



# Chicago's South Shore Country Club (IL) (Images of America)

*William M. Krueger*

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Conceived in 1906, during an era of formal balls and Gatsbyesque lifestyles, the South Shore Country Club began as an idyllic lakefront retreat for the wealthiest of Chicago's movers and shakers. Marshall and Fox, architects of the Drake, Blackstone, and Edgewater Beach Hotels, were hired to design an opulent, Mediterranean-style clubhouse for a membership that included the Armour, Swift, Palmer, and Glessner families. The grounds provided a private stable, beach, and golf course. Tennis, horseback riding, and skeet shooting were enjoyed by guests the likes of Jean Harlow, Will Rogers, and Amelia Earhardt.

Between the first and second World Wars, a housing boom brought the development of luxury cooperative apartments and mansions to the neighborhood surrounding the club. After World War II, the new money of an upwardly mobile middle class replaced the old money of the original members. Membership peaked with the Golden Anniversary in 1956-only to decline as the 1960s brought racial and economic changes to the surrounding community. On July 14, 1974, the club held its last "members-only" event and closed the door on what some have described as "the party that lasted 68 years." The Chicago Park District now owns this once exclusive property. It has been restored to its original design and is now open to the public as the South Shore Cultural Center.

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