



The Rotary Club of Waterville, Ohio

Serving the Anthony Wayne Area

P.O. Box 97
Waterville, OH 43566

WATERVILLE ROTARY CLUB - THE EARLY YEARS

Recollections of charter member, Harry Dudrow and 52 year member, Willard Farnsworth.

In or around 1925, Frank Mulholland, Past President of Rotary International, approached his brother-in-law, Howard Squire, along with Dr. Burton Buck, Arthur Longbrake, and others, about organizing a Rotary Club in Waterville. It was generally felt that the village was too small to support a Rotary Club, and no action was taken at that time.

In 1927, Exchange Clubs were being organized in several neighboring communities, notably, Perrysburg, Maumee, Whitehouse and others.

Remembering Frank Mulholland's earlier interest and discussions regarding Rotary, the aforementioned decided to make an effort to establish Rotary in Waterville with Frank Mulholland's support before an Exchange Club could be organized.

Prior to the formation of the club, a series of meetings were held over a period of months in the board room of the Waterville Bank. Officers from the Toledo Rotary Club, our sponsoring club, met with local business and professional leaders to acquaint them with the principles and responsibilities of Rotary and to help with the myriad of detail that would ensue with the formation of a new club.

While Frank Mulholland, Past President of Rotary International (1914) was the motivating force in the formation of the Club, it was Charlie Hartman, Frank Mulholland's law partner, who did the bulk of the preliminary work. Mr. Hartman was assisted by Bill Roemer and Grove Patterson.

Since the meetings were held in the bank, we can safely assume that Gus Dedrich, then Cashier of the bank, was one of the early organizers. Other Charter Members who participated were Arthur Longbrake, Howard Squire, Dr. Burton Buck, Harry Dudrow, and Milt Gray.

Remember - this was in 1928. Since Rotary's formation in 1908, clubs had been organized in the larger cities of the United States, Canada, and a number of foreign countries, but no one had considered establishing a Rotary Club in a small village of less than 10,000 people. This thought was undoubtedly in the back of everyone's mind during these preliminary discussions.

A word about Frank Mulholland. Frank was a successful Attorney, accomplished and sought after speaker, and civic leader in Toledo in the early 1900's. He was a Charter Member of the Toledo Rotary Club which was formed in 1912. In 1914, he was made President of the Toledo Rotary Club, and the following year, President of Rotary International. He is the only member of the Toledo Club to be given this honor. Frank's father, the Reverend R. N. Mulholland, was a retired Methodist Minister residing in Waterville. Also, his sister Mae, (Mrs. Howard Squire), lived in Waterville. (The writer purchased the Squire home in 1945, and at that time Mrs. Squire remarked that they lived in this house 30 years to the day.) A brother, Ralph Mulholland, also resided in Waterville.

All of the interested parties must have believed in Frank Mulholland's influence, and that he could persuade Rotary International to establish a precedent and grant a charter to a club

in a small village. It turned out that their confidence was not misplaced. The application was approved, and the first Rotary Club in a small village was granted a charter.

It was generally understood that the Charter was given with some misgiving by Rotary International, and that the Club was on a somewhat provisional or "guinea pig" status.

It is also safe to assume that the Charter was given primarily upon the recommendation of Frank Mulholland, and that he could justly be considered the progenitor of small Rotary Clubs throughout the world.

The minutes of the organization of the Waterville Rotary Club, March 5, 1928, and the Charter night meeting of May 17, 1928, follow: Minutes of the Meeting for the Organization of the Rotary Club of Waterville, Ohio. Waterville, Ohio, March 5, 1928.

A meeting, for the purpose of organizing the Rotary Club of Waterville, Ohio, was held in the American Legion Hall at Waterville, on this 5th day of March, 1928, at 6:30 o'clock P.M.

Rotarian Frank L. Mulholland, (special representative of the Governor of the 21st District,) being absent from the United States, deputed Rotarian Charles Hartmann, of Toledo, to represent him and to attend the meeting. Accompanying Rotarian Hartmann were Rotarians A.M. (Bert) Tillinghast and Will Roemer, of the Rotary Club of Toledo.

There were also present the following: Fred G. Starkweather, Harry Dudrow, Fred J. Dose, Thomas K. Corn, Arthur C. Longbrake, Clarence Milton Gray, Charles J. Hensley, Harold G. Walbolt, Senor T. Walbolt, Gustave A. Dedrich, Howard W. Squire, Dr. Burton Butler Buck, Dr. Waldo C. Suter, Harry F. Witte, A. Logan Mills.

Upon motion of S. T. Walbolt, seconded by Fred C. Starkweather, Dr. Burton Butler Buck was chosen chairman and Howard W. Squire was chosen secretary, of the meeting.

After a brief statement by Rotarian Hartmann and questions by various of the gentlemen present, Arthur C. Longbrake moved that the Rotary Club of Waterville be organized by the adoption of the standard constitution and by-laws for Rotary Clubs and the election of directors and officers. The motion was duly seconded by Gustave A. Dedrich, and, upon a vote being taken, was unanimously adopted.

Upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously voted that the board of directors consist of five members and that the regular weekly meetings of the club be held on Monday evenings at 6:30 o'clock at the American Legion Hall; that the admission fee shall be \$20.00 and the membership dues shall be \$25.00 per annum.

Thereupon on motion duly made and seconded the constitution and by-laws of the Rotary Club of Waterville, Ohio were unanimously adopted, a copy thereof being attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Thereupon the following were nominated as candidates for directors: Dr. Burton Butler Buck, Fred J. Dose, Albert Logan Mills, Arthur C. Longbrake, and Charles J. Hensley. Harold G. Walbolt thereupon moved that the nominations be closed. The motion was seconded by Howard W. Squire and upon a vote being taken thereon was unanimously adopted.

A vote for directors was thereupon taken and the following were duly elected directors of the Rotary Club of Waterville, to serve until the next annual election: Dr. Burton Butler Buck, Fred J. Dose, Albert Logan Mills, Arthur C. Longbrake, and Charles J. Hensley.

