

## AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

by  
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On the longest day of the year, we arrived in Meadow Lakes, our retirement village in Hightstown, N.J. Would our nightmares of trying to push our way through an apartment too filled with treasures we could not bear to leave behind, come true? Or would our measurements of space and furniture prove to be accurate?

On a large piece of graph paper, we plotted every piece of furniture so that the movers, on that warm June day in 1968, could put everything in its new niche. The furniture fitted as neatly as a jigsaw puzzle. By nightfall, the boxes were all unpacked, removed, and we were at home. We had even unearthed the cake cover with the two pieces of chocolate cake which we had been saving for our final lunch in Glen Ridge. The moving van had given them such a gentle ride that they were in perfect condition. However, now we had a beautiful dining room with delectable food, and no longer needed them!

Two days later, the Meadow Lakes handyman did a meticulous job of hanging our pictures. We were settled in for life.

Were we glad? Were we sorry? We were delighted! Two and a half years have now gone by and we continue to feel that Meadow Lakes is as close to heaven as we care to be for a long, long time.

Since the end of our living room is glass, with a sliding door, we can step out, at any moment, onto our own patio or into our own garden. This garden is ours. We can plant what and where we like within our own property. We can do our own gardening as long as we are able and interested in doing it. After that, the Meadow Lakes crew will take over the job.

We still go to the dining room three times a day. We thought the novelty would wear off but it hasn't—yet! The dining room is so beautiful, surrounded as it is on two sides by glass, that we are given gorgeous vistas of trees, flowers, lakes and our graceful swans who sail majestically back and forth for our pleasure and amusement.

A hostess seats us and gives us a printed menu as in any fine hotel. We may eat alone, with friends, or we may plan a dinner party. No flurry—no worry!—we just let the hostess know how many places to set at the table. The food is delicious and varied. With constant and generous supplies of fresh fruit, we have decided that it takes less time to walk three-eighths of a mile to the dining room (through covered walk-ways which are heated in winter and air-cooled in summer) than to shop for food, cook it and wash the dishes afterwards.

There is another dividend from eating in the dining room. We greet and are greeted by a friendly, interesting and homogeneous group of people. It makes an invigorating start for the day.

Between meals, we do our “own thing” in our apartment or elsewhere or we can join organized activities in the Crafts Room—weaving, painting, ceramics, making unusual note paper with dried flowers—or we can enjoy the clear fresh air outside on Meadow Lakes’ hundred-odd acres, by bowling-on-the-green, playing Wimbledon, golf or shuffleboard. If we want to play shuffleboard, and the weather does not cooperate, there are handsome shuffleboard courts inside for us to use.

Active sports usually result in dirty clothes—and that’s made easy, too. A laundry with two washers, two dryers, two ironing boards with irons, is in each section of Meadow Lakes. We may use them at any hour, and we don’t even have to put in 25¢!

When we run out of reading matter, or we just want a quiet corner with a comfortable chair and a good light, we visit our library. Two of our residents are retired librarians and they have done a superb job of cataloguing and arranging the entire library.

The insulation of the building is so good that we do not hear anything from one apartment to the next. We don’t have to worry about our radio or TV.

Entertainment is furnished by outsiders (professional movies are shown twice a month) and by Meadow Lakes residents. There are several duo-piano teams (including Dorothy), three violinists (including Howard) and a cellist (George). The “Meadow Lakes Orchestra” plays for a Hymn Sing each Sunday evening. Musicales are

planned and they are well attended in the auditorium which seats 500. There is a large and well-equipped stage. My major contribution to the music is to accompany Howard, play a four-hand arrangement of "Stars and Stripes Forever" for an eighty-three year old "gal" who loves to play The Bones, and act as M.C. on New Year's Eve for a party of 75 or more residents.

Since the Presbyterian Church in Hightstown burned to the ground, church services have been held in the Meadow Lakes auditorium. The Nursery operates in the small meeting room. This causes some surprise when visitors to Meadow Lakes (supposedly a retirement village) are confronted with baby cribs and rocking horses.

Emergencies do arise, and the Meadow Lakes Medical Center (with M.D. and R.N. care around the clock) is prepared to go into action immediately. For example: When I stubbed my toe on the sidewalk, broke my wrist and cracked my head open, emergency treatment was given immediately at the Meadow Lakes Medical Center. Then an ambulance drove me to Princeton Hospital where three specialists (alerted by our Medical Center) were on hand to sew up my head, take x-rays and set my wrist. In less than three hours, I was back in our apartment.

From the beginning, we were convinced that this was the way to grow old happily and gracefully. Our grandchildren, however, were strongly adverse to the whole idea. Then they visited us and had a swim in our pool. That changed their minds in a hurry. Lynn, who was eight years old, really spoke for all nine of our grandchildren when she turned to her mother and said, "When can *we* move in here?"