

The younger generation of the Finnish speaking folks of the Parker Street Hall were interested in continuing the cultural interests of the Finnish people therefore, they held an informal meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a club. It was decided to formulate this club and the first regular meeting was held on March 18th, 1945 with the following 20 present: Tyyne Glad, Aune Ojalehto, Aili & Ray Niemi, Ralph Weckstrom, Rachel Ojanen, Cora & Carl Niskanen, Lillian Pajunen, Huldah & Eino Nelson, Kay Kangas, Albert Goodrich, Roy Helander, Ranny & Walter Nelson, Hilda Aromaa, Helen Mark Ketola, Helen & Lauri Klemola and the first set of by-laws were accepted at the April, 1945 meeting.

Officers elected were: President, Lauri Klemola; Vice-President, Ralph Weckstrom; Treasurer, Albert Goodrich; Recording-Secretary, Helen Mark Ketola; Membership-Secretary, Rachel Ojanen.

With many suggestions for a name it was decided to temporarily call it ALL AMERICAN CLUB and after lengthy discussion and consideration about changing the name it was voted at the March 17, 1947 meeting to retain the club's name as ALL AMERICAN CLUB.

The purpose of the club was for the betterment of social life and welfare with stress on educational work, social work, physical culture and dramatics. For years the ALL AMERICAN CLUB has been interested in the cultural with a fine chorus and a talented dramatic group. During the first 15 years of its existence the club had presented 17 long plays, 8 of which were musicals or plays with music, 2 of which were CARMEN and BLOSSOM TIME in Finnish; 15 one-act plays, 6 of these musicals. The club profited by presenting the plays in Finnish as they had a much larger attendance with the audience traveling long distances to see the performances. Hilda Aromaa directed most of the plays with Roy Helander also having directed, acted and accompanied many productions. Tyyne Glad was the full time accompanist. Leading parts for these productions were successfully taken by Stella Linna, Ventla Saari, Huldah Nelson, Elma Kansanniva, Helen Mark Ketola, Ellen Haapala Hangas, Roy Helander, Ruben Aromaa, William Wehkoja, Charles Kallio, George Ojalehto and Waino Ojalehto with

supporting roles at different times by many other members. Costuming was ably handled by Julia Wahkoja and Hilda Aromaa.

Meetings are held at the Parker Street Hall the first Saturday of each month with the Annual Meeting in March. After the Annual Meeting committees are selected for each month of the year and they in turn are responsible for planning the "after-meeting" activities and entertainment plus the refreshments for their month. Members are very cooperative and willing to work not only for the month they are assigned but for any projects designated at the meetings. Attendance at meetings are excellent with at least two-thirds of the membership present at meetings.

Skits for after-meeting activities have been prepared by Sirkka French and Helen Mark Ketola which have high-lighted many meetings and get-togethers. Sirkka French, the clubs' "poet-laureate", prepared a most hilarious membership report "in prose" for the 1967 Annual Meeting.

The first affair of the club was a Dance on April 18, 1945 which was successful socially if not financially. A Banquet Supper was prepared by Tyyne Glad for the First Annual Meeting with music furnished for dancing by John Lubin, Accordion; Carl Niskanen, Guitar; Reino Linna, Drums. Since that time music for our annual and monthly meetings has been furnished by Henry Salmela, Accordion and Reino Linna, Drums.

A Girl's Chorus at the hall was under the leadership of Lauri Koski and later Oscar Tofferi but on August 22, 1946 it was reorganized under the direction of Hilda Aromaa as part of the All American Club activity. The men's voices were added to the Chorus around October, 1946 and some time during 1949 Roy Helander became the director of the chorus. The chorus performed at many local and neighboring town affairs with great acclaim.

The first club Bazaar was held in November, 1946 and for many years varied and successful Fairs and Bazaars have been held with different themes and motifs with the members getting dressed to portray the theme.

Rhythm classes for youngsters under the instruction of Evelyn Walsh and Janet Klemola were held before meetings in the Fall of 1946 but were finally discontinued

due to lack of attendance by members children. Square dances were held during the 1947 season. Bowling matches have been held with the Fitchburg Club hosting 3 annually and Maynard 3 with dancing and entertainment provided by the host clubs. Family outings with Fitchburg and Quincy Clubs have been held annually at Saima Park in Fitchburg. Also successful family outings during the summer months for years were held at the Lake Boone homes of Val and George Ojalehto as well as Ranny and Walter Nelson.

The All American Club was instrumental in observing the 50th Anniversary of the Finnish Workmen's Association of Parker Street Hall in May, 1954 by presenting a Finnish Play, A Pop Concert and a Dance. Then in September, 1964 the 60th Anniversary was celebrated at a Fall Festival which was held at the Maynard Rod & Gun Club and the members were actively engaged in working at the canteen, performing ,in the program,etc.

The All American Club has donated large sums of money to the Emerson Hospital Building Fund besides making annual contributions to the Hospital. The Club has also been instrumental financially boosting W.G.B.H. Channel 2 plus many national, local fund drives, scholarships and other worthwhile drives too numerous to mention.

Past Presidents in order of their term with 1st President Lauri Klemola include: Ray Niemi (deceased), William Wehkoja, Roy Helander (who was also the club's 12th President), George Glad, Ahti Jaakkola, Lauri Manning, Harold Ruble, Ruben Aromaa, Albert Saari, Val Ojalehto, Jim Regan, Elma Kansanniva, Everett Saari (Deceased), Philip Murphy, Henry Salmela, Helen Mark Ketola, Alric French, William F. Schipper, Arne Aho, Vera Leithead, Tauno Torppa and Eino Nelson.

Present Officers for the 1969-1970 season are: President, Eino Raikunen; Vice-President, Harold Hicks; Treasurer, Huldah Nelson; Recording-Secretary, Frances Schipper; Membership-Secretary, Sirkka French; Extra members of the Board: Waino Ojalehto and Eino Nelson; Reporter, Helen Mark Ketola; Historian, Tyyne Glad.

The Charter members still active include: Tyyne Glad, Helen & Lauri Klemola, Sirkka French, Helen Mark Ketola, Impi Kangas, Huldah & Eino Nelson; Ranny & Walter Nelson, Aune Ojalehto, Albert Saari, Impi Rivers.

The membership is limited to around 100 but is no longer restricted to persons

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of Finnish descent but is open to persons interested in continuing the cultural aspects for which the club was originally formed.

During October the All American Club celebrated its Twenty-fifth Anniversary (25th) Year by honoring its Past Presidents and it was the highlight of the club's activities. A catered dinner was served by Charles Turner Caterers of Worcester and dancing was enjoyed to music by the Bobby Z Quartet of Worcester. This was a night that will long be remembered by all present.

Submitted by:

HELEN MARK KETOLA (Mrs. Eino)
Past President - ALL AMERICAN CLUB

Read at the November 19, 1969 Meeting
MAYNARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY