

The U.S. Clubwoman's No Always Hokinson Stereotype

The late, great cartoonist, Helen Hokinson, created a picture of the typical American clubwoman which has become the prototype of the species in contemporary minds. Mrs. William Forbes, former president of the Allendale Woman's Club, made a report on the history of that club at its recent 40th birthday party which sheds new light on their activities.

Mrs. Forbes, who lives at 126 Hillside Ave., has been a member of the club for many years. She brings out in her report the community activities the club took part in since its inception, and the ideals of neighborliness with which it was started. Her report follows.

"When I first joined the Woman's Club of Allendale almost 40 years ago, one of the charter members, Mrs. Stephen Van Houten, who knew everything about the Club's beginnings and progress, was the final authority on what happened and when. If no one could find an answer, someone invariably said, 'Ask Mrs. Van.'" She always knew the answer.

"Through the ensuing years, I worked beside her and learned too. Amazingly, the years have slipped away and so have many of the founders of the club. And today when questions about any incident in the past need answering, someone always says, 'Ask Florence Forbes.'"

"So here I am to tell some of the things I can remember about our history. What I couldn't remember I learned from reading 44 years of minutes.

"It all began Dec. 13, 1918, and I quote from the Constitution of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Board of Trade:

"The name of this organization is the Community Club, The Woman's Auxiliary to the Allendale Board of Trade. The object of the organization is to keep in existence as a body the Borough's progressive women for the purpose of cooperating with the Board of Trade in advancing the business interests, furthering social and civic welfare of the Borough of Allendale.

"Thirty women were invited to attend, and 20 were listed as our charter members.

"In 1918 our country had just celebrated the first Armistice Day to mark the end of World War I and the first minutes recorded the mention of erecting a memorial to boys who had served in the war. From this discussion came the establishment of the small memorial park on Park Avenue. It was determined to make Allendale a better place to live and to that end we must work to build a library and a new school.

"The charter members from the very beginning worked with amazing zeal and before long they were planning a nursing service, a center for the distribution of used clothing to the poor, the supervision and inspection of keeping streets and properties clean, especially the trolley station. Remember, back in 1918, we had no busses, just the old trolley to help the Erie to transport townsmen to and from Allendale.

"The early minutes disclose all these needs, as well as Woman's Suffrage and formation of a Garden Club to beautify approaches to the town, especially at the Erie Station.

"Street signs were needed and a movement by the Board of Trade to place them followed.

"Bergen County was beginning to grow, and everywhere road advertising signs were marring the country areas. The Community Club wrote letters to residents of Franklin Turnpike begging them not to permit advertising signs or road marts.

"Many other projects were undertaken. Sheets and pillow cases were given the Soldier's Home on Chestnut Ridge. National and local charity drives such as Salvation Army, Red Cross and similar services were triggered by the Community Club.

"We worked closely with the school. The need for hot lunches became evident and some of our women started lunch serving, not only planning but actually doing the cooking and the serving. Our Mrs. Frank Berdan, Home Demonstration at the time, and Mrs. Kenneth Burger sponsored the 4-H Club and taught cooking and serving to the girls before the school maintained a Home Economics Department.

"We maintained giving of prizes for high scholarship and paid for magazines and many, many books for the school.

"We bought the first furniture and equipment for the kindergarten.

"And don't forget the planting of more than 50 trees along the sides of Recreation Park and on the school grounds.

"We wrote the mayor asking for better street lighting.

"We started a Baby Clinic, where every week we carried our infants to be weighed and examined by a registered nurse.

"We pledged \$500 toward the new library and, oh how many card parties and bazaars were sponsored to fulfill that pledge.

"We installed a new stove and water heater in the Fire House when we used that building for our meetings.

"We installed the kitchen in our present meeting place (Allendale War Memorial Building). *Mrs. Hawes*

Mrs. Hawes, a member of the Ridgewood Club, visited us in 1922 and told us about the Federation of Women's Clubs, suggesting we join. So, on May 26, 1922, we joined the New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs and changed our name to the Woman's Club of Allendale.

"We wrote a cookbook and contributed to countless charities, both those local to Allendale and those of the Federation. Our members visited Old Peoples' Homes and Bergen Pines and, at one time before the town acquired an ambulance, we established a motor corps to carry sick people to hospitals.

"In 1933, The Junior Woman's Club was founded and is still under our sponsorship. An evening department was formed which later withdrew and became the Evening Woman's Club.

"Oh, there are countless other activities we have engaged in which I could never enumerate. You all know

about them, for all are full of good works

"Aren't you proud of this splendid organization that participates in its good d