

PRELIMINARY INVENTORY
K0397 (KA1127)
OAKWOOD COUNTRY CLUB RECORDS, 1893-1993
[JCA]

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Introduction

33 volumes (microfilmed)

Begun as the Progressive Club, Oakwood was the primary country club for the Jewish community of Kansas City, Missouri. Included are organizational records such as annual, board of directors, and committee meeting minutes.

Restriction

The Lender retains copyright held in the materials, with the understanding that researchers are free to use and quote from any of the materials.

Donor Information

This loan for microfilming was received from Oakwood Country Club as accession KA1127 on April 20, 2001. The microfilmed material was returned to Oakland CC. Two additional cubic feet of material not microfilmed were retained by SHSMO-KC, and returned to Oakwood Country Club in December 2015.

Historical Sketch

Responding to the need for social activities for the children of German Jewish immigrants in Kansas City, Congregation B'nai Jehudah formed the Progressive Club in 1881 to provide a non-religious social setting. Relocating to a new "Chateausque" home at 1017 Washington Street commissioned by the renowned architects Frederick Gunn and Louis Curtiss, the club achieved front-page headlines when it served as the headquarters for the Ohio delegation to the 1900 Democratic National Convention after the Convention Hall was destroyed in a fire. Despite its luxurious accommodations, the residential trend towards basing country clubs in rural properties so as to provide proper accommodations for the then new game of golf prompted the Progress Club's owners to purchase the W.A. Rule farm southeast of town as the conversion site for its proposed nine hole golf course.

Designed by Tom Bendelow, the innovative course planner of the A.G. Spalding Company and one of the most influential individuals in the history of the game, the golf course opened to instant fanfare in 1912 and for decades served as the only city location where Jews could play golf owing to the discriminatory practices of the established Kansas City country clubs. With the club's first golf professional, Arthur Boggs, arriving in Kansas City from the Oakwood Club in Cleveland (1912), owing to its increasingly singular identification with the game the club subsequently came to be known as "Oakwood, summer home of the Progress Club" which subsequently became shortened to the more accessible Oakwood Club. Hosting one of the first professional golf tournaments in 1915, the club grew rapidly to enlarge its golf course to fifteen holes and correspondingly augmented the game's publicity to the extent that in 1920 the Kansas

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City Golf Association was formally organized and incorporated with the Oakwood Club serving as one of its original eleven members. Continually acquiring adjacent land throughout the 1920s to expand its golf facilities, the Oakwood Club replaced its old headquarters with a new Tudor-style clubhouse in 1930.

Despite the ravages of the Great Depression, the Oakwood Club, by carefully restricting budgets, was not only able to maintain consistent solvency throughout the crisis but even embarked upon further expansion by forming the Oakwood Realty Company which purchased additional land at the northwest corner of the club's property. Ironically, the resurgent economy following America's entrance into World War II inflicted greater privations upon the club's resources, as the rationing of food, gasoline, and equipment (particularly golf balls) combined with the military draft depleted the club to such an extent that its golf course was reduced to nine holes and the position of head professional, which had been instrumental in central management for decades, became vacant for three years (1942-1945). However, during the 1950s, the club, consonant with the fate of most postwar U.S. industries and businesses, experienced a protracted period of growth and prosperity characterized by the addition of a summer day camp for members' children (1950), a drastic revamping of the golf course (1950-1952), and the institution of a lavish New Years Eve Party. Nonetheless, the most significant development during this period was the first appearance of professional women golfers at the Women's Heart of America Invitational Open at Oakwood (1955), a landmark change which became permanent with the creation of a separate women's golf instruction department, the Ladies Day Program. Notwithstanding this progress, however, women golfers were still subjected to restricted times of play and woman board members were not allowed to vote until the 1980s.

The Oakwood Club's ensuing decades were characterized by additional changes with the 1960s emphasizing facility modernization, particularly the construction of a water pump system complete with piping and sprinklers (1960) and the addition of an automatic watering system (1967). Alternately, the 1980s were distinguished by diversification through the revival of the old day camp, the addition of a separate clubhouse for tennis players, and the construction of a larger swimming pool enabling the club to participate and compete in local inter-club events.

With the Oakwood club reaching an unprecedented membership roll of 675 members by 1989, the subsequent years were noted by further upgrades to accommodate this growth, especially the renovation of the golf course to include seventeenth holes and the installation of an Olympic-sized six-lane pool to the swimming facility. At the onset of the twenty-first century, the club replaced the golf course's irrigation system with a three row system and computerized pumping station, added an outside deck to the bar, resurfaced the tennis courts, and added new chairs for card players in the west lounge.

As of the time of the Oakwood Club's 125th anniversary in 2006, its facilities had become sufficiently diverse to include catering services, restaurants, private parties, weddings, concerts, and bar/bat mitzvahs, with its camp curricula equally eclectic to encompass swimming, golf, tennis, art, drama, and music, thereby bringing the original founders' hopes of a well-rounded social setting full circle.

Materials List (Microfilmed)

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OAKWOOD COUNTRY CLUB RECORDS

- Volume 1. Minutes: 1879 – August 1896 – MISSING
- Volume 2. Minutes: September 15, 1896 to February 5, 1911
- Volume 3. Minutes: March 3, 1911 to September 17, 1930 (includes a loose copy of the December 11, 1930 minutes)
- Volume 4. Minutes: October 1930 to September 1931 - MISSING
- Volume 5. Minutes: October 25, 1931 to September 15, 1936
- Volume 6. Minutes: September 22, 1936 to December 12, 1939
- Volume 7. Minutes: January 16, 1940 to November 21, 1943
- Volume 8. Minutes: January 23, 1944 to December 15, 1946
- Volume 9. Minutes: January 12, 1947 to December 11, 1949
- Volume 10. Minutes: March 23, 1948 to August 12, 1951 (Feb. 26, 1950 on are duplicates)
- Volume 11. Minutes: February 26, 1950 to December 15, 1953
- Volume 12. Minutes: January 3, 1954 to December 2, 1956
- Volume 13. Minutes: January 10, 1957 to December 12, 1961
- Volume 14. Minutes: January 11, 1962 to December 13, 1964
- Volume 15. Minutes: January 14, 1965 to December 22, 1968
- Volume 16. Minutes: January 12, 1969 to December 16, 1970
- Volume 17. Minutes: January 10, 1971 to December 9, 1972
- Volume 18. Minutes: January 10, 1973 to December 11, 1974
- Volume 19. Minutes: January 25, 1975 to December 28, 1976
- Volume 20. Minutes: January 12, 1977 to December 28, 1978
- Volume 21. Minutes: January 11, 1979 to December 16, 1980
- Volume 22. Minutes: 1981 to June 1982
- Volume 23. Minutes: July 1982 to December 1983
- Volume 24. Minutes: 1984
- Volume 25. Minutes: 1985-1986
- Volume 26. Minutes: January 18, 1987 to December 8, 1988
- Volume 27. Minutes: March 22, 1989 to December 20, 1990
- Volume 28. Minutes: January 13, 1991 to December 22, 1993
- Volume 29. Annual and Board Meeting records: January 1992 to July 1992
- Volume 30. Annual and Board Meeting records: August 1992 to December 1992
- Volume 31. Annual and Board Meeting records: January 1993 to July 1993

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- Volume 32. Annual and Board Meeting records: August 1993 to December 1993
Volume 33. Committees