

LOUIS C. MERSFELDER

Men's Veteran Service – Charter Member 1978



4/11/1884 – 12/21/1967

L.C. Mersfelder was born in Midway, Texas. He spent 43 years in the Oklahoma City area and 25 plus as a sanctioned bowler. He came from New Mexico in 1924. While in New Mexico he was a school Superintendant and a State Senator. He bowled from 1929 to 1955. He was the First President of the Oklahoma City Bowling Association. L.C. was a very successful businessman and an ardent civic leader. He helped organize the Civic League that is still in operation today. Each year he would sponsor at least one men's team and one women's team. He was honored by the All-Sports Jamboree in 1958 for his service to all sports from 1922 thru 1958. L.C. is best known for organizing the First "700 Club" in the Nation January 9, 1939 (See 700 Club History). His free-rolling southpaw curve, both on and off the alleys, best characterized Mersfelder. Always in life, or on the lanes, aiming for a goal, a 1-2 pocket, but able to have a wide 1-2-3 pocket. Free of indecision, smallness, self-doubt, lack of vision, free to be enthusiastic & a leader - in life ins. Management, civic activity, sports, hobbies, church. For conceiving and organizing "original 700 club of America" after a jackpot 711 series (about Nov 1938) and making it an incentive for skill, sportsmanship, fraternity,

benevolences, etc...the Oklahoma City Bowling Council honors his legacy by inducting L.C. Mersfelder into the Oklahoma City Bowling Hall of Fame.

Notable Articles concerning the Mersfelder 700 Club

(1949) Mersfelder 700 Bowling Club To Dine, Elect New Officers

Oklahoma City's exclusive bowling organization "Mersfelder 700 Club" comprising 73 men who have turned in 700 series since 1938, will meet for dinner at noon Sunday, February 27, at Oklahoma City Golf and Country club. Bob Tubre, president of the club who owns the most 700 series-14 between 1939 and 1943-said a new president and secretary would be elected at the meeting. Andy Koettker, Play-more alleys proprietor, is secretary now. L.C. Mersfelder organized the club early in 1939 with eight charter members, as one of the first such groups, if not the first, in the nation. Bart Severs, Bill Dyer, Mersfelder, Bert Grubb, the late O.E. McAfee, Bob Burns, Koettker and Earl Bleakney were the original 700 shooters who formed the first club. Now the club shows a membership of 73 men, including 25 who now live outside of the city. Members automatically qualify when they turn in a series of 700 or more in regular league play, tournament, jackpot, or any competitive game vouched for by alleys management in Oklahoma City. Tubre has the high series since the club was formed, with 789. Bert Grubb has made the list nine times. Members still living here: O.K. Benson, Bleakney, K.D. Blood, Burns, Bod Childers, Cliff Colley, John Criser, Art Driskill, Jim Edgecomb, Roy Finerty, Malcolm Garrett, Ralph Gibson, Bert Grubb, Marvin Hambrick, Lawrence Hatfield, Elmo Hunt, Art Johnson, Koettker, Al Maggio, Ed McColgin, Ray Meadows, Mersfelder, Pat Miller, Casey Mills, Walt Neal, G.F. Paine, Berlin Parks, Byron Potter, Bill Rellihen, Bill Riddles, Charles Saulsberry, Severs, Pete Sexton, John Smethers, Jeff Stanley, Pappy Steele, Dick Stevens, Paul Trosper, Tubre, Blackie Williams and Woot Winton. Living in other Oklahoma cities are Russell Allen, Stillwater; Glen Hamous, Enid; Lee Haynes, Tulsa; Shornden McCloud, Tulsa; Joe Moews, Seminole; Bruce Slanker, Bartlesville; and S. Don Wilson, Norman.

(1961) City 700 Club Oldest in U.S. from The Daily Oklahoman, Sunday, September 3, 1961, page 8

An important part of the bowling picture in Oklahoma City is the Mersfelder 700 Club, believed to be the oldest organization of its kind in the nation. In 1938 L.C. Mersfelder rolled a 711 series and promptly offered to buy a steak dinner for anyone else shooting 700. Eight men met for dinner Jan. 9, 1939 and organized the club which now has more than 200 members. Those eight men and their qualifying scores were Andy Koettker 769, Bob Burns 718, O.E. McAfee 717, Earl Blakeney 716, Bert Grubb 713, Mersfelder 711, Bill Dyer 709 and Bart Severs 702. Although Mersfelder no longer is an active bowler, he still hosts the membership at a dinner following the annual tournament. Each year the members roll four games and the winner's name is engraved on the Joe Wythe trophy, which becomes permanent possession of the man winning three times.

(1964) 700 Club Bowls for 5th Time by Laymond Crump

America's first 700 club, started by L.C. Mersfelder in 1939 here, is to hold its 25th anniversary tournament Sunday, June 2, at 2 p.m. on Windsor Lanes with the four-game meet expected to draw a big turnout of stars, past and present. At 4 p.m. the group will move across the street to

O'Mealey's Restaurant for the annual dinner, with much entertainment planned by seck Bob Burns and prexy Berlin Parks. Mers as usual will pick up the check. Billy Young of Tulsa, 1962 ABC all-events champ, is defending champion. Entry is \$4 for the tournament. Insurance man Merselder, noted sportsman and southpaw bowler when he shot his 700 some 26 years ago no longer bowls but the 25th party will honor him. Among bowlers will be Andy Koettker and Bart Severs and probably lefty Earl Bleakney of the eight original 700 clubbers. It always has been and still is a coveted achievement for a local bowler to gain membership in the exclusive club. There are several girls in the club now, too—Sandy Hooper, Jean Cowger, now a Californian; Carole Brilliant, Rheba Martin and Jean Trahern. The champion Sunday wins a permanent trophy and traveling trophy which takes three wins to retire. Ralph Gibson, now in Chicago, is the only three-time winner.

(1974) '700 Club' Gearing For Annual Tourney The Oklahoma Journal, Wednesday, October 16, 1974 by Clyde Horn Of The Journal Staff

It is only natural that the best in any activity tend to congregate. That's the 'why' for any number of both professional and amateur organizations. One of those groups is the L.C. Mersfelder's 700 Club. Mersfelder, now deceased, was for many years the Oklahoma general agent for Kansas City Life Insurance Co. and was based in Oklahoma City. Mersfelder was a bowler. He was active in the sport, and his company sponsored many of the early leagues which helped to make the sport the biggest in terms of number of people competing. In 1938, rolling in league competition at the old Brantley Lanes on 6th st.; Mersfelder recorded his first 700 series. To a bowler, a 700 series is a plateau. Compared with baseball, it's like stealing 30 bases, hitting at a .300 clip or pitching in 20 winners. It would be like gaining 1,000 yards rushing or completing 20 touchdowns passes in football. It was in the fall, and Mersfelder was scheduled to go to Colorado the next week to hunt deer. He went and he killed his deer but he did a lot of thinking on that trip. He decided to form a "700 Club" of people who had rolled a 700 series, and have an annual tournament. So, when he got back, he went to work on it. After locating as many 700-bowlers as possible he set up a dinner at the old Oklahoma Club (now the Tivoli Inn), and invited all of them. So, in 1939, the first 700 Club in America was formed. It rolled along during the war years, the fifties and into the sixties. It died in 1965, but a bunch of bowlers, all owners of 700s, reactivated it in 1972. The new organization is known as the "L.C. Mersfelder's 700 Club." and hosts an annual tournament. Mike Wheeler won the 1972 meet and Jerry Beavers took the crown in 1973. E.R. "Pinky" McCan, resident pro and manager of Holiday Lanes, has been instrumental in the reorganization and tournament arrangements. McCan will host this year's meet at Holiday. Having the annual tournament is sort of a new format." advises McCan. The old club was as much social as it was competitive. Another innovation is that women are accepted into membership, now. The qualifications are slightly different, also. To qualify, you can roll a 700 in league action or on two lanes in any play against competition. The organization, which is sanctioned by both the ABC and WIBC, will hold its 1974 tourney the afternoon of Nov. 3. Beavers, the '73 champ who is president this year, advises that there will be four games across eight lanes with a handicap of 66 2/3 from 200, with the highest 73-74 average. Ed Shuba, president of the Greater Oklahoma City Bowling Council is vice-president of the 700 Club. Other officers are Jack Sanders, second vice-president, and Lois Grant, secretary.