

## Tom Marshall's Weekly News, March 5, 2007

**Clubs and Social Customs about 1900:** In the 1890s, people were excited about the coming of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which they called the new century. Possibly as a growth of the Womans Suffrage movement. Women's clubs began to flourish, in cities and small towns alike, and many bore the name New Century Club. Both my grandmothers were enthusiastic members, one in Kennett Square and one in Middletown. As these clubs grew, new clubhouses were built, in Kennett Square a beautiful stone building on the corner of Center and Cypress Streets in the late 1920s (built by Paul Hannum, the husband of one of the members) and in Middletown on North Broad Street, also in the 1920s, almost across the street from my grandmother Shallcross home. For many years, Kennett members served the meals at the Yorklyn Gun Club during the trapshooting tournaments to help pay off the mortgage on their clubhouse. My mother was the driving force behind this effort.

Wilmington had a large New Century Club on Delaware Avenue, which was rented out for various purposes, in addition to their member programs. I had to take dancing lessons there in the mid-30s, not one of my favorite pastimes. I had taken my mother and Aunt Bertha (Mrs. J. Warren) Marshall to a program there (in the 37 Packard still in FAHP's collection) on the evening of March 15, 1943, and upon our return home, the telegram was received calling me to active duty in the Army Air Corps. Hockessin did not have a New Century Club, but it did have a Waverly Club and a Hockessin Community Club, to which prominent women of the community belonged. Many of these women's clubs, whether New Century or otherwise, were affiliated with the National Federation of Women's Clubs, in which my mother's sister, Aunt Mary Ferguson, was active.

Men had their social clubs as well, many of which were secret societies. The Masonic order was started as early as 1800, and there were Free Masons in all parts of the world. Other secret groups were the Knights of Columbus, the Odd Fellows, the Red Men, and one very bad one, the Ku Klux Klan. I can remember a public billboard advertising the Klan on Old Lancaster Pike near Sanford School. The Odd Fellows had lodges in Hockessin and Centreville. There were many other special men's groups, such as the Asparagus Club in Philadelphia, which met at least once a year over a lavish dinner where asparagus was always on the menu.

The wave of service clubs soon followed. In most places Rotary Clubs led the way, followed by Lions, Optimist, Kiwanis, and so on. These clubs grew into international organizations, all doing good and sharing some of the knowledge and wealth of their members to those less fortunate. In society, men smoked cigars, and respectable women did not smoke (at least not publicly). Cigar smoking seemed to be one symbol of success, especially 100 years ago. In the Marshall family, I don't know whether Israel or his brother, Elwood, smoked cigars, but I wouldn't be surprised if they did. Their four sons were all cigar smokers, even though three of the four were active in their local Quaker Meetings, and Quakers did not approve of the practice.

My father once told me how much he spent on cigars during his lifetime. It was not as much as on his Packard cars, but it was a lot. The Shallcross men, my mother's father and her brothers, wanted nothing to do with tobacco. Some men, like storekeepers Grover Gregg and Joe Lake, chewed on a cigar but seldom lit it. While smoking had become popular among men in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, I was surprised to learn that John Adams smoked cigars while working on his farm about 1800. A good many of our presidents have been smokers, but it has been political suicide to be photographed that way, or so they thought. FDR was often pictured with a cigarette attached to a holder held between his teeth. Although men had enjoyed cigarettes since well before World War I (they were often called *fags*), Hollywood films changed it all for women in the 1930s. By the time my cousin Lorraine Marshall was married in 1935, several of her bridesmaids were seen smoking during the reception.