



Golden Anniversary
SONS of REST
DECEMBER 17, 1949
-MASON HALL ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.
CENTRAL STUDIOS

Sons of Rest: 1899-1971

By Melvern R. Evans, Jr.

*T*he Sons of Rest probably was the most unique organization in Lancaster history. It all started in 1899 when a group of aspiring young football players, many of them from the Lancaster Boys' High School, banded together and competed against Millersville State Normal School (now Millersville State College), Franklin and Marshall Academy (now absorbed with the Shippen School into the Lancaster Country Day School), and the Leopard Athletic Club. Following a successful gridiron season, the team and their staunch supporters held a victory banquet at William T. Hambright's Three Mile House along the Columbia Pike at Running Pump Road. (The present hotel replaced the old structure which burned many years ago.) The affair proved so popular that it was agreed to renew the festivity the following year. As the years rolled by, the football games stopped but the banquets continued. In 1909 during the banquet at Charles J. Hoster's Hotel Rieker, 602 West King Street, Lancaster, the club was given its name. Barney Breneman suggested in his droll way that such a lazy, carefree group like ours should be called "Sons of Rest," and the name stuck. Harry A. Ruthart was elected the club's first president, and he retained the office for 69 consecutive years.

In the early 1900s the group closed its membership, and every reunion thereafter showed a slight drop in attendance.

◀ *50th Anniversary Banquet of Sons of Rest, December 17, 1949. Left to right, seated: I. G. Coulter, Lewis Levy, Monroe Levy, Harry A. Ruthart (President), David F. Chambers, Joseph Jacobs, and George W. Creswell. Standing: H. B. Herr, Melvern R. Evans, Henry B. Howell, William R. Styer, John O. Wohlsen, Harry Levy, James B. Stauffer (?), and Harry Bard*

The "Sons" made it through "Prohibition" in great style, thanks to one of their number who managed a brewery. However, as the members grew older the parties became calmer, and in the latter years, it meant getting together for fine cuisine, a few drinks, and several hours of fond reminiscing, with early bed time for most.

The 25th Anniversary Banquet was held at the Hotel Breakers in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on December 20, 1924. A private Pullman car was chartered to provide transportation. Those who were financially pressed to make the trip had no problem, because the more affluent members picked up the tab with no questions asked. This gala banquet was followed by a wonderful poker game and midnight lunch.

Each banquet followed the same pattern without any formal program, or as one member put it, "We just talk with one another and see what a difference one year makes in a fellow."

By the time the 41st reunion had rolled around, membership had dwindled from the original 45 members* to 24 survivors. Those attending this banquet at the Lancaster Elks Club were: Lewis Levy, Frank P. Levy, Monroe Levy, David F. Chambers, Frank B. Kreider, Harry Bard, I. G. Coulter, Harry A. Ruthart, Dr. John A. Nightengale, H. B. Herr, Melvern R. Evans, Edward J. Hodgen, William T. Hodgen, George Creswell, Joseph Jacobs, Henry B. Howell, William R. Styer, Edward L. Matterer, and James P. Martin.

The Golden Anniversary banquet was held at Haddon Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on December 7, 1949. The official banquet photograph showed only 15 members present. Among those present were: I. G. Coulter, Lewis Levy, Monroe Levy, Harry A. Ruthart, David F. Chambers, Joseph Jacobs, George W. Creswell, H. B. Herr, Melvern R. Evans, Henry B. Howell, William R. Styer, John O. Wohlson, Harry Levy, James B. Stauffer (?), and Harry Bard.

The 60th reunion was held at Lancaster's Hotel Brunswick (the "old" Brunswick) on December 17, 1959 with only six of the surviving ten members present: Lewis Levy, Dr. John Nightengale, Melvern R. Evans, Uhler Hambright, Harry A. Ruthart, and Jack N. Hoffman.

Saint Joseph Hospital was the site of the last official gathering. In January, 1965, Dr. John Nightengale, then 81, went there to visit Harry Ruthart, the 87-year old president of the "Sons." The good doctor brought along a bottle of port wine, and the hospital graciously ~~supplied~~ the "banquet" which was served by Ruthart's private nurse, Mrs. Doris Hall. The third-surviving member, Melvern Evans, was ill at the time and could not join the party.

*Dr. John Nightengale was quoted at various times in newspaper articles as saying the club had from 75 to 100 members. Mr. Evans tended to be more precise. The 45 members probably were the original club, or they may have been on the club roster when the membership rolls were closed. (Editor)

By September 1968 both Ruthart and Nightengale had joined the ranks of their departed club members, leaving Melvern Evans the last survivor. A bottle of bonded bourbon supposedly was stashed away in a safety deposit box to be removed by the last member for a farewell toast, but if such a bottle existed, Mel was not able to find it. On June 4, 1971, seventy two years of friendship and conviviality came to an end for the Sons of Rest as Melvern Evans himself was laid to rest, aged 85. □

Pen Names, Nicknames and By-Names of Some Lancaster County Writers

Collected by Ruth Cross*

We've mixed them, can you match them?

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. American Linneus | 13. Mr. Lancaster |
| 2. Aunt Blanche | 14. Morgan Towne |
| 3. Bashful Bard of Bard | 15. New Holland Cheese Man |
| 4. Chief Walking Stone | 16. Old Buck |
| 5. Christiana | 17. Pit Schnefflebrenner |
| 6. Clericus | 18. Queen Anne |
| 7. Cora Grumbling | 19. Sage of the Buck |
| 8. Disdaskalis | 20. Sander |
| 9. Euphonius | 21. The Scribbler |
| 10. Father Peaceful | 22. Shirley Watkins |
| 11. Grass Widow | 23. Sinceratas |
| 12. Indiana | |

*Better Known as Miriam E. Bixler