

*The Founding of Saratoga Springs Rotary*  
from Dr. Robert Rockwell's booklet "A Sixty Year History"

Rotary was founded at Chicago in 1905 largely due to the efforts of the revered Paul Harris. It was some three years later that a second club was established in San Francisco. One year later, Rotary spanned the continent with the formation of clubs in New York City and Boston.

In 1910, it became an international organization with a club in Winnipeg, Canada. Within another year clubs were started in Dublin, London and Belfast. By the year 1910, there were sixteen clubs in existence - enough to hold a convention in Chicago where a national organization was formed.

The idea of Rotary caught on, and the formulation of new clubs was some thing of an epidemic. We, in Saratoga Springs, like to think of ourselves as being in the forefront (more so in the present), but that was certainly not the case in the 1920s. Albany Rotary Club was founded in 1913 as Club #68. A year later Club #122 was opened in Troy; Schenectady Club #397 was chartered in 1918.

There was a close affiliation between Troy and Ballston Spa, largely because John Knickerbocker, "Daddy of Rotary" in this area, lived in Ballston Spa but managed the family foundry in Troy, NY. (It is reported that he commuted from Ballston Spa to Troy on the D & H passenger train, and that if he was late the conductor held the train for him, and also that he collected tolls on the bridge between Troy and Green Island.) So it was not surprising that the Ballston Spa Rotary Club was established in 1922. We are grateful to the latter club for they were our sponsors for Club #1752, which was chartered in Saratoga Springs, New York on May 7, 1924.

That Rotary clubs were burgeoning all over the country is suggested by the fact that the Granville, New York, Rotary Club was chartered the day before ours (one of their newly inducted members attended our ceremony) but was numbered 1719. Even so, as of May 19, 1924, there were thirty-five clubs in our district, which covered a large territory including Bermuda, so we were not doing too badly. There were about 100,000 Rotarians world wide at that time.

On Saturday afternoon when we were chartered there was a census of about 13,500 in Saratoga Springs (actual - in 1920, 13,181 and 1926, 13,884). The event was held at the Saratoga Club, a venerable men's club with room, board and fraternizing, whose Club House stood on the site of the Community Theatre building. Even though the next recorded meeting was held May 21, 1924, we know that meetings were held each Wednesday at the Saratoga Club until November 1928, when the meeting place was either at the Hotel

Rip Van Dam or the Saratoga Inn, both establishments being owned by Rotarian "Joe" Flanagan. Apparently the "Rip" was closed during the winter months.

There had been a small rental fee at the Saratoga Club and the hope was that better meals could be obtained by changing meeting sites. There may have been other factors involved in the decision to move. Apparently, as a gesture of good will and support for Company L, our club had one of its weekly luncheon meetings at the local Armory where they ate Army “grub.” It is noted, however, that on the same day the Saratoga Club chef had broiled twenty-six lamb chops for the Rotarian’s luncheon - a real snafu in communication or lack of it. No note was made about who paid for the chops or ate them.

There were 25 charter members, and by 1925, there were a total of 56 members, including:

George Adee	Book & stationery Store
George B. Ballagh	Welch & Gray Lumber Co.
William c. Barton	pharmacy
Guernsey BorSt	Skidmore professor
John T. Butler	saratoga NatIonal Bank (Commdr. Co. L.)
James Bortle	Mortician
Dabney Coff man	Agent-Southern Pacific Railroad
Carl Comstock	Physician
William D. Eddy	Grain & Feed Store (Mayor)
Edgar Hewett	Grocery Store
William Leonard	Insurance (Van Voast & Leonard)
John H. LohnaS	Furniture Store
Thomas Luther	Forests
L.W. Noland	Saratoga St. Waters (Saratoga Nat’l. Bank)
A.J. Pierce	Life Insurance
Albert Platt	Music Director, St. Faith’s School
Leo Roohan	Dentist
Rev. Irving Rouillard	Episcopal Church Rector
Kenneth Savard	Clothing Store
Fred w. Schaefer	Tailor
Edgar D. Starbuck, Jr	Department Store
N.R. Thompson	LaundrY
J. Blame Towne	Hardware Store
B.K. Walbndge	Lawyer
Herman Walters	Confectionary Store

All Charter Members are now deceased. Edgar Starbuck, the last living Charter Member, died 9 June 1973.

During the remainder of 1924 and the year 1925, the following members were added:

A.J. Moore	Meat & Grocery Store
Joe McConnell	Saratoga Boy Scout Executive

George Shackelford	Insurance
James N. Crocker	NY Telephone Company
PJ. Mulholland	Shoe & Hosiery Store
W. Frank Ingham	Real Estate Agency & Insurance
William Vaughn	Architect
Francis Lynch	Paper Manufacturing (Victory Mills)
J.B. White	Automobile Agency
Harold Espey	Insurance (bought/own Van Voast & Leonard)
Charles Ford	Principal, St. Faith's School
Leman Grippen	Saratoga Ice Company
Milton Huppuch	Wall Paper & Decorative Co.
Clarence R. Kilmer, Jr	Investments
Gustav Lorey	Photographer
Charles Mosher	Superintendent of Schools
C.R. Pamienter	Contractor & Builder
Robert Ritchie	Mason
Robert Lawrence	Insurance
William Blackmer	Wholesale Paper
Henry Moore	President, Skidmore College
Frank Roohan	Physician
Stewart Don	Retired Businessman
William Shering	Electrical Shop
Cyrus Elmore	Superintendent Saratoga Spa
Henry Schrade	Florist
Lewis Humphrey	Harvey Co. (Member School Board)
George Brock	Minister Congregational Church

In 1926 other members were:

Frank Steenbergh	Grocer
A.S. Osborn	Music Director, Skidmore College
Harry L. Loop	Physician
Newton Robbins	Undetermined
Gill T. Clark	Distributor Pure Food Products
William DeFrehn	Jewelry
Harold B. Little	Agriculture Agent
James J. Riley	Contractor & Builder
William H. Waterbury	Saratoga National Bank/Clothing Store
T.J. Flanagan	Owner Saratoga Inn & Rip Van Dam Hotel
Ashley Kendrick	Cork Importer

**Rotary Today:** Rotarians: 1,176,083 Clubs: 26,484 Districts: 502 Countries: 149.. .  
 Since 1989, a total of 146 Rotary clubs have been admitted in Central and Eastern Europe  
 and the former Soviet Union.