



 **ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBURG, PA.**

CENTENNIAL MOMENTS

1916 – 2016

Number 14 **March 25, 2014**

The War Years, Part II: 1943-1945

Austerity Colors Club Life

After the initial shock of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the nation began to immediately feel the impact of war on every aspect of American society as strategic resources such as rubber, gasoline, steel, coal, lumber, and food were directed toward the war effort. Every individual, household, business, and organization began to feel the pinch of rationed and scarce goods. *Rotary Flashes* from December 1942 through the fall of 1945, offers stark testimony to the austerity of the times as the Greensburg Rotary Club's once robust social and community service agenda was severely curtailed during the war: Club outings to Poke Run Country Club; trips to the Boy Scout camp at Camp Wesco; the annual excursion to Idlewild Park with the children from the Children's Aid Society; a sharp drop off in attendance at Rotary's district and national conventions; and apparent changes in the quality and quantity of food served at club luncheons were among the casualties. Also, in 1943, the club's president, (Rev.) Harold Post and Vice President, Oliver Shupe Collins were called to service along with other club members.



The wartime shortage of hotel rooms and the difficulty of travel during the war impacted district, national, and international meetings of Rotary. Rotary International was forced to limit attendance at the R. I. conventions of 1943 and 1944 to only R. I. officers, committee chairs, and district governors. World-wide, some 500 Rotary clubs either folded or suspended operations in Europe and Asia during the war. In 1933, the Nazi Party in Germany pressured German Rotary clubs to deny membership to Jews and non-Aryans. Clubs that would not comply were forced to close, and those clubs that complied with the German government's demand, had their charters revoked by Rotary International.

Centennial Celebrations

As of Saturday, March 1, 2014, the first 105 Rotary clubs observed their one-hundredth birthday. There aren't many 100 year old organizations that can measure up to that record of success and longevity. The Greensburg Club, founded in 1916, will inaugurate its centennial observance in 2015.

Source: Rotary Global History Fellowship

Some have asked. . . .

A few months ago, one of our club members asked why, if we were the 250th Rotary club chartered, as our charter so indicates, why are we designated as "Club 5228" on the cover of club's *History and Roster* publication. In response to the same question asked by other Rotarians from other clubs, the Rotary Global History Fellowship offers the following explanation: "You are correct that your club charter number was 250, which at the time meant that Greensburg, PA. was the 250th Rotary Club over all. Since no clubs were terminated before 1926, any of the more than 2000 that were admitted before then had an original club number that reflected their 'rank' among all clubs. Beginning in the 1930's and through World War II, hundreds of clubs were lost. In 1951, the Board decided to no longer use this numbering system as the amount of clubs terminated and rejoining had caused the numbers to lack meaning during post-war times.

Source: "Club Charter Numbers Discontinued," 1951 Proceedings, Forty-second Annual Rotary Convention, 127-128.

“It is with regret that I tender my resignation. . . .”

The Greensburg Rotary Club’s archives contain a collection of resignation letters written by club members who, for a number of reasons, including business and professional obligations, could not fulfill Rotary’s then strict attendance requirements. The letter writers, expressing heartfelt regrets, in many ways, represent an earlier era of letter writing as meaningful communication. Following are excerpts from some of those letters.

“For at least a year I have realized that it seems impossible for me to perform my Rotary duties. . . in the way I wish and in the way that Rotary demands., I have always contended that when such a time comes. . . I would drop out and not be an obstruction to the active members. . . It has not been easy to give up [the] comradship, but in justice to the Club, I desire to resign. . . I regard my Rotary experience as a Valuable Training School for. . .better service to my fellow man. . .It will always be my desire to always live the Rotary ideals.”

[Dr.] Hugh B. Barclay, October 20, 1925

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*“Please accept my resignation. . .My intermittent absences from Greensburg make it impossible for me to attend Rotary luncheons regularly. It is not fair for me to drag down the [club’s] attendance record as I have in the past. I have enjoyed Rotary and its members more than I can tell you.”*

U. S. Congressman, Robert G. Allen, December 28, 1938

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“I trust you and the fellows do not think I am resigning because Rotary does not mean to me as much as ever. After... fifteen years in Rotary, I have made many friends that I value and I will always carry the memories of the good fellowship I have enjoyed.”

S. W. Rose, September 23, 1941

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*“I submit herewith, my resignation from the Greensburg Rotary Club. . .Please assure the members this action. . .is not the result of any inattention or discourtesy from any of them, but rather my unwillingness to continue in the club as I was not supporting it as every good Rotarian should. My membership card and pin are enclosed and I am mailing you. . .the Rotary Code of Ethics.”*

C. Hampton Willis, October 29, 1943

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“. . .I have been assigned to duty at our local Induction Center on Tuesday of each week [and] I find it impossible to meet with the club for lunch on that day. I feel that this obligation supersedes any other interest I may have and therefore, it is with regret. . .that I discontinue my membership in the Club, at least for the duration [of the war].

John S. Anderson, M.D., May 13, 1943