

Uncle Ben Started A New Era

(Cont. from preceding page.)

the track grounds "to burn the joint down," one informer told Armour several years later.

With the new Armour-Hertz group in firm control Arlington Park became a reputable enterprise. In 1929 the Post and Paddock club was added. Designed by famous architect Benjamin Marshall, the club cost \$300,000 and its charter members included 250 top level society families.

ARLINGTON Park's rise to its position at the top of America's race tracks was due primarily to one man, Benjamin F. Lindheimer. "Uncle Ben," whose death last summer was mourned by the whole turf world and brought eulogies from newspaper and magazine writers all over the country, made the local track second to none.

His long list of "firsts" included escalators (16 of them), racing seasons, recreational facilities for track workers, shuttle services from the far reaches of the parking lots to the grandstand, mechanics to tour parking lots and repair flats or assist distressed motorists, a track infirmary with a physician available 24 hours a day.

He also introduced banked turns on a grass course, \$100,000 purses, for 2 year olds, and closed circuit TV.

Lindheimer, who had taken over Washington Park in 1935, teamed with Brinks chief John Allen to acquire Arlington Park in 1940. In the following 20 years he made the Midwest a top attraction in the racing world.

He spent more than \$8 million making Arlington Park the most beautiful place to make a \$2 wager, and he made the track a home away from home for the 2500 horsemen who use the facilities every year, providing them with a chapel, recreational grounds and equipment, trailer accommodations, laundries, and swimming pools.

Testimony to his position with the people he worked with is his selection, by the nation's jockeys, as "Man of the Year" in 1955, and, by the National Horsemen association, as "Man of the Year" in 1957.

He extended the "Lindheimer season" to 97 days (Balmoral, Washington, and Arlington racing dates), and attracted the country's finest horses, owners, and trainers. Calumet trainer Jimmy Jones credited Lindheimer with developing "the finest track in the world."

Lindheimer was a man with a public conscience who claimed to run his track "for sport instead of profit." Through his influence Arlington Park has taken part in charitable activities dating back to July 4, 1942, when a record crowd of 50,638 saw the track donate its take, \$346,250, to the war effort.

He served on the board for the Northwest Community hospital and considered the northwest suburban area's problems his own.

The last phase of Arlington Park's history revolves around Lindheimer's adopted daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Everett, who now administers the plant with the same efficiency for which her father was known.

One Difference

Frank White Was Accepted by Village on Individual Merit

by DICK HOFFMANN

The barber shop of old was probably the best barometer for gauging the political climate of the times.

It was the forerunner of the present day political pollster.

One of the most accurate weather vanes for judging which way the political winds were moving in Arlington Heights at the turn of the century was Frank White's barber shop.

Al Volz, the 90-year-old patriarch of Arlington Heights, recalls that White sometimes took as long as 45 minutes to shave a customer in order to learn his political inclinations.

White's barber shop was known as "The Star Chamber."

"He'd get a fellow in the barber chair and quiz him on his political views and how he was going to vote," Volz recollected.

"We always knew the results of the election before they took place by this method," he chuckled.

Barber White, who settled in Arlington Heights in 1888 when he arrived here from Geneseo, Ill., was also a charter member of the town's fire department, organized in 1894.

There is little to distinguish White from his fellow firemen in the yellowed photographs from that bygone era. He posed as they did: stiffly and self-consciously. His walrus mustache was full, drooping at the sides in the classic "soup-strainer" style of the day.

BUT HE DID differ from other department regulars in one way. For Frank White was a Negro, the only member of this race ever to take up residency in Arlington Heights.

This one distinguishing difference did not exclude White from any phase of community life. "There was never any racial feeling against him," Volz declared.

White's membership in the fire department was "the outstanding thing in his life," Volz thinks.

The barber and his wife, Fanny, owned their own home in town. "She was quite a talented woman; very good with

oil paintings and that sort of thing," said Volz. The couple had no children. They were members of the Methodist church.

White had barber shops in five different locations. Two of the more remembered ones were situated in the building which is now the Arlington Heights National bank at Dunton and Campbell sts., and later on S. Dunton st. where the National grocery store is now located.

Here, the political life of the community was centered and flourished. The barber, Volz recalled, was a staunch Republican.

Arlington Heights' elder citizen remembers the time White announced proudly in a neighborhood saloon that there were "only three Democrats in town."

The village's fourth Democrat happened to be at the bar at the time White made this pronouncement. "He told me, 'If I had said there were four, there would have been a fight, so I kept quiet,'" Volz related.

At one time, Frank White's bouts with bottled spirits were legend, but he was eventually to win the fight against John Barleycorn.

"He told me how he cured himself of drinking," Al Volz said. "He said when he felt he couldn't get along without a drink any longer, he went out to the pump and filled himself with water up to here," Volz measured neck level with a flattened hand.

When Frank was among the more dedicated of imbibers, he once shaved only one side of Al Volz's face and then announced, "I'm not going to shave any further until I'm paid 10 cents for the shave so I can get a pal of beer." After this brief interruption for re-



FRANK WHITE

freshments, he completed the chore.

The only trouble in which White was involved, to Volz's knowledge, occurred during his thirst-quenching years. Volz said that a farm worker of prohibitionist sympathies did his best to have the barber barred from the local saloons. For his efforts, White "thrasped the fellow out in the fields," Volz volunteered, "and was fined. He was sorry for it, though, after he gave up drinking."

A MORE MINOR vice Frank indulged was a fondness for poker. He and another barber, Frank Weber, would close their shops occasionally during the week to play.

Once, they were busy at cards at White's shop in what is now the Arlington Heights National bank, which was then located beneath the Meyer dance hall which connected to the Union hotel.

A customer arrived and the poker enthusiasts fell quiet to wait until he left. The customer, however, was a Presbyterian minister who paced the corridor between the shop and the steps leading up to the dance hall. He stepped off the distance in the narrow corridor for over an hour memorizing a Sunday sermon while the two barbers suffered in silence.

White was a resident of Arlington Heights until his wife,

who was five years older than he, died. Then he went to live with a niece in Harvey. Volz thinks his wife was buried in Geneseo.

Volz estimates the barber's age was anywhere from 85 to 90 when he went into retirement in Harvey. "I understand he joined some fraternal order that bled him for something like \$10,000," he added.

The Negro whose "star chamber" barber shop once was the rallying place for all shading of political persuasions was the only member of his race ever to reside here.

But he was welcomed as a member of the community on the basis of his merits as an individual. Al Volz pays him a simple yet moving tribute:

"He had nothing when he came here, but he soon owned his own home. He was a good mixer and a good fellow and he was accepted."

Inflation

In 1900, Arlington Heights' barbers Frank White and Frank Weber announced that their shops would hereafter charge more for Sunday efforts than those expended during the week.

The following price changes went into effect with the announcement:

SHAVING, Weekdays, 10 cents; Sundays, 15 cents.

ADULT HAIRCUTS, 25 cents.

CHILDREN HAIRCUTS, 15 cents; Sundays, 25 cents.

NECK SHAVES, 5 cents.

Closing hours were listed as 9 p.m. except Saturday, when it was 11 p.m. Sundays, however, the shops closed at noon.

Still Marching

Arlington Heights will soon have water works and electric lights. Then she will march up to the head of the procession of enterprising towns. (The Herald, Mar. 8, 1902)



THIS PLOT OF GROUND, now Rolling Meadows, was Arlington Park airport in 1936. The property, purchased as part of the race

track grounds, was sold when Kumbal Hill built the neighboring city.