

Woman's Club 100th Anniversary

Slide Notes

I'm Marsha Travis, Second Vice President and Historian for the Women's Club of Cranbury. I will give you a brief overview of the history of our club. Some of you have seen part of this material before. But we have guests who have not.

We are divided into six Departments, clockwise from upper left, Arts & Culture, Gourmet, Health & Wellness, Education & Libraries, Environment, Civic Engagement, and two Focus Groups: International Affairs and Hiking.

Oddly enough, it all started with a book. In 1893, a group of women from Cranbury formed The Ladies Reading Circle of Cranbury.

Here is the first program for the Ladies Reading Circle. Note that the silver pin holding the pages together has the symbol '98. The original can be seen at the Cranbury History Center.

Inside the program are five lines of the constitution and six bylaws. The first bylaw states that the regular meeting shall be held every Wednesday at 2:30 o'clock.

Also listed are four weeks of programs dedicated to Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the country of Holland, and Liquefied Air. Why Holland? Queen Wilhelmina was enthroned in 1898 at 18 years old. Liquefied air because Charles E Tripler was experimenting with the idea.

A Reading Circle reception held in 1907 came with this beautiful program. The drawing of the lady was cut out by hand and attached to each copy.

When a professional journalist, Jane Cunningham Croly, attempted to attend a dinner at an all-male press club honoring British novelist Charles Dickens. Croly was denied admittance based on her gender and, in response, formed a woman's club—Sorososis. Sorososis is a botanical term for a fruit derived from multiple flowers—an excellent metaphor for a woman's club.

The ladies were serious about that Wednesday meeting date. The following was stated "Thou shalt remember that Club Day is Wednesday, and to keep it from engagements, and not absent thyself without an excellent cause" and that "Each member should, like the citizens of the Golden Age of Greece, be prepared to do anything that was asked of her."

Here are some other beautiful reception cards and notes from that period. They were printed in color and embossed.

This article indicates that there was a yearbook produced in 1916. Of note are the various events around Mexico. That year, revolutionary Pancho Villa attacked an American border town. In response, the United States Army, under the direction of General John J. Pershing, launched the "Punitive Expedition" into northern Mexico to find and capture Villa.

1919 was a big year for the Women's Club. We got the right to vote and a name change. It was desired to change the name of the Ladies Reading Circle, to "The Woman's Club of Cranbury," which is a more appropriate name for this day of opportunity and progress.

From October 10, 1919, Cranbury Press is an article indicating that President Mrs. Stanley Conover hosted the meeting at which the name change was decided.

On November 3, 1922, 25 members voted to join the Federation.

In the 1930s, we planted trees for the George Washington Bicentennial. On the right, is the President's pin worn by Mrs. Arthur L. Burroughs at the 1930 convention in Atlantic City.

In January of 1931, the Home Economics Department hosted a discussion of home lighting, and the Welfare Department gathered contributions to benefit the drought fund. We participated in a Little Theatre Tournament at the New Jersey College for Women presenting "The First Dress Suit."

The Woman's Clubs went to War.

We sent a Ping Pong set to the 19th Evacuation Hospital at Fort Dix.

Most of us are too young to remember rationing books. A message we could use today: "If you don't need it, don't buy it." These ads show that a #30 stamp was needed to buy 5 pounds of sugar. On the left is the instruction page.

Around one-third of the vegetables produced by the United States came from victory gardens. By May 1943, there were 18 million victory gardens in the United States – 12 million in cities and 6 million on farms.

In 1944, we sent Fanny Farmer candies to George F Barber. He was busy with the Battle of the Ardennes, which you may know as the Battle of the Bulge. He wrote back his thanks.

We sent "Buddy Bags" to the USS New Jersey and got an excellent thank you.

An interesting sidelight is that the local Lenox factory was also busy fighting the war. Lenox made a unique contribution to the war by producing a durable material called Lenoxite that was used in high-frequency radar devices by the US Signal Corps.

Our 50th Anniversary Scroll is shown here. Our 100th Anniversary Scroll is here in the room.

Eugenia Bunting, President of the Woman's Club from 1952-1954, encouraged our members to support the New York Herald Tribune's new Fresh Air Fund.

In 1958 she and her daughter joined her husband in Laos, where he was an engineering advisor to the Laotian government. In August of 1960, there was an uprising, and she and her daughter were among the US dependents evacuated. Ven t on.

In the 1960s, we auctioned off Vacations.

In 1966, the General Federation of Women's Clubs was the subject of a US Postage stamp.

In 1972, we published What's Cooking in Cranbury. In 1974, we published a Cranbury calendar using our members' artwork.

In 1975, 50-year members were Mrs. Isaiah Barclay and Mrs. Arthur E. Perrine. 50-year members and past presidents were Mrs. Arthur L. Burroughs and Mrs. Frederick Brunner, Jr. Mrs. John Frisch, Jr. 1966-67 president-elect attended the 72nd annual convention in Atlantic City.

In the 1980s, we published another cookbook with contributions from children.

In the 1990's we were recognized for our work on the Special State Project, The "RCR" Room at Children's Hospital of New Jersey.

Joan Rue, who joined the club in 1971, served as President from 1992-1994, 1996-1998, and 2004-2006 explained our structure and key projects. Joan was placed on the Honor Roll in 2010 and received the Order of the Lily in 2015.

In 2010, we received a Gold Award for our Newsletter, and Ethel Mesner and Elizabeth Wagner were placed on the Honor Roll.

Then I joined in 2018. Here are pictures of us Fashionistas at the Fashion Show we held at St. David's Church. And here is our all-star lineup of officers.

Here we see Blaine Lippe in Afghanistan and, later, safely home. He was one of the hundreds of recipients of our Christmas Stockings each year.

The 2019-2020 year saw us warm tummies with hot cocoa at the Christmas Tree Lighting and holding the Great Chili Cookoff.

Here we see Ray Chilmileski, Founder of Operation Chillout, and the young pup, Lenox, we sponsored at the Seeing Eye, and then Lenox all grown up.

Last year, we filled stockings, celebrated the holidays, helped Women Aware, Learned about Princeton's Sustainability program, assisted an Afghan refugee family, and Fran Rak spent some time in jail.

An exceptional young Mother and a promising young man received our scholarships. Best line of the night: **Mommy, Mommy, you won!**

This year is starting strong with the Special State Project Fundraiser, our Cranbury Day jewelry sale, our Opening Luncheon, the Walk to End Alzheimer's, Candidates Night, and so much more.

And we have many more years to come...