

"The Rotarians Build a Mess Hall"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Part of Carroll County's rich heritage is the contribution of civic organizations to the quality of life in our communities. Beginning in the nineteenth century, a wide variety of groups have served local citizens. Some of these early organizations helped disadvantaged people such as the poor and slaves, while other organizations promoted temperance and education. In the present century some new organizations formed which addressed the needs of our young people.

A 1925 building project undertaken by the Westminster Rotary Club was for the use of youth groups throughout the county. The accompanying photograph appeared with the following article in the May 22 issue of this newspaper:

The above photo was taken on the Rotary grounds at Bridgeport, and shows the mess hall as it appeared at noon, Wednesday, May 6th, after three hours work had been done on it by the Rotarians. The erection of this building, which is for the use of all worthy juvenile organizations of Carroll county, was accomplished by the personal efforts of the members of the Westminster Rotary Club, ably directed by Mr. Charles B. Hunter, builder, of this city. The work was divided into two shifts, one half the members of the Club working from nine until twelve, and the remainder from one until four.

The entire ground on which this building has been erected is freshly sown with grass seed, and when the proposed concrete bridge, spanning Big Pipe Creek, adjacent to this property is finished, the Westminster Rotarians will own, perhaps, the finest and most beautiful recreation ground of its kind in the state.

The committee in charge of permits for the use of the ground are T. W. Mather, Jr., John L Bennett and Jos. L. Mathias.

At the angle of the building Mayor Koontz, Past President of the Club, may be seen pushing Leeds Billingslea and George Babylon behind him; the man most conspicuously advertising John Reifsnider, and with his head absolutely bared, is no other than Pearre Wantz, Cashier of the Union National Bank, and Chairman of the Club's Entertainment Committee; off to one side, away from the reeking group of laborers, stoops Captain Geo. Monagon, former Vice President of the Club, the man who conceived the idea of the mess hall, and altogether a go-getter of the first water; the portly gentleman slightly obscuring Bill Mather and Charles Klee is none other than S. G. Ramer, Proprietor of the Westminster Hotel, who acted as water boy during the day; Postmaster and Republican Leader, Harry M. Kimmey, may be observed resting in the immediate foreground and providing ample shade for those behind. The position in which you see him remained unaltered during most of the day. Others in the picture are Pete Gehr, George Hunter, Homer Twigg, Claude Kimmey, Ray Fogle, Dr. Fitzhugh, Herb Cover, Russ Mowen, Prof. Unger, George Mather, Randolph Wehler, LaMotte Smith, Lee Leister, Ober Herr, Charlie Eckenrode, Tom Anders, Pete Albaugh, Frank Leidy, Molly Twigg, Tank Reese, Frank Thomas, Joe Mathias, John Reifsnider, Parson Dillard and Joe Hunter. The only casualty occurred at lunch time, when Joe Hunter's new prisoner's overalls became spotted.

Photo caption: Members of the Westminster Rotary Club pause during the construction of their mess hall located at Bridgeport on May 6, 1925. J. Leland Jordan Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of the Commissioners of Carroll County, 1955.