club celebrated its 80th birthday. The Sunday Patriot-News reported in a retrospective feature that the club. In 1914 “possessed a teen-agers zest for a host of crusades and causes, and the house... echoes with lively discussions and debates about plans to further the beautification of the city and the education of its children.” The newspaper called the Club the “grande dame of Harrisburg women’s groups.”

In May, the club members were updated on the building of Strawberry Square and its proposed Shopping Mall.

1982

The October 4, 1982 the general meeting featured a presentation by Lenore Haas, director of the Methodist Neighborhood Center on Maclay Street. She spoke of her organization’s mission, including offering a day camp for youngsters, leadership development and working with inmates at the Dauphin County Prison.

1983

The club took a field trip to the Eisenhower Farm and had lunch at the Fairfield Inn. They also reviewed the novel, “almost Famous” by Camp Hill author David Small. Also, the club raised funds to help with the “Statue of Liberty” replica standing on a rock near the Dauphin Narrows section of the Susquehanna River.

1984

Students from Benjamin Franklin Elementary School third grade class recited Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address for members at a club meeting.

1992

The club gives five boxes of historic documents such as minutes, treasurer reports, newsletters, etc. to the Dauphin County Historical Society for safekeeping in its archives.

1993

The club had 193 paid members this year.

Members honored former president Mary Sheffer (1968-1971) with its Pioneer Award.

1994

Douglas Russell, son of member Marion Russell, made an offer to buy the club house property, put the proceeds into trust to support club activities and its mission. The board considered his altruistic offer, but declined.

1995

Club member Virginia Bear died leaving \$25,000 to the club in her will.

Members organized a bus trip to see Neil Simon’s “*Odd Couple*” at the White Marsh Dinner Theatre in Baltimore.

Squirrels made a home in the club house but were removed after they chewed on parts of the air-conditioning system.

1996

Historic marker on N. Front Street near Reily Street dedicated to a club founding member, activist and environmentalist Mira Lloyd Dock is dedicated.

The club had 130 paid members.

The club made donations to the following organizations: Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council, River Rescue, Greater Harrisburg Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A, Bethesda Mission, and, Harrisburg Fraternal Order of Police, among others.

1997

Some members considered disbanding the club for lack of membership and support but then reconsidered and decided to “continue into the second century.”

1998

This year marked the 100th anniversary of the club. Betty Barnes, as recording secretary, invited several state elected officials to the club’s celebration.

Officer Isabelle Cameron Smith wrote a brief history of the club for the 100th Anniversary Yearbook. She wrote, “many persons learned to dance, gave recitals, had their wedding receptions or parties, were entertained during WORLD War I and II and all the ‘ladies’ who have met and loved echo throughout its (the club’s) history.

Gladys Pedlow bequeathed \$5,000 to the club.

The year the club had 139 members. The Historic Harrisburg Association designates the club as a “pillar” of the Harrisburg community.

1999

The club forms The Civic Club of Harrisburg Affiliates, a 501(c)3, a non-profit, fund raising arm of the club with both men and women members. Local prominent attorney Jonothan Vipond III provided legal advice pro bono, saving the club over two thousand dollars to get the non-profit status.

The Affiliates mounted fund-raisers to help the club pay for utilities and restoration. Members piloted programs during Harrisburg’s Kipona and Artsfest Festivals. A very successful event was “A Good Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social” held during Artsfest.

The club receives \$5,000 for allowing a portion of the film “*Girl Interrupted*” to be filmed at the clubhouse in late March. Select scenes were filmed at the club featuring well-known actors Winona Rider, Angelina Jolie and Whoopi Goldberg.

The club made donations to the following: Y.M.C.A., City of Harrisburg Parks and Recreation, City of Harrisburg Police and Fire and Capital Emergency Services.

Program presenters were given \$25 this year.

2000

The club introduces “Manners Matter” an annual program for children between 7-12 to teach table manners and social skills to area youth. Several members provide scholarships for the program. Almost 90 children, members and volunteers participated in the inaugural program.

The club receives a \$15,000 grant from The Kline Foundation.

The club reports 130 members with 50 of those listed as “inactive.”

2001

The Affiliates host “Manners Matter” for the second year. Through the efforts of the Affiliates, the IBM Corporation donated a new computer to the club.

Member Pauline Nedwich donated an upright piano to the club and Kathryn Ellenberger bequeathed \$5,000 to the club.

2002

Affiliates donate \$25,000 for capital improvements. In May, the membership committee reports 101 paid members.

2003

New Inclinor is installed, a gift of the Affiliates.

2004

A large rendering of the club’s first floor parlor along with two blue prints of the building’s first floor were found in the parlor’s bookcase. The large print was framed and hung above the bookcase. Titled *Cambridge Party* R.H. 9/99, it was drawn by movie production designer Richard Hoover and was used during the filming of the Hollywood production, “*Girl Interrupted*.” In the lower right-hand corner of the picture is an impression of a stamp in purple and white that reads “*Girl Interrupted*.” The set title is *Cambridge Party*.

Balance sheet reflects total assets of \$235,290 vs. Liabilities of \$235,290.

2005

The club reorganized the Civic Club of Harrisburg Affiliates, a move necessitated to preserve the 501 (c) 3 status of the Affiliates. The group must hold one meeting per year.

New toilets were installed in the Powder and Men’s rooms.

Member Mrs. Thomas Francis died at the age of 108.

The Junior League of Harrisburg wants to meet at the club. The idea of having Junior League members join the club at age 40 as sustaining members of the Junior League and members of the club is discussed.

2006

The club installed storm windows in the building at a cost of almost \$25,000.

The club donated \$30,000 to the City of Harrisburg for community programs.

Rentals were almost \$50,000 this year.

2007

Daughter of member Winifred Murray made a \$5,000 gift in memory of her mother.

2008

Beth Cornell (President 2010-present) made a gift to the club in honor of her mother, the late Laura Cornell.

Bill Cornell, sister of Beth and son of Laura Cornell, made a September presentation on “The Pride of the Susquehanna.”

2010

The club sponsors trips for members and guests to the original Barnes Foundation in Merion and The Union League in Philadelphia.

The club's Executive Committee adopts a three-year strategic plan for the club and the Affiliates. A monthly club newsletter is produced and sent to members.

Floors are refinished on both floors.

The clubhouse is wired for wireless internet access.

2011

The club gets bids on repairing the roof, changing the heat from steam to gas and other restoration projects. Members paint the flat wall surfaces and reupholster furniture in the Ladies Room on the second floor.

The club begins its Legacy Project by getting interviews from members to be put on the website.

2012

The club successfully secures the technology to webcast its programs at the club to senior centers and other locations through Digital Samba. This major contribution (over \$22,000 in equipment) allows the club to provide a significant service to senior and homebound neighbors. In March, for example, our program on "*The Role of Women during the Civil War*" was available "live" and free to participating centers.

The club created and launched a website and focused on "branding" the club to increase membership and sponsorships.

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