

Sudbrook Park Keeps Serenity, Aloof To Surging Suburbia

By Karen Hyneckal

While other communities feel the steady tide of business activities pushing around and through their borders, Sudbrook Park remains serene and lovely, untouched by the city's spread into the suburbs.

A quiet, wooded section of Pikesville, the Park retains its charm and beauty under the watchful eye of the Sudbrook Club, Inc., whose members consider it their main task to preserve the tradition of gracious living set by the first families in the area.

The Park was established seventy-five years ago as a summer colony and is said to be Maryland's first planned community. The land was originally owned by James Howard McHenry, who sold it for development. Its location was ideal for families of means who wished to spend the warm months in the country but wanted to remain close to their city offices.

F. L. Olstead, a celebrated engineer, drew up the planned community and ten homes were built and advertised for \$3,000 to \$6,000 depending on size, which ranged from six to twelve rooms.

Hub Of Activity

The colony was soon a hub of summer activity and became such a popular place to live that residents began installing furnaces and staying there the year round. Today 600 families live in the Park, some of them occupying the original homes.

The Park has changed quite a bit since its days as a summer colony but the sense of true community living prevails and the Sudbrook Club takes pride in the traditions it has preserved and the ones it has started.

The club was organized in 1946, an outgrowth of the Sudbrook Park Improvement Association. Its original purpose was to raise funds for association projects and aid the social, recreational and cultural advancement in the community.



DIAMOND JUBILEE—Seventy-five years of memories are stored in the scrapbook kept by the Sudbrook Park's "history expert," Mrs. T. Newell Cox, Sr. On the grounds of her home, Mrs. Prunetta Owens, left, first elected president of the Sudbrook Club; Mrs. Henry F. Schoenfeld, center, out-going president, and Mrs. Royal Gerlock, in-coming president, go over the book for ideas for the club's celebration of the Park's anniversary. A diamond jubilee dinner-dance is scheduled for June 12 at Greenspring Inn.

Among its first activities were obtaining stop signs, sidewalks and school crossing guards in the Park. The women also determined to encourage residents to take proper care of their grounds and see that the triangle areas in the community were well kept.

Anxious to provide their children with a safe place to play in the summer, the women sought land in the Park for a playground. Property was donated by a family and the club equipped it with swings, seesaws, picnic tables and other items for the youngsters' enjoyment. Through the Pikesville Recreation Center, the services of a qualified leader were obtained and the playground now offers many supervised programs for the children.

Kept Active

An interest in the educational needs of the community has kept the club active in the Milford Mill High School Scholarship program. Funds are raised through dances, fashion shows and other projects and donated to the program which offers deserving students a chance for advanced study. Mrs. Henry F. Schoenfeld, president of the club

and a representative to the joint scholarship fund, says that this year, in addition to helping the general program, the club will offer a separate scholarship to a student of its choosing.

As a part of its plan to preserve the summer colony's tradition of doing things together, the Sudbrook Club has initiated several annual programs which have captured the enthusiasm of the entire community. Every Halloween, for example, is celebrated with a special trick or treat night and a parade.

Christmas in the Park is particularly festive, with activities getting under way in the middle of December. The largest spruce tree in the Park, at the entrance, is lit at a special ceremony and Santa Claus always makes an appearance with little gifts for the children.

Caroling is also a popular Yuletide tradition and families are asked to join the club's annual serenade around the Park. Judging of the best decorated home takes place shortly after Christmas with prizes being awarded at the Twelfth Night celebration.

At that time Christmas trees are brought from all over the

area to be burned in a symbolic blaze, preceded by a short religious pageant.

Fourth of July celebrations, always a favorite part of summer at Sudbrook, still delight the children and adults in the Park. Uncle Sam leads the annual parade which features gaily decorated bicycles and many excited boys and girls.

Although the year-round activities consume much time and effort, the members of the club are ever vigilant to carry out what has become their most important job: to keep Sudbrook Park a strictly residential community.

The women declare with pride that "we have no beauty parlors here, no drugstores, no small shops. We insist on only one family to a house and discourage anyone who wants to operate a private business from his home."

Large trucks are prohibited from traveling through the area and public transportation, except for a special bus for shoppers, is nonexistent.

As for the physical care of the Park, Mrs. Prunetta Owens, first elected president of the club, credits both the builders

and residents who have always tried to avoid cutting down trees or shrubs, thus helping Sudbrook to remain the "lovely wooded area" which so delighted its original residents.

Anniversary Dance

The Sudbrook Club will celebrate the Park's seventy-fifth anniversary, with a diamond jubilee dinner-dance June 12 at the Greenspring Inn. Mrs. T. Newell Cox, Sr., an early resident of the area, will speak on the history of the Park. Mrs. Cox has made a hobby of studying the history of Pikesville and Sudbrook, in particular, and is recognized throughout the community as "the expert" on times gone by.

Among those on the committee planning the anniversary program are Mrs. Owens, Mrs. Schoenfeld, Mrs. C. G. Kin Carroll, Mrs. Royal Gerlock, Mrs. John Grogan, Mrs. Charles Hazard, Mrs. Gifford E. Blaylock, and Mrs. W. J. P. Austin, vice president of the club.

Mrs. Vernon Liebno is corresponding secretary of the organization; Mrs. William Cox, recording secretary, and Mrs. Russell Davis, treasurer.