

HISTORY OF BATAVIA ROTARY CLUB
By Dr. Claude B. Smith

Early in the year of 1938, Rotarian Harry Snyder of the Blanchester Rotary Club arrived in Batavia to organize, if enough interest was shown by the business and professional men, a Rotary Club in Batavia.

As I recall, he had no great difficulty arousing the interest of approximately thirty men of the community, and after a few get together meetings, the Batavia Rotary Club was organized on Tuesday evening, February 22, 1938.

Six members were nominated and elected as a temporary Board of Directors, and these members elected the following as temporary officers: Harry Kahle, President; Claude B. Smith, Vice President; Dr. John Carter, Secretary; and Aden C. Nash, Treasurer.

The next few weeks, we were hard at work making plans for our big night, Charter Night. Without the help of Governor Bob Bangham, Rotarian Harry Snyder and many other Rotarians from the Rotary Clubs of our District, our troubles would have been overwhelming. But with their guidance, everything was ready.

On April 12th, 1938, the charter meeting was held at the School House Auditorium with twenty-eight members present. There were Rotarians and Rotary Anns present from many of the Rotary Clubs of the District, a total of 213.

Harry Snyder, of the Blanchester Club was Master of Ceremonies. Governor June Thompson, of the Northern Kentucky District, addressed the club and our own Governor Bob Bangham made the Charter presentation address.

We were presented with many gifts from the Rotary Clubs of the district. Our first President, Harry Kahle responded in his usual able and competent manner. Thus was Rotary International instituted in Batavia.

As the baby club of the District, we concentrated more on community service in the first years of our club existence. Among the club activities, suggested by our members before Charter Night were: Public Playground, Aiding Handicapped Children, Traffic lights and traffic control, promotion of Federal Post Office Building, Street Workers, Community Xmas, new Main Street, and Railroad underpass. Some of these projects were in operation quite early in our club existence; some were not satisfactorily completed until our 20th Anniversary.

Other projects over the years, which were completed and in operation were: Halloween Party, Crippled Children's party at Cincinnati Rotary Camp at Lake Allyn, Delegates sent to the World Affairs Institute, Delegates to Boy's State, the sponsoring of one of our members, Mr. Harold Nichols, as Governor of our Rotary District, and many others.

The community Xmas party and street decorations have been carried out very successfully by the Business Men's Club and other organizations in the past few years.

While we are now active in community projects as in the past, we are now concerned also with the International side of Rotary. Our support of Rotary Foundation Scholarship has enabled us to hear from students from many foreign lands, which will help us to understand their problems.

Thus our first twenty-five years have passed. May our club continue its activities during the next twenty-five years, so that our members and community will always remember "Service Above Self."

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