

Minneapolis Athletic Club

1915, 1998

On April 5, 1913, the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported on the groundbreaking for the Minneapolis Athletic Club, “With Old Glory waving, the rain pouring down and a cold wind blowing, members of the Minneapolis Athletic Club dug the first earth from the site of their proposed 12-story club house on Second Avenue between Sixth and Seventh Streets South.” A band played, Governor Adolph Olson Eberhart was in attendance, and all members of the club marched in procession through downtown. Governor Eberhart praised members of the club and the construction of the building, stating, “anything that will make a man more fit, that will enable him to go about his work with increased vitality and renewed courage, is worthwhile a thousand times.”

The Minneapolis Athletic Club, which existed as a club of men before the building was erected, was organized in 1913 by Charles Henry Genslinger. He is known for having organized several athletic clubs around the country, with the goal of providing social and civic activities along with recreation and athletics.



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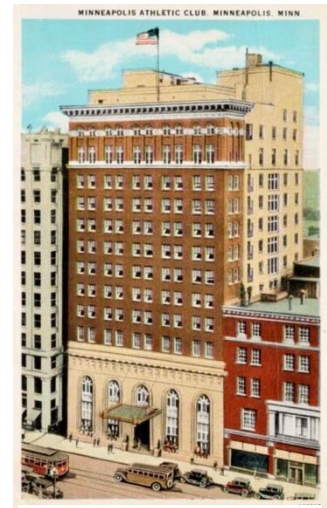


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Purchase of the land, construction of the 12-story building, and furnishings and equipment totaled \$900,000. Arthur Bishop Chamberlin was the architect.

A campaign to recruit members to the club had begun in late 1912, and it was reported in December of that year that the directors and officials associated with the club were confident that there would be no fewer than 1,000 members on the roster at the beginning of 1914. By early 1915, membership had grown to 2,200. The building officially opened in August 1915, and was commonly referred to as The MAC.

The MAC had a restaurant, lounge areas, club member sleeping rooms, and, of course, athletic facilities. The building at Second Avenue and Seventh Street was considered to be a structure superior to anything previously designed, “having all the features known in modern architecture” according to a 1912 article in the *Minneapolis Tribune*. Furthermore, it was reported that the club would provide business men, the elderly and youth a place to spend the noonday hour.



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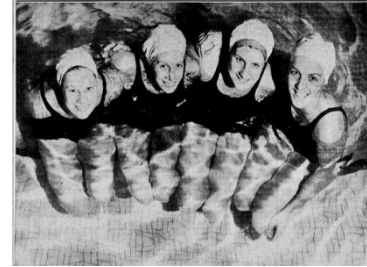
The club quickly became the center of athletic events. On February 16, 1913 the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported, "Sports of all kinds will be fostered in the new Minneapolis Athletic Club" and the gymnasium and athletic equipment will be of the very best.



Minneapolis Journal
March 4, 1928

In December 1918, three of the most prominent swimmers in the country competed at the Minneapolis Athletic Club in one of the largest swimming events to take place in the Northwest. One of the swimmers, Billy Heyn, was the National AAU junior fancy diving champion and performed on the new 10-foot board installed at the club's pool.

They'll Try to Break Own World Mark
Washington A.C. Girls' Relay Team to Swim at the M.A.C. Next Monday Night



Young boys met at the club for juvenile boxing training. A girls' relay swim team was featured in a swimming exhibition in 1934, attempting to break their own world record.

Minneapolis Star
April 14, 1934

It was reported that the Lakers basketball team had its beginnings in the MAC gym.



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In October, 1940, the Minneapolis Athletic Club celebrated its 25th anniversary with a dinner dance, vaudeville program, a water follies show, bowling and movies of the University of Minnesota football team.

In the early 1940s, square dancing became in vogue. Couples met at the club for square dance lessons on Wednesday night, as they attempted to "Dive for the Oyster".

SQUARE DANCE BACK IN STYLE
AT ATHLETIC CLUB: CLASSES SET



Minneapolis Star
October 31, 1943

By 1963, the club reported membership of 3,800.

In late 1997, the MAC board decided to sell the building when a bond drive to raise funds for renovations and debt repayment failed to raise the money needed. Membership had declined, its business base was dropping, and funding was uncertain, and maintaining staff had become problematic.

Members of the club sold the 83-year-old building in 1998. The former Minneapolis Athletic Club was converted into the 140-room Minneapolis Grand Hotel. In late 2018, the building was purchased again. Hyatt announced its newest hotel, the Hyatt Centric, would occupy the Minneapolis Athletic Club building. In contrast to the historic, dark wood interior of its previous incarnation, the Hyatt Centric would present as a modern, contemporary hotel, with a focus on



health and wellness. A 7,000-square-foot, two-story fitness center at Hyatt Centric Downtown Minneapolis features an indoor walking and running track, squash courts and fitness amenities.