

DOUGLAS W. EVERETT ICE SKATING ARENA

FOR 1965 BICENTENNIAL TIME CAPSULE

The arena is the outgrowth of agitation and talk for a generation for an enclosed skating rink here for hockey, figure skating and recreational skating. Ice sports have a lengthy background here, pond skating starting around the time of Concord's settlement (1727) on Horse Shoe Pond and on "The Boom," an inlet of the Merrimack River near the Manchester St. Bridge. Evidence indicates that organized ice hockey started in the U.S. at St. Paul's School in 1881 (masters wrote the first US rules and the first game played under them was on the pond that year). Previously, there had been hockey at SPS and in town on rather a donnybrook basis, up to 40 on a side chasing on skates a ball batted by curved sticks; boundaries were marked by stones and shoes. (See "At the Bend in the River" history for more details (1965).

In the 1930s hockey reached a peak with three men's teams (Sacred Hearts, Millville Bruins and Concord Hockey Club); Concord High; and boys' teams. Thaws and the growth of skiing and other diversions left ice sports in a slump after World War II. With the White Park pond well maintained by the city Parks & Recreation Dept. and a hockey revival sparked by Russell F. Martin, at this writing president of the arena company, from 1957, ice sports again became immensely popular. Figure skating classes also began.

For almost 20 years Dudley W. Orr, Concord attorney and for some time chairman of the City Planning Board, sought means of building an arena as a desirable community facility. A group could not be found ready to deal with the immense costs of a building with a continuous span (no posts) of 120 feet and an artificial ice plant.

In the summer of 1964 Mr. Orr called a meeting at City Hall. Among those present were Douglas W. Everett, insurance and real estate executive, civic leader and a member of the 1932 Olympic Hockey Team; Mayor Charles Davie; Gustaf H. Lehntinen, City Planning Director; G. Thomas Greenwood, broker; James S. Barker, banker; Mr. Martin, telephone executive; Mayland H. Morse, attorney; John Healy, insurance man and referee; and myself.

This committee began collecting cost data. It was decided that the arena must be built with private funds, since a city facility would have a noticeable effect on the tax rate. The state law permitting the State of N.H. to guarantee loans for recreational facilities for communities up to 50% has little or no parallel in other states and was the necessary shoe horn to secure \$350,000 to build and run the building. In March, 1964, Concord Ice Skating Arena, Inc., was chartered by the State as a non-profit company to erect and run the arena. Incorporators were Messrs. Martin, Malcolm McLane, attorney, William Ingham, vice-pres. of United Life, Carl Wason, owner of the Corner Drug Store, and myself. Besides those named at the City Hall meeting and the incorporators, directors elected are: Chief of Police Walter Carlson, pres. So. N.H. Skating Club; Mrs. Angus Brooks (wife of a physician and interested in youth programs); J. Preston Barry, Concord High principal; Daniel K. Stuckey, head of Classics Dept./hockey coach at SPS; Dean Mattice, manufacturer Caleb Whiton, ~~and~~ and Richard Williamson, bankers; Dr. Anthony D. Bower; Kenneth McKinnon, founder of Granite State Hockey League; Robert Tardiff, manager of the Concord "Shamrocks;" and Charles Sweeney, optometrist.

N.H. Savings Bank, Concord Savings Bank and Merrimack County Savings Bank agreed, on the basis of the State loan guarantee, to put up three-fourths of the \$350,000 if the arena company would get the rest. It did, by offering \$100 7% debentures; \$500 skating passes for 20 years; and accepted smaller contributions. Approximately \$85,000 was thus raised. It was decided to name the arena for Mr. Everett, a leading business man and a fine athlete at Dartmouth College, post-graduate sports and the Olympics.

Koehler & Isaac, Manchester architects, were retained to design the

Also, Robert Ayer,
City Recreation Director.

Everett Arena

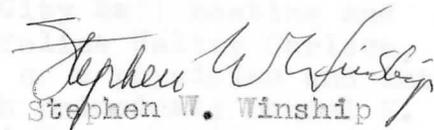
arena, and the A. Taylor Construction Co., Concord, was selected on the basis of its \$320,000 bid to build it. The city, by good chance, had the ideal site in an unused (except for dumping snow) tract of land just east of the Bridge St. bridge and north of Loudon Road. This assured easy access from the Interstate 93 turnpike, the Heights, the main business district and all nearby points, the arena being created as a facility for the central N.H. region. The city sold the arena company the land for \$1.

Construction started in April, 1965 and, at this writing, the arena is to open in mid-October, 1965, for a full season. With ten prep schools having hockey in the area; Concord High; and Bishop Brady starting in a year or two; the Shamrocks and other men's teams; an old-timers' team (men, 35-?) and scores of fervent Youth Hockey players (boys 8 to 16); New England College and other schools as of now showing interest in fielding teams, it appears the arena will be hard put to find plenty of regular times for other winter uses planned, as figure skating classes; recreational skating for all ages; and ice shows.

The building measures 120' wide x 240' long, with artificial ice, four dressing rooms, electric scoreboard, capacity of 2,000 spectators which can be expanded by adding grandstands, skate and equipment shop, snack bar, office and a sound unit for announcements and music. The parking area at the outset will hold 625 cars.

Since this will be one of the largest buildings in the state suitable for meetings and performances, and has a concrete floor, the arena was designed with an eye to its off-season use for a variety of community events. Among them as now envisaged are political meetings and conventions; concerts; dances; trade shows; flower shows; pet shows; tennis; pageants and circuses; business and industry conventions.

Under terms of the charter, the company's profits, after paying operating expenses and debt service, are to be turned over to the city government for its recreation programs. The corporation officers at this writing besides Mr. Martin, are Malcolm McLane, Clerk (although he has been a championship skier and chairman of the U.S. Olympic Ski Committee and thus the Big Boss of our Olympic ski effort, he has been most enthusiastic and has worked at great length on the project) and Mr. Williamson, Treasurer. An Executive Committee composed of Messrs. Martin, McLane, Nason, Ingham, myself, Ayer, McKinnon, and Tardif has been in charge of expediting the fund-raising campaign, making the arrangements with the banks; the State Industrial Park Authority, the agency responsible for recommending projects for loan guarantee; the Governor and Council (to approve same); the architects and the builders. It recommended after a search and interviews, that Robert Brochu, Concord man with a skating background and superintendent of the arena construction, be elected manager on a full-time basis. This was adopted by the Board of Directors on Aug. 11, 1965. This has been a community project from the start. The founders, executive committee and the other directors serve without pay. It has, all in all, been an experience which makes me proud of my cloth.


Stephen W. Winship