



The Golf Chronicles

The story of golf at Reading Country Club and in Berks County

Number 16 • August 28, 2015



The current first hole was number 18 prior to 1931 when the new clubhouse opened.

Setting a New Course

The opening of the new clubhouse required a course re-routing as reported in the [Reading Eagle](#) on April 26, 1931.

The current first hole had been played as the 18th, which makes sense because the temporary clubhouse was at the entrance on Rte. 422. Playing the current first hole as 18, the golfers would enjoy a short walk down to the clubhouse after the final putts were holed. The routing would have been reset in 1931 to the layout as it is played today and as Alex Findlay designed it (see *The Golf Chronicles* number 3).

What's curious about the *Reading Eagle* article is the statement that the 10th hole became the 9th and the 11th became the 10th. If the 2nd was played as the 1st—an undocumented but logical inference as the tee would have been adjacent to the temporary clubhouse—the current 9th hole would have been the 8th not the 10th and the current 10th would have been the 9th.

Let's leave the confusion behind and be thankful that it all worked out.

An Imposing New Home

With major [clubhouse renovations](#) about to begin, now is the time to look back at the grand structure that greets those who turn right off Rte. 422 and proceed up the tree-lined, winding driveway to enjoy the amenities of Reading Country Club.

When RCC opened in 1923, members dined and changed their shoes in the stone building known as the Bishop's house that still stands at the club entrance. This was always to be a temporary clubhouse. An article in the *Reading Eagle* on October 22, 1922, described the [renovations](#) to the historic stone building and the [plans for the new structure](#).

The new clubhouse opened in May 1931. Newspaper coverage included a preview article, photos of the new building, a story about the opening festivities with interior photos and an ad recognizing the [contractors and suppliers](#).

The founders' ambitions. RCC's founders had grand plans to make the club a premiere facility and to that end, they consulted with people who had expertise in building and managing country clubs. They hired Alexander H. Findlay, one of the most celebrated golf architects of his day, to design the course. The board of governors was also most appreciative of the counsel they received from the members of Berkshire Country Club "...for their courteous and helpful assistance in many ways. The new club has much to learn from its local senior and welcomes all assistance by suggestion or criticism."

By October 1922, nine holes had been built, with the greens and tees shaped and seeded. Work was progressing on the remaining nine holes.

A temporary five-hole golf course had been open for members in 1922. The track was described as "...not a good course but sufficient to afford golfing novices an opportunity to 'get their eye on the ball.'"

Here are some of the board of governors' plans and dreams from the October 22 article.

- **Club management** was thinking along the lines of daycare for the members' children: "Along the upper stretches of the creek there is a splendid glen in which the club may construct a playground for the kiddies. Parents who desire to play golf will be able to take the children along to the club. The children can be taken care of at the playground."
- **Tennis, anyone?** "To the west of the site of the proposed club house an area has been set aside for the construction of a number of tennis courts." The courts were located in the area between the current first and the former 10th fairways in what is now the driving range.
- **Go for a swim?** "In the meadow near the creek the club plans, in the near future, to construct a regulation size swimming pool of concrete. The pool will be supplied with fresh water directly from the creek and will be constructed that the pool can be protected from flood water and all pollution." The earliest reference to a pool at RCC was found in a *Reading Eagle* article from February 22, 1970, announcing that a new pool would be built in the caddy area of the club grounds. The pool opened in July 1971.



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OLD FORT ON GROUNDS.

Muhlenberg Bros., architects, also had charge of the remodeling of the old stone farm house and the old fort, dating back to Indian days, which are to be used as a temporary home for the club until the new house is built.

This old house is, well worth a visit, being a charr [sic] example of the old Pennsylvania colonial style. The changes were all carried out to harmonize with the old work, and the club members and visitors express themselves as being more than pleased with the results attained.

HAS 130 MEMBERS.

Thus far the club has 130 members, most of whom are share holders.

The club has acquired two farms and four adjacent tracts of land, comprising in all 237 acres, in Exeter township. The land is five miles distant from Fifth and Penn streets, Reading, and lies along the state highway leading to Philadelphia. The lands of the club extend to the road from Wamsher's Mill to Jacksonwald on the one side, across the Esterly road leading from the pike to the Antietam farm. From the Philadelphia pike the land extends northeastwardly three-fourths of a mile. For more than half a mile the Antietam Creek flows through the new golf course, furnishing eight water hazards. This creek has been dammed near the old mansion and by means of a turbine now supplies water to the house and barn.

The club's lands include many different varieties, low-lying smooth, level meadows, rolling fields, rocky hillocks, rapidly rising slopes and wooded hilltops. All of these features, directly and indirectly, will contribute to the creation of a wonderful golf course.

HOUSE OVER 100 YEARS OLD.

Upon the one farm is an excellent colonial mansion, over 100 years old. In the rear of the mansion is a stone fort, with openings in the walls for rifles, which dates from the French and Indian War of 1753-1755. The interior of the mansion has been papered and painted. The interior woodwork, which is in an excellent state of preservation, has been retained in all details. In front of the house an uncovered porch and, on the western side a large covered porch have been constructed under the supervision of Muhlenberg Bros., architects, of Reading.

The old mansion has been beautifully and comfortably furnished and is now open to members. As yet the only method of heating the building is by the use of open fireplaces, of which there is one in every room. A heater is being installed in the cellar.

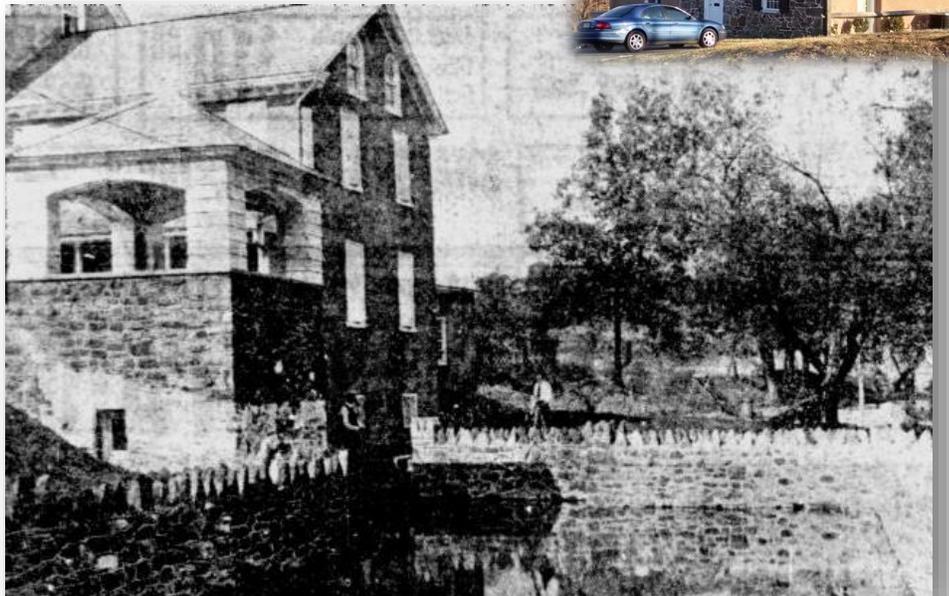
The eastern portion of the house is occupied by the caretakers.

BIG SPRING UNDER HOUSE.

Flowing from beneath the house is one of the largest and finest springs in the county. In August of this year the flow of water was 218 gallons a minute; in the last of September, after weeks of severe drouth, the flow was 185 gallons a minute.



A photo from the Reading Eagle shows the additions to the building that served as a clubhouse until 1931. The small photo shows the house as it appears to day.



The pond next to the clubhouse was fed by a spring that ran under the building.





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An excerpt from the Reading Eagle, October 22, 1922, describes the proposed clubhouse.

The board of governors of the Reading Country Club and Muhlenberg Bros., the architects selected for the work, after inspecting a number of modern county clubs and after a thorough study of the subject in all its various aspects, have determined upon a preliminary plan for the new club house.

Their aim has been to erect an ideal club, complete in every particular, and designed to care for future growth as well as for the present, as everyone believes it will play a large part in the life of the city and county, and all members are enthusiastic as to its future.

The location selected, after consultation with A. H. Findlay, who laid out the golf course, is ideal. It has as a background a fringe of woods and rocks, as charming as any in the county, and a magnificent view south, east and west over the beautiful Schuylkill Valley.

Being only a few miles from the city, on a state highway, it is very accessible. From the highway a road is being constructed to the house, which will be about one-third of a mile back from the pike.

DUTCH COLONIAL STYLE.

The style selected is Dutch colonial with a charming, homelike atmosphere so desirable for country clubs.

The board of governors and the architects believe that the clubhouse as designed will surpass anything of its kind in this part of the country and are going ahead with the project, only asking the support of the community.

The house, consisting of a main building and two wings, will be constructed of local stone, clapboards and shingle roof. It will be two stories and basement.

269 FEET LONG:

The main building will be 54 by 75 feet, with 37-foot-wide wings, making a total length of 269 feet.

The main entrance will be on the north, through a generous vestibule, and parking space for motors will be provided nearby.

From the vestibule one enters the spacious lobby, with main dining room adjoining, so planned that they may be used as one room, either for dances, assemblies or large dinners.

At each end of this handsome room will be monumental fireplaces. The main stairway and office space are also provided here and the ceiling will be paneled.

Across the south side is a large living porch, 14 by 75, and a wide brick-paved open terrace or porch

with stone wall, from which there will be a view unsurpassed in the county.

GRILL ROOM.

The east wing, opening onto this terrace and to the drive and also from the lobby, is devoted to men's conveniences. There will be a grill room and service, men's locker room, large enough to house 300 lockers, and shower, and toilets and coat room conveniently placed.

The first tee and professional and caddy house are conveniently located.

The west wing has a private dining room, a woman's golf entrance, a large dining porch 14 by 64, service and kitchen arranged to care for the many and large requirements of the club.

In the basement of this wing are the male help's quarters, bedrooms, showers, toilets, dining room, etc., and laundry and store rooms.

CAN BE ENLARGED.

On the second floor of the main building will be the women's locker room, lounge and lavatory, the locker room being so arranged that by adding several rooms now planned as bedrooms its requirements may be increased whenever needed.

Besides the women's quarters there will be seven double bedrooms with bath and toilet.

On the second floor of the west wing the stewards and female help and bath are provided for.

The many uses of a modern country club have all been given ample consideration. Besides a sporty and beautiful 18-hole golf course, there will be tennis courts and a swimming pool, and for the motorists there will be a delightful place to dine, lounge and meet one's friends and to entertain out-of-town visitors.

In short, the Reading Country Club, with its ideal location and its active board of governors, is going to be an accomplished fact and something the whole community may well be proud of. It deserves and will have the enthusiastic support of motorists, golfers and all lovers of this beautiful countryside, members say.



The site of the current clubhouse as seen in 1922.





From the Reading Eagle, April 26, 1931

Imposing New Home of Reading Country Club To Be Ready for Inspection Sunday, May 3

Workmen are engaged putting the finishing touches to the new Reading Country Club building erected on the golf course, located along the Philadelphia pike. The members are anxiously awaiting the opening, as at present they are greatly inconvenienced, due to the old locker house burning down last Fall.

It has been announced that the new home will be ready for dedication the week beginning Sunday, May 3. A series of elaborate events is planned for the dedicatory period.

The members for years have wanted a new club house and locker room, and in the Spring of 1930 they authorized the directors to erect the building and locate same on a site in the center of the course, selected at the time the course was first laid out.

This site is a prominent point among the rocks and trees, closely adjoining the present No. 10, No. 15 and No. 17 greens, all of which are in view of the club house. The new location necessitates the rearranging of the tees and greens, as No. 10 green will be No. 9 green and No. 17 green will be No. 18 green, and on leaving the club the members will tee off at the present No. 18 tee, which will be No. 1 tee. The present No. 11 tee will be No. 10 tee. Both the latter tees are within easy access from the professional stop.

New Road Constructed.

A new road was constructed from the pike, winding through the center of the grounds, so that now the club house is 1,600 feet from the public road, and has a commanding outlook to all parts of the course.

The building is of the Norman type, irregular in shape, with many gables of stone, half timber and siding, which give all sides an artistic treatment of

architectural interest. The front facing the main road, being the entrance front has a large open porch 70x21 feet, with an enclosed porch directly over of the same size. Spacious terraces and steps lead from the circular road to the porch. From this porch one enters the main stairs to the right, the men's grill to the center and the women's lounge to the left.

The entire first floor is devoted to lockers and conveniences for the golfers. The men's locker room accommodates 294 lockers and has two elaborate tile and marble groups of showers with toilet facilities, supply room and all the latest conveniences to make a first class modern layout for the golfers, a feature being the separate porch for the golfers overlooking No. 1 tee and adjacent to the professional's shop. A men's grill on this floor is provided in a unique design, with flagstone floor and jondosa fine beamed ceiling, with grotesques supporting the beams. A buffet is immediately adjoining.

Unique Circular Lounge.

The women's portion of this floor consists of a unique circular lounge which is adjacent to the locker-room which accommodates 84 lockers. The women's shower is probably the most complete in this section of the country. It is all constructed of marble with dressing compartments, double compartment showers, bath tub and a nine-foot dressing table with glass top and mirror with a theatrical light the entire length of the mirror.

The lockers are heated, cooled or ventilated by a mechanical unit which will be of great comfort to the members. Guest lockers are provided in each locker room. Telephone booths, drinking fountains and all modern conveniences are provided. The lockers are of the latest type in robin-egg blue with mirrors, hose racks, private compartment, golf ball racks and coat hangers. Mirrors and shelves are attached also to each group of lockers. Spacious benches and chairs are included.

The rest of this floor is devoted to refrigerator rooms, kitchen supplies, help lockers for men and women, and numerous stairways to upper floor or club rooms. The heating and refrigerating plant is located in the sub-basement.

Winding Iron Stair.

On entering the building, to the right is the main entrance leading to

the circular stair hall, 40 feet high, with winding iron stair leading to the ball room floor. The office is located at the head of the stairs and has a commanding view of the entrance, living room, ball room and enclosed porch.

The living room is very large, with trussed ceiling to the rafters, a nicely ornamented oak balcony to the one end, a cut stone fireplace to the side, and a large studio window overlooking the golf course. Plank oak floors are provided.

To the rear of the living room is the men's lounge, which will attract the men in their leisure moments. A wicket and knocker arrangement on the doors suggests privacy for the men. This room, with its flagstone and tile floor, hand hewn beam ceiling and pilasters and old English walls, gives a very restful feeling on entering. A large leaded glass window overlooks No. 1 tee. A unique screen protects the stone fireplace. The club house is reproduced on the screen in hammered iron.

Handsome Ball Room.

The ball room is a feature of the building. The committee felt the growth of the club was due to the large dance pavilion at the old club house, and that this feature should be preserved. The new hall now which is very attractive, is oval in shape, 40 feet by 70 feet, with five balconies, orchestra recess, private dining rooms and all other rooms adjoining same. The circular ornamented ceiling with the modern drop lights and wall lights, will delight the members.

From the entrance hall one goes through the enclosed porch to the main private dining room and then to the main dining room, which is a replica of the living room in size and arrangement of balcony, with circular trusses and lace draped lighting fixtures forming a composition that will house many dainty parties.

The private dining room, which is also oval in plan, with a high dome ceiling with a frieze of excellent taste worked out in mulberry and black tile and fluted frieze topped with moldings of blue, mulberry, black and gold, will be most inviting for parties from 12 to 30.

Circular Tea Garden.

A feature of the club is the circular tea garden to the north of the ball-room, made up of circular bands of brick and flagstone, with a privet hedge forming a railing with openings leading to the grass lawn. A covered porch leads to the tea garden and directly over is a roof garden overlooking the tea garden.

A large, newly equipped kitchen is centrally located between the dining room, ballroom and tea garden, with all modern facilities for catering to parties of any size.

A mezzanine floor surrounds the ball room and contains iron balconies, card rooms, Board room, specious balconies overlooking the living room and dining room and five rooms for stewards' quarters.

This thought was placed into the building by the building committee and surely will be appreciated by the members. The building committee consists of Stanley Giles, chairman of the committee; Randolph Meck, Edward Morris, James Eyster and L. O. Rothermel and A. L. Frame, president of the club.

The committee put untiring efforts in the work, selecting all the equipment that is necessary to make a project of this kind complete. The

grounds are being landscaped and planted by Mr. Giles and already show the results of his efforts.

List of Contractors.

Charles H. Schlegel is the contractor for the general construction work; Corbit Bros., for the plumbing and heating; Keystone Engineering Company did the wiring; David A. Evans, sewerage disposal; Reading Automatic Sprinkler Company, the sprinkler system; W. F. Dougherty & Sons, kitchen equipment; Biddle Gaumer Company, lighting fixtures; Durabilt Steel Locker Company, steel lockers; Kurtz Wells, excavating; Deysher Bros., stone masonry; Consolidated Cut Stone Company, cut stone; Progressive Iron Works, structural iron; Noe Company, ornamental iron; Northeastern Planing Mill, millwork; Kegerise Bros., plastering; Cronan & O'Connell, copper work; Charles E. Snyder, slate roofing; Reading Decorating Company, painting; Delar Marble Company, tile and marble work; Reading Hardware Company, hardware.

The furniture for the new building was installed by Vansciver Company, and the draperies, rugs and furnishings by Leinbach & Leinbach. Harry Maurer, architect, who is a member of the club, designed and supervised the construction of the building.

AMERICAN CARDINAL PAYS VISIT TO POPE

Vatican City, April 25 (AP).—Cardinal Mundelein, of Chicago, today made his quinquennial report to Pope Pius XI in a private audience at the Vatican apartment of the pontiff. He was at the Vatican in audience with the pontiff for an hour and 25 minutes.

Cardinal Mundelein expressed the deepest appreciation for the pope's visit to the Propaganda Fide College dedication yesterday.

His Holiness in turn told of his satisfaction in the church's possession of such a modern institution of training for missionaries, erected principally by funds obtained from the Chicago archdiocese.

The cardinal gave the pope an account of Roman Catholic affairs under his jurisdiction and discussed problems of his administration.

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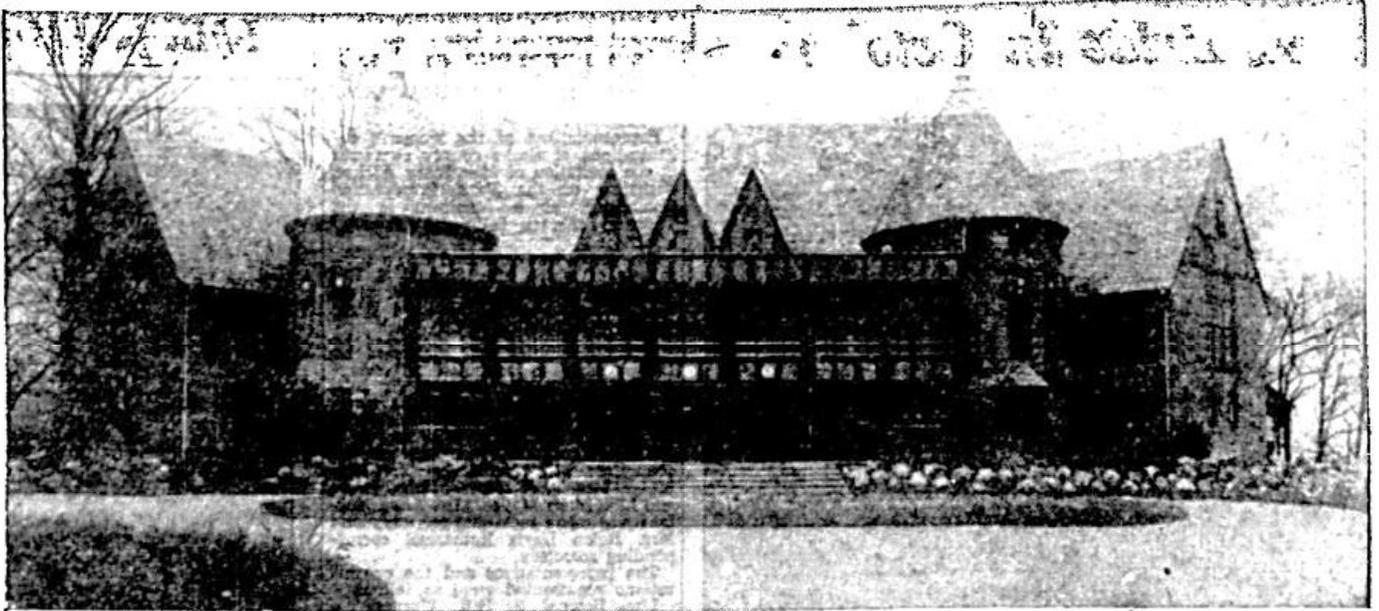
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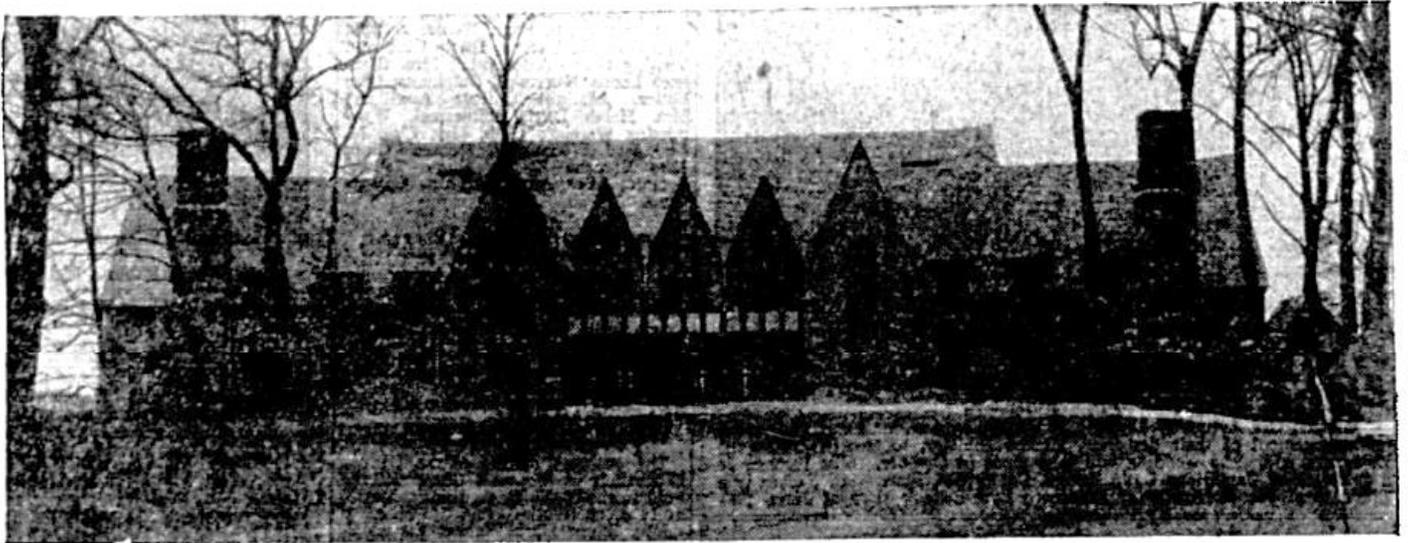
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From the Reading Eagle, April 26, 1931

Imposing New Home of Reading Country Club To Be Ready for Inspection Sunday, May 3



Front View of Reading Country Club's New Club House.



Rear View of New Club House.





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THE READING EAGLE, SUNDAY MAY 3, 1931.

Handsome New Home of Reading Country Club Open For Inspection Today by Members and Friends



Interior views in new home of Reading Country Club: Upper left, part of main dining hall; upper right, sun parlor; lower left, portion of balcony; lower right, small dining

The beautiful new home of the Reading Country Club will be open for inspection for members and friends this afternoon, but the dedication ceremonies will not take place until Monday night.

A dinner-dance for members only Monday night will inaugurate a week of social activities, which will include dances, teas, smokers, bridge parties and a Monte Carlo affair.

During the inspection this afternoon, the Board of Governors and the house committee will act as escorts to members and guests. This will be the first opportunity for members to view the new home with the interior completed and furnished.

Dedication Ceremonies.
At the dedication dinner, the keys to the palatial club house will be presented by J. S. Giles, chairman of the building committee, to A. L. Frame, president of the Reading Country Club, and the other officers. The dedication

ceremonies will be staged before the dinner and dance. The new home will be a revelation to the hundreds of club members. The officers and Board of Governors feel the members will be proud of their new place.

The first social affair after the dedication will be the dinner-dance Tuesday evening, sponsored by the riding academy. The committee in charge of this event is composed of John D. Eisen-

French croupiers will assist the guests in having a good time; French girls in costume will serve cigars and cigarettes, a casino will be open from 9 until 1 o'clock, and a dance orchestra will play continuously in the ballroom.

In addition, a French shop will offer an opportunity for the purchase of novelties to be bought with imitation francs. In charge of this affair are John C. Dethoff and Dr. John T. Bair.

Friday night will be devoted to the annual bridge tournament dinner and dance, when the winner of the silver cup will be announced and prizes awarded to the season's best players and to the high scorers of the evening. Keller B. Albert is chairman for this affair.

A dinner-dance for members and guests Saturday night will conclude the succession of events, with George J. Frimontout and Samuel Sherman in charge.

Club Officers.
In addition to President A. Lincoln Frame, the club's officers are: First vice president, John S. Giles; second vice president, Randolph S. Meck; treasurer, Nathan S. Althouse; secretary, P. B. Weidner.

Board of governors, K. B. Albert, S. D. Bausher, W. C. Bittins, J. D. Eisenbrown, Joseph W. Essick, J. C. Eyler, J. J. Knoll, Clifford R. Lyons, E. J. Morris, F. P. Nistle, E. J. Poole, F. W. Robinson, L. O. Rothermel and Allyn C. Taylor.

enbrown, chairman; William Mayer, vice chairman; Martin L. Hoffer, treasurer; Robert E. Delp, chairman of the horse show committee; A. C. Andrews, Joseph W. Essick, J. J. Knoll, J. Lewis Linsloe, Fred H. Ludwig, Howard J. Shriver, Amos Z. Sherik and George C. Smith.

With the wives of the house committee members as hostesses, a tea will be held Wednesday afternoon. Receiving the guests will be Mrs. James C. Eyler, Mrs. Keller B. Albert, Mrs. John T. Bair, Mrs. William C. Bittins, Mrs. John C. Dethoff, Mrs. George J. Frimontout, Mrs. Clifford R. Lyons and Mrs. Samuel M. Sherman.

Stag Program Planned.
Wednesday night will be "men's night." A smoker for members and their male friends will be held, with J. C. Eyler and Clifford R. Lyons in charge.

What will probably be the gayest of the week's events is the Monte Carlo night, scheduled for Thursday night.

Members of the building committee were: J. Stanley Giles, Randolph Meck, Edward J. Morris, James E. Eyler, L. O. Rothermel and A. Lincoln Frame.

May 4, 1931

HUNDREDS VIEW NEW HOME OF READING COUNTRY CLUB

Picturesque Structure Arouses Favorable Comment of Members and Friends. Week of Social Events Marks Opening

Hundreds of members and friends expressed delight over the new club house of the Reading Country Club, along the Philadelphia pike, formally opened for inspection Sunday afternoon. Standing on the knoll of a slight slope to the west of the old building, the new structure, done in Norman-style architecture, has a commanding view of the golf course and surrounding country.

Members of the Board of Governors and the house committee acted as escorts to visitors, showing them the spacious main dining hall, the sun parlors, grills and locker-room facilities. The old English design incorporated into the interior appointments provoked favorable comment from all.

Dedictory Dinner.
Tonight the dedictory dinner will be the first formal step in presenting the building to members of the club. J. Stanley Giles, chairman of the building committee, will present the keys of the palatial club house to A. Lincoln Frame, president of the Reading Country Club, and other officers. These ceremonies will precede a dinner-dance.

A second dinner-dance on Tuesday evening, sponsored by the riding academy, will be the first social event in the new building. John D. Eisenbrown heads the committee in charge. With wives of the house committee members as hostesses, a tea will be held on Wednesday afternoon. "Men's night" will take over the Wednesday evening exercises.

"Monte Carlo Night."

Thursday evening gives promise of the gayest night of the dedictory week. "Monte Carlo Night" is scheduled for that evening with French atmosphere predominating. The annual bridge tournament and dinner-dance is scheduled for Friday evening. The succession of events will conclude with a dinner-dance on Saturday evening.

Outstanding in the tour of inspection on Sunday were the sun parlor and main dining hall. The former, with its wicker furniture, presented a striking picture, while the latter, with its exposed arched rafters, caused much comment.

Members of the building committee were: J. Stanley Giles, Randolph Meck, Edward J. Morris, James E. Eyler, L. O. Rothermel and A. Lincoln Frame.



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Sunday, May 3, 1931

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