



**MATANUSKA SUSITNA  
REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S  
CLUB**

*History*

**Legally changed name October 1, 2019 to  
MAT SU REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S CLUB Est. 1947**

MATANUSKA SUSITNA REPUBLICAN WOMEN'S CLUB ~~ BRIEF HISTORY

Written in 1985 by member Louise Kellogg

"It is too bad that volunteer organizations like the Matanuska Susitna Republican Women's club are composed of volunteers. They are usually run by officers elected on a rotating basis which gives no time to build up an experienced cadre. This often results in missing or imperfect records, as is the case with our Club. For instance, the earliest records were last seen in a cardboard box under Amy Irwins' bed. When she died, they were lost. (2014 note: This was repeated when member Gloria Tokar had been compiling Club information for a Historian report. She kept it under her bed in a box the last time we had heard. She passed away and we lost those as well.)

Some officers are chosen for their social charms, some for political savvy and some because they were the only ones who did not say "No." Few are chosen because of their ability to keep good records. By 'keep', I mean both write and preserve. As some of the Army Historians were told by the troops in the field during World War II, "We don't have time to keep records, we are too busy fighting the war."

Reasonable conjecture could probably establish the founding date for the Matanuska Susitna Republican Women's Club as 1945. I.E. In 1930 the Republican Party of Alaska was formed in Juneau, according to Tillie Reeve. It seems highly unlikely that a Republican Women's Club would have been formed prior to that.

In 1938 the Republican colonists formed a Republican Club in Palmer according to Evangeline Atwood. The stage was being set. In the early 1940s, according to Lillian Eckert's memory, our Club was formed. According to Doris McKinley's memory it was formed shortly after she arrived here in 1946. Louise Kellogg remembers it as a going concern when she arrived in 1948. It takes a little time to get these things going. Therefore 1945 is a plausible date. the Club, should it be a purely social group as are many party political clubs? Or should it be politically active? In the absence of any other politically active group in the Valley (the Republican Club which was organized in 1938 seemed

Some of the first members were: Amy Irwin, Karla Duff, Lillian Eckert, Gertrude Felzien, Sarah Moffit, Doris McKinley, Lila Newville, Mrs. M.D. Snodgrass, Mrs. Harold thuma, Myram Tunnicliff, and Dorothy Sherrod. Ina McKenzie, a good Democrat, sometimes came to our meetings because her Republican family gave her a bad time at home.

Some of the early discussions of the Club concerned the name. And the whole of somnolescent, and there was no active Election District organization), it was decided to assume both roles-social and political.

## FEDERATION

1952 In the absence of any Alaska State Federation of Republican Women's Clubs, the Matanuska Susitna Republican Women's Clubs for applied directly and

independently to the National Federation of Republican Women's Club for affiliation with it. We were accepted.

In 1957 Tillie Reeve, National Republican Committee woman for Alaska was appointed by the National Federation to organize a Territorial Federation of Republican Women's Clubs in Alaska. At her request, our Club sent two delegates and an alternate-Doris McKinley and Mary Frey and Marie McDowell-to the Territorial Convention of Republican Women's Clubs being held in Fairbanks in December of 1957 to discuss federation of all the clubs. Apparently the effort failed at that time. The clubs were still wrangling over by laws in 1962.

1962 Pat Kling, appointed from the Anchorage Republican Women's Club by Tillie Reeve to carry on as federation coordinator, was working hard in March of 1962 to get the by laws approved. A letter of March 5, 1962 to all of the Alaska clubs says: "So far I have heard only from the Matanuska Susitna Republican Women's Club. They have approved the by laws and have submitted their nominating committee's report."

Things must have moved pretty fast after that. By October 1962, the Federation of Alaska with the National had been accomplished. Barbara Dimock, president of the Alaska Federation of Republican Women's Clubs received the following letter (excerpt) from Mrs. Parks, the President of the National: "Several weeks have elapsed from our Biennial Convention in Phoenix, but the excitement of Alaska's Federation is still in the air. All of you would have been thrilled at the spontaneous outburst when it was announced that the Executive Committee had unanimously accepted your application."

## THE FAIR BOOTH

In 1949, the Fair Booth was an early project of the Club, in order that we might be of service and attract good will to the Republican name. By 1949 It took the form of standing at the Fair entrance with a card table, when the Fair was still in Palmer in the area now occupied by the Pioneer Home, and answering questions. Most of these concerned, "Where is the restroom?" We also handed out literature and maps of the Fair. M.D. . Snodgrass loaned us his ex-campaign booth which

was on its way to Mrs. Snodgrass, to become her storage shed. We kept it far too long, and constantly worried about Mrs. Snodgrass' storage problems, as did she.

With the booth we enlarged our information center, supplied drinking water and a place to rest. Our services multiplied. Inasmuch as most of our members were also occupied with duties at the Fair, such a judging, and exhibits, we turned to the Anchorage Republican Women's Club for help. A few of their members had for several years been helping us informally. The Republican Fair Booth became a joint enterprise of both clubs and we shared the rent.

Eventually, we served coffee and doughnuts, sold Republican jewelry, distributed free Republican literature, and served as a focus for increasing Republican activity on the Fairgrounds. (new note from September 2012: The Alaska State Fair awarded our Club a beautiful ribbon in 2011 for being the oldest booth there. Their date was 1946.)

## CONVENTION

1954 The Republican Convention of the III Judician Division was held in Palmer March 19 and 20, 1954. From 40-200 persons were expected and these had to be housed, fed, and accommodated with meeting places. Eisenhower stew was served. To the campaign fund of the featured speaker, Jack Coghill we donated \$50. All told, we served one hundred and fifteen diners that night, of whom thirty eight were from Anchorage. Ticket sales brought in \$272 and we made a net profit of \$104.01. At the bottom of the account page is the following notation: Motion passed at the March 9 meeting: "Before spending any of the \$104.01 consider carefully our debt to M.D. Snodgrass for the Fair Booth." I think we had some thought of building Mrs. Snodgrass a new one. The other one was quite worn out by this time.

V. Louise Kellogg

## 2019 UPDATE

October 1, 2019 we officially changed our Club name to the Mat Su Republican Women's Club Est. 1947. Our amended by laws reflected the change. All was done by the vote of membership. We then voluntarily withdrew from the Alaska Federation of Republican Women, which left just

the Kenai Republican Women's Club and Midnight Sun Republican Women's Club in the Alaska Federation. We also voluntarily withdrew our membership in the National Federation of Republican Women and both were effective October 31, 2019.