

## **History**

The earliest known existence of an Officers' Club at Fort Snelling dates back to March 1, 1905. On the lower level of the Bachelor Officer Quarters, a military club was installed to provide the officers a place to relax and socialize. It exists today as building 20A on the grounds of Historic Fort Snelling.

In 1934, the Officers' Country Club (the current club building) opened. Being assigned to work on the Club was the most sought after duty on base. Pvt. Steward Montgomery, assigned to F Company, 3rd Infantry Regiment, recalled that immediately after his enlistment on Jan. 29, 1934, he was told to report to Lt. Charles at the Club. His fatigue duty was to move stones from the sandstone riverbank to the Club site.

Included on the grounds of the Officers' Country Club were a swimming pool, a golf course with its own clubhouse, and large picnic grounds. Two dirt roads led to the parade grounds and the original buildings of the historic Fort Snelling. Ross Conte, a captain in the Army, was the first club manager. The Club held Sunday tea dances every week during the afternoon. In the summertime, barbecues and picnics were held by the pool.

The Club interior had many interesting features, including handcrafted woodwork and labor intensive stone work. When the Club held parties, guests would drive to the west entrance of the building and an enlisted man would park their car. As they entered the building, they walked into the ballroom, which had a dance floor and a large crystal chandelier. It was an elegant setting for parties and galas. Many weddings were and still are celebrated at the Officers' Club. During the Korean War, the army relinquished the Club to the Air Force because of lack of funds. In the late '50s, a freeway was built nearby and the old dirt road leading from the Club to the parade grounds was replaced by a blacktop highway. The construction and the airport expansion in 1969 irrevocably altered the Ft. Snelling grounds.

Although the Officers' Club has changed throughout the years, it retains its historic charm and ambience and still remains as a special place for socializing and camaraderie, and prides itself in its service to military members and their families.

