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**"SELF HELP AND INSTITUTION BUILDING IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA,
1830-1945"**

VOLUME I

By

Pamela Annette Smoot

"A DISSERTATION"

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ABSTRACT

BLACK SELF-HELP AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, 1830-1945

BY

Pamela Annette Smoot

Black Pittsburgh is an integral part of Pittsburgh's general history, but has not been treated as such based on an array Pittsburgh histories. With the exception of Pittsburgh studies by Peter Gottlieb and John Bodnar which focus primarily on the Great Migration of blacks from the South, black urbanization, and industrialization, this neglect persists. Pittsburgh's black history goes beyond the confines of these respective boundaries, extending to similar depths of black life in the migratory cities of New York, Cleveland, Chicago, and Milwaukee as blacks struggled to develop communities of their own. Beginning in 1830, this detailed study sheds new light on the building of Pittsburgh's black community, its relationship and contributions to the city, and Black History.

The methodology used in the completion of this study included a plethora of primary and secondary source materials, government documents, theses and dissertations. Primary sources includes several manuscript collections; unprocessed papers; minutes of organizations, social service, and government agencies; oral history interviews; newspapers, newsletters, and vertical files; various types of programs; pamphlets; church anniversary souvenir booklets; photographic collections; financial, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports; and correspondence. It is from these sources that the intimate details of black Pittsburgh were extracted and the larger part of the dissertation constructed.

Several important points have resulted from this comprehensive study on black Pittsburgh. Despite the non-portrayal of Pittsburgh blacks by many scholars, the city's blacks established a solid community by the third decade of the 19th century by creating a socially organized life against the racial prejudices of whites. Second, it brings to fore issues of race, class, and gender. This study describes the formation, significance, and activities of numerous black religious, social welfare, and educational institutions; the establishment of early black business; and social and political organizations. During the early decades of the 20th century, it tells the story of the city's black leadership successfully fought for black civil rights in employment, transportation, and public places like other northern black communities. Pittsburgh's black history is as important as that of other northern urban communities and deserves a place in Pittsburgh's general history where it rarely appears.

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DEDICATION

Throughout the trials and tribulations associated with earning a Ph.D. and especially, completing this work, the doctoral dissertation is humbly dedicated to my maternal grandmother, the late Olivia “Sister” Mannings Washington, especially, Chapter Two, because she was undoubtedly an example of “noble womanhood;” my parents, Ruby Luease Washington Smoot and the late Thomas A. Smoot, Sr.; my brothers Thomas A., Timothy L., and Jamison L. Smoot whose love, patience, moral and financial support, and sense of humor enabled me to persevere; and my maternal grandfather, Samuel E. Washington, whose stubbornness would not allow me to quit, although the thought often crossed my mind.

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INTRODUCTION

"Black Self-Help and Community-Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1830-1945," is the title of this dissertation. The history of black Pittsburgh, particularly, in the Hill District, remain untold by historians as their attention has focused on the Great Migration, black urbanization, and industrialization. Black life in Pittsburgh goes beyond the confines of these respective boundaries, extending to similar depths of black life in the migratory cities of New York, Cleveland, Chicago, and Milwaukee, as blacks struggled to develop communities of their own.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide a detailed study of black Pittsburgh highlighting the black settlement, black women, the formation of black organizations, businesses, and institutions, politics, black leadership, and black life, in general, all of which have gone unnoticed or given scant attention by scholars. Using the three themes in Afro-American history--struggle, resistance, and survival, this study depicts and analyzes the contributions of blacks in developing Pittsburgh's black community. Specifically, "*Black Self-Help and Community Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*" sheds new light on this city and presents a broader picture than the recent studies of historians, Peter Gottlieb and John Bodnar, and the earlier studies of sociologists, Ira De Reid and Abraham L. Epstein.

In this present work, is a seven chapter narrative interspersed with analysis. Chapter One, "*Black Pioneers: When We Wuz Called Free People of Color The Early Years*," deals with the first real settlement of blacks in Pittsburgh and the efforts of the city's early black

leadership, John Vashon, a black abolitionist, who organized an anti-slavery society; Lewis Woodson, an African Methodist Episcopal minister and founder of the Lewis Woodson School; John Peck, a wig maker and abolitionist; and Martin Delany, publisher of Pittsburgh's first black newspaper, *The Mystery* to establish a community of their own. It focuses on the creation of viable community organizations, black institutions, and the early roles of black women in helping to sustain the same. Also of importance is the struggle for basic black civil rights, the role of black Pittsburghers in the Civil War and the development a social life among the city's blacks which eventually leads to a black middle-class.

Chapter Two, "*A Noble Womanhood: the Black Women's Club Movement in Pittsburgh*," discusses the history and significance of black women's clubs and their impact on the black community. This includes their ability to mobilize the black masses, direct the lives of young black women and mothers, their intense struggle for civil and women's rights and more importantly, the strategies used to "lift as they climbed." Pittsburgh's black club women engaged politics, education, social service, and self-help. To enhance their initiatives, these women formed clubs on the local, county, state and national levels where they demonstrated their leadership skills.

The Young Women's Christian Association was significant to the lives of white girls and women beginning in the mid-1860s, but soon became viable in those of black women and girls as 'colored' YWCAs emerged during the first decade of the 20th century. Chapter Three, *Black Women and the Pittsburgh YWCA*, explores the history of Pittsburgh's 'colored' YWCA, identifies the women who made it possible, the struggles of the city's black female leadership to make it a successful endeavor including the fight against racial discrimination

within their YWCA's local and National bodies. Although this discussion should be included in Chapter Five as one of Pittsburgh's black social welfare and recreational institutions, the wealth of information warranted a chapter of its own.

"Black Female Leadership in the Pittsburgh Urban League and Black Female Migrants," comprises the fourth chapter. It examines the roles of four black women who were responsible for many of the Pittsburgh Urban League's successes. Focusing on a close examination of the lives of these same women, is in part, the result of a cry for more gender studies by scholars of women's history. Black women volunteers as well as salaried employees of Pittsburgh's Urban League are important for a number of reasons: they demonstrate black female leadership "outside" the Black Women's Club Movement; the impact they had on migrant women which effectively changed their lives and those of migrant families to Pittsburgh; and the successful coalition-building with and cooperation white social service institutions and businesses in the city.

Chapter Five, *"Struggling Hard, But Struggling Strong, Black Institution-Building, A Necessity,"* concentrates on black self-help efforts of individual black Pittsburghers to provide numerous social service, recreational, and financial services to the city's blacks, because they were forced to react to white racism and discrimination. Pittsburgh's black leaders, both male and female, established various types of institutions relative to the needs of the black community including homes for the aged, orphanages, working girls homes, a hospital recreational and housing facilities, and banking institutions, eminent to the survival of the race. The need for these institutions became exceedingly great at the onset of the Great Migration. focuses on the need to establish Negro hospitals to provide better health

care, financial institutions for economic stability, and social services institutions to support the indigent. The organizational and individual efforts of the city's blacks, many of them professional, presented an opportunity for dialogue on ways to improve the quality of black life which eventually, produced tangible results.

During the second wave of the black migration from the South to Pittsburgh, black Pittsburghers engaged local and state politics; became involved in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association; civil rights protests became commonplace as blacks began to use the courts to end black injustice, employment discrimination, and segregation in public places; and the formation of organizations such as the Pittsburgh Housewives Cooperative League a campaign by to encourage the Negro community to patronize Negro businesses, and the initiatives of the Young Negro Consumers Cooperative League in providing instruction to Negroes on how to manage their money and understand their buying power, and Citizens Coordinating Committee to deal with the economic issues of Pittsburgh's black community. In short, Chapter Six, *"Politics and Protests,"* examines the initiatives of Negro voters to participate in the electoral process and their struggle to exert some control over the activities in the Pittsburgh community.

Sporting events were a large part of Pittsburgh's black history which includes the Negro Baseball League. *"Black Baseball: Pittsburgh's Claim to Fame,"* tells the story of the Pittsburgh Crawfords and Homestead Grays, two of the most recognized Negro League Baseball teams. An integral part of the black community, these teams created employment, entertainment, and impacted the city's black economy. The Crawfords and the Grays, however, were not the only baseball teams in Pittsburgh as the Negro Interplant Baseball

League, organized by the Pittsburgh Urban League, played a significant role to black industrial workers and their families. The League, comprised of Negro employees of Pittsburgh's steel mills and manufacturing plants, was created with hopes of deterring southern black migrants from illegal activities by providing organized recreation. This chapter delves into the significance of these teams and their importance to Pittsburgh's black community.

This particular study makes several contributions to African-American History. First, recent debates among historians have pointed to the need for more local studies on African-American communities and organizations. Kenneth Kusmer's "*The Black Experience in Urban America*," in *The State of Afro-American History: Past Present and Future*, (1986) edited by Darlene Clark Hine, also expresses a need for additional local studies, because earlier studies written by sociologists and not historians, were pathological, and often poorly researched. This research on black Pittsburgh definitely responds to this need.

Second, while studies on black women are increasingly on the rise, no gender studies exist on black women in Pittsburgh, who were a viable segment of the community as individuals and within the movement among black club women. For example, they responded to the complicated social welfare demands of the community by establishing and supporting black social welfare institutions designed to uplift the race through education and self-help. Black women in Pittsburgh also established businesses and participated in the same reform movements as white women which included temperance and suffrage.

Third, during the period 1875-1915, a critical period in the development of Pittsburgh's black history, few, if any, scholarly works have been produced. Most are post-

1915, studies and deal with the pains of the Great Migration: living conditions such as, overcrowded housing; crime; poor health; residential segregation; and industrial employment. Surely, the lives of black Pittsburghers represent a reputable significance to the history of black Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh in general, as they settled mainly in the Hill District, but also established communities on the North Side; in East Liberty, Homewood, Lawrenceville, and Beltzhoover.

This study is important, because it demonstrates that blacks in Pittsburgh initiated the same kinds of social welfare and self-help programs, and economic development strategies as other cities with large concentrations of blacks. "Black Self-Help and Community Development Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1830-1945," contributes to the fields of African-American, urban, social, and women's history, as well as open new avenues for comparative studies on local African-American communities.

Research for this dissertation includes a variety of primary materials, secondary sources and government documents. In the proposed discussion of black women, the Frances Harper League Papers, will be an asset to this project. Mrs. Brooks was a charter member of the Frances Harper League, Pittsburgh's first black women's club, established November 20, 1894. The papers in this collection which cover the period 1894-1950, contain 108 documents totaling 3,145 pages and include minutes, reports of the League's City-County and Pennsylvania State Federations of Colored Women's Clubs, the League's constitution and by-laws, financial records, correspondence, letters, newspaper clippings, speeches, biographical sketches of League members, pamphlets, programs, essays, *National Notes*, the monthly magazine of the National Association of Colored Women, the *Women's*

Era Newsletter, the official organ of the Negro Federation of Afro-American Women, and black and white still photographs. Similar records are available for the Harriet Tubman Guild, the Lucy Stone Civic League, but not of the same magnitude.

The Urban League was a major organization in northern and mid-western cities, particularly, during the migration. In Pittsburgh, the Urban League was established in 1918, and provided a wide range of social services to blacks including employment, training, and education. Its papers are housed in the Archives of the Industrial Society, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They contain an abundance of valuable information about Pittsburgh blacks and various aspects of their established black community. Lists of black institutions, black businesses, organizational histories, 'colored' recreational facilities, prominent blacks, and blacks in the professions, all appear in these records.

The Pennsylvania State Archives is also important as a source for information. In its African-American collection are materials on blacks in Pittsburgh: *"The Negro in Pittsburgh, 1939-1941," "The Early Negro Community of Pittsburgh, 1815-1861," "The Later Community, 1863-1940," "The Church School and Press," "The Abolition Years 1820-1861,"* and a newspaper clipping file from local newspapers on Negroes between 1841-1941. The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh's Pennsylvania Department maintains a limited vertical file on black Pittsburgh, but is a viable asset to this work. ✓

Three categories of secondary sources to be used in the completion of this project are: case studies on black Pittsburgh, urban studies on local black communities, and studies on black women. Peter Gottlieb's *Making Their Own Way: Southern Migration to Pittsburgh,*

1916-1930, John Bodnar's *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians and Poles, in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*, *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh*, by Abraham L. Epstein, *City at The Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh* edited by Samuel P. Hays and *Social Conditions of the Negro in the Hill District of Pittsburgh: Survey Conducted Under the Direction of Ira De Reid, Director of Research, The National Urban League*, help provide the framework for the task at hand.

To enhance this dissertation, several secondary sources on local urban black communities will be useful. They include *We ask only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community in Evansville, Indiana* by Darrel E. Bigam, and *Life for us is What We Make It: building the Black Community of Detroit, 1915-1945*, by Richard W. Thomas will be used as models for Black Pittsburgh. *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930*, by Kenneth Kusmer, *Black Milwaukee: the Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, by Joe William Trotter, Gary B. Nash's *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*, Leonard P. Curry's *The Free Black in Urban America 1800-1850, Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the 19th Century* by David Katzman, and *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, by Allan Spear provides additional insight to this study.

Because black women played a major role in the development of Pittsburgh's black community, it is important to respond to many of the gender questions. Therefore, Gerda Lerner's *Black Women in White America: a Documentary History*, Jacqueline Jones' *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present*, *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, *Black Women in American History*:

from Colonial Times Through the Nineteenth Century, Black Women in American History: the Twentieth Century, all edited by Darlene Clark Hine, and *Black Women in the Middle-West: the Michigan Experience* by Darlene Clark Hine, Shirley Yee's *Black Female Abolitionists*, were used.

Government documents on all levels of government aided in this research and include include property deeds, mortgage books, tax statements, ordinances, resolutions, judgements, census records, and minutes of Pittsburgh's City Council meetings. These items were obtained from the Prothonotary's Office, Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds Office, City Clerk's Office, the Allegheny County Courthouse. *Smull's* and *The Pennsylvania Manual* provided detailed information concerning election statistics by race, counties, municipalities, districts, and wards, and election returns, were located in the Government Documents Department, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh. Overall, these government documents help us to understand the composition of black Pittsburgh and its neighborhoods, determine property ownership, observe the manner in which city government responded to the endeavors of black organizations, and look at some of the legal problems facing Negroes.

Local newspapers provide a wealth of information for this project, especially *The Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the oldest black newspapers in the United States. It serves as a road map leading to the development of Pittsburgh's black community and ruler by which to measure its progress, successes, and failures. Other Pittsburgh newspapers significant to this study were Martin R. Delany's, *The Mystery*, first published in 1846; *The Daily Dispatch*; *The Pittsburgh Sun*; *The Pittsburgh Press*; *The Pittsburgh Post*; *The Pittsburgh Telegraph*; *The Gazette Times*; and *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. *The Colored American*,

an antebellum black newspaper, and William Lloyd Garrison's, *The Liberator*, a Boston abolitionist newspaper, were extremely useful in describing the players and activities of Pittsburgh's early black community.

The major problem facing this project is, for unexplained reasons, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, an invaluable source for this dissertation, was not collected by local repositories and universities, or the Library of Congress between 1913-1922, and therefore unavailable. This represents a critical period in Pittsburgh's black history the Great Migration of southern black migrants to Pittsburgh catalyzed a third phase of the city's community development and self-help initiatives during World War I. For example, economic ventures became a reality with the establishment of more than a hundred black businesses; numerous religious institutions and organizations; Garveyism spread to Pittsburgh; mass black mobilization became commonplace as blacks struggled to support their own institutions; and black political participation was on the rise as blacks, under the leadership of Robert L. Vann, owner of *The Pittsburgh Courier*. The inaccessibility of *The Pittsburgh Courier* somewhat "diminishes" the opportunity to chronicle the intimate details of this period.

In conceptualizing this part of the study, it is important to understand two points: "Black Self-help and Community Building in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1830-1945," is not specifically about the Great Migration, but the city's reaction to it. For this reason, it is organized into two parts, which are voluntary and involuntary self-help and community development initiatives, i.e., those created as a result of racism and discrimination. Also, little time was spent examining this southern exodus to Pittsburgh, because this historic work is an attempt to explore other important areas of black life in Pittsburgh.

In terms of research and sources, this project has great potential and stands to be well documented. Despite the ten year absence of *The Pittsburgh Courier* and the problem identifying many of the women in this study, (because they often used the first and last names of their husbands), the difficulties encountered are minimal and none too familiar as I have conducted other research projects on black Pittsburgh. In an attempt to fill the void, a number of oral history interviews were conducted to reconstruct the past as well as complement the hard data. In doing so, the author utilized the black church network, tapped on senior citizens residing in more than 25 hi-rise apartments in Pittsburgh and surrounding areas, and gathered information from various other segments of the community.

Difficulties in research projects, particularly those conducted within African-American communities often occur, and attributed to the fact that most records about African-Americans are in private hands and not centrally located. In other words, there is a scarcity of African-American records in local repositories which necessitates travel to at least four archival facilities. My personal interest in black Pittsburgh is no secret, but the source from which it stems cradles within the unscratched surfaces of its history by scholars and lack of research conducted. I, therefore, consider this dissertation a challenge, but confident in my ability to eloquently tell the story of black Pittsburgh's self-help and community-building initiatives.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh is located at the confluence of the Allegheny, and Monongehela Rivers which meet to form the Ohio River. All three rivers were primary transportation arteries making Pittsburgh a “commercial entrepot” during the early 19th century. Pittsburgh is a producer of at least six manufactured goods: textiles, engines, steamboats, tobacco products, paper, and glass. Pittsburgh’s economic foundation was based on iron and steel, but also known for other mineral resources including coal, limestone, and iron-ore.

With more than thirteen rolling mills and approximately thirty foundries, Pittsburgh prospered financially and attracted newcomers of all nationalities, especially, blacks and European immigrants of Irish, Russian, Scottish, Jewish decent, and Germans during the Civil War. Most European immigrants were concentrated close to Pittsburgh’s central business district which was accessible to its many mills and factories. Pittsburgh blacks resided in basically four areas: Downtown near Third Avenue, Arthursville, Hayti, and Allegheny. Pittsburgh’s other ethnic groups were scattered throughout the city.

During the 1830s Pittsburgh’s racial climate varied in relationship to free people of color. A portion of the city’s whites were pro-slavery, a fragment thought of free people of color as inferior; some were not phased by their presence; and others were aggravated by their increasing numbers to the city creating job competition. Pittsburgh’s free people of color, despite the attitudes of whites, attempted to deal with their own social, economic, educational, and political woes as they engaged the building of an infrastructure for the development of a close knit and productive black community.

Chapter 1

Black Pioneers: When We Wuz' Called Free People of Color

Pennsylvania was a free state. Two legislative actions in the Pennsylvania General Assembly prohibited slavery: the Act of 1773, which limited the importation of Negroes, most of whom were purchased in the West Indies, Barbados, Jamaica and Antigua; and the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1780, which provided that children born to slaves after the passage of this law be given their freedom at the age of twenty-eight.¹ In addition to this legislation, agitation against slavery by the Society of Friends, the creation and spread of abolition societies throughout Pennsylvania, and an increased hostility by white inhabitants against southern slavery, also contributed to the anti-slavery cause in the State. Prior to 1780, blacks had absolutely no rights.

Despite the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania in 1780, it still existed when slave masters in Greene, Fayette, and Montgomery Counties refused to free their slaves. In Pittsburgh, situated in Allegheny County, slaves were often brought by emigrants from Virginia and Maryland, but the Pennsylvania General Assembly enacted additional legislation restricting slavery. It declared that any slaves brought into the state by residents or persons intending such, become immediately free.² Although these slave owners

¹Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania: Slavery-Servitude-Freedom*, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1911), p. 9; Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery in the Free States 1790-1860*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 3; James P. Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania, Private, Public Elementary and Higher*, (Lancaster, PA: Inquirer Publishing Company, 1886), p. 246.

²During this particular period, Pennsylvania blacks were prohibited from raising their offspring; were without access to the courts, because of their race; and all black males were banned from military service.

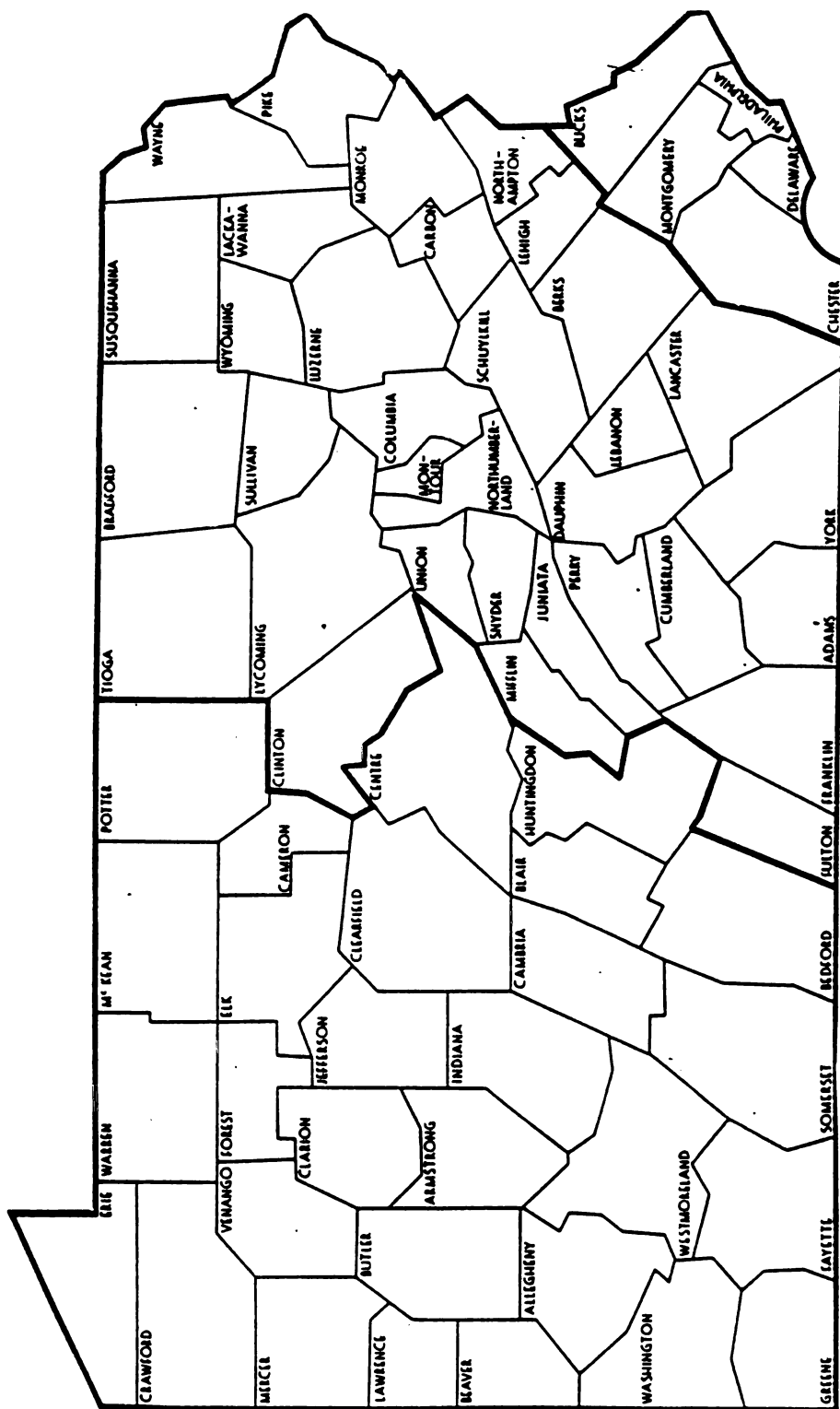


Figure. 1. Map of Pennsylvania Counties

disobeyed the law and some even continued to advertise for slaves in Pennsylvania's various newspapers, they could no longer be purchased. The actions taken by the State to enforce the laws broken by slave owners in the above mentioned counties is unclear.

Pennsylvania, because of its close proximity to the South, became a fortress of refuge for a large number of fugitives, particularly, from the bordering slave states of Virginia and Maryland. In addition, the Underground Railroad which originated in Pennsylvania (1787), had more routes in proportion to the area than anywhere else in the North, making it possible for a steady stream of fugitive slaves to find permanent freedom.³ A majority of these runaway slaves found freedom in seven Pennsylvania counties: Bucks, Philadelphia, Chester, Lancaster, Montgomery, and York. A smaller population of Negroes settled in Allegheny County, particularly, Pittsburgh which is our focus.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the establishment of Pittsburgh's antebellum community and examine the forces which made it possible. Concentrating on black leadership, early institution-building, the establishment of black businesses, black civil rights, and black organizations, I argue that although Pittsburgh's antebellum black community, smaller than those of Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, that its black leadership successfully provided for the black community's needs.

While slavery, largely a southern institution by the end of the second quarter of the 19th century, free black society took shape in the North, as thousands of free Negroes

³Charles Blockson, *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*, *Pennsylvania Heritage* (January) 1984, p. 118.

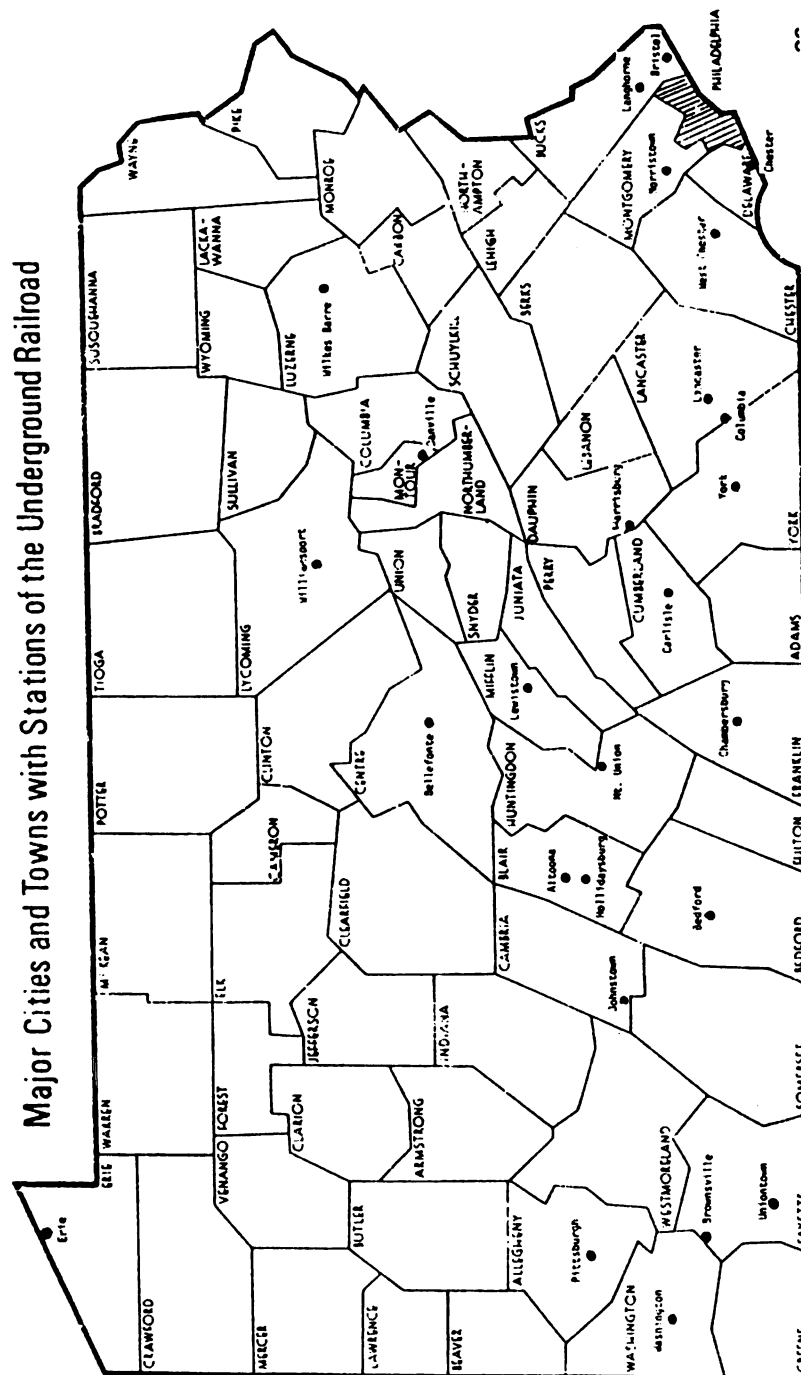


Figure. 2. Map of the Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania

obtained their freedom mainly by running away.⁴ By 1830, 319,000 free Negroes lived in the United States clustering in small urban communities.⁵ Historian John Hope Franklin explains that “free Negroes were inclined to be urban, because of greater economic opportunities and social activities.”

Early Settlement

The first evidence of blacks in Pennsylvania was as early as 1644, but it was not until 1830, that a substantial number of blacks began to settle. In Pittsburgh, there were 453 free people of color in Pittsburgh, 191 males and 262 females.⁶ This early black population was comprised of indentured servants, free blacks, and fugitive slaves. Although many of them were from other Pennsylvania counties, particularly, Cumberland and Franklin, a majority of the other blacks were from Virginia and Maryland.

According to the United States Census, thirteen black families resided on Third and Market Streets near the Monongehela River, where accessibility to docks and river traffic made settlement feasible, especially, for employment. Most of these blacks were self-employed as coopers, boatmen, stevedores, and washerwomen. Others were employed by whites as servants, grounds keepers, waiters, and custodians in white business establishments. In addition to this settlement, blacks tended to establish themselves in two

⁴ John Oliver Horton, *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p. 2.

⁵ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African American People*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), p. 217.

⁶ Samuel Hazard, “*Census of Pittsburg City, Allegheny, Armstrong, and Bedford Counties, June 1, 1830*,” *Hazard’s Register of Pennsylvania*, May 7, 1831, p. 311.

Table I.

***Free Colored Males in Pittsburgh
By Age and District
June 1, 1830***

District	Under 10	10-24	24-36	36-55	55-100	100
North	4	9	5	0	2	0
South	21	32	34	3	4	0
East	9	7	8	4	1	0
West	10	9	18	7	4	0
Total	44	57	65	14	11	0

Total Free Colored Males: 191

Table II.

***Free Colored Males in Pittsburgh
By Age and District
June 1, 1830***

District	Under 10	10-24	24-36	36-55	55-100	100
North	4	11	5	3	3	0
South	28	53	31	14	4	0
East	8	9	11	8	0	0
West	18	20	19	8	4	1
Total	58	93	66	33	11	1

Total Free Colored Females: 262

Source: Samuel Hazard ed., "*Census of Pittsburg City, Allegheny, Armstrong, Bedford Counties, June 1, 1830,*" *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*.



Figure. 3. Map of Pittsburgh

other areas: Arthursville where some of the city's prominent blacks resided and Allegheny (not formally a part of Pittsburgh).

Black Leadership

In northern urban cities across the United States, the black population continued to increase as did the need to create established black communities within American Society. This was necessary, because the daily demands of blacks was on the rise which called for schools to educate black children; black churches for spiritual growth; community organizations to create social activities and stimulate community development; and black businesses to build an economic base. However, the task of community-building could not be achieved without a strong black leadership.

Black leaders were extremely important to black life. They were the providers of the essential support for institutions, the nurturers of services to the community, and those who worked to sustain Negro institutions. Black leaders were important, because they sought in diverse ways to advance the race by overcoming racial barriers and oppression that pervaded American society.⁷ Of equal importance, were their efforts toward moral betterment, intellectual growth, and social intercourse which formed blacks into a fragile web of community.⁸

Black leadership in many northern communities including Philadelphia, New York,

⁷Horton, p. 86.

⁸Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 215.

Boston, and Pittsburgh, consisted of all males. In the past, slavery attempted to deny black manhood and made it impossible for a man to freely express himself, his opinions, control his own life, and make his own decisions.⁹ However, northern freemen changed this perception when they became the leaders in the building of urban communities and many of them were encouraged by the words of Boston black activist, Maria Stewart. In a speech to Negro Bostonians in 1831, she stated: "It is important that successful free men of color become assets to the Negro community and contribute to the struggle of Negro people."¹⁰

Pittsburgh's antebellum black leaders were: John B. Vashon, a prominent barber, hairdresser, and owner of City Baths; John Peck, a wigmaker and barbershop owner; Lewis Woodson, and African Methodist Episcopal minister, school teacher, barber and operator of barbershops in the city's leading hotels; Martin R. Delany, an editor, physician, and publisher of Pittsburgh's first black newspaper, *The Mystery*; George B. Vashon, the son of John Vashon, an attorney, an first black graduate of Oberlin College who later, became President of Avery College, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania; and David Peck, the son of John Peck, the first black graduate of Rush Medical College, Chicago, Illinois.¹¹ They were the individuals who planned and executed strategies, and responded to the problems of education, civil

⁹Marilyn Richardson, *Maria Stewart: America's First Black Woman Political Writer*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. xii; Horton, p. 82.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹¹Walter M. Merrill, *Letters of William Lloyd Garrison*, Volume III, August 1847, p. 512-513; *Letter to Helen E. Garrison from William Lloyd Garrison*, August 13, 1847, p. 509; "Documents: Letters from William Lloyd Garrison to John B. Vashon," XII (*Journal of Negro History*) 1927, p. 33-40. Lewis Woodson was a heavy set man and the son of Virginia slaves who purchased their freedom. When his parents migrated to Ohio, he received his early education from Quakers.

rights, and the establishment of black institutions, and organizations. Most of these men were from various parts of Virginia and some were former slaves while others were free people of color. For example, Lewis Woodson was the son of Virginia slaves who purchased their freedom and John Vashon, the son of a white Indian agent and a black woman, was free.¹²

Black Education

Free people of color were avid for an education and were afforded the opportunity for such during the early 19th century. In every community, free people of color, were studying with an apparent belief that education would solve some of their problems. It would elevate and bring them some measure of economic success; provide for individual advancement in a non-agricultural society; train potential leaders; strengthen the bonds of the black community and heighten its self-consciousness.¹³ David Walker, born a free man in North Carolina, asserted, “education would go toward enabling blacks to take the initiative for reversing their fortunes in this country.” For these reasons, the black school became a key institution and contributed significantly to the building of northern black communities.

The attitudes of northern whites concerning the education of blacks varied. On the

¹²Ann G. Wilmoth, "*Toward Freedom: Pittsburgh Blacks, 1800-1870.*" 9 *Pennsylvania Heritage*, p. 16.

¹³Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America 1800-1850*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 147, 172; Also see Loretta Funke, "*The Negro in Education*," (*The Journal of Negro History*) 1920, pp. 1-21. Funke provides a discussion on the establishment of early black education beginning in the 18th century and the enactment of laws opposing black education, especially, in the mid-western states.

one hand, whites favored black education. Robert Drury's article, "The African Free Schools of New York," (1970) tells us that most schools established for black children were the efforts of Manumission Societies, individuals, and philanthropists. They played a major role in black education by establishing the African Free Schools in New York, the first in 1789, in a house on Clift Street. Individual efforts by whites to educate blacks were also prevalent. For example, Pittsburgh's Reverend John Herron, a white Presbyterian minister, and two of his associates, James Wilson and Nathaniel Smith in 1817, opened a school for blacks in a carpenter shop on Smithfield and Diamond Alley.¹⁴ In 1818, Robert Smith opened a free school for black children in Pittsburgh and was later paid a small stipend by overseers of the poor.¹⁵ M.B. Lowerie, a white abolitionist, who took black pupils into his school on Hay and Seale Way.¹⁶ In Cincinnati, Lane Seminary students instructed 100-300 black children and 40-50 adults at night during the 1830s. The interest of abolitionist whites in providing for the education of black children spread rapidly in northern cities.

On the other hand, both southern and northern whites were often fearful about the

¹⁴Records of the Works Progress Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 1933-1942, "*Ethnic Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh*," p. 15. An important point made in this survey relative to Pittsburgh's first colored school was that it lacked funds for educational supplies, especially, reading materials. As a result, the *Bible* was used to teach black children to read and write. The school founded by Herron was described by historian Leonard Curry as Pittsburgh's "earliest educational opportunity offered blacks."

¹⁵Leonard Curry, p. 151. As schools for black children continued to struggle financially, the 1820s brought a sense of relief, when they were supported by the Pittsburgh Sunday School Association.

¹⁶Lowerie's School was initially established for white students, but accepted black children, because he disagreed with the exclusionary policy barring them from attending white schools. Though white school directors often insisted that the schools for their children were overcrowded, Pittsburgh's black leadership suggested that another story be added onto the current school building to accommodate colored children.

education of blacks. This type of elevation would probably eliminate his inferiority and give him racial equality; encourage political participation; and enhance his desire to improve his standard of living. There were, however, northern whites who would not interfere with the education of black children as long as the schools were segregated. In Philadelphia, “whites were not so adamantly opposed to the education of the Negro as they were about separate schools for white and Negro children.” An elected group of commissioners decided black and white children should not attend the same schools. It was generally conceded by both the colored and white people of Pittsburgh that it was out of the question for colored children to be sent to the white schools.¹⁷

Black leaders and their respective communities were not idle on the subject of black education, and while embracing those schools established by whites, they refused to depend solely on their benevolence to educate black children. Black churches contributed to the education of black children by providing day schools devoted to secular education, because educational opportunities for blacks were few.¹⁸ In Philadelphia, for example, black churches contributed to the training of black youth through Sunday Schools and weekday church schools, usually directed by ministers. David Katzman's *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the 19th Century*, (1973) tells us that Detroit's black churches, such as the Second Baptist Church, utilized their basements to house colored schools. Through education, blacks were making preparation to become an integral part of American society.

¹⁷William Daniel McCoy, *History of Pittsburgh Schools to 1942*, Volume II, 1837-1855, p. 48 .

¹⁸Leonard Curry, p. 193.

In Pittsburgh, two schools were established for the education of blacks: The Lewis Woodson School and the school organized by the African Education Society. In 1831, Lewis Woodson, a native of Columbus, Ohio, founded his school and officially opened its doors in Little Bethel Church, Miltenberger's Alley. With a curriculum of reading, writing, and ciphering, informal classes were held during the day for colored children and adults at night. For advanced students, with previous schooling, Woodson designed an advanced reading course. Although few students paid tuition, his salary, disbursed by the Negro community, was \$150.00 annually.¹⁹ Martin R. Delany, Woodson's first student, walked sixty miles from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania (Cumberland County), to attend Woodson's school.²⁰

To further meet the educational needs of the black community, black leaders also formed the educational organizations. Whereas free people of color in Philadelphia formed the Augustine Society (1817), a literary club and established a seminary (1822), Pittsburgh blacks organized the African Education Society (1831) in John B. Vashon's home. The purpose of the AES was to eliminate "ignorance, the sole cause of the present degradation of people of color in the United States."²¹ This organization consisted of elected officers and

¹⁹James P. Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania: Private and Public Elementary and Higher*, (Lancaster, PA: Inquirer Publishing Company, 1886), p. 254.

²⁰Dorothy Sterling, *The Making of An Afro-American, Martin Robinson Delany, 1812-1885*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971), p. 82; Wilmoth, p. 6.

²¹"*Colored Philanthropists: They Form an Organization in Pittsburgh As Early As 1832*," *Pittsburg Commercial Gazette*, June 28, 1886, n.p. Vertical File, Pittsburgh Nationalities, Groups, Blacks, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.; Samuel Hazard, "*African Education Society*," *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, IX (January-July) 1932, p. 116 ; IX (February) 1832, p. 115.



Figure. 4. Lewis Woodson

a Board of Managers.²² Meetings of the African Education Society were held on the third Monday for its annual session and the second Monday of each month for monthly meetings. It opened its school for black children in the Front Street Methodist Church and, like the Lewis Woodson School, was financially supported by Pittsburgh's free people of color.

Throughout 1832, both the Lewis Woodson and the African Education Society Schools, were separate entities. However, in 1833, these schools were merged by their black teachers: John Templeton, a graduate of Athens College, Athens Ohio, and Mathilda Ware both of Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Franklin County). Minute financial resources which plagued most early black schools sometimes forced black leaders to pool its resources together to effectively accomplish their goal. In Pittsburgh, this also became necessary.

As black Pittsburghers struggled to maintain their school and educate their children, Governor George Wolf, in 1834, signed the Public Education Act #102 establishing the common school system throughout Pennsylvania. The law stated that all children from eight to sixteen years of age were subject to school training with the exception of working children over fourteen.²³ Under this Act, blacks legally had the right to be admitted to any public

²²The officers of the African Education Society were: John Vashon, president; Job B. Thompson, vice president; Lewis Woodson, secretary; and Abraham D. Lewis, treasurer. The Board of Managers included Richard Bryans, William Greenly, Samuel Bruce, Moses Howard, and Samuel Clingham. Their responsibility was to "transact the business of the AES; purchase books; raise money by subscription or other means; purchase suitable ground to erect a suitable building to accommodate and educate "colored" youth; and a hall to be used for the society." See *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, February 9, 1832, p. 116.

²³Lila V. North, "*The Elementary Public Schools of Pittsburgh*," *Charities and the Commons*, 21 (March 6, 1909), p. 1175. This article also has photographs of the earliest public schools in Pittsburgh.

school at which they presented themselves.²⁴ It determined school districts by the population, making them responsible for furnishing an adequate number of schoolhouses, and educating all school-age children within their geographical limits when requested by the parents, guardians, or friends of school-age children.²⁵

However, this did not include Pittsburgh's black children. Contrary to James P. Wickersham's contention that "colored people were finding the establishment of the public school system sufficient for their purpose," the law provided no specific provisions for the education of black children, no public funds, or facilities for black public schools. Pittsburgh blacks as tax payers and property owners, responded to the exclusion of their children from adequate schoolhouse quarters. Black leaders on December 18, 1835, petitioned the Directors of the Public Schools:

We the colored citizens (sic) whose names are whereunto subscribed do sincerely petition to them as we have paid tax for the said schools, and yet received no benefit therefrom (sic). As we are not the most of us able to school our children although we have a house and teacher numbers cannot come on account of not being able to pay the teacher. Therefore we do sincerely hope that the authority in this city be pleased to let the diferent (sic) wards of the citty (sic) be kept at our house in First Street between Wood and Smithfield.²⁶

²⁴Edward J. Price, Jr. "*School Segregation in Nineteenth Century Pennsylvania*," XLIII (*Pennsylvania History*), April 1976, p. 124. The Educational Act #102, passed by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, was also referred to as the "free school law."

²⁵Ann G. Wilmoth, "*19th Century Education in Pittsburgh, Allegheny City: Path To Equality?*," in *Blacks in Pennsylvania History*, ed., David McBride, (Pennsylvania: Research and Educational Perspectives, Historical and Museum Commission, 1983), p. 3.

²⁶This petition was signed by Thomas Norris, Samuel Johnston, A.D. Lewis, and George Gardiner. It was forwarded to the Directors of the Second Ward School District. There were a total of eight such districts and one township (Pitt Township). In addition to the districts, the schools were located in four wards: North, East South and West.

More than a year had elapsed and the inquiry by Pittsburgh's black leadership concerning a school for black children was ignored by School Directors. However, prominent whites in the city expressed an interest in the education of black children by forwarding a letter to School Directors, but it is unclear if any of Pittsburgh's blacks, asked them to intervene. The letter dated January 30, 1837 read:

The undersigned believe that the laws of this state providing for the education of the children of the poorer classes of her population at the public expense contemplate no distinction between white and colored children. They, therefore, respectfully ask whether colored children will be received into the schools under your care and if not whether any appropriations of money will be made for the support of such schools for colored children as are now in existence and which are now sustained chiefly, if not entirely by tuition.²⁷

The letter written by Avery, Laughlin, and Church also went ignored, so they sent another letter to the School Directors in February 1837, inquiring if any action had been taken on the request from the city's blacks.

On February 17th the Directors, Benjamin Bakewell, Thomas Fairman, John Caldwell, and Samuel Darlington, met and decided that "it was expedient to establish an African School" and agreed to find accommodations for it. They requested that free "People of Color furnish the Board of Directors with statistical information concerning the number of [colored] children, age, addresses, and parents names."²⁸ The action by and pressure imposed upon the School Directors brought some sense of satisfaction to the city's blacks and

²⁷McCoy, p. 175. The white citizens who wrote this letter on behalf of the colored citizens of Pittsburgh were: Charles Avery, a philanthropist, Presbyterian minister, and businessman; Samuel Church, a businessman; and Alex Laughlin, a merchant. For the complete text of this letter *see* McCoy.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 160.

to their white allies after having long awaited a favorable response.

The intentions of School Directors were reflected in the four newly erected schools for white children in each of the Pittsburgh's wards during the 1840s, while the newly found accommodations for black children were in a rented basement of a brick structure. John Vashon, John Peck, John Templeton, and other black leaders protested that the accommodations were too small and unsuitable. Emma Lou Thornbrough in *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900: A Study of a Minority*, (1985) tells us that "black schools were under great disadvantages, unsuitable buildings, and uncomfortable furniture." All too often were blacks subjected to this type of arrangement which were deeply embedded in racism.

Black leaders expressed their dissatisfaction to School Directors in October 1849, when they hired an attorney, George W. Layng, to represent them in their right to obtain public funds and facilities under the law.²⁹ During this period, there were no black attorneys in Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh blacks, through a collective effort, gathered whatever funds they could in a door-knocking campaign in the black community to pay their attorney. They were willing to fight for their rights and the fair and equal education of black children.

After three years, there were no new developments on the lawsuit. The School Directors sought to appease black citizens by appointing a committee of Colored School Board Directors which was responsible for "all things to promote the interest of the [colored]

²⁹McCoy, p. 194. Laying met with 14 of 54 white school directors where a committee was appointed to devise a plan to satisfy Pittsburgh's free people of color relative to the issue of a colored school. More importantly, was the fact that their rights to equal education based on the Pennsylvania State Constitution were violated.



Source: *History of Allegheny County, PA*, Philadelphia: L.H. Evert Company, 1876, p. 127.

Figure. 5. Charles Avery

Charles Avery was born in Westchester County, New York, December 10, 1874, and was one of numerous children. He moved to New York City where he apprenticed himself to a druggist while attending night school to obtain a formal education. In 1812, Avery relocated to Pittsburgh, opened a drugstore and invested money in two industries: cotton and copper. Avery was described as a constant giver to the poor, young men of good character, itinerant ministers, teachers and literary institutions. Avery, an abolitionist and adversary of the Fugitive Slave Law, assisted fugitive slaves on the Underground Railroad. Upon his death, he provided approximately \$300,000 for the establishment of a Negro school named in his honor, Avery College. Its staff consisted of both Negro and white teachers, Avery A.M.E.Z. Church was later organized in the same building.

school.” Given the circumstances surrounding the accommodations of the colored school, the first item on the committee’s agenda was to find other quarters.

The school moved three times between 1851-1853: in 1851, the colored school moved to the engine house on Wylie Street; on September 20, 1852, to the Arthur Street Church; and later, to the Wesleyan Church where School Directors rented space for \$5.50 per month.³⁰ In each case, the quarters were still unsuitable. Conditions of the colored school became so terrible that it was eventually closed September 29, 1853. Plagued by the same problems of Indiana’s “colored” schools, it was overcrowded, had no blackboard, poor lighting, and uncomfortable furniture.

It was not until two years after the Civil War that the Central Board of Directors decided to actually deal with the issue of a colored school. On June 11, 1867, four lots were purchased on Miller Street and a two story brick building was erected. Since the city’s black leadership and community hired an attorney which successfully sued the State of Pennsylvania for not allotting the same funds for the erection of a Negro school as for white ones, it took eighteen years to see the promising results. After this success, a number of subsequent Negro schools were established. For example, the first school supported by the city was presided by Professor Samuel Neale.³¹

³⁰McCoy, pp. 184, 187.

³¹Thomas Ewell, “*Public Schools, Business, and Professional Life, Colored American Magazine*, p. 173. Ewell, in the 1980s established Ewell’s Evening School, a Preparatory School of English Studies in East End. Also the Mission of St. Benedict the Moor, a black Catholic mission, had a parochial school on Overhill Street with two Negro teachers: Mrs. Eloise Walker and Sadie Black Hamilton.

Protest and Resistance

Free people of color in the North led lives of protest through anti-slavery societies; the Underground Railroad; and direct confrontation. They were no longer going to accept or tolerate the racist behavior of whites which excluded them from schools, employment, and the polls, because free people of color were, in fact, free. Whites, particularly, southern whites, formed the American Colonization Society (1817) and proposed to colonize slaves in Africa (on a voluntary basis) or “any place Congress might deem expedient.”

The ACS began as the American Society for Colonizing People of Color in the United States, founded December 1816. The principle initiative for the formation of this organization came from New Jersey’s Robert Finley, a Presbyterian cleric and led by Presbyterian ministers in Washington, D.C.³² Historian William Robert Fogel points out, especially in the 1820s, that Presbyterian ministers often preached Independence Day sermons endorsing African colonization. The colonization scheme was a means of dealing with the increasing numbers of free blacks and manumitted slaves whom many southern whites felt were responsible for recurring slave insurrections.

Whites favoring colonization of Negroes argued that it was the only humane solution to the Negro problem as the following excerpt shows:

³²William Robert Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), p. 252.

As long as they remained in the United States public opinion would bar them from the polls, the jury box, the white man's schools, church pews, workshops, and dining tables. The Negro would have to contend with an obviously superior knowledge, wealth, and influence, a competition to which he is unequal.³³

Many of its white supporters included wealthy white men of the North and South; major office-holders such as John Calhoun; James Monroe; Abraham Lincoln; Henry Clay, president of the ACS during the late 1840s; and Bushrod Washington, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.³⁴ The American Colonization Society was endorsed by the slave states of Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia; and the Federal Government which purchased Cape Mesurado and Liberia, as a means of eliminating free people of color from the United States.

In Pittsburgh, prominent whites engaged the colonization movement by organizing the Pittsburgh Colonization Society, August 20, 1835. A public notice read: "Pursuant to public notice, a large meeting of citizens favorable to African colonization and opposed to the dangerous and visionary measures of certain associates calling themselves abolitionists,

³³Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 21. Litwack provides an informative discussion on the American Colonization Society. See pages, 20-24. Also see John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African American People*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), p. 168.

³⁴Layn Saint Louis, "American Colonization Society," in *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, eds., Jack Saltzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornell West, Volume 1 (New York: Simon and Schuster and Prentice Hall International, 1996), pp. 111, 112. Mesurado was located approximately 225 miles south of Sierre Leone, West Africa. Other possible sites for the colonization of Negroes were: Haiti and Sherbo Island also near Sierre Leone.

met at the Hall of the Young Men's Society."³⁵ During a subsequent PCS meeting August 27, 1835, five resolutions were passed two of which included: Resolved that we believe the colonization upon the coast of Africa or elsewhere of the free blacks and emancipated slaves from within the United States, to be wise, safe, and practicable scheme of benevolence, and that we will aid in its application and advancement; and that free blacks of our own state...should be encouraged to emigrate to the colonies upon the coast of Africa or elsewhere.³⁶

Abolitionism was unpopular among many northern as well as southern whites who feared that ending slavery and promoting racial equality would result in racial amalgamation.³⁷ Not all Pittsburgh whites favored the colonization of Negroes. For example, a letter from the *Pittsburg Christian Witness*, a local anti-slavery newspaper, to the Pennsylvania Legislature read:

³⁵Samuel Hazard, ed. "*Colonization*," *Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, Volume XVI, July 1835-January 1836; September 6, 1835, (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes) p. 155. During this meeting, a committee was appointed to write the Constitution for the newly organized Pittsburgh Colonization Society, the auxiliary to the Young Men's Colonization Society of Pennsylvania. The founders of the PCS were: Thomas Bakewell, James Veech, H.D. Sellers, Wilson McCandless, John M. Snowden, and M.B. Miltenberger.

³⁶Hazard, "*Colonization*," p. 156. A Committee of twelve persons were appointed to solicit subscribers: G.R White, Dr. Thomas Miller, W.H. Lowrie, H. Parry, D.M. Hogan, D.C. Harker, C.J. Totten; H. Childs, H.D. Sellers, William McCandless, J.M. Snowden, and M.B. Miltenberger. The officers were the Honorable R.C. Grier, president; Walter Lowrie, secretary; G.R. White, treasurer.

³⁷Shirley Yee, *Black Female Abolitionists: A Study in Activism 1828-1860*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), p. 137.

Application being about to be made to your honorable Body for the appropriation of funds to sustain the Colonization Society in removing colored citizens to the coast of Africa, your memorialists (sic) do earnestly, conscientiously entreat your Honorable Body not to make any such appropriation from the Peoples Treasury of this free state.³⁸

Free people of color were willing to fight those forces which sought to take away there freedom. James Forten, a free man and part of Philadelphia's black intelligentsia, organized a meeting of the city's blacks regarding the American Colonization's Society's scheme. They were adamantly oppose to their proposed colonization and responded, "their ancestors, the first successful cultivators of America entitled them to participate in the blessings of its luxuriant soil."

In Pittsburgh, black leaders called a meeting of colored citizens who met at the A.M.E. Church. Led by John B. Vashon an Richard Bryan, they registered their protest against colonization by writing a series of seven resolutions. An excerpt from one of the resolutions read: "...as citizens of these United States with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, do mutually pledge to each other, our lives, fortunes, and sacred honor not to support a colony in Africa nor Upper Canada, nor yet emigrate to Hayti."³⁹ The resolutions brought forward at this meeting also sent the following message to the city's free people of color who dared to contemplate emigration: "...we are determined not to be cheated out of our rights by the colonization of men, or any other set of intriguers...and we do

³⁸*The Colored American Magazine*, December 1, 1837, p. . A copy of this letter was reprinted in the *Colored American Magazine*, one of the most widely read communications among northern blacks. It advocated race pride and consisted of columns relative abolitionism, community organization, and the importance of Negro education. There were at least two other anti-slavery newspapers in Pittsburgh: *The Saturday Evening Visitor* and *The Spirit of Liberty*.

³⁹Louis R. Mehlinger, "*The Attitudes of the Free Negro Toward African Colonization*," *Journal of Negro History* (July 1916), p. 215.

consider every colored man who allows himself to be colonized to Africa, or elsewhere a traitor to our cause."⁴⁰ They also informed the Pittsburgh Colonization Society that "should they desire to move, they would apprise them."⁴¹

Free people of color in northern urban communities began to organize anti-slavery societies of their own in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Vashon, Woodson, Delany, and A.D. Lewis formed an Anti-Slavery Society (1833), to work for the destruction of slavery and promote the welfare of the race.⁴² It was designed to (1) bring anti-slavery lectures to the city and (2) to provoke the formation of new abolitionist societies to fight the institution of slavery. Part of the Pittsburgh's Anti-Slavery Society mission was to thwart the plans of the American Colonization Society. The Pittsburgh Anti-Slavery Society had a membership of approximately 180 persons including three prominent white citizens, J.D. Gazzam, a physician; Charles Avery, a philanthropist; and J.L. Pressley, a Presbyterian minister.

During the Revolutionary Period blacks in Pennsylvania voted to a considerable extent and those in Allegheny County had done so until their population increased. Whites began to fear the possibility of black political leadership and dissipation of black inferiority. However, in 1838, black males were disfranchised by an amendment to the Pennsylvania

⁴⁰Curry, p. 235; *The Liberator*, September 17, 1831, p. 1. *The Liberator*, an anti-slavery newspaper, was founded by William Lloyd Garrison, a noted Boston abolitionist.

⁴¹Mehlinger, p. 287.

⁴²Pittsburgh's Anti-Slavery Society was organized in 1833, one year after William Lloyd Garrison founded the New England Anti-Slavery Society and the same year as the American Anti-slavery Society whose agenda was geared toward racial equality for blacks.

Constitution by the word “white” males.⁴³ Blacks protested their disfranchisement, because they owned property, paid taxes, and obeyed the laws like other citizens. They considered disfranchisement oppressive and the political annihilation to those deprived of it.⁴⁴ In Pittsburgh, black leaders, unsuccessfully petitioned the State Legislature to amend the Constitution to remove all restrictions on account of color.⁴⁵

With the disfranchisement of black males came discrimination in employment also the result of an increasing black population. Job competition between blacks and whites created another problem in northern urban communities as whites began to limit blacks to various kinds of employment, paid low wages or were completely excluded from employment opportunities. Free people of color became the victims of mob violence by intolerant whites in Ohio, Philadelphia, St. Louis, New York, Boston, Providence, and Pittsburgh, but they fought back. In retaliation to the resentment held by prejudiced whites numerous race riots occurred during the 1820s-1830s.

In spite of mob violence by hostile whites, free people of color continued about their daily lives which included assisting fugitive slaves. Four northern cities: Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Detroit, were locations where they could obtain help from blacks. In participation and protest, black leaders in Pittsburgh twice in the Spring and Summer of

⁴³Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker, eds. *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840-1865*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 123. Article III read: In the Elections by the citizens every white freeman of the age of twenty-one years, having resided in this state one year, and two years paid a state or county tax which shall have been assessed at least ten days before the election shall enjoy the rights of an elector.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁵Ernest J. Wright, p. 31.

1847, intervened as several fugitive slaves were apprehended in Pittsburgh by their masters. Inhabitants of Pittsburgh's black community forcibly liberated them and expeditiously dispatched them to Canada.⁴⁶ Also in the 1840s and 1850s, some of Pittsburgh's free blacks encouraged and provided the means by which to free slaves from several slave owners passing through the city.

Two other incidents involving the actions of Pittsburgh's free people of color are also worth mentioning. In 1855, Lloyd Boyd, a fugitive slave, employed as a janitor in one of Pittsburgh's hotels, was apprehended by slave catchers. As word spread throughout the black community that slave catchers were in motion, they gathered at the St. Lawrence Hotel on March 9th, surrounded the slave catchers and freed him. He was later sent to Canada through Pittsburgh's Underground Railroad.

In a separate incident, Martin R. Delany was sued for libel, for slandering Tom Fiddler Johnson, a Negro slave catcher, who assisted white men in capturing fugitive slaves in Pennsylvania. During a hearing in the Allegheny County Court of the Common Pleas, March 1847, Delany was found guilty and fined \$150, in addition to \$25 in court costs. Pittsburgh's black community, Delany's attorney, William E. Austin, local newspapers, and white abolitionists enraged about the excessiveness of the fine, launched a campaign to gain public support against the court's decision. They successfully petitioned Pennsylvania's Republican Governor, Francis Skunk, who had the fine rescinded, but Delany was still responsible for the court costs. This was also a demonstration of both blacks and whites

⁴⁶Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 231.

coming together for justice without regard to race.

Historian Charles Blockson in "*A Black Underground Resistance to Slavery 1833-1860*," says that the beginnings of Underground Railroad activity and fugitive aid occurred in 1833 coinciding with the development of black communities in Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ En route to Canada, fugitive slaves often found shelter in the homes of prominent blacks, hotels, barns and churches. In Pittsburgh, there were several "stations" on the Underground Railroad, mainly in Arthursville and Hayti, but one of the most notable was the home of Thomas Arthur Brown.⁴⁸

The Brown home was known among northern blacks for its hospitality and culture, rest for travelers, and refuge for runaway slaves.⁴⁹ Thomas Brown was a native of Frederick, Maryland who had been held as a slave by relatives, but in freedom, he became a steward on a steamboat. Little is known about his wife Frances Jane Scroggins' except that her mother had been a slave. The Brown home, in Arthursville, protected, fed, clothed, provided numerous disguises and assistance to fugitive slaves to the next station on the Underground Railroad. This was only one of many examples of the conclusions drawn by historians James Oliver Horton, Charles Wesley, and William Still against the argument that abolitionist whites were the main conductors on the Underground Railroad.

⁴⁷Charles Blockson, "The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Heritage*, 9 (January) 1984, p.

⁴⁸Charles Blockson, "*A Black Underground Railroad Resistance to Slavery*," *Pennsylvania Heritage*, p. 32.

⁴⁹Records of the Works Progress Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 1933-1942, Ethnic Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh, "*The Early Community*," p. 49. Thomas Brown, the father of Hallie Q. Brown, was employed as a steward aboard a steamship.

As slaveholders or employed agents appeared more frequently in northern urban communities to reclaim their lost chattel, a mass meeting of black men from Pittsburgh and Allegheny was organized in June 1850. At was this meeting, a resolutions committee formed with Martin Delany as chairman, concluded that blacks were no longer safe from being kidnapped or re-enslaved. It was the opinion of black leaders that "Pittsburgh whites conspired with pro-slavery forces to return them to bondage." In response to these unfortunate possibilities, black leaders unsuccessfully appealed to the federal government for their protection.

Pittsburgh's free people of color also resisted the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. As a result of a rising dissension between northern whites and free people of color, and the southern demand for strengthened fugitive slave legislation, white Americans devised, yet, another law restricting the rights of free and enslave blacks. The Fugitive Slave Law, signed by President Millard Fillmore, September 18, 1850, made it legal to recapture fugitive slaves and return them to their respective southern masters. It empowered federal officers to call upon all citizens to help enforce its provisions and imposed fines, imprisonment, and civil damages for concealing or rescuing a fugitive.⁵⁰

Blacks in Pittsburgh actively participated in the issues affecting them and free people of color everywhere. The dread and injustice wrought by the Fugitive Slave Law provoked and indelible display of community among Pittsburgher as slave catchers an owners appeared

⁵⁰Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), p. 157. Harding provides an informative discussion on the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the strategies used by free blacks to protect themselves from slave catchers. He also explains that many northern and southern whites as well as white politicians were opposed to this "racially motivated legislation."

in northern communities to reclaim their fugitive slaves. Pittsburgh Negroes pledged to die before being enslaved or re-enslaved and carried guns for their protection. Community involvement in responding to the task of sending runaway slaves to Canada, in petitioning the federal government for protection under the law, and in supporting Martin Delany against the unfairness of the judicial system, all contributed to the building of Pittsburgh's black community.

Black Religious Institutions

Given the tumultuous lives of blacks, religion became a survival mechanism for them in slavery and freedom. Therefore, no black community northern or southern would be complete without religious institutions. Black churches unified the community through organizations and activities such as, missionary societies, clubs, prayer meetings, and day nurseries. They served to disseminate news or information quicker and more effectively than any other mechanism or institution in the black community.⁵¹ The black church provided hope among its member in the face of adversity, moral improvement and opportunities for full participation in civil and political activities, and economic issues.⁵² Except for the

⁵¹W.E.B. DuBois," *"The Function of the Negro Church in America,"* in *The Negro Church in America*, eds. Hart M. Nelsen, Raytha L Yokley and Anne K. Nelsen, (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 80. This is an excellent source for subjects related to the Negro church, because it contains a series of articles including *"The Negro Ministry in the Mid-West," "The Kingdom of Father Divine," "Black Catholics in America."* These articles were written by some of the best scholars in the field of religion, Joseph Washington, Benjamin Mays, and James H. Cone.

⁵²David W. Willis and Richard Newman, *Black Apostles at Home and Abroad: Afro-Americans and the Christian Mission from the Revolution to Reconstruction*, (Boston: G.K. Hall Company 1982), p. xviii.

family, the black church became the most important institutions among blacks.⁵³ The black church in Pittsburgh became significant to its antebellum community for the same reasons as black communities everywhere.

The first separate denominations formed by blacks in the United States were Methodists, because of their opposition to slavery and ongoing conflicts between black and white Methodists. For example, Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, founded Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (1794) in Philadelphia when they were physically thrown out of the white Methodist church for disobeying segregation rules which included seating and participation in the sacraments. Historian Clarence Taylor, in *The Black Churches of Brooklyn*, (1994) states that an increase of black membership in the white, Sands Methodist Church caused great alarm among white parishioners. To thwart black attendance, white church officials charged blacks an excessive fee of ten dollars per quarter to worship in their church. As a result, black membership declined.

The process of religious separation was to eliminate racial discrimination, harassment, and conditions endemic to society in which black churches existed. In separate churches there would be no restrictions in seating or participation in the sacraments, but an independence not otherwise afforded them in white churches. Historian Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya in *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, (1990), contend that “the movement for separate churches was the first effective stride toward independence by blacks.”

⁵³Clarence Taylor, *The Black Churches of Brooklyn*, 1994, p. 8.

African Methodist Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh

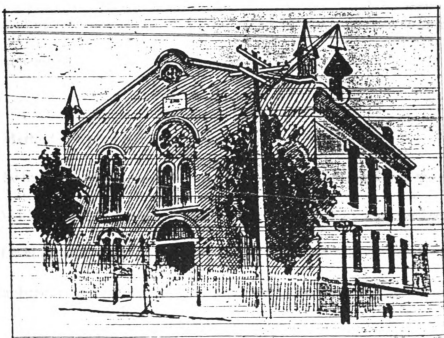
As in other northern black communities, the first churches organized by Pittsburgh blacks were Methodist. Pittsburgh's first "colored" church was called the African Methodist Episcopal Church and established by three freedmen: James and George Coleman, and Abraham Lewis in 1808.⁵⁴ Like the formation many black churches it began with an established Sunday School for children, and later, attended by eight adults. The Colemans and Lewis petitioned the Baltimore Conference of the A.M.E. Church for a minister and Reverend David Smith was sent to Pittsburgh. Located in the city's business district on Front Street at Smithfield, the church was formally organized by Bishop Paul Quinn of Philadelphia.⁵⁵

By the 1840s, this church which changed its name from the Wylie Avenue A.M.E. Church to Bethel, became a positive force in the black and church communities.⁵⁶ It hosted the 5th Pittsburgh Conference of the A.M.E. Church in Pittsburgh, September 5th with

⁵⁴"*We Celebrate Our Heritage 1808-1898*," *Bethel A.M.E. Church Anniversary Souvenir Booklet*, p. 1.

⁵⁵Paul Quinn, the son of Catholic parents, was born in the British Honduras in 1788. He later, immigrated to the United States and resided in Pennsylvania where he worked as a lumberjack. Quinn's religious experience was under the tutelage of a Methodist clergyman, Samuel Collins of West Chester, Pennsylvania and received his license to preach in 1812. After attending an A.M.E. Conference in Philadelphia, Quinn became an itinerant preacher in Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. For more information see, Daniel Payne's, *A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*, New York, Reprint (1968) and Charles Smith's, *A History of the A.M.E. Church*, New York, 1968.

⁵⁶On April 10, 1845, a fire swept through Pittsburgh's business district destroying most of the area's homes, businesses and churches causing an estimated \$8 million in damages. Those suffered by Bethel was \$2,200. It was difficult for the A.M.E. church to recover the loss, so its members formed a building committee to solicit donations to rebuild the church. The building campaign began in October 1846.



Source: Rollo Turner Collection
Figure. 6. Bethel A.M.E Church
Wylie and Elm Streets

Morris Brown, Bishop of the Convention, presiding.⁵⁷ The 8th General Conference of the A.M.E. Church College.⁵⁸

During the last third of the 19th century, other African Methodist Episcopal churches were emerged in Pittsburgh. As the number of Pittsburgh Negroes affiliated with the A.M.E. denomination, these churches emerged in various parts of the city. Brown Chapel in Allegheny City (1837) and St. Paul's, Southside (1845), supplied the religious needs of Negroes residing in these areas. Siloam A.M.E. Church, the only such church in East End, was founded in 1886 and began with informal gatherings in various locations including shanties, schoolhouses, carpenter shops, and a flour mill.⁵⁹

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The independent church movement among blacks continued with the establishment of the A.M.E.Z. Church when New York Bishop Frances Asbury suggested separate church services for black and white congregants. This suggestion was the result of four factors: a large number of blacks joining the John Street Methodist Church; a general lack of seating;

⁵⁷ *The Colored American*, August 29, 1840, p. 2. This A.M.E. Conference included: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri. The purpose of the convention was to make plans for 1841.

⁵⁸ "*We Celebrate Our Heritage, 1808-1988*," p. 1; *The High Points: Chronicle of the Negro in Pittsburgh, Bicentennial Celebration, 1758-1958*, Western Pennsylvania Research and Historical Society, October 1958, p. 1.

⁵⁹ *St. James A.M.E. Church Anniversary Souvenir Booklet*, (year) *Pittsburgh, PA*, p. .Twenty-four people chartered this church: James Ray; Alexander Saunders and wife; Stanton Brown; Charles and Mary Ford; William Wright; Reuben Banks, Ellen banks, Emma Alexander; Joseph Ashfield; Nancy Forsythe; Pap Banks and wife; Lizzie Deems; Mary Hardin; Pap Terry; Mrs. Taylor; Sadie Rageans; Sam Finny; Cassie Warfield; and Henrietta Stevenson.

an overcrowded Negro section in the church; and overt racism. In 1796, Peter Williams, a former slave and employee of John Street Methodist Church, organized the African Chapel for black worship services, because they did not have the same privileges as white congregants. The withdrawal of Negroes from the John Street Methodist Episcopal Zion Church led to the establishment of the A.M.E.Z. Church.⁶⁰

Pittsburgh's first African Methodist Episcopal Zion church began when a group of Christians met in Homewood. In the Spring of 1871, it was formally organized in the home of Robert Reed and Reverend Pithkins served as its first pastor.⁶¹ It affiliated with the A.M.E.Z. Conference in 1872. Several years later, Stephen Duncan, a storekeeper purchased a one-room dwelling on Susquehanna and Dumferline Streets. Under the pastorate of Reverend Adams, the church relocated to the corner of Dumferline and Tioga Streets to a structure called, "The Lecture Room" which was donated by one of Pittsburgh's wealthiest families, the Mellons.

Black Catholics, Pittsburgh

As Pittsburgh blacks established themselves as Methodists, a separate congregation of black Roman Catholics emerged. Historian Leonard Curry tells us that, Negro Catholics

⁶⁰ John Hope Franklin, p. 102. Two of the first A.M.E.Z. church bishops were George Collins and Christopher Rush. Although they had built a solid foundation for a new Negro denomination, both the Episcopal and Methodist church officials refused to ordain A.M.E.Z. Church elders.

⁶¹ "*Homewood A.M.E.Z. Church Historical Sketch, 1871-1996*," p. 1. The first meeting of these people occurred in the home of George Little. The founding families of this church were: the Littles; Reeds; Owens'; Morrisons; Poles; Johnson; and Alexanders.

were virtually unheard of in the United States prior to the Civil War, because the predominant religious tradition among the slaves and descendants in the United States, was evangelical Protestantism.⁶² Furthermore, Catholicism was the less tolerant of the religious practices of Africans, but many slaves were evangelized to basically to protect them against brutal treatment from their masters. Even so, not many free blacks were attracted to Catholicism. Albert Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*, (1978) recorded this slave testament: "We all supposed to be Catholics...but lots don't like that 'ligion. We used to hide behind some bricks and hold church ourselves. Catholic preachers from France won't let us shout and the Lawd done said you gotta shout it you want to be saved. That's in the Bible."⁶³

However, the Catholic church impressed several black observers, since it extended equal privileges to blacks and permitted no segregated seating arrangements. Between 1839-1855, four white Catholic parishes were established in Pittsburgh and one separate congregation of black Catholics, called the Chapel of Nativity.⁶⁴ It was organized by (white) Reverend Robert A. Wilson, in a frame hall on Smithfield Street and blessed by RT.

⁶²Curry, p. 190. For more information on black Catholics, see Loretta M. Butler, "Catholic Church," in *Black Women in America: an Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 226-228.

⁶³Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: the Invisible Institution in the Antebellum South*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 272.

⁶⁴O.M. Walton, *Story of Religion in Pittsburgh Area*. Authorized by the Committee on Religion of the Pittsburgh Bicentennial Association, 1758-1958, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 28. Four of the Catholic parishes listed by Walton were: St. Michael's, (1846); St. Peter's, (1850); First Passionist Monastery in the United States, (1853); and Church of St. Paul of the Cross, (1855). Walton does not mention the Chapel of Nativity in his work, although the diocesan records clearly show that it was formed prior to any of the Catholic churches in his discussion. Also see Leonard Curry, p. 190.

Reverend Michael O'Connor, an Irish priest, June 30, 1844.⁶⁵ No records exist revealing the names of its members or size of the parish.

By 1845, Pittsburgh's black Catholics became uneasy, because of rumors allegedly spread by Presbyterian ministers, that (white) Catholics favored slavery and were secretly plotting the seizure of blacks in the city. Moreover, they had not forgotten that Presbyterian ministers initiated the colonization movement against Negroes. Father Wilson was accused of being a slave agent in disguise, declaring he would seize his parishioners and betray them into bondage. Black Catholics, "frightened out of their wits," deserted Pittsburgh's first Roman Catholic Church.⁶⁶ In other words, the Chapel of Nativity dissolved in less than one year.

Black Presbyterians, Pittsburgh

A group of black Presbyterians in Pittsburgh was the latest of the Protestant denominations to blossom. Although the preaching, formality of the church service, and paternalism of Presbyterian church officials, blacks were attracted to this denomination, because like black Catholics, they were not relegated to segregated seating. Gayraud S. Wilmore in *Black Religion and Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African American People*, (1990), the same independent spirit that impelled black Baptists

⁶⁵Reverend William F. Stadelman, *St. Benedict's Church: Beginnings and Growth of the Colored Catholic Parish, Overhill Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 1844-1821*, Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 1; *Fahnestock's Pittsburg City Directory for 1844*, p. 61.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 1.

and Methodist to separate from whites led to the organization of Black Presbyterians and Episcopalians.⁶⁷ In a statement by a black Presbyterian, the racism prevails: I have been a brother of the Presbytery, with them (sic) for 15 years—but I am a colored man...they hate me for it...I may walk throughout their sanctuary and unless I sit against the wall or go into the Negro pews, they have not a seat for me.⁶⁸

The number of black Presbyterian congregations was small as were black Catholics with the first being organized in Philadelphia as the First African Church (1807). It was led by Reverend John Gloucester, the pastor and a former slave, who worked as a missionary under a white Presbyterian minister in Tennessee.⁶⁹ Other black Presbyterian churches soon emerged in New York, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh.

In Pittsburgh, a congregation of black Presbyterians was organized in the Sixth Presbyterian Church in 1867, when the Ohio Presbytery appointed a committee to consider the claims of colored people to the organization, after they petitioned to establish a Presbyterian church. Reverend Elliott E. Swift conferred with James H. Bond, Lewis Green, Hezekiah Anderson, and Alfred Dunlap in organizing a Presbyterian Mission among colored

⁶⁷ Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African American People*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 90. For more information on black Presbyterians see Sydney Alstrom, *The Religious History in America* and Lincoln, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*.

⁶⁸ *The Colored American*, March 18, 1837, p. 2.

⁶⁹ Andrew E. Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966), p. 32-33. Also called the First African Church of Philadelphia, this church was organized with twenty-two members.

people in Pittsburgh and Allegheny.⁷⁰ Hezekiah Anderson thought it would be good to start a colored church in the area to bring people together.⁷¹ The first service was conducted in June 1867, but the church was not formally organized until January 12, 1868, with fourteen charter members.⁷² Between 1868-1872, they held church services at Miller Street Schoolhouse.

Henry Highland Garnet, became the first pastor of what was to be called the Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church located in Arthursville.⁷³ Presbyterians emphasized education among its ministers and Garnet, one of very few black Presbyterian ministers, was hired in keeping with this trend. In 1870, after solidifying Grace Memorial's foundation, Garnet resigned and was replaced by Reverend Charles Hedges, under whose leadership, the church bought a lot and built a church at 74 Arthur Street. The erection of Pittsburgh's first Negro Presbyterian Church was completed in 1873.

⁷⁰*Centennial, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1868-1968, Souvenir Booklet*, October 27 1968-November 1, 1968, p. 4.

⁷¹Ellen Perlmutter, "*Revived Church Celebrates 125 Years in Hill*," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, undated, Vertical File, Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁷²The charter members were: Elias Edmonds; Hezekiah Anderson; Louisa Bowman; Mary Jane Hughes; W.L. Miller; Robert W. Bell; Richard A. Hall; Nelson A. Groom; Frances Williams; Alfred Hawkins; George Galloway; James H. Bond; Mary Jones; and Louisa Galloway. Edmonds and Anderson were elected as the churches' ruling elders.

⁷³Henry Highland Garnet was one of the country's most renowned abolitionist and considered the radical precursor to Frederick Douglass. Born December 23, 1815 in New Market, Kent County, Maryland, Garnet was a descendant of a kidnapped African chief from the Mandingo ethnic group. He was educated in the Free African Schools of New York and his religious training at Canaan, New York. Garnet's religious inspiration was from the Reverend Theodore Weld, the pastor of the first Negro Presbyterian Church located in New York. See "*Henry Highland Garnet*," *The Journal of Negro History*, Volume 13, 1928, pp. 36-52. While in Pittsburgh, Garnet was also president of Avery College.

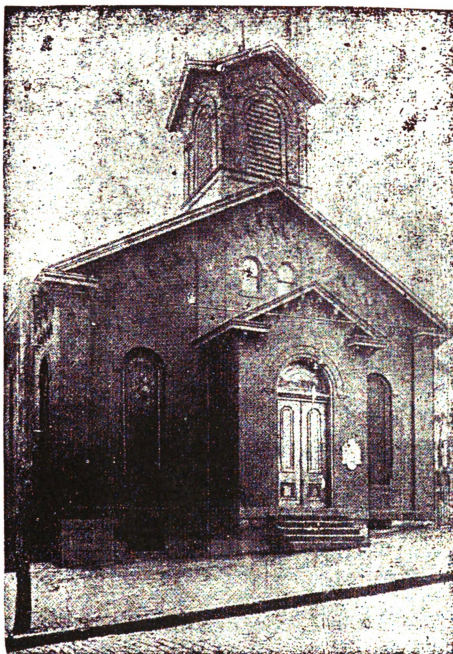


Figure. 7. Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church

While black Baptist congregations organized in Boston (1805), New York (1807), and Philadelphia (1810), there were no black Baptist congregations in Pittsburgh prior to the Civil War, but there was one in Allegheny, the First Colored Church (1861). It was organized when sixteen Negroes were excommunicated from (white) Sandusky Street Baptist Church relative to the use of china communion cups for white congregants and tin cups for blacks.⁷⁴ Pittsburgh's first black Baptist church was the Ebenezer, organized in 1874, when ten Negro Christians gathered for what started out as a weekly prayer meeting held each Wednesday night at the home of Mary A. Kendell.⁷⁵ As the intensity of these gatherings increased, as did the intensity of their prayers, the church was organized.

Members of Ebenezer made their church home in the vacant (white) Fourth Avenue Baptist Church, downtown Pittsburgh, and on August 10, 1875, installed Reverend R. Henry Marshall as its first pastor, selected the Deacon and Trustee Boards. Two years later, the Sunday School was organized with six persons: Reverend Marshall; Isham A. Carter; Andrew Carter, Bessie Foster and her two children; the church was accepted into the Fellowship of Regular Missionary Baptist Churches; in 1880 the Pittsburgh Baptist

⁷⁴ *The Negro in Pittsburgh*, Records of the Works Progress Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 1933-1942, p. 8.

⁷⁵ Pamela A. Smoot, *The History of a Black Church: The Ebenezer Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1875-1975*, M.S. Thesis, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN, 1983, p. 2. The founders of Ebenezer were: Zonway Jackson; Isham A. Caaarter; Madison Epps; Paul Cableton; John Evans; John Richman; George A. Kendall; Eliza Fisher; and Mary A. Kendall. Reverend R. Henry Marshall was the church's first pastor. In 1882, they adopted the name of "Ebenezer meaning "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Association.⁷⁶ During the last decade of the century, Ebenezer build the first church edifice owned by black Baptists in Western Pennsylvania on four lots purchased for \$1,000 on the corner of Miller and Colwell Streets, Hill District. It became a community-oriented church which held a series of entertainments and picnics for Pittsburgh blacks. On July 18, 1898, for example, Ebenezer had a picnic at Idlewild Park. In advertising the event, the church distributed hand bills to all of Pittsburgh's black churches and those in McKeesport, Braddock, Wilkinsburg, and Sharpsburg.⁷⁷ The following year, it established a Beneficent Committee to help the Foreign Mission Board.

Subsequent black Baptist churches were established in Pittsburgh during the late 19th century. Central Baptist Church (1891) was the result of a split from Ebenezer Baptist Church over communion practices. Similarly, in 1878, Tabernacle Baptist Church was formed when a schism in Metropolitan Baptist Church caused a church "split."⁷⁸ As black Baptists, "we often multiply as we divide." Other newly formed black Baptist churches

⁷⁶Souvenir Book Committee, *"Four Score years of Service of the Ebenezer Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,"* (Pittsburgh: Pernell Printing Company, 1955), p. 1. Membership in the Pittsburgh Baptist Association meant Ebenezer was eligible for financial assistance either in loan or grant for church related matters. See Pittsburgh Baptist Association, Report, *"Baptists, Black/White,"* December 2, 1976, p. 2.

⁷⁷*Minutes, Ebenezer Baptist Church, April 6, 1898 and June 29, 1898*, Ebenezer Baptist Church Archives, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, p. . The Picnic Committee which consisted of W. A. Johnson; R.A. Brooks; William Albert; Martha Davis; Lucy V. Thomas; M. Woolridge; Sophia Maxwell; Ella Johnson; Mary E. Pryor; Mary Mason; had 800 tickets printed and a prize was awarded the church member selling the most tickets. Transportation to the picnic was 90 cents for adults and children 5-12 years old, 55 cents and a deposit was required.

⁷⁸Tabernacle Baptist Church was organized on July 4, 1878 with thirty-seven members and a Reverend Robinson as its first pastor. The church was first located on Federal Street, Allegheny and later, Howard and Jackson Streets. Two of its early black ministers were: Reverend A. Lewis and J.C. Taylor.

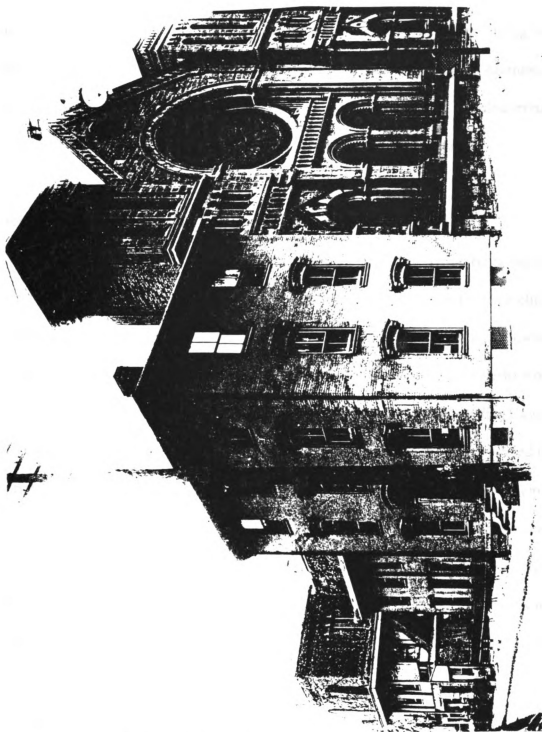


Figure. 8. Fourth Avenue Baptist Church

included Shiloh; Carrone Street Baptist Church; South Hills; Jerusalem; Victory; and Good Hope. The bulk of the city's black Baptist churches, however, were formed during World War I as in most other migratory cities. For example, Macedonia, Corinthian, Monumental, Sixth Mount Zion, Mount Ararat, and at least twenty other churches of this denomination emerged to accommodate Pittsburgh's growing black religious population.

Black Episcopalians, Pittsburgh

The Episcopalians were the "late bloomers" of Pittsburgh's Protestant denomination. During the late 1800s, several blacks concerned about the social isolation of their children and segregated religious settings they experienced, pushed for the establishment of a separate mission for their needs. In 1875, Sadie Black Hamilton contacted Bishop Kerfoot of the Episcopalian Diocese of Pittsburgh to make the request. He responded by sending Reverend W.F. Floyd to Pittsburgh to establish a mission among the colored people which led to St. Cyprian's Mission. Its first services were conducted in Trinity Church's Parish House.

Like many of the city's early black churches, St. Cyprian's congregation moved several times. For example, it moved from the Parish House to a building on Wylie Avenue to the Church Army Headquarters; and later, to a storeroom on Centre Avenue and Roberts Street. This constant moving of black congregations could be attributed to inadequate space, lack of funds to maintain rented space, and a desire for a better location with hopes of attracting more members. Accessibility may have also been a factor.

By 1905, St. Cyprian's changed its name to St. Augustine's under the leadership of Reverend Scott Wood who reorganized the mission with money donated by a businessman

named Stewart. During this same year, a building was purchased at 319 Jackson Street, North Side which led to the formal establishment of Pittsburgh's first black Episcopalian church. It was not until twelve years later, that the church again changed its name to the Church of the Holy Cross.

Protestant religious institutions organized by Pittsburgh's free people of color, continued to flourish throughout the second decade of the 20th century. The city eventually, had more black ministers than churches. These churches helped stabilize Pittsburgh's black community as they did in most northern communities by functioning in numerous capacities. The basements of black churches were used as colored public schools, places for charitable meetings, social activity, benevolence, and the Underground Railroad.⁷⁹ Consequently, the Baptist denomination became the largest among Pittsburgh blacks, but overall, Pittsburgh blacks established more than 40 churches of various denominations by the 1920s.

The Development of Black Businesses

The development of black communities in the North was achieved not only through the establishment of black schools, and religious institutions but black businesses as well. Free people of color, striving for economic independence operated businesses as barbers, dressmakers, boarding house and bathhouse operators and restaurateurs. Aside from hucksters and peddlers, black business owners depended mainly upon black patronage.

⁷⁹David Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the 19th Century*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 18-19. Katzman's work on Detroit perhaps led to the growing number of urban histories written during the antebellum period. The value of this book is that it opened the door for more scholarly works on black Detroit; may have subsequently encouraged the writing of histories of other urban black communities; and provided opportunities for comparative analyses of the same.

During the antebellum period, most black businesses like black churches were located in the nucleus of the black community.

In Pittsburgh, the first blacks to set up business establishments of were barbers and hairdressers.⁸⁰ During the 1830s, there were approximately ten barbers with most of them serving the black community.⁸¹ John Peck and Lewis Woodson were exceptions, because of the additional services they provided. Peck, the “ornamental hair manufacturer,” made wigs and toupees for whites as well as blacks; and Woodson owned barbershops in some of Pittsburgh’s leading hotels where whites most often registered.

Historians Gary B. Nash and Leonard Curry point out that clothing stores were popular in urban communities. For example, more than one fifth of Boston’s black population were clothes dealers.⁸² It was a significant business, because many blacks were tailors and seamstresses, racism and discrimination often prevented them from shopping in white clothing establishments, and clothes were a necessity for every aspect of the population. Clothing stores were established by Pittsburgh blacks during this same period and owned by Benjamin Wilkins and Solomon Norris both located in Virgin Alley, and A.D.

⁸⁰Helen A. Tucker, "*The Negroes of Pittsburgh*," *Charities and the Commons*, XXL (January 2, 1909), p. 603. This is a valuable source of information although does not identify the names or proprietors of the businesses mentioned. It also cries for a chronology of events.

⁸¹These barbershops were owned by William Jones, whose shop was located on Fifth between Wood and Market; William Newman, Baxter’s Alley; Zelicher Newman, Smithfield between Fifth and Sixth Streets; Thomas Norris, 216 Liberty; John Peck, Penn and St. Clair; S. Runels, Fourth Street; Henry Vashon, Third and Market; J.B. Vashon, Wood and Third; Lewis Woodson, 214 Liberty; and George Carney, Virgin Alley.

⁸²Horton, p. 125.

Lewis' store at Third and Wood Streets.⁸³ Norris also owned a clothing store which featured "new and fashionable clothing." All three of these establishments were second-hand clothing stores. In 1848, several black women operated successful seamstress businesses in Pittsburgh.⁸⁴

Bathhouses and boarding houses also helped solidify Pittsburgh's black business community. Thomas Norris and John B. Vashon, each owned bathhouses and both were located in their respective barbershops. In 1833, the *Gazette* described Vashon's bathhouse as follows:

The two-story bathhouse has 13 bathing rooms for use of gentlemen...each supplied with an abundance of hot and cold water of the purest quality, taken from the LaBelle Riviera and furnished with everything necessary for complete enjoyment of the most delightful and refreshing luxury. The upper level is intended for the use of the ladies residing or visiting the city. Every precaution has been taken to secure for the ladies apartment the utmost privacy and security. Female attendants are employed.⁸⁵

Segregation laws in the city's hotels was not written in stone, but free people of color often preferred accommodations among race people. This led to the establishment of black owned and operated boarding houses. They sometimes served to supplement the incomes of free people of color, particularly, black males and often provided black women with a live-in support group, because those who boarded in black households were most likely to

⁸³ *Fahnestock's Pittsburg City Directory for 1839*, (Pittsburgh: George Garvin, 1839), p. 69, 94-95.

⁸⁴ Yee, p. 53.

⁸⁵ "The Early Community, 1804-1860," *Ethnic Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, Records of the Works Progress Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, 1933-1942, Job #64, p. 54.

be young females.⁸⁶

Pittsburgh's City Directory listed only one boarding house which also consisted of a restaurant owned by James W. Strickland, a Pittsburgher and proprietor of the Great West Eat House, Third Street (under the P.O.). An advertisement in *The Mystery* described the services Strickland offered: "Begs to leave and inform his colored friends and strangers visiting the city, that he has fitted up a part of his house for their accommodation where they can get boarding by the month, day, or week on the most reasonable terms."⁸⁷

A newspaper was a significant part of Pittsburgh's black business community. The black press in any early black community was a leader of protest against the injustices to the race and were mainly directed at white readers since literacy among blacks during the 19th century was extremely low. John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish began the first black newspaper in New York, *Freedom's Journal* (1827) as a means of responding to attacks on blacks by the *New York Enquirer*, a white newspaper. The value of the black press was noted by Valarie Myers, former editor of the *New York Challenger*: "Without the black press, the black man would not know who he was nor what was happening to his struggle for the freedom of citizenship."

Other black newspapers emerged: *The Weekly Advocate*, the *North Star*, and *Colored American*. Martin R. Delany, the editor and publisher of Pittsburgh's *Mystery*, established this communication for four reasons. *The Colored American* in 1842, the only colored newspaper in the United States at this time, ceased publication. This meant that

⁸⁶Horton, p. 112.

⁸⁷*The Mystery*, December 16, 1846, p. 2.

colored people no longer had a means of communication among and about themselves. Second, white newspapers seldom printed colored news, unless it was derogatory. Third, Delany's personal experiences with local white newspapers owners in Pittsburgh was that they refused to publish his articles and letters to the editor, because they were "impolitic."⁸⁸ Fourth, Delany believed in the "printed word." These were the important factors prompting his decision to establish a black newspaper.

The purpose of *The Mystery* was to give news both foreign and domestic, to aim at the moral elevation of the Afro-American and African race, and the different branches to literary sciences, mechanic arts, agriculture, and elevation of labor.⁸⁹ It was used to express nationalist ideas, speak out against discrimination in the North, and to defend the rights of colored people.⁹⁰ Over 1,000 copies of this issue were purchased.⁹¹ Its contents consisted of speeches, essays, editorials draped with anti-slavery connotations, letters to the editor, meeting notices, religious matters, vital statistics and reports from correspondents of Philadelphia, Cleveland, New York City, and Boston; and the southern cities of Baltimore,

⁸⁸Sterling, p. 78.

⁸⁹This information is found on the masthead of *The Mystery*.

⁹⁰Cyril E. Griffith, *The African American Dream: Martin R. Delany, the Emergence of Pan-African Thought*, (Pennsylvania: University Park, 1978), p. 27. See Nell Irvin Painter's "*Martin Delany and Elitist Black Nationalism*," in August Meier and Elliott Rudwick's, *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century*, 1988; and Victor Ullman's *M.R. Delany, The Beginnings of Black Nationalism*, 1971.

⁹¹*The Mystery* was sold at Mr. Isaac Harris' Intelligence Office, Fifth Street; the office of M.R. Delany, 40 Hand Street; H. Price Confectioner, Allegheny City, and at the West End of the Allegheny Bridge. Subscriptions were \$1.00 in advance, \$1.25 if not paid in three months, and \$1.50 at the end of the year. Delany had special rates for clubs of ten who could receive *The Mystery* for \$1.00 per year; each subscriber and any person sending cash for six subscribers at the regular price of \$1.50 received the seventh copy gratis. Agents for *The Mystery*, received the newspaper free.

Maryland, Charleston South Carolina, and Dansville, Kentucky, which provided news from their respective cities.

The Mystery had an impact on Pittsburgh's black community, because it provided employment for free people of color, before it experienced financial difficulties, and served as a vehicle by which black businesses were promoted. It was probably the largest employer of free people of color in the city with 94 agents, twenty-eight of whom were from Pittsburgh including George W. Parker, Reverend A.D. Lewis, and John B. Vashon; Reverend A.R. Green, in Arthursville and Scottsfield; and Isaiah Watson, (wherever he goes) and Reverend David Stevenson, (wherever he goes).⁹² Some of the agents were not bound by territory in obtaining subscriptions. It is important to note that Pittsburgh's black leadership also participated in the selling of *The Mystery*, and that most were self-employed, so they were not solely dependent on a salary from Delany. Moreover, the newspaper was not a "money making venture," but one to inform and educate free people of color.

Advertisements in *The Mystery* helped families locate free people of color kidnapped by slave catchers, those separated by slavery, a person who were lost:

"Lost Child"

Thornton Delany Parker, a small colored boy about nine years of age was decoyed from Pittsburgh during the absence of his parents some four months ago [when] the parents last heard of the child, he had been a short time in Cleveland. Any information concerning him will be more than fully received by his anxious parents Henry and Sarah Parker. Direct the information to The Mystery.⁹³

⁹²*The Mystery*, December 12, 1846,. P. 1. *The Mystery's* agents sold subscriptions in 28 Pennsylvania counties; seventeen in Ohio; five in Indiana; one in Detroit, Michigan; three in New York; one in Iowa Territory; two in Illinois; and one in Virginia.

⁹³"*Lost Child*," *The Mystery*, December 16, 1846, p. 4.

On November 4, 1846, an advertisement placed by a committee of Pittsburgh blacks read as follows:

\$200 Reward!

One hundred dollars will be paid by the subscriber, a committee appointed by a public meeting of citizens of Pittsburgh for the restoration of the two Colored (sic) children to the ages of 4 and, kidnapped in Beaver County and \$100 more for the arrest and bringing to punishment of the kidnappers.

Henry Williams

W. M. Shinn

W.A. Lease

Saml Ferguson

Our brethren of the press in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky, will please copy our notice the above.⁹⁴

This newspaper also served to reunite families and alert free people of color to the injustices imposed upon free blacks. In addition, it linked free people of color with other blacks in urban communities.

In addition to this type of advertisement, black entrepreneurs sold their wares and their services. John Peck, advertised "A large Assortment of Ladies Wigs, Curls, Gentlemen's Wigs, Toupees, and Scalps all Made in the Best Fashionable Style."⁹⁵ The proprietor of the Great Western Eating House placed an advertisement which read, "Ladies and Gentlemen of My Own Color Can Be Accommodated With Oysters Done Up in Every Variety of Style." Educational opportunities were also part of *The Mystery's* contents. John Templeton, the teacher in Pittsburgh's only colored school, used the newspaper to announce,

⁹⁴"**\$200 Reward**," *The Mystery*, November 4, 1846, p. 2.

⁹⁵"**Removal**," *The Mystery*, December 16, 1846, p. 2.

“The Opening of An Evening School for Adults.” All who avail themselves of an opportunity to improve their minds through the long dreary nights of winter, give us a call.”⁹⁶

Two of Pittsburgh’s black, women, Mrs. Colder and Miss Vashon advertised, “The Ladies, are respectfully informed that instructions in French Raised Work will be given to classes or individuals. Specimens of their work, together with the terms of instruction, can be seen at the store of F.H. Eaton, Market Street.” Oftentimes free people of color did not own or rent a place of business, but made their wares available in the establishments of other entrepreneurs.

The city’s whites also advertised in *The Mystery*. Mrs. Parker called attention to the hand-made articles for women. Her sales pitch is contained in the following advertisement:

Mrs. Parker No. 4, St. Clair Street between Penn Street and the river, gratefully acknowledges past favors, begs to leave respectfully, to inform the citizens of Pittsburgh, Allegheny, and the vicinity, that she will open her seasonable Fall and Winter Bonnets, Caps, Flowers, Feathers, Ribbons, and ladies Fancy Trimmings, generally. Where she especially invites the attention of the ladies, before purchasing elsewhere.⁹⁷

Advertisements in *The Mystery* were not always local. Mrs. C.R. Ramsey, advertised Ramsey’s Boarding House as “Respectable for Colored Citizens,” located at 155 Church Street in New York. Black women were just as eager to sell their products thus inviting the colored citizenry to patronize businesses owned by free people of color. Also of importance were “notices” of black organizational meetings. A “notice” entitled, “To all and Every,”

⁹⁶ “*Evening School*,” *The Mystery*, October 12, 1846, p. 2. John Meacham, of St. Louis’ African Baptist Church, used *The Mystery* to sell his book for those “laboring for the cause of our elevation.” James L. Williams of Allegheny City and T.L. Roberson, Washington, PA, also helped the minister in his efforts to distribute his book.

⁹⁷ “*A Card*,” *The Mystery*, November 11, 1846, p. 1.

a communication from the St. Cyprian Lodge of New York Free and Accepted Masons Chartered and under the First Independent African Grand Lodge of North America, sitting in the city of Philadelphia, read: [We] are now open for the regular dispatch (sic) of business at the Masonic Temple, southwest corner of Market and Fifth Streets, Pittsburg (sic) on the 1st (sic) Wednesday evening of every month.⁹⁸

A crucial aspect of early black Pittsburgh, *The Mystery*, brought about a sense of community by elevating the consciousness of blacks, providing employment when possible and encouraging them to patronize their own businesses. Delany informed the black community of *The Mystery's* financial difficulties and issued a call to salvage the newspaper which became too expensive to publish, perhaps because of an increase in the cost of materials and equipment or lack of adequate subscriptions. The first facet of the black community to answer the call was, of course, black women whose roles were virtually ignored in black Pittsburgh's early history even though they established their own newspapers. For example, Mary Shadd Cary, the first woman publisher of a newspaper, founded the *Provincial Freedman* between 1853-1859, and Ida B. Wells established her paper in Memphis during the latter part of the 19th century.⁹⁹

To keep the newspaper afloat, each winter, they held soirees and organized a series

⁹⁸"*To All and Every*," *The Mystery*, p. December 16, 1846, p. 4. This notice was placed in *The Mystery* by George B. Vashon, one of Pittsburgh's young black leaders, and the son of John Vashon.

⁹⁹Mary Shadd Cary was born in Wilmington, Delaware to free black parents, October 9, 1823. Having attended a Quaker School in West Chester, Pennsylvania, she became a teacher and at sixteen years old, and opened a school for Negro children. She later became, an abolitionist, suffragist, a journalist and lawyer. For more information on Mary Shadd Cary see Jason H. Silverman's "*Mary Ann Shadd*," in *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, pp. 87-100.

of festivals and picnics during the summers, to maintain this vital black communiqué. According to Delany, had it not been for the generosity of Pittsburghers, especially the ladies in holding levees, the newspaper would have collapsed. *The Mystery* also contributed to the black community in that it, like the merging of Pittsburgh's two colored schools, allowed free people of color an opportunity to pool its resources together for the good of the community.

Black Organizations

Free people of color in northern urban communities founded various types of organizations in response to racial discrimination. For example, they were afforded limited or no relief from state or local social service agencies. White employers often paid blacks low wages leaving no extra monies after household expenses were paid. This led to the establishment of benevolent and beneficial societies such as, the Woolman Benevolent Society, Brooklyn, New York; the Mutual Relief Society, Providence, Rhode Island; and the Young Men's Friendly Association, Baltimore, Maryland. Historian Leonard Curry tells us that benevolent societies secured donations from more affluent blacks and distributed monetary donations to orphans and widows. Beneficial societies were significant to black communities, because they provided limited resources to the poor and death benefits.¹⁰⁰

Free people of color in Pittsburgh had few organizations prior to the Civil War in comparison to those Philadelphia and Boston which may have been because of the differences in population size. With the exception of the African Education Society and the

¹⁰⁰Curry, p. 197.

Anti-slavery Society, they formed one benevolent association, one literary society, a temperance society, and the Juvenile Anti-slavery Society. In 1834, Martin Delany organized the Philanthropic Society to fulfill an obligation to the poor. It also used donated funds to assist runaway slaves from Virginia and Maryland who fled to Pittsburgh by connecting them to the Underground Railroad.¹⁰¹

Within the Philanthropic Society and similar to the one in New York, was a female Vigilance Committee (1836), whose purpose was to protect defenseless and unoffending persons against kidnapping and other oppressions.¹⁰² The Pittsburgh Female Vigilance Committee successfully raised monies to obtain the release of a reclaimed fugitive slave before he was removed from the city.¹⁰³ In one year, an estimated 269 persons were aided through Pittsburgh's Underground Railroad. In reality, this particular society had a dual purpose: to provide for the city's indigent and the welfare of fugitive slaves.

During the 5th Annual Convention of the Colored Citizens of the United States, black leaders created the American Moral Reform Society in Philadelphia June 1, 1835. Pittsburgh's black leadership formed an auxiliary to this organization, March 2, 1837, with many of the city's most respectable citizens and more than 100 persons attending the first

¹⁰¹"*The Early Community*," p. 33.

¹⁰²"*New York Vigilance Committee*," *The Colored American*, April 8, 1837, p. 4. In New York, the Vigilance Committee raised money and employed lawyers to defend the cases against fugitive slaves. See *The Colored American*, October 28, 1837, p. 3. The formation of Vigilance Committees became a relevant part of northern urban communities and a constant irritation to slaveholders and slave catchers.

¹⁰³Curry, p. 230.



Figure. 9. Martin Delany

Martin Delany was born in Charles Town, Virginia to a slave father and free mother. Upon moving to Pittsburgh, he married Catherine Richards, the daughter of Ben Richards, a local and well-to-do butcher in 1843. They became the parents of seven children all of who bore the names of prominent blacks. Martin Delany organized a number of emigration conferences between 1854-1858 in response to the American Colonization society's plans to colonize blacks. He was also a major in the Union Army, commissioned in 1865, and the author of books and pamphlets including *The Condition and Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered* (1852).

meeting.¹⁰⁴ The purpose of the MRS was the moral reform of Pittsburgh's free people of color by giving the rising generation an education; instruction in some useful occupation; promoting moral virtues of Christian graces and refinement for a civilized life. One of its early tasks was to encourage Pittsburgh's free people of color to "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" by closing their businesses on Sunday.

While John Vashon and Mr. Colder, a barber, closed their business establishments, not all Negro business owners who pledged their support for the organization cooperated with it. Those businesses that remained open offered the following explanation: It is the fault of our customers; they will be shaved and dressed on Sundays.¹⁰⁵ In meeting this opposition, *The Colored American* responded: Some of the member of the Pittsburgh Moral Reform society are in the habit of desecrating this holy day. Let the colored population of Pittsburgh, be the first in the union to step forward and set their faces against the opening of barber shops or any other kind of shops or any businesses over which they had control upon the Sabbath.¹⁰⁶ There was also an implication that members of the society failing to cooperate would be shunned and those in sync would prosper.

The Juvenile Anti-slavery Society, established July 7, 1838, was the first such organization in America and only one of its kind on this side of the Allegheny Mountains.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴*The Colored American*, May 3, 1837, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵*The Colored American*, May 3, 1837, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶*The Weekly Advocate*, March 25, 1837, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷Richard Blackett, "...*Freedom or the Martyr's Grave: Black Pittsburgh's Aid to the Fugitive Slave*," Volume 61, *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, April 1978, p.

Under the leadership of George B. Vashon, son of John Vashon and David Peck, son of John Peck, it was a one cents per week society consisting of forty members. While the Juvenile Anti-slavery Society engaged the fight against the institution of slavery, it also made philanthropic gestures. In 1839, there was a campaign to save *The Colored American* and Pittsburgh's Lewis Woodson called on all of colored America, because the newspaper was a public matter connected with the moral interest of the whole colored population of the United States.¹⁰⁸ On November 11, 1839, the Juvenile Anti-slavery Association resolved that five dollars be given in support of *The Colored American* as a small token of the esteem the organization had for the paper, and hoped it might be a means of doing good.¹⁰⁹

For the most part, literary societies were formed among free people of color by accomplished race people. Organized in cities such as Buffalo, Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Pittsburgh, the purpose of literary societies was "to direct initial activities in the field of intellectual advancement toward securing basic educational facilities for black children, to educate themselves and combat white racism."¹¹⁰ Literary societies also used their organizations to protest racial discrimination and prepare petitions and resolutions to white government officials and school directors. It is important to note that free people of color organized few literary societies in the first third of the 19th century, because they placed emphasis on black religious institutions and beneficial societies.

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¹⁰⁸*The Colored American*, November 16, 1839, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹*The Colored American*, November 23, 1839, p. 3.

¹¹⁰Curry, p. 206.

In 1831, Martin R. Delany and Molliston Clark, a student at Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania organized the Theban Society (the Young Men's Literary and Moral Reform Society of Pittsburgh) which devoted its attention to combating illiteracy and the intellectual and moral improvement of young men.¹¹¹ Any young man of known moral habits and respectability who has attained the age of 18 years (sic) and exceeding thirty-five may become a member of this society by paying fifty cents on entrance and twelve and one half cents monthly.¹¹² They started a library and held meetings every Friday evening for mental and moral improvement, and once a month, to transact business.

Dorothy Sterling in her book, *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19th Century*, (1992) discusses the origins of literary societies and explains that black male literary societies also sponsored public lectures and debates. The only evidence of a literary society among black women in Pittsburgh was the Aurora Reading Club founded in 1894, although literary societies rapidly emerged in other northern urban communities.¹¹³ For example, the Female Literary Society of Philadelphia was organized in 1831, and in New York, the Colored Ladies Literary Society, 1834.

¹¹¹ Sterling, p. 46.

¹¹² *Letter from John Templeton to The Colored American, The Colored American*, September 2, 1837, p. 1. Dismissal from this organization occurred in two stages: for the first offense, the member was admonished by the president; and in case of a second offense, the member was expelled by the majority of members at the meeting.

¹¹³ The Aurora Reading Club was organized by Rachel Lovett Jones, a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church and the Avery Trade School Board of Directors. The charter members were Frances Golden; Anna Posey; Virginia Woodson Proctor; Hannah Grinage Lovett; and Cora V. Hill. The Aurora Reading Club claims to be the oldest black women's club in Western Pennsylvania and to have coined the slogan "Lifting As We Climb," but the plethora of literature on black women's clubs raises questions about this claim.

Temperance Movement in Pittsburgh

Temperance, one of the most important aspects of the reform movement in America, was the result of the excessive number of distilleries and large amount of alcohol production. Reformists asserted that alcohol damaged the body and mind, caused poverty, and the suffering of innocent mothers and children. Furthermore, it produced idleness and loss of property. It was clear to reformers that something had to be done about alcohol use. In 1826, for example, a group of Boston ministers organized the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance.

However, the 1830s marked the beginning of the temperance movement in Western Pennsylvania with the formation of at least two such organizations: one in Lawrenceville established March 15, 1830, and the Pittsburgh Temperance Society, April 26, 1832.¹¹⁴ The city's temperance movement was led by white Presbyterians. In 1830, they organized the Allegheny County Temperance Society; established Temperance Hall; a Temperance Hotel; and conducted two conventions, the Allegheny County and District Temperance Conventions. Other temperance societies in Pittsburgh emerged including the Young Gentlemen and Ladies Total abstinence Society of Pittsburgh and Vicinity and in 1834, the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Church established a similar organization.

Free people of color in northern cities, especially, Philadelphia where in 1833, a group of Boston ministers held a convention and formed the American Temperance Union,

¹¹⁴Lloyd Spinholtz, "*Pittsburgh and Temperance, 1830-1854*," *Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, October 1963, p. 351. The Lawrenceville Temperance society was organized with twenty-five persons. Pittsburgh attorney Walter Forward was the first president of the Pittsburgh Temperance Society.

were abreast of this movement for temperance and spread the news among the race. Northern free blacks embraced temperance as an idea and a movement before the Civil War.¹¹⁵ Temperance, black leaders felt, would uplift the morals of free people of color. The emergence of black temperance societies were the result of the National Negro Convention, June 10, 1833, where district societies were organized in most states represented at the convention. They included the cities of Carlisle and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C.; and New Haven, Connecticut.

While the cities of Providence and Cincinnati had active Temperance Societies with as many as 200 members and Buffalo with 300 members, Pittsburgh's free people of color did not form a temperance society until 1835. A meeting was held at Bethel Church, Tuesday, December 10th for the purpose of forming a Temperance Society with Reverend John Boggs chairing the meeting, and Thomas Norris, acting secretary. Within two years, it had 110 members; prepared and distributed an Annual Report; and published 500 copies of its Constitution and By-laws.¹¹⁶

Martin R. Delany organized the Temperance Society of People of Color in Pittsburgh, because "any black man who drank too much damaged the fight for freedom everywhere."¹¹⁷ The temperance society elected four officers and a Board of Managers which consisted of

¹¹⁵Patricia A. Schector, "*Temperance Work in the Nineteenth Century*," in *Black Women in America: an Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Volume II, 1993, p. 1154.

¹¹⁶*Fahnestock's Pittsburg City Directory for 1839*, p. 127.

¹¹⁷Sterling, p. 42. Pittsburgh necessitated temperance societies, because of its excessive number of drinking establishments. In 1829, for example, Pittsburgh alone, was estimated to have 129 taverns and Allegheny County 162.

twelve persons as its governing body.¹¹⁸ Many temperance organizations consisted of an all male membership such as the New England Colored Temperance Society. However, historian Shirley Yee tells us that black women were part of this reform movement.

Black women participated in the drive to promote the entire abstinence from all that could intoxicate. As the moral protectors of the home and agitators for community improvement, black women participated in temperance organizations with some joining with male temperance advocates while others formed all female societies.¹¹⁹

Pittsburgh's Temperance Society included women, four of whom were elected to the Board of Managers: Phebe Collins, Nancy Jones, Mary Dockins, Nancy Morgan, and Isabella Collins. A black male asserted, "Our young women can do much to head off the drink habit among young men...and is for their own future well-being that they exercise their decisive influence for this end. Black women were expected to teach temperance by example and encourage young men to do the same."¹²⁰ Pittsburgh's Temperance Society, had a membership of approximately 150 persons, a relatively small number compared to those in other cities, but perhaps commensurate with its smaller black population.

Pittsburgh's free people of color worked diligently to fight the use of alcohol among the race. A 1837 report of The Pittsburgh Temperance society read:

¹¹⁸The officers were: Richard Bryans, president; Samuel Bruce, vice president; Martin Delany Recording secretary; and William T. Greenly, auditor. John B. Vashon, Samuel Reynolds, A.D. Lewis, Samuel Berry, and C.T. Williamson were the male members of the Board of Directors.

¹¹⁹Shirley Yee, *Black Female Abolitionists*, pp. 82-83.

¹²⁰Patricia A. Schector, p. 1154.

...the society has held eleven regular monthly meetings and one convention of the society in our vicinity...Every meeting has been larger than the preceding one. At all these meetings, appropriate addresses delivering either by those who voluntarily came forward to vindicate the cause of Temperance. An increase of useful knowledge among us on all topics relating to temperance has been most happily developed among us during the past year.¹²¹

Pittsburgh's Temperance society, had a membership of approximately 150 persons, a relatively small number compared to those in other cities, but perhaps commensurate with its black population. Nonetheless, Pittsburgh's free people of color worked diligently to fight the use of alcohol among the race.

Black Pittsburghers and the Civil War

The development of black Pittsburgh also spread to a larger community, the United States. Black men in Pittsburgh were active participants in the Civil War. Upon the attack of Fort Sumter by Confederate soldiers, President Lincoln called for 75,000 militia, including sixteen regiments from Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh blacks as well as blacks in other parts of the state willingly volunteered. In Pittsburgh, blacks formed a regiment of their own, the Hannibal Guards who responded to Lincoln's call to preserve the Union as a letter to Brigadier General James S. Negley, commander of Pennsylvania's western division, read:

As we sympathize with our white fellow-citizens at the present crises and show we can and do feel interested in the present state of affairs; and as we consider ourselves American citizens, although deprived of all political rights...we are willing to assist in any honorable way or manner to sustain the present Administration. We, therefore, tender to the state, the services of the Hannibal Guards. P.S. If accepted sir, we can raise a full company.¹²²

¹²¹"*Pittsburgh Temperance Society*," *The Colored American*, May 2, 1837, p. 2.

¹²²Davis, p. 103. This letter was signed by Captain Samuel Sanders; R.D. Turley, 1st Lieutenant; and Lieutenant, G.W. Massey.

On June 22, 1861, the 1st Regiment 12th Pennsylvania Volunteers was organized in Allegheny County under the command of Colonel David Campbell. The Zoavue Cadets were led by Captain George Tanner which comprised only men of color from companies A-K.

Though many white Union soldiers were opposed to fighting alongside blacks and the fact that they were given guns, by July 18, 1861, the Hannibal Guards enlisted in the Union Army.¹²³ Proud black Pittsburghers did their share in the war effort by supporting the needs of their colored troops with weapons and clothing for the war which probably, consisted of shoes, socks, and warm undergarments. One of Pittsburgh's early black female leaders, Susan Paul directed several sanitary relief bazaars netting thousands of dollars to care for sick and wounded colored soldiers in the Civil war and housing for refugees at Pittsburgh between 1864-1865.¹²⁴ The first black regiments enlisted for three months of military service and, later, enlisted for three years. This may have been a litmus test for the Hannibal Guards and other black soldiers to see how they would fare in war.

During the Civil War, most blacks fought in the 54th and 55th Regiments of the Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. At least six Pittsburgh blacks fought with the 54th

¹²³Numerous reasons were offered for the opposition of blacks in the Union Army. For example, blacks were considered inferior by many white northern and southerners. Some whites felt blacks were cowards and would not fare well in combat, although they had proven themselves during the Revolutionary War. Fear also existed among whites that blacks would seek revenge on whites for the many abuses they suffered as slaves.

¹²⁴Hallie Q. Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 134. Susan Paul was born in Boston, September 19, 1838, to Elijah W. and Ann Paul Smith (who was the daughter of Reverend Thomas Paul). She moved to Pittsburgh with her father after her grandmother's death and was appointed teacher of Pittsburgh's colored school. Susan Paul, later married George B. Vashon.



Figure. 10. Susan Paul

Massachusetts enlisting between March and May 1863: Alexander Jones; Edward Stewart; Martin Tilman; Isaac Brown; Cyrus Dunlap; and Leroy Hilton. Prior to their enlistment, they engaged various occupations including waiters, boatmen, teamsters, firemen, laborers, barbers, cooks, and fish dealers.¹²⁵ Other black Pittsburghers spent their military service with the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

Social Life in Black Pittsburgh

The early lives of black Pittsburghers was spent establishing the community from an educational, religious, organizational, and military standpoint. However, most early black communities, particularly, those in the North, created and engaged a social life. Many of them orchestrated leisure activities for themselves in the form of social clubs. Pittsburgh's first black social club was the Loendi Club, organized August 13, 1897, when George W. Hall, a local businessman. Hall sought professional black men interested in the establishment of a social club, because they were prohibited from membership and even The purpose invitations to white social clubs.¹²⁶

The purpose of the Loendi Club whose membership consisted of Pittsburgh's leading

¹²⁵Three of these six black soldiers in the 54th Massachusetts ended their military service as corporals, two of whom died of disease, and three discharged in 1865, for disabilities incurred during the Civil War. Alexander Jones and Isaac Brown were waiters; LeRoy Hilton, a farmer; Edward Stewart, a fireman; Martin Tilman, a boatman; and Cyrus Dunlap was laborer. In the 55th Massachusetts were Pittsburghers David Wilkins, a laborer; Charles Broughton, a teamster; Henry Pulpress, a fish dealer; Alfred Pellett, a musician; Edward Logan, a waiter, who was also captured by Confederate soldiers in North Edisto, S.C.; and David Scott, was a cook.

¹²⁶Oliver G. Waters, "*Glimpses of Social Life*," *The Colored American Magazine*, p. 11.

black professionals---mainly physicians, attorneys, and dentists, was to serve as an organization for the advancement of the Pittsburgh Negro, social gatherings, and the entertaining of race men of wide reputation and ability.¹²⁷ Upon its establishment, the members elected several officers: president, William Maurice Randolph, a prominent Pittsburgh attorney; William Page Nelson, vice president and chairman of the Loendi's House Committee who was a stenographer for Carnegie Steel Company; Thomas Johnson, a local businessman; Joseph Stanton, a stenographer and the only "colored" telegraph operator in the city, was the corresponding secretary of the House Committee. It was also comprised of a six-member Board of Directors.¹²⁸

While prominent Pittsburgh black men established the Loendi Club, the city's young women created the Narcissus Literary and Musical Club at the turn of the century. In 1901, it was organized by Elfreda Hamilton, a former Allegheny High School student and fifteen ladies of the "Smart Set" whose purpose was to organize themselves into bodies for the cultivation of higher faculties; to lift themselves; and produce the best thinking women of all time to come.¹²⁹ These young black women understood that "the world would demand

¹²⁷"*Home of the Loendi Club*," Vertical File, Societies and Clubs, Loendi Club, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.

¹²⁸The Loendi Club's Board of Directors included: S.L. Pangham, a stenographer employed in the Allegheny County Sheriff's Department; Louis H. Woodson, local businessman; W.E. Billows, Assistant District Attorney in Allegheny County; Edwin Cyrus; George Wilson, vice president of R.W. Jenkinson and Company and J.W. Peck, whose occupation was not revealed. They purchased a three-story building on Fullerton Street, Hill District which contained the following: a dining, billiard, and a card room, but gambling was prohibited; a buffet and bathrooms. On the third floor were apartments for the stewards.

¹²⁹Oliver G. Waters, p. 18. The officers of this literary club were: Anna Darkins, president; Elfreda Hamilton, vice president; Pauline Witt, secretary; Birdie Mahoney, treasurer; Luella Jones mistress of ceremonies; and Luella Waters, critic.



Source: Rollo Turner Collection

Figure. 11. William Maurice Randolph

more of them than it did of than it did their mothers."

As Pittsburgh's black community experienced continued growth, many of them rose to prominence and were referred to by whites as "Rara Avis," a Negro who had accomplished success such as, John M. Clark, William H. Stanton, and Cumberland Posey, Sr. Clark, for example, worked as a blacksmith's helper for \$12 a month and by 1870, he owned a blacksmith and wagon-making shop where he employed 30-50 men. Clark also operated three other businesses: a stock-farm; a half mile race track; and a general contracting business.

William H. Stanton, born in 1873, became a prominent Pittsburgh attorney, and the first Negro in Western Pennsylvania to pass the bar examination on the first attempt. He was officially admitted to the Pittsburgh Bar Association October 1, 1895, opened his own law office, and began to practice law, a privilege ill-afforded George B. Vashon.¹³⁰ Stanton, accordingly, represented most of the city's prominent blacks and black institutions including Ebenezer Baptist Church. Cumberland W. Posey, was born to slave parents in Charles County, Maryland in 1858. In spite of his slave status, in 1890, Posey established the Diamond and Coal Company situated in Homestead which was said to be the largest black-owned business in Pittsburgh.¹³¹ It was during this further development of the city's black

¹³⁰George B. Vashon, the first black graduate of Oberlin College, who earned an A.B. in 1844 and an A.M. in 1849, was unable to practice law in Pennsylvania, because he was a "race man. In 1868, he attempted to take the bar examination in Pittsburgh, but was denied the opportunity. Stanton's admission to the Pittsburgh Bar Association may indicate that the city's whites were becoming more tolerant of the Negro's presence and intellectual capabilities."

¹³¹"*Commodore Posey Plied Boats, Ore Trade*, *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, February 21, 1994, p. B-1. Cumberland Posey not only built approximately 40 steamboats, but owned at least three other businesses: Delta Coal Company, Posey Coal Dealers and Steam Boat Builders.



Figure. 12. William H. Stanton



Figure. 13 . Cumberland Posey

infrastructure.

Conclusion

Despite the trials and tribulations of Pittsburgh's free people of color, they established the city's first black community during the antebellum period. Its strong black leadership through protest and persistence managed to educate their children and eventually obtain a new schoolhouse with all the amenities afforded Pittsburgh's white children. They were no longer subjected to overcrowded damp basements, poor lighting, uncomfortable furniture, no blackboards, a high turnover of teachers, and quarters unfit for white children, and therefore, human habitation. Pittsburgh's black leadership and the community as well, were certain that the opportunity for an education would improve the quality of life for this generation of black antebellum children and those to come.

The increasing numbers of free people color in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania as a whole, threatened the well-being of many of the city's prejudiced whites. To deal with this problem, whites in Pittsburgh formed (1) the Pittsburgh Colonization Society, (2) petitioned the Pennsylvania State Assembly introduce pro-slavery and disfranchisement legislation, (3) and even attacked free people of color. In retaliation to the actions of the anti-black forces, free people of color created an anti-slavery society which included whites to maintain their rights, especially, their freedom. When mobbed by racist whites, free people of color defended themselves and their community.

Black religious institutions have most often been the "backbone" of black communities. During the Antebellum Period, the formation of black churches came as a

result of racial discrimination by white congregations. Free people of color in Pittsburgh founded a number of Methodist and Baptist Churches, a Presbyterian, and a Catholic church. It was through these churches that a sense of community was established. Club meetings, community meetings, and social activities forged free people of color into a fragile web of community, created a communication network among them, and accommodated the "colored" school when there was no "colored schoolhouse."

When northern blacks were called free people of color, they established businesses in their stride for economic independence and in the formation of black communities. Pittsburgh's free people of color founded numerous barbershops, several bathhouses, confectioneries, boarding houses, restaurants, and clothing stores. *The Mystery*, probably the city's largest black business, was a monument in the community, because it provided employment and linked the city's blacks with other free people of color. For the most part, their services were confined to the black community, but several black businesses were patronized by the city's whites. Like other northern communities, Pittsburgh's black owned businesses were a demonstration of the freedom and independence of free people of color.

W.E.B. DuBois has pointed out in *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899) that community organizations were important in the urban North. Black churches, societies, attempts at business cooperation, institutions, and newspapers were the largest hope for the ultimate rise of blacks lied in the mastery of the art of a social organized life. In Pittsburgh, the few organizations formed during the early development of the black community were instrumental in the Underground Railroad, care for the indigent, and the moral and intellectual uplift of the race. The Philanthropic Society, Female Vigilance Committee, and

the Theban and Temperance Societies, nonetheless, served the black community in meaningful ways. By the onset of the Civil War, Pittsburgh's black male leadership had built a solid community of free people of color basically, without the participation black women. However, the development of black women's clubs in the late 19th century would soon lead Pittsburgh's black community throughout the first three decades of the 20th century.

Chapter 2

A Noble Womanhood: The Black Women's Club Movement

I always remember my grandmother having club meetings at our house with twenty to twenty-five women being present. All of the ladies wore fancy hats and shoes; and the dresses were always long, very elaborate, and made of beautiful material. The ladies were all very erudite. She would bake for them and the house always smelled so good. My brothers and I would look forward to club meeting at Mother Brooks' house, because we knew we would get the leftovers.¹

---Anna Brooks Gary

Although several exemplary studies including Stephanie Shaw's "*Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women*," (1991), Deborah Gray White's "*The Cost of Club Work, the Price of Black Feminism*," (1993), and Dorothy Salem's *To Better Our World: Black Women in Organized Reform 1890-1920*, (1990), have outlined the larger history of the black women's club movement, the exploration of local black women's clubs is needed for three reasons. First, the movement among black women began and remained fundamentally a local enterprise, with the formation of clubs within black communities across the country. Second, without these local black women's clubs of which the NACW is comprised, its creation would not have been possible. In other words, there would not exist a larger history of the black women's club movement without detailed studies of local clubs. It is out of the local conditions that broader issues emerged. Third, in most studies of both black and white women's history, have ignored women's clubs case

¹ *Letter to Pamela Smoot from Anna Brooks Gary, June 21, 1997*, Pittsburgh, PA. Gary is a retired English and Latin teacher at Pittsburgh's former Fifth Avenue High School.

studies of black urban communities. This is therefore a rich mine of information which has for the most part remained largely untapped.

Darlene Clark Hine has led the charge in the exploration of local black women's clubs, particularly those clubs in the mid-west. In Michigan, she has written extensively on the Grand Rapids Study Club, the Detroit Study Club, and the Detroit Housewives League. Hine's work, *When the Truth is Told: A History of Black Women's Culture in Indiana, 1875-1950*, focused on black women and the earliest local women's clubs including the Sisters of Charity (1874), the Alpha Home Association (1883), and the Women's Improvement Association (1903). In addition to these important histories, was Hine's *Black Women in the Middle-West Project*, an examination of local black women in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Historians Cynthia Neverdon-Morton studied black women's clubs in the South, Wanda A. Hendricks, those in Illinois, and Lillian Williams black women's clubs in Buffalo, New York. All of these important histories have challenged scholars of women's history to further explore local black women's clubs across the country.

This chapter is about the Black Women's Club Movement in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where more than sixty clubs were organized between 1894 and 1940. In this examination of three of Pittsburgh's black women's clubs, the Belle Phoebe League (1894), the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association (1911), and the Harriet Tubman Club (1915), I argue that they were actively involved in their communities, and, moreover, that they made a difference in the life of these communities. They played a major role in promoting their vision of social justice by defining and defending black womanhood,

creating and maintaining black social service institutions, fighting for equal rights, and providing for the education of black youth.

In addition, this study shows the commitment and willingness of Pittsburgh's black club women to reach the black masses which resulted in the organization of Pennsylvania State Federation (1903), the City-County Federation (1915), and the Western District of Federated Colored Women's Clubs (1925). They were also inextricably woven into the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs where key women held a number of leadership positions. Most of the city's black women's clubs belonged to at least one or all three of these conglomerates.

The black women's club movement, largely led by black middle-class women was not necessarily a middle-class movement, but a reform movement. Historian Sharon Harley made two points regarding black middle class women: (1) "the racial solidarity of true race women, meant joining in with and accepting women of all classes in the black community and (2) that their incomes were often too low, job security too elusive, and racial discrimination too widespread for most middle-class black women to boast of being anything other than servants of their people." These factors enabled them to develop a reform and race uplift agenda, because they believed that the moral improvement of the lower classes would generate self-respect and respect from others, and it was their responsibility to clean-up the black community's problems.

In Pittsburgh, the reform and race uplift agenda of the Belle Phoebe League, Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association, and the Harriet Tubman Club is best described in three phases: (1) civil rights, (2) race consciousness, (3) and social reform. Within these

three themes, these black women's clubs struggled to provide for blacks social, health, and recreational needs, raising the race's political and racial consciousness. In short, black women reformers challenged forces that limited them as women and especially, blacks.

The Black Women's Club Movement probably began in Brooklyn, New York, when Dr. Susan McKinney Smith and Victoria Earle Matthews, two of this city's prominent black women, recognized the undying activism of Ida B. Wells in her crusade for racial justice and equality. A journalist and lecturer with a profound history of social protest Wells, publicly decried the lynching of blacks, denounced Jim Crowism, led a successful black boycott of the Memphis streetcar line, and argued for the humanity of black womanhood and the entire race.² In October 1892, Smith and Matthews honored Wells in New York, with a testimonial dinner for her courage.

Delivering a motivating speech about her experience in England, Ida B. Wells, described how English women successfully organized themselves into numerous civic groups for community work. The experience Wells shared inspired black women attending the dinner to form two of the earliest black women's clubs in the country after the civil War: the Women's Loyal Union, Brooklyn (1892) founded by Victoria Earle Matthews and Susan McKinney Smith; and the Woman's Era Club, organized in Boston (1892) by Josephine St.

²Thomas Holt, "*The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells Barnett and the Struggle for Equality*," in *Black Leaders in the Twentieth Century*, eds. John Hope Franklin and August Meier, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1982), p. 45. During the streetcar boycott, Memphis transportation officials and many of the city's whites became so aggravated by the success of the boycott, that they approached Wells and told her to end it.

Pierre Ruffin.³ The formation of these clubs caused a rippling effect among black women during the 1890s. For example, black women in Jefferson City, Missouri, organized the Harper's Woman's Club (1893); the Belle Phoebe League, in Pittsburgh, (1894); Knoxville, Tennessee, the Woman's Mutual Club (1894); Omaha Nebraska, the Woman's Club (1895); and Providence, Rhode Island, the Sojourner Truth Club (1896).⁴

Historian Gerda Lerner asserted that these clubs were established wherever an urgent social need remained unmet.⁵ For example, the Harriet Tubman Club of Boston, established a home for working "colored" girls. The Belle Phoebe League of Pittsburgh formed a Mother's Club to teach young black women the rudiments of motherhood, and in Indianapolis, a black women's club opened an employment agency for black women in the city's canning factories. In addition, the emergence of black women's clubs was also necessitated by the enormous problems created by the Great Migration.

The Belle Phoebe League

Similarly, the organization of black women's clubs in Pittsburgh began with Sadie Black Hamilton. Hamilton, the youngest of nine children, was born October 20, 1859, in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. Hamilton, received her early education under the tutelage of

³Gerda Lerner, "Early Community Work of Black Club Women," *Journal of Negro History*, LXI (April 1974), p. 161. Alfreda M. Duster, ed., *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. xix. Ida B. Wells, subsequently, organized the first black women's civic club in Chicago bearing her name. For more information on this club, see Duster, pp. 345-347.

⁴"The Black Women's Club Movement," in *A Quest for Equality, Black Women in United States History*, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1990), p. 18-19.

⁵Lerner, p. 159.

Professor Samuel Neale, the principal of the only colored school for children in Allegheny City and surrounding districts for miles.⁶ After completing the prescribed courses with Neale, she entered Wilberforce College and graduated in 1878. Hamilton, an educator and Christian woman, started a school in her home for colored children and helped organize the St. Cyprian Episcopal Mission.⁷

Sadie Black Hamilton had read much about women's clubs of the "dominant race" and the work being done.⁸ Like her predecessors, Ida B. Wells, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, and Mary Church Terrell, Hamilton acknowledged having been inspired by the success of white women's clubs and their voluntary efforts to solve social ills. Given the needs of the black community, Sadie Hamilton, proceeded to find ways in which to learn more about women's clubs and how they operated.

Interested in study clubs and activities for civic and community betterment, Sadie Black Hamilton contacted prominent white Pittsburgh club women of the Twentieth Century (1894) and New Era Clubs (1889) whose activities included studies on current events, music, health, and citizenship regarding the inner-workings of a woman's club.⁹ After visiting the

⁶Gertrude L. Brooks, "*A Biography: Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton*," *Gertrude L. Brooks Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁷"*102 years Old: Mrs. Sadie Black Hamilton Dies in California*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, n.p. Vertical File, Pittsburgh Blacks, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA; *Holy Cross Church Anniversary Souvenir Booklet*, 1997, inside back cover. Hamilton's 'colored' school became overcrowded so it was moved to Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church's lecture room.

⁸"*Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton*," *National Notes*, First Quarter 1943, p. 7.

⁹Pittsburgh's Twentieth Century and New Era Clubs endorsed the Frances E.W. Harper League of colored women in 1901. Mrs. Andrew Easton was president of the New Era Club and Julia Harding founded the Twentieth Century Club with 48 other white women. The New Era

meetings of white club women, Hamilton realized that white women's clubs were committed to the betterment of white women and worked for the betterment of the race.¹⁰ As an invited guest of white club women, she gained valuable experience and using those clubs as a model, decided to form a women's club.

Hamilton readily joined with her friend Rebecca Aldridge in helping organize Pittsburgh's first black women's club in May 1894.¹¹ Rebecca Aldridge, the daughter of Micah Aldridge and Sarah Meyers, was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, January 2, 1851.¹² In 1885, Rebecca married Taylor Aldridge and upon moving to Pittsburgh became a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church. She was an avid church worker, ordained evangelist, and a committed member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Aldridge's interest and willingness to establish a black women's club was not necessarily the result of her strong religious background, but that many Christians worked diligently to help the less fortunate. Before the formal organization of this black women's club, Aldridge stated:

Club held membership in the (white) General Federation and Pennsylvania State Federation of Women's Clubs in 1892 and 1896, respectively. In 1910, the New Era Club was chartered. According to the data, the Twentieth Century Club, originally called the Women's Health Protective Association, was Pittsburgh's first civic organization.

¹⁰*Beverly Washington Jones, "The Black Woman's Club Movement," A Quest for Equality: The Life and Writings of Mary Eliza Church Terrell, 1863-1954, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company 1990), p. 20.*

¹¹Gertrude L. Brooks, "*Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton, Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 1.*

¹²"*Scores Attend Final Rites for Club Leader,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 1, 1933, p. 8.

The individual efforts of black women to uplift the race have accomplished a great deal of good, but we must reach the masses through a united effort. We need not think we can accomplish anything standing apart as we do. We need to have mothers meetings, so our young mothers can get the proper idea of child training.¹³

It was through two of Pittsburgh's white women's clubs that these black women sought to develop self-respect, and prove to themselves and the world that they were capable of organizing and doing things without white women.¹⁴

On November 20, 1894, Hamilton and Aldridge began the Black Women's Club Movement in Pittsburgh when they founded the Belle Phoebe League. Although the data does not reveal the significance or meaning of the name Belle Phoebe, it was organized for the development of higher womanhood, the demand of mental improvement among black women enabling them to qualify and "grapple" with the demands of the age which included issues of social welfare, employment, politics, and education relative to the Negro race.¹⁵ The women who responded to the call included: Gertrude L. Brooks, a seamstress and wife of a bank messenger and Sarah Bentley, a minister's wife. Georgianna Ragen, Lizzie

¹³*Rebecca Aldridge, 3^d Anniversary Address, The Frances E.W. Harper League*, November 11, 1897, p. 2. *Gertrude L. Brooks Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

¹⁴Historian Jacqueline Rouse, in *Lugenia Burns Hope Southern Reformer*, consistently points out the efforts of Hope and other black club women to convince the National YWCA's and Atlanta's local YWCA leadership that the supervision of white women was unnecessary for the management of a 'colored' YWCA. Black women in similar situations, especially those relative to race uplift, fought the same battle.

¹⁵"*The Golden Anniversary of the Frances Harper League, 1894-1944*," November 29, 1944, p. 1. *Gertrude L. Brooks Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA. This anniversary celebration was held at A. Leo Weil Elementary School, Hill District.



Figure. 14. Gertrude L. Brooks

Monroe, and Lillian Darkins all came to the founding, although little is known about them.¹⁶ These black women who resided in various parts of Pittsburgh and Allegheny City provided funds and resources to Pittsburgh's early black institutions, fought for black civil rights in employment, and published a newspaper.

Membership in black women's clubs required prospective members meet certain criterion, a practice used nationwide with some being less stringent than others usually to maintain the club's elitism. Darlene Clark Hine's study of black women's clubs in the Middle-West found two exclusionary clubs: the Grand Rapids Study Club and the Women's Improvement Club of Indianapolis. Membership in these clubs was restricted to handpicked women who shared the same middle-class values, were married to professionals, well-educated and positioned and belonged to reputable families. Both considered prospective candidates upon the recommendation of a current member. It was not uncommon for elitist black women's clubs to restrict their membership to women who shared their same social status.

Without a vested interest in class status, Pittsburgh's earliest and most influential black women's club had less stringent requirements. Based on a thorough examination of the Belle Phoebe League, it was an exclusionary club, and, for the most part, accepted black

¹⁶*Rebecca Aldridge, 3rd Anniversary Address, November 23, 1897*, p. 1. Gertrude L. Brooks was born Gertrude L. Queen, the daughter of Andrew S. Queen of Staunton, VA, and Annie Williams of Chambersburg, PA. She was educated in Allegheny City schools and earned her high school diploma from Gleason's Parliamentary Law School in Los Angeles, California. Gertrude L. Queen, later married Harry S. Brooks of Washington, D.C. She was the youngest member in Pittsburgh's Frances E.W. Harper League. For more information, see Anna Brooks Gary, "*A Biography of Gertrude L. Brooks*," *Gertrude L. Brooks Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

women based on their commitment to “uplift the race.”¹⁷ They were exclusionary to the extent that they accepted for membership a certain type of black woman. For example, the Belle Phoebe League, mandated that every woman have good morals, be literary inclined, be free of employment in houses of ill fame, and willing to devote her energies to the elevation of woman, the home, and the race.¹⁸ Each member was to discountenance dancing, card playing, and the drinking of intoxicants at any social given under the auspices of the League.¹⁹ So long as women subscribed to these middle-class values, they were welcome.

In 1895, two important events occurred within the Belle Phoebe League. The League responded to a call issued by Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin of Boston, to the First National Conference of Colored Women which was organized in the interest Negro womanhood. Represented by Rebecca Aldridge, who paid her own expenses to the conference, submitted a report about the Belle Phoebe League which read:

¹⁷*Rebecca Aldridge, 3rd Anniversary Address*, p. 1.

¹⁸*Golden Anniversary of the Frances E.W. Harper League*, p. 3. On February 5, 1895, Mrs. Sarah Bentley suggested the club’s name be changed to the Frances Harper League. Also see *Constitution and By-Laws of the Frances E.W. Harper League*, p. 4.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

Greetings. (sic)

We, the members of the Belle Phoebe League of the twin cities, namely Pittsburg (sic) and Allegheny, beg to leave to submit the following report to your noble body:

We were organized November 20, 1894. Object: Self culture, and to advance the interest of the women of our race on all lines pertaining to the development of a nobler womanhood and the securing of our rights in every legitimate way and to second the efforts of our leading women such as Mrs. Ida B. Wells-Barnett and others. Number of members, nineteen; monthly taxation, five cents. Our league (sic) is in a flourishing condition. Signed on behalf of said league (sic).

Mrs. Rebecca Aldridge, Pres.
Mrs. S.A. Bentley, Vice Pres,
Lillian S. Darkins, Sec.,
Lizzie H. Monroe, Rec. Sec.²⁰

During this Convention, Aldridge, was appointed to the Nominating Committee. The League was the only Pittsburgh black women's club represented in Boston for this important meeting, among colored women.

The League also changed its name to the Frances E.W. Harper League, because "Belle Phoebe was only a myth and did not exemplify the meaning of true womanhood" or the mission of black women to uplift the race. The name Frances Harper, the League thought, "stood out boldly for everything that was good and pure." Harper, a published poet and lecturer by 1854, actively participated in the abolition, suffrage, temperance, and equal rights movements and, to her credit and that of black women, she earned a national reputation and respect among both black and white women. Phoebe A. Hanaford, author of *Daughters of America*, wrote:

²⁰*The Woman's Era*, July 1895, p. 12.

Frances E.W. Harper is one of the most eloquent women lecturers in the country whom white women may be proud, and of whom abolitionists can point and declare that a race which could show such women never ought to have been held in bondage.²¹

Though Harper had no ties to Pittsburgh, her interest in the welfare and progress of black women was especially striking to members of the Belle Phoebe League. Frances Smith Foster's *A Brighter Coming Day: A Frances Ellen Watkins Harper Reader*, tells us that Harper often conducted private sessions with them about their daughters, encouraged them to uplift their heads and plant the roots of progress under the hearthstone.²² By word and by deed, Harper was such a powerful symbol of empowered womanhood that black women across the nation organized and renamed clubs in her honor, as did Pittsburgh's Belle Phoebe League.

Behind the closed doors of the Frances Harper League, members sang religious hymns and read papers, an activity which occurred during the meetings of many black women's clubs, whatever the club's mission which represented a sort of spiritual grounding or ritual to open each meeting. In other words, literary clubs were not the only clubs which engaged in this type of exercise, because most of them sought to enhance their intellect and share information. In 1898, for example, papers read by members of the Frances Harper

²¹Frances Smith Foster, ed. *A Brighter Coming Day*, (New York: the Feminist Press, 1990), p. 326. Frances E. Watkins was born in Baltimore, Maryland, to well-educated family in 1825. She attended her uncle's school, William Watkins Academy, a school for "oratory, literature, and debate." When she reached thirteen years old, her formal education ended. Her first publication was *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (1854). Watkins's literary works were published in abolitionist newspapers. She later, engaged anti-slavery causes earning the respect of Frederick Douglass, William Still, William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown. Harper was also an advocate of universal suffrage and attended several Women's Rights Conventions and held memberships in woman suffrage organizations.

²²*Ibid*, p. 127.

League included: "The Presumption of a Husband," "A Wife's Troubles," "What a Woman Can Do," "Should Negro Girls Go to College," and "Women's Clubs and the Negro Problem."²³ Other topics dealt with the various departments of City government to help these black club women to better understand its functions and obtain City services for the race. After the papers were read, they were critiqued by a League member, and a discussion ensued.

Through the opened doors of the Frances E.W. Harper League poured a powerful commitment to black social welfare beginning in the late 19th century. It was most noted for its charitable acts for the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women, the first black institution established for black women in Pittsburgh. In addition, the League members fought for equal employment opportunities in Pittsburgh Department Stores. Always key, however, were the continuing efforts to promote "noble womanhood," among the city's black women and their daughters. The women of the Frances Harper League also formed the Woman's Press Association of Pittsburgh and published a paper, *The Woman's Defender*.²⁴

²³*Minutes of the Frances E.W. Harper League, October 1898*, p. 25. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA. Some of the papers written and presented by League members included: "Some facts in the Life of Frederick Douglass," "The Relation of Drink to Digestion," "Bureau of Building Inspection," and "Water Supply and Distribution."

²⁴*Golden Anniversary of the Frances E.W. Harper League, 1894-1944*, p. 4. This newspaper was published and made available to the public every Friday for a nickel. The records reveal that the *Woman's Press* was staffed by four League members with Sadie Black Hamilton as secretary. The names of the staff were not mentioned. No copies of this important communication were available.

After the Civil War, this was the first organized effort by Pittsburgh's black women to change the quality of life in the black community.

Charity

The early charitable activities of the Frances E.W. Harper League were devoted to the Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored Women founded by Fannie Peck Bond, the daughter of abolitionist and ornamental hair designer, John Peck. Raising funds through bazaars and house-to-house entertainment, she purchased a small house on LaPlace Street, Hill District in 1884, to ensure that black women had a place to retire, especially those without families. It was owned and operated solely by black people.²⁵ The League organized holiday celebrations, gifts of furniture, and donations of food to this facility.

Beginning in 1897, each Christmas became a special one, because the League rendered a program which included song, refreshments, and presents for the residents. Black women residing in the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women were given gifts of aprons and candy on Christmas. Black institutions such as this one were always in need of food donations and often held "Donation Days." On one occasion, the members of the League agreed to donate six potatoes each, but the request came (sic) too late, so they donated fifty pounds of sugar with each member contributing twenty-five cents toward the donation.²⁶

²⁵ "*The Harriet Tubman Guild*," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, p. B-1.

²⁶ *Minutes of the Frances E.W. Harper League, November 27, 1928*, p. 67. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA. The total cost of the sugar was \$3.18 and Mrs. Smith, a League member, was given \$3.75 for its purchase.

Personal donations were not the sole means of the Harper League's charitable activities. Most black women's clubs sponsored recitals, contests, lyceums, symposiums, socials and bake sales to raise funds. Members of the Frances Harper League submitted and compiled recipes, and published "The Frances E. W. Harper League Cook Book" which was sold and the proceeds given to the Working Girls Home.²⁷ In November 1927, it sponsored the "Crawford Recital" at Carnegie Hall. This successful event which grossed \$225.50 was distributed among five of Pittsburgh's black institutions: the Colored YWCA and YMCA, the Coleman Home for Colored Boy's, the Ella Grayson Home for Working Girls, and the Davis Home for Colored Children.²⁸

Another example of fund-raising by the League involved a variety of contests, especially, was the "Lamp Shade Contest." A committee headed by Mrs. Thomas and members Oceola Holland, Ada V. Brown, Goldie Hamilton, and Naomi Walker purchased a crystalline lamp shade for seven dollars, distributed 200 tickets among League members, and sold them for one dollar.²⁹ The contestant bringing in more than ten dollars won the lamp shade. On May 29, 1928, this contest netted \$142.00. The fund-raisers held by the

²⁷*Minutes of the Frances E. W. Harper League, February 1, 1928*, p. 56. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

²⁸*Minutes of the Frances E. W. Harper League, November 16, 1927*, p. 24. See Chapter Six of this study for a detailed discussion of the above mentioned Pittsburgh black institutions. The tickets for the League's Crawford Recital were sold by its members and two local black businesses: Dorsey's Music Shop and Fowler's Drug Store. Dorsey's, Pittsburgh's first black owned music shop, was located in Homewood. Harry Fowler, a graduate of The Western Pennsylvania University in 1910 with a degree in pharmacy, had two locations: Wylie Avenue and Watt Street and Wylie Avenue and Somers Street, Hill District.

²⁹*Minutes of the Frances E. W. Harper, April 4, 1928*, p. 57.

Frances Harper League grossed substantial profits enabling it to assist several institutions and remain a viable force in Pittsburgh's race uplift.

Members of the Frances Harper League often retired at the Home and sometimes made special requests on its behalf. Between 1927-1928, it purchased carpet and furniture for the Aged Home for Infirm Colored Women. For example, Lizzie Monroe made a request from the League to put new carpet on the Home's back parlor by Friday, November 11, 1927, Annual Donation Day.³⁰ After checking the League's financial resources, the Refurnishing Committee honored Monroe's request and the carpet was laid one day before the event. The accord and expediency with which the League acted was by no means characteristic of the organization.

Much more characteristic of the normal League behavior was the controversy of 1928. During the League's monthly meeting in February, Gertrude L. Brooks reported that a room of furniture was purchased for the Home at a cost of \$81.20 creating discord and hurt feelings between members of the Refurnishing Committee, Lucy Robinson and Mrs. Walker. They could not agree on a price or the quality of the furniture, so Mrs. Walker telephoned the President, Gertrude Brooks, and told her of a special bargain sale (sic) and requested that she meet her to view the same.³¹

³⁰*Minutes of the Frances E.W. Harper League, November 2, 1927*, p. 19. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

³¹*Minutes of the Frances E. W. Harper League, February 1, 1927*, p. 44-46. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

Mrs. Robinson took exception to not having been called to meet with the president and Mrs. Walker before the final purchase. The League made monthly payments of ten dollars until the balance on the furniture was paid. The donations of food and furniture may have seemed perhaps small gestures, but were helpful in defraying some of the Home's operational costs and contributed to the comfort and sustenance of the residents.

Fighting Discrimination

While the Frances Harper League worked to support the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women, it proceeded in the same direction of black women's clubs across the United States to end discrimination and expand the employment of black women beyond the domestic sphere. Jacqueline Jones pointed out that black women were limited to "black women's work that paid much less than that performed by white women, barred from peacetime factory labor, and traditional (white) female occupations of secretarial and sales work." Black women sought jobs that lacked the social stigma of domestic service indicating a persistent struggle for self-improvement.

During the decade between 1880-1890, George B. Tindall explained that with the nation's population growth, the number of employed women increased, particularly, in clerical work and sales jobs. Partly responsible for this change in female occupations was the establishment of department stores which spread to the United States from Paris when Aristide Boucicaut opened Bon Marche in 1852. There is, however, no comparable consensus as to the first department store to emerge in the United States, but the concept spread to Pittsburgh with the establishment of Boggs & Buhl (1869), and Kaufmann's (1871)

Department Stores. It was not until the 1890s, however, that department stores achieved widespread acceptance and created an important venue for female employment.

In July 1898, Mrs. Emma J. Moore, secretary of the League read a letter from the president, Rebecca Aldridge:

It would be well for the League to appoint a committee to [visit] the firms of Boggs & Buhl and Kaufmann's asking them to employ colored help as sales and cash girls. A committee of Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Brady, Mrs. Sands, Mrs. Brooks, Mrs. Steward, Mrs. Jenkins, and Mrs. Moore was appointed.³²

The committee, on behalf of the League and the city's black women, circulated a petition among the race with some of Pittsburgh's most outstanding colored citizens having signed their names, and went to Boggs & Buhl and Kaufmann's Department Stores asking them to employ colored girls as sales clerks and cashiers.³³ A "*Study of Girls in Pittsburgh*," revealed that "none of the department stores hired Negro girls as clerks. They took them in the storerooms (sic) and departments where personal service positions were open such as, the shampoo parlors and restrooms." Many white employers were, and remained, rigid in their thoughts on the job performance and abilities of blacks as shown in their refusal to employ blacks and the positions to which employers limited them.

³²*Minutes of the Frances E.W. Harper League, July 6, 1898*, p. 17. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

³³*Golden Anniversary of the Frances E.W. Harper League, 1894-1944*, p. 4. Boggs & Buhl was owned by Russell Boggs and Henry Buhl. It was located on Federal Street in Allegheny City and the only department store in this area. Kaufmann's, founded by Edgar Kaufmann, was first situated on Pittsburgh's South Side and later, relocated to downtown Pittsburgh.

Because neither department store responded to the League's petition or its committee, it contended that Boggs & Buhl and Kaufmann officials "did not know how to respond." John Hope Franklin has suggested that oftentimes white employers refused to hire blacks, because of objections raised by white employees, many of whom found it degrading to work alongside blacks.³⁴ Nonetheless, the Frances Harper League made a vigorous, but unsuccessful, attempt to change their hiring practices and to create equal employment opportunities for black women and girls.

Women's Press Association

Communication among black women was essential for their moral uplift and to keep open the lines of communication, the Frances Harper League founded the Women's Press Association of Pittsburgh which published the *Woman's Defender*. With four members of the League comprising the editorial board and Mrs. Sadie Black Hamilton, secretary, the paper promoted the development of noble womanhood which has been defined by the League in the following excerpt:

...when black women organize our younger women and expose them to the need of social purity, talks warning them of evil company, an bringing them in closer touch with more that is pure and good...when black women teach other black women to realize that they have a part to act in developing womanhood of the race, true honored womanhood, enlightened motherhood, and a happy, comfortable homes which could only be secured by a concerted effort of black women.³⁵

³⁴John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: a History of African Americans*, 7th edition, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990), p. 310.

³⁵*Rebecca Aldridge, 3rd Anniversary Address, November 23, 1897*, p. 3.

This vehicle also allowed black women to define themselves for themselves. It was a place where they could tell their own stories, identify causes, concerns, and enemies of black advancement.

Other Activities

They held meetings in churches, private homes and in the parlors of the YWCA to teach them the rudiments of motherhood. The Frances Harper League also founded a Junior League within the organization to instill basic values and high morals in black girls. The idea of “noble womanhood” was the foremost tenet of black women's clubs nationwide, as black women, in the aftermath of slavery, remained vulnerable to the sexual exploitation of white males, constantly degraded by white society, and the victims of domestic violence.

Contrary to Gunnar Myrdal's argument that “black voluntary associations were pathological, since among other things, they accomplished so little of what they set out to accomplish,” the Harper League was an exception to such a broad and ludicrous generalization of black organizations. The main objective was the training of black women in motherhood and to instill in them high moral values. While the early years of the League were spent solidifying the organization, it soon organized public mother's meetings conducted monthly by Luella Stewart, a League member and president of the Kings Daughters. The F.E.W. Harper League also organized a Junior League within its club supervised by Ella Jones which also performed social service work.³⁶

³⁶In her 1921 address, League member and newly elected president, Josephine McCord (McCard) suggested the Frances E.W. Harper League form the Young Women's Auxiliary to the League as the Jr. Frances Harper League, because there was a great deal to be accomplished

Furthermore, the Harper League engaged in activities outside its mission. Through providing financial and other means of support for the city's black institutions and fighting for equal rights, the Frances Harper League paved the way for the formation of other black women's clubs in Pittsburgh. After its inception, numerous black women's clubs emerged which meant increased services and a greater involvement of black women in the affairs of the black community.

Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association

By the turn of the century, black men and women supported and argued for universal suffrage, for along with white women, they were denied political rights. Blacks had been effectively disfranchised in the South. Women could vote, in Colorado, Utah and Idaho, but, for black women the right to vote was imperative for four reasons: (1) it would be a boon to education, (2) they could improve conditions by having a voter's influence with legislators and school boards; (3) it was essential for their own protection, the protection of their children and the progress of the race.³⁷ In other words, black women felt that the right to vote would give them citizenship, guarantee them rights and protection under the laws of this country. As Willie May King pointed out, black women also felt a right to participate in the

among the younger class. It was designed to have its own officers and its social service activities, but supervised by the Sr. Frances Harper League. For further information see *The Presidential Address to the Frances Harper League of Pittsburgh, 1921*. Gertrude L. Brooks Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

³⁷Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "African American Women and the Suffrage Movement," In *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman's Suffrage Movement*, ed., Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, (Trousdale, Oregon: New Sage Press, 1995), p. 136.

electoral process, because they owned property, paid taxes, successfully managed their own business affairs, and became dentists, physicians, lawyers, and journalists; it was their earned right.³⁸ The advantages of suffrage realized by black women marked the beginning of their suffrage activities in the United States.

Black women played an active role in every stage of the suffrage movement from the ante-bellum period through the suffrage victory in 1920. Beginning in the 19th century, early black women suffragists participated in various women's conventions where the subject of woman suffrage was high on the agenda. Sojourner Truth, a former slave, participated in the Women's Rights Convention of 1850, in Worcester, Massachusetts and Sarah Remond spoke at the Ninth National Woman's Convention in New York City in 1858.³⁹ Mary Ann Shadd Carey, an attorney, argued on behalf of woman suffrage in the 1860s and was one of few women black or white registered to vote. Truth and Carey attempted to vote, but were both rejected at the polls. Harriet and Hattie Purvis, and Frances E.W. Harper belonged to predominantly white mainstream suffragist organizations such as the National Woman

³⁸Willie May King, *Suffrage and Our Women*, *The Competitor*, June 1920, p. 60.

³⁹Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, p. 138. Sojourner Truth, whose real name was Isabella Baumfree, was illiterate as most slaves and former slaves were. A woman's rights advocate and known suffragist, she participated in the Women's Rights Conventions in Akron, Ohio (1851) and New York (1853). An abolitionist and member of both black and white anti-slavery societies, she traveled across the country and abroad speaking against the institution of slavery. For more information see Nell Irvin Painter's *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Carelton Mabee, *Sojourner Truth, Prophet: Why Did She Never Learn to Read?* in *Black Women in United States History*, Volume 3, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1990), pp. 869-894. Boston's Sarah Remond came from a family whose abolitionist activities were well known. Her anti-slavery activism even took her to England where she made several anti-slavery speeches. See Ruth Bogin's, "*Sarah Parker Remond: Black Abolitionist From Salem*," in *Black Women in United States History*, Volume 2, pp. 135-166; Dorothy Porter's "*Abolitionist and Physician*," in *Black Women in United States History*, Volume 4, pp. 1125-1131.

Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association to secure the right of enfranchisement for the race, while other black women developed suffrage organizations of their own.⁴⁰

By the 1900s, black women founded a number of suffrage clubs and societies in various parts of the United States. They organized such clubs in Tuskegee, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Memphis, Boston, Charleston and New Orleans and state suffrage societies in Delaware, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Texas, New York, and Maryland.⁴¹ These suffrage clubs were established to enlighten black women who did not fully understand the casting of the ballot and its significance, to agitate for woman suffrage, and to gain strength through various women's clubs of the "fairer" race.⁴² The agitation by black women in the woman suffrage movement continued to spread to other cities and states.

On February 8, 1911, Rebecca Aldridge, the mother of Pennsylvania clubdom, felt that "organizing for suffrage was a good thing for Negro women."⁴³ With four other black

⁴⁰Harper and the Purvis' were active participants in the American Equal Rights Association, (AERA) founded in May, 1866. See Janice Sumler Lewis' *"The Forten-Purvis Women of Philadelphia: The American Anti-Slavery Crusade,"* Volume 4, *Black Women in United States History*, pp. 1337-1344. Andrea Kerr's *"White Women's Rights and Black Men's Wrongs"* in Marjorie Spruill Wheeler's *One Woman, One Vote*, provides a detailed discussion on the AERA, pp. 61-79.

⁴¹Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: the Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, (New York: Quill, William, and Monroe, 1984), p. 129.

⁴²Willie May King, p. 60-61.

⁴³*1911-1929 Lucy Stone Civic League Yearbook, Club History*, p. 3. Lucy Stone Civic League Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA; Mrs. J. Welford Holmes, "The Lucy Stone Civic League, Pittsburgh, PA," in *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*, p. 384. This document was obtained from Dr. Edna McKenzie, but there was no cover page. Therefore, the writer is unable to identify the publisher and place of publication.

women: Mrs. I.S. Lee, Nora D. Temple, Mrs. Welford Holmes, and Martha Sutton, Aldridge founded the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association in Pittsburgh, a replica of Allegheny County's exclusively white Equal Franchise Association of Pittsburgh.⁴⁴ The purpose of the Association, whose motto was "Hold Together As We Go," was to (1) inspire and promote civic betterment, and interpret the principles of better citizenship, (2) to maintain a scholarship fund for aiding worthy members within their group [race], and (3) more importantly, to educate Pittsburgh's black women the value of uplifting the masses.⁴⁵ One of its most important efforts was to educate Pittsburgh's Negro women along suffrage lines. It was especially clear to black women suffragists and observers that lacking the skills to understand the political process hindered black women from full participation in civic matters.⁴⁶

Membership in the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association was open to Pittsburgh's black women of good civic and moral standing and sympathetic to the object of the organization.⁴⁷ Club affiliation depended on the Membership Committee's

⁴⁴*A History of the Allegheny County League of Women Voters—Seventy-Five Years of Achievement*, (Pittsburgh: Allegheny County League of Women Voters, Inc., 1995), p. 5. The Equal Franchise Federation of Pittsburgh was the local representative of the NAWSA from 1912-1920. It encouraged legislators to vote for the enfranchisement of women and for (white) women to urge white men to do the same. This organization also participated in suffrage parades in Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. and wrote and distributed suffrage literature.

⁴⁵*1911-1927 Lucy Stone Civic League Yearbook*, p. 2. Lucy Stone Civic League Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁴⁶Willie May King, p. 60.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 2. *Constitution and By-Laws, Lucy Stone Civic League*, p. 2. Lucy Stone Civic League Papers, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.



Figure. 15. Harriet Duffield Lee

Pittsburgh's Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association was limited to seventy black women, a large number in comparison to earlier local black women's clubs which usually did not exceed twenty-five to thirty black women. However, the membership could be terminated when a member missed four consecutive meetings without notification, failed to pay dues, and expressed disloyalty to the organization.⁴⁸ Reinstatement was only possible with a recommendation from the Membership Committee and the advanced payment of one year's dues. In cases when a member violated the guidelines, her commitment was immediately called into question. Sometimes, black women joined clubs for social status and not necessarily to participate in race uplift. The guidelines were perhaps a way to "flush out" those women seeking recognition through club affiliation and simultaneously deter such status seeking black women from attempting to join the Negro Women's Equal Franchise League.

In order successfully and effectively to conduct its business, the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association formed five standing committees: Charity, which was responsible for all charitable activities; Scholarship, to promote the financial growth of the scholarship fund and transact all necessary business with colleges, applicants, and recommendations; Membership, to maintain waiting lists, notify new and delinquent members, and vote on all reinstatements; Good Fellowship, to collect money for the flower fund, visit and report the names of all sick and deceased members, and send flowers and cards of sympathy when the "grim reaper" visited the homes of its members; and Delegate, composed of five members of the organization who were appointed by the president, to

⁴⁸1911-1927 Yearbook, *Lucy Stone Civic League*, p. 14-15.

receive the names of eligible delegates to various black women's conventions.⁴⁹ In addition to these committees, was the executive board of the NWEFA comprised of the organization's officers, chairpersons of the standing committees, and nine members of the club appointed by the president.

Such an elaborate organization within the Negro Women's Equal Franchise League is attributed to three factors. First, every member of the League was given an opportunity to actively participate in its race uplift activities. Second, it provided them an opportunity to acquire leadership training. Historian Jacqueline Rouse, in *Lugenia Burns Hope Southern Reformer*, asserted that black women's clubs in addition to their many activities, functioned as a training ground for leadership among black women. Third, the League's solid organization, allowed for a smooth operation in accomplishing its goals.

Historian Gerda Lerner pointed out that black club women were for the most part, educators or the wives of black ministers. Harriet Augustus Duffield, the daughter of Milton B. Duffield (white), a U.S. Marshall and Elizabeth Ann York, the Superintendent of the Women's Prison in Butte, Montana was born in Sonora, California January 19, 1862.⁵⁰ Harriet Duffield married Reverend I.S. Lee, the pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church in Pittsburgh. Alice Waring was born in Oberlin, Ohio in 1872.⁵¹ She attended the Howard

⁴⁹Willie May King, p. 60-61.

⁵⁰*Letter to Pamela Smoot from Susan Noble, March 29, 1996.* Ms. Noble is the great-granddaughter of Harriet Duffield Lee. In 1904, the Frances E.W. Harper League appointed Harriet I. S. Lee as its representative in Juvenile Court.

⁵¹Holmes graduated from Howard University in 1900. She was an active member in the Aurora Reading Club, a founding member of the Pittsburgh Urban League and Pittsburgh Chapter of the NAACP.

University School of Dentistry and later married an attorney, Mr. Welford Holmes. With the exceptions of Harriet Lee and Alice Waring Holmes, however, little is known about the charter members of the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association. A better test is that they promoted views consistent with middle class and professional status.

Black women were conducting suffrage meetings in cities across the nation in support of woman suffrage and to explain the importance of their votes to the race, and black women in particular. In Pittsburgh, only one month after its organization, the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association held its first public meeting March 10, 1911, at Trinity Congregational Church.⁵² While the records do not reveal what transpired during the meeting, they do tell us that Ida Porter Boyer, field secretary for the Pennsylvania State Suffrage Association, was the speaker. This was the first step by Pittsburgh's only black suffrage organization to politically educate the city's disfranchised population.

The race question became almost as large as the suffrage movement itself. Historian Rosalyn Terborg-Penn explained that there was a nationwide, not just a southern prejudice against black women. She concluded that white women outside the South used southern white women's overt prejudice as an excuse for National Woman Suffrage Association's (NWSA) discriminatory policies, while hiding their own similar feelings about black women.⁵³ These discriminatory policies and racist attitudes of white women suffragists were

⁵²"*Women's Clubs, Lucy Stone Woman's Suffrage Club*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 11, 1912, p. 5; "*Suffrage Meeting At Trinity Church*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 1912, p. 1.

⁵³Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, "*African American Women and the Woman's Suffrage Movement*," p. 148.

reflected in the March 1913 suffrage parade sponsored by the NAWSA in Washington, D.C. when black women were relegated to the back of the line regardless of state residency.⁵⁴ With the exception of Ida B. Wells, black women suffragists readily assumed their position in the rear of the parade rather than not participate.

The Lucy Stone Suffrage League also affiliated with the NAWSA and claimed it “was accorded a hearty welcome by such ardent suffragists as Helen Price, Mary Ingram, Hannah Peterson, and Mary E. Blackwell, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Alice Stone Blackwell.”⁵⁵ Although little is known about the other white women suffragists, we do know that Shaw vehemently opposed the participation of black women in white suffrage organizations for fear of offending southern white women suffragists who consistently threatened to withdraw from the movement. Shaw also worked for the continued

⁵⁴Wanda A. Hendricks, “*Ida B. Wells Barnett and the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago*,” in *One Woman One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement*, ed. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, (Trousdale, Oregon: New Sage Press, 1995), p. 263-264. Wells undoubtedly built a foundation for the largest black suffrage organization by 1915, which eventually led to the election of Chicago’s first black alderman and Congressman. The National American Suffrage Association was the result of a merger between the American Woman Suffrage Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association which occurred in February 1890. The schism between the two organizations was caused by a disagreement regarding the defeat of the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The idea of a merger involved Lucy Stone and her daughter, Alice Blackwell, members of the NWSA, and Susan B. Anthony and Rachel Foster representing the AWSA.

⁵⁵*1911-1929 Lucy Stone Civic League Yearbook*, p. 4. It is unclear exactly when the Negro Women’s Equal Franchise Association changed its name to the Lucy Stone Civic League, but is clear that it was named in honor of one of the most renowned woman suffragists. Stone was the first woman in Massachusetts to earn a college degree. Stone, a woman suffragist, organized the first National Woman’s Rights Convention, was founder and editor of Boston’s *Woman’s Journal*, a woman suffrage newspaper which circulated for almost fifty years; an abolitionist and spokesperson for the anti-slavery movement; and successfully orchestrated campaigns to elect or defeat political candidates. See Alice Stone Blackwell’s, *Lucy Stone: Pioneer of Women’s Rights*, 1971; Elinor Rice Hay’s *Morning Star: A Biography of Lucy Stone, 1818-1863*, New York, 1978.

disfranchisement of black men by supporting states rights positions as the South's white political leadership drafted new state constitutions to disfranchise black men.

And, given the attitudes and behavior of the white leadership in the woman suffrage movement, the likelihood of a sincere "hearty welcome" on the national level is questionable. For example, historian Marjorie Spruill Wheeler explained that the National Woman Suffrage Association (1869) was opposed universal suffrage and the Fifteenth Amendment which gave black men the right to vote. In 1895, the National American Suffrage Association (NAWSA) asked Frederick Douglass, an ardent supporter of women's rights conventions, to stay away from the Atlanta meeting for fear of offending southern white women suffragists. Women suffragists who disagreed with the behavior and policies of the NWSA formed a splinter organization, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). Because of the increasing number of black women engaged in the fight for universal suffrage, many white woman suffragists, especially those in the South, became intimidated and lashed out at the participation of black women suffragists.

Despite the attitudes of white women suffragists elsewhere, those in Pittsburgh and the state of Pennsylvania accepted the membership of the Lucy Stone Suffrage League into their white woman suffrage organizations. It affiliated with the Equal Franchise Federation of Western Pennsylvania and claimed to be the first black suffrage organization associated with this body; and the Pennsylvania Woman's League. Members of the Lucy Stone Suffrage League sent delegates, Harriet Duffield Lee and Alice Waring Holmes to the Pennsylvania State Suffrage Conventions and joint suffrage conventions of the state and national bodies in Philadelphia (1912). They also participated in suffrage parades sponsored

by the Pittsburgh Equal Franchise Association and paid a year's subscription of \$25 to the Equal Franchise League.⁵⁶ The fight for suffrage in Pittsburgh became a combined effort of the city's black and white women suffragists.

Perhaps this racial solidarity between white and black women suffragists in Pittsburgh is best explained in two ways. First, northern whites and white women suffragists unlike southern whites were not threatened by the enfranchisement of black men and women. With the massive population of blacks in southern states, whites feared blacks could wield considerable political influence and "take over the South," if given the right to vote.⁵⁷ Furthermore, whites were extremely frightened by the mere thought of not being able to maintain the status quo. Second, though racism and discrimination existed in northern cities, it was sometimes subtle, as it was in Pittsburgh. The relationship between black and white women suffragists, however, probably had more to do with striving for the same right---the right to enfranchisement.

Women almost everywhere like those of Pennsylvania fought for woman's suffrage and in several states were granted full suffrage rights. In 1869, the Territory of Wyoming granted such rights to women and after 1890, retained woman suffrage as a state.⁵⁸ Three

⁵⁶ *1911-1929 Yearbook, Lucy Stone League*, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Alice Welfred Holmes, "*The Lucy Stone Civic League, Club History*," p. 385. It is important to note that the famed W.E.B. DuBois was guest speaker at this political event. DuBois, an adversary of Booker T. Washington, was founder of the Niagara Movement, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and worker as the author of *The Crisis*. A sociologist and author, Booker T. Washington, wrote *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899) and *The Souls of Black Folks* (1961), in addition to numerous other publications.

⁵⁸ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "*A Short History of the Woman Suffrage Movement in America*," in *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement*, p. 11.

other states also granted women the right to vote: Colorado (1893), Utah and Idaho (1896), and New York, (1917).⁵⁹ With the success of women suffragists and their supporters in these states, other women were encouraged to fight for participation in the electoral process.

Significant to the woman suffrage organizations in Pennsylvania and to all disfranchised women was the State Woman's Suffrage Bill. This legislation, written by the Legislative Committee of the Equal Franchise Society was successfully submitted to the Pennsylvania State Legislature and would be placed on the November 2, 1915, ballot. The passage of this Bill would amend the Pennsylvania Constitution giving all women the right to vote and perhaps set a precedent in other states where women were disfranchised. This measure would also give Pennsylvania male voters the opportunity to decide the controversial fate of woman suffrage. It is important to note that the Equal Franchise Society was comprised of both men and women which indicated that not all men were opposed to the enfranchisement of women.

To change the non-voting status of black women, the Negro Women's Equal Franchise Association actively engaged in a local fight for universal suffrage. With the State Woman's Suffrage Bill on the November 1915 ballot, the NWEFA lobbied tirelessly in Allegheny County for its passage. Word of mouth has most often been the best medium of disseminating information in black communities. The NWEFA used this mode of communication to issue a call to black women's clubs throughout the state to agitate for the

⁵⁹Beverly Beeton, "*How the West Was Won for Woman Suffrage*," in *One Woman, One Vote*, p. 99. Other western states granting woman suffrage were California (1900); Washington (1910); Kansas (1912), and Montana and Nevada (1914). Beeton's book, *Women Vote in the West: The Woman Suffrage Movement, 1869-1896*, is additionally a valuable source of information on western women and the vote. Also see Andrea Kerr, p. 74.

passage of the Woman Suffrage Bill. Its members, Harriet Lee, Martha Sutton, Daisy Lampkin, Lula E. Belle, Mary Turner Burwell, Annie J. Miller, Lillian Lloyd, Minnie Ryan, and Mrs. E.W. Bass, and Nora Temple, also sought to enlighten black congregations and organizations about the potential benefits of having the vote through public meetings, house meetings, lectures and the black press.

This, however, was not the first time Pennsylvania women sought to change the 19th Amendment of Pennsylvania's State Constitution to legally give women the right to vote. In 1885, the Pennsylvania Suffrage Association proposed a Constitutional Amendment to the Legislature which passed in the House, but failed in the Senate by a vote of 13-19.⁶⁰ But unfortunately for women, the amendment was again defeated. The Woman Suffrage Bill passed in Allegheny County, but stumbled on the state level in the November 1915 election by a vote of 441,034 to 385,348. Although the vote was a great disappointment to the Lucy Stone Civic League and white woman suffragists as well, the League continued to raise the political consciousness of local blacks and club women throughout Allegheny County with hopes of one day obtaining the right to enfranchisement.

Initially, the women of the Lucy Stone Suffrage League were committed to the enfranchisement of blacks, one of several means of uplifting the black community. In 1920, however, the League changed its focus to philanthropy and civic work, because blacks and white women had obtained the right to vote on August 26, 1920. With the ratification of the 19th Amendment, there was no longer a need for a suffrage organization of this type. Ending

⁶⁰*The Woman's Report, August 7, 1980*, Pennsylvania Commission, Harrisburg, PA, p. 1.

this period of political activism, members of the Lucy Stone Suffrage League also changed its name to the Lucy Stone Republican League.

The successful activities and participation of the Lucy Stone Suffrage League in the fight for enfranchisement, gave them the confidence to turn its sights on the many challenges within the black community. Most black women's clubs were founded on the premise of black womanhood, self-help, and race uplift. Between 1919-1920, the Lucy Stone Republican League in its new role provided for six black institutions and social services agencies. For example, it furnished the day nursery at the Morgan Community House and replenished the facility's supplies for \$300; disbursed a \$100 annual allotment to the Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored Women; assisted Livingstone Memorial Hospital and the Pittsburgh Urban League to which it contributed since its formation in 1918.⁶¹ The Lucy Stone Republican League sponsored musical and theatrical entertainment, and recreational activities for the Davis Home and the Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys.

Intertwined with helping the race's less fortunate was the Lucy Stone Republican League's fight for racial equality. One of its first battles was against the racist policies of the Pittsburgh Public School system. Since its creation in 1834, credentialed black teachers were barred from teaching in the city's public schools even though these schools were integrated. Although the Lucy Stone Republican League made an unsuccessful attempt to have "Negro"

⁶¹*Minutes of the Lucy Stone Civic League, 1920*, p. 6. *Lucy Stone Civic League Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA; Alice Waring Holmes, p. 386. The maintenance of Pittsburgh's black institutions by the Lucy Stone Civic League was supervised by Sadie DeMund Lynch and the League's Charity Committee. The successful and charitable efforts of the committee were applauded by the League and greatly appreciated by the beneficiaries. This was just another demonstration of a black women's club trying to uplift the race.

teachers placed in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the education of black children remained a great concern of the organization.

For this same reason, the Lucy Stone Republican League provided the financial means by which many of Pittsburgh's black youth could obtain a post-secondary education. From its inception, this black women's club maintained a scholarship fund for aspiring black youth residing in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The funds were specifically accrued through one fund-raiser, the Lucy Stone Civic League's Annual Mardi Gras. For years, this annual affair was held at the Labor Lyceum on Miller Street and has been described by J. Ernest Wright:

[It] was decorated with streamers, colored lights, and thrones for the king and queen. [People] were dressed as clowns, milk maids, cowboys, and devils. It opened with a grand march, the coronation of the king and queen, the traditional confetti, spirals and refreshments. There were bands and a gallery packed with spectators. Dancing went on until morning.⁶²

Since 1922, this fund-raiser enabled the Lucy Stone Republican League to award 35 scholarships to black students.

Given the large number of black students seeking a college education, the League changed its policy from awarding full to partial scholarships enabling it to help more students. Under the leadership of Alice Waring Holmes, Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee, this practice began in 1924, when the sum of \$500 was divided among six recipients. Four students, Catherine Hancock, Vivian Judkins, Clarence Smith and Russell

⁶²Ernest J. Wright, *Ethnic Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, Records of the Work Progress Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Job #64, p. 39. This document is an extensive survey which covers almost every aspect of Negro life in Pittsburgh from the 1700s-1940s. Topics include slavery, abolitionism, social life, and business life.

Anderson received \$75 each to attend the University of Pittsburgh; and Jane Curtis and J. Welford Holmes, the son of Alice Waring Holmes, \$100 each to attend Howard University. The latter may have received larger amounts, because they were attending a university outside Pennsylvania. In discussing the 1924, scholarship awards, Daisy Lampkin, President of the Lucy Stone Civic League stated:

We are only doing our duty to the ambitious colored youth whom are without funds. We wish we could help more. We have on file the names of many deserving students who are anxious to enter college. We would be glad to recommend these persons to any club or organization interested.⁶³

This plea to finance the college education of worthy black students by Lampkin failed to fall on deaf ears. The Della Robbia Club contacted the Lucy Stone Civic League and upon its recommendation, awarded a scholarship to Mary Covington to continue her education at the University of Pittsburgh. Networking among black women's clubs was a common practice and a clear demonstration of sisterhood, self-help, and social welfare. Until the Great Depression, the Lucy Stone Civic League divided \$1,000 among its scholarship recipients and when this fund was depleted, scholarship applicants were referred to other black women's clubs interested in racial uplift through education.

⁶³“*Lucy Stone Civic League Gives \$500 to Students*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 4, 1924, p. 4. The success of the League in awarding scholarships is demonstrated in the achievements of the recipients. For example, J. Welfred Holmes eventually earned three degrees: an A.M.; M.A; and a Ph.D. Although he received his doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh, he relocated to Baltimore, Maryland, where he taught English and became Chairman of the Division of Humanities at Morgan State College. See *Who's Who in the Aurora Reading Club*, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 10. It may not have been his choice to leave Pittsburgh, because Negro teachers were not permitted to teach in the public schools because of racial discrimination. In other words, he was probably forced to find employment elsewhere---a Negro college.

By 1929, the League had thirteen graduates, including one doctor of medicine, three doctors of dental surgery, one graduate of pharmacy, one Bachelor of Music and seven Bachelor of Arts.⁶⁴ The recipients of the Lucy Stone Republican League's scholarships attended the following institutions: Howard University, Lincoln, Wilberforce, and Fisk Universities; Oberlin, and West Virginia State, Storer Colleges; Hampton Institute, Carnegie Tech, and the University of Pittsburgh. On behalf of these students, the Scholarship Committee had awarded approximately \$3,500.⁶⁵

The social work in the area of education enthusiastically performed by the Lucy Stone Civic League received widespread attention not just for college scholarships awarded to black high school students, but also for its "trouble shooting" abilities on behalf of Pittsburgh educators and social service agencies such as the Urban League. On several occasions, whites solicited the help of the Lucy Stone Civic League concerning the financial difficulties of intelligent and ambitious black students aspiring a college education. In 1938, Dr. Tyson of the University of Pittsburgh contacted the Pittsburgh Urban League regarding Vivian McDonald, a student at the University of Pittsburgh. "Ms. Virginia McDonald, a very worthy student was not able to finish the semester, because of the lack of \$23 and he referred

⁶⁴"*Lucy Stone Civic League Benefits Many Through its Scholarship Fund, Nine Students Attending College; Thirteen Have Graduated By the League's Aid,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 28, 1919, p. 7. As of 1929, the League had awarded 34 scholarships. However, with the need so great among young black aspiring students, the League thought it could help more students and changed the scholarship program to one of loans.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p. 7. The \$3,500 also included monies given Aubrey Pankey, an aspiring musician, pursuing a music career at Boston's Hubbard Studios. Two years earlier, the Lucy Stone Civic League had also given a benefit specifically for Pankey which grossed \$130.



Figure. 16. Daisy Lampkin

the case to the Urban League to learn if some of the clubs could not provide this amount.”⁶⁶

The Lucy Stone Civic League paid Ms. McDonald's tuition balance.

High school teachers were also aware of the Lucy Stone Civic League's race uplift activities, its reputation, and unselfish deeds in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Hoping for positive results, Mr. Coyne (white), a teacher at Allderdice High School had written the League on behalf of Dorothy Reeves, an aspiring black student “who had an excellent academic record.” “I have been successful in securing for her through my efforts, individuals of our group, and some of his friends, all of the necessary finance (sic), but \$25 for her books which I am asking your help in getting.”⁶⁷

Impressed with the personal attention given this black student and the efforts of Mr. Coyne, the Lucy Stone Civic League agreed to pay for Ms. Reeves' books in two installments enabling her to secure the necessary funds for matriculation at Hampton Institute.⁶⁸ The organization also expressed an appreciation to Coyne and his interest in one of our group.

⁶⁶*Minutes of the Lucy Stone Civic League, January 1938*, p. 4. *Lucy Stone Civic League Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁶⁷*Minutes of the Lucy Stone Civic League, September 14, 1938*, p. 2. *Lucy Stone Civic League Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA. Reeves resided at 1439 Oak Avenue, Extension, Turtle Creek, PA. Most of the League's charitable deeds benefitted black students in Pittsburgh and surrounding mill towns. The League obviously thought Reeves was an exceptional case.

⁶⁸During the September 14, 1938 meeting, League members presented a \$15 check to Mr. Coyne whom they had invited. A subsequent check for the remaining balance would be sent to Ms. Reeves in February 1939. In a November 1938, a communication from Ms. Reeves to the League told of her academic progress at Hampton Institute and described her courses. It was through this communication that she showed her appreciation to the Lucy Stone Civic League for its kindness in her pursuit of a college education. In addition, she may have wanted to insure its members that they had made a good investment.

The “trouble-shooting” abilities of the Lucy Stone Civic League and its willingness to adhere to such unfortunate circumstances was a demonstration of the kinds of relationships among black women’s clubs, social service agencies, and educators. When the Lucy Stone Civic League exhausted its coffers, other black women’s clubs assumed the responsibility of supporting black college students. The Virginia McDonald case created a rippling effect among a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Urban League, and the Lucy Stone Civic League causing them to coalesce and successfully resolve her problem. Coyne’s recognition of the talent and scholastic ability of Dorothy Reeves created a new relationship between him and the League, and Reeves and the League. The generosity of the Lucy Stone Civic League to educational causes outside its scholarship fund showed the League’s commitment to their motto, “Hold Together as We Go.”

Harriet Tubman Club

Many black women’s clubs were named in honor of historically significant black women. For example, Phyllis Wheatley Clubs were formed in New Orleans, Chicago, Jacksonville, Florida, and Nashville, Tennessee. In Boston, black women organized the Harriet Tubman Club; in Chicago, the Ida B. Wells Club; and Pittsburgh, the Frances Harper League and the Madame C. J. Walker Club. These black women’s clubs were named for these black women, because of their leadership, courage, and devotion to defending black womanhood and the race.

Winona Idell Scott, was born in Harmonsburg, Pennsylvania September 8, 1877. Her parents, Sarah Ann Stewart and Matthew Felson Scott, were farmers in Greenwood

County, Pennsylvania and active participants in the Underground Railroad.⁶⁹ She attended the village school and academy of Greenwood County and later, married Harrison Ford of Mercer, Pennsylvania.⁷⁰ The couple had three children. It was a short-lived marriage, Harrison Ford died in 1911, and Winona remarried to Abraham Lincoln of Nelson County, Virginia and moved to Pittsburgh.

Winona Idell Lincoln, a house wife, was an avid church worker who belonged to several fraternal and women's organizations. She was a member of the Ebenezer Baptist Church until her husband bought a home in East End moving her church membership to the Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church. While there, Lincoln organized 67 children to work in the church who successfully raised funds to buy windows for the new church, the first baptizing (sic) robe, and made the first deposit of \$20 toward purchasing church pews.⁷¹ In addition, she held several leadership positions within the church including Sunday School Superintendent, chairperson of Foreign Missions, and church clerk. While a member of the Carron Street Baptist Church, Lincoln became president of the Rodney C. Fox Missionary Society and sponsored the Girls Friendship Club.

In addition to her church activities, Lincoln belonged to fraternal organizations and held a number of leadership positions. She was the first Worthy Counsilar (sic) of the Star of the West Court of Calanthea, a member of Cyrene Chapter #9 Order of the Eastern Star

⁶⁹*Harriet Tubman Terrace House for Convalescent Negro Women and Girls*, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 2.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

and first vice president to the Prince Hall Association. Winona Idell Lincoln, a housewife and avid church worker, contacted eleven of her friends to organize a club to help the Women's Auxiliary of the Union Baptist Association maintain the Aged Ministers' and Laymen's Home. A group of Christian women: Mrs E. J. Gould, Jessie Hale West, Mary Brown, Bannie Ellis, Mrs. Chambers, Anna Douglass, Georgia Stevens, Martha Madison, Sarah Winston, Mrs. Willis and Elsi Witten answered the call and met at Winona Idell Lincoln's home July 22, 1915, to organize the Harriet Tubman Club.⁷² It was named in honor of Tubman for her courageous and untiring deeds as a conductor on the Underground Railroad and for having "devoted her life to helping others."

The women of the Harriet Tubman Club, dedicated to "showing their love through service," had two objectives: (1) to provide donations and volunteerism to hospitals and welfare agencies caring for black patients and (2) the acquisition of land and buildings for community centers or club houses.⁷³ Unlike many other black women's clubs which admitted black women as long as they were of good moral character, literate, and recommended by a member of the club, the Tubman Club restricted its membership to twelve members, the number of Christ's disciples.

⁷²Jean Bryant, "*The Tubman Terrace House Becomes Real*," *The Pittsburgh Press*, June 29, 1989, p. A-2. The officers of the newly organized club were: Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, president; Laura A. Brown, first vice-president; Fannie Morton, second vice president; Patience Carter, recording secretary; Minnie Ryan, corresponding secretary; Lucille Carey, treasurer; Mrs. E.J. Gould, chaplain; Mrs. Geneva Stevens, Dorcas; and Anna Douglass, chairperson of social services.

⁷³*Constitution and By-Laws of the Harriet Tubman Guild, Article III*, p. 1.



Figure. 17. Winona Idell Lincoln

It set the regular meeting dates for the first Wednesday of each month; and adopted “Deeds Not Words” as its motto, as suggested by Laura A. Brown. Failure to attend meetings and pay dues for three consecutive months automatically terminated one's membership in the Harriet Tubman Club. The president of the club was authorized to recommend the dismissal of any member guilty of destroying the peace and harmony of the Harriet Tubman Club or who by her conduct reflected discredit upon the group.⁷⁴

With few exceptions, the goals of black women's clubs were primarily the same across the country. Black club women believed they could solve the problems of the race through intensive social service activities and often sent its members into local neighborhoods to assist blacks, particularly, black women and children. Pittsburgh's Harriet Tubman Club was similar in its race uplift efforts. It established the Frederick Douglass Literary Club at Peabody High School for black youth designed to help them appreciate the beginnings of their culture by studying black history. In 1928, the Harriet Tubman Club used the radio waves to inform the public of its social service work. Winona Idell Lincoln and Sarah Brown secured time from radio station WCAE to broadcast a musical and literary program presented by the members of the Frederick Douglass Literary Club. An annual Abraham Lincoln-Douglass broadcast was later established.⁷⁵ The Harriet Tubman

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, *Article XV*, p. 4.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 6. On February 12, 1930, four Pittsburgh radio stations WCAE, WJAS, KQV, and WWSW allotted the Tubman Club fifteen minutes on its air waves for their Frederick Douglass Memorial Program; and KDKA, Pittsburgh's first radio station, a half hour. It is unclear if the Harriet Tubman Club paid a fee for these radio broadcasts. Nonetheless, the Harriet Tubman Club used this mechanism to educate and reach the black masses, because Pittsburgh had no black radio station during this period. Furthermore, the Frederick Douglass Memorial Program could be heard by both blacks and whites, the young and the old.



Figure. 18. Charter Members of the Harriet Tubman Club

Front Row: Mrs. Willis, Mrs. Chambers, Winona Idell Lincoln, Anna Douglass, Elsi Witten

Middle Row: Bannie Ellis, Georgia Stevens, Martha Madison, Sarah Winston.

Back Row: Mrs. E.J. Gould, Jessie Hale West, and Mary Brown.

Club's greatest accomplishments, however, were its social service activities in local Pittsburgh hospitals and the establishment and ownership of a black convalescent home which are the main foci of this discussion.

In 1917, the Harriet Tubman Club began its first social service project outside the Aged Minister's and Laymen's Home in Western Pennsylvania Hospital which was founded March 18, 1848 and Pittsburgh's first publicly sponsored hospital. During the first two years of the club's existence, members provided food and other household necessities for residents. The director of the hospital's Social Services Department, Betty Wright contacted Winona Idell Lincoln requesting the Tubman Club assist the hospital in its social service work. With an overwhelming number of cases, many of them black, the Harriet Tubman Club accepted the challenge and responsibility of helping the needy, registered as the Harriet Tubman Club, Aide to the Social Service Department of the Western Pennsylvania Hospital.⁷⁶ These black women made referrals to the hospital, bought braces for cripples, and supplied layettes for indigent mothers. It was through this "outside" experience that members of the Harriet Tubman Club recognized the necessity of convalescent quarters for black women as some cases compelled them to open their private homes to nurse these women into recovery.

Two migrations among southern blacks to Pittsburgh, the first between 1890-1910, and the second migration, 1915-1920, exposed thousands of blacks to poor and often uninhabitable living conditions as well as a climate to which they were unaccustomed

⁷⁶*Harriet Tubman Terrace House for Convalescent Negro Women and Girls*, p. 5. Plans for Western Pennsylvania Hospital began March 10, 1847, during a community meeting at Odean Hall, located on Fourth Avenue. It was actually established March 18, 1848, and became Pittsburgh's "first publicly sponsored" hospital. The Articles of Incorporation were written by Dr. H.D. Sellers and Judge William Wilkins.

causing disease and suffering among the race. These problems were compounded by overcrowded conditions in integrated hospitals, segregated hospitals which refused to admit black patients, and smaller medical facilities that were cramped for space. The major problem of inadequate health care available to blacks created a need for social service in this area, because their treatment was limited to the medical services of Western Pennsylvania and Passavant Hospitals, making it almost impossible for the hospital staff to properly service all of its patients.

A convalescent home for Pittsburgh blacks was a much needed social service institution, because no black health care facilities existed and segregation prevented their admittance to white ones. In 1928, sociologist Ira De Reid in a survey of Pittsburgh hospitals, revealed an outstanding need for attention among the black population of Pittsburgh, because there existed no persistent effort on the part of agencies working in the field or blacks to provide even private homes for convalescent patients.⁷⁷ The Kingsley House, one of the first settlement houses in the country, was founded in Pittsburgh's Strip District (1893).⁷⁸ However, it did not admit black patients to either of its affiliates, the Lillian Fresh Air Home or Fresh Air Rest (1915) as the following quote reveals: "... it has

⁷⁷Ira De Reid, *The Negro Survey in Pittsburgh*, p. 49.

⁷⁸Woodene Merriman, "*For Half a Century She's Served Organization That Serves Others*," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 14, 1980, p. 2. The Kingsley House was founded by Charles Kingsley, a religious and reform leader. The Kingsley Association's first location was 1707 Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh's 12th Ward as a social settlement with classes, clubs, recreational activities, and a dispensary. It was later relocated to Bedford Avenue and Fulton Street, Hill District on property purchased by Henry Clay Frick for the Kingsley House in 1901. It was supported by voluntary contributions from Pittsburgh's corporate barons including Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and Richard Mellon. See John Butera, "*The Kingsley House*," 66 (*Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*), 1983, p. 25-47. Two other Pittsburgh settlement houses were: Irene Kaufmann and Sarah Heinz.

never been able to do much for the colored people. The race question is an acute one which as much as the Kingsley House would like to solve by serving both black and white, it has never been able to do so.”⁷⁹ Montefiore Hospital accepted no black convalescent patients, and while Magee Hospital recognized the need for convalescent care for blacks, but offered no solutions, and like other Pittsburgh hospitals refused to open its doors to blacks.

Reid's survey also revealed that Hamarville Convalescent Home, a facility where women and girls over fourteen years old convalesced after operations, broken bones, heart attacks, and infectious illnesses, had never taken black patients due to a shortage of space.⁸⁰ However, an unforgettable and disheartening experience of the Harriet Tubman Club with Hamarville Convalescent Home officials revealed the depths of their racism and discrimination. According to Mrs. Bartlett, the daughter of Mrs. Winona Idell Lincoln: “We sold bricks on the street to raise money to help build the convalescent home at Hamarville. But, when we asked for admission for one of our ladies, they said, they had no facilities for Negro women.”⁸¹

Although Mrs. Lincoln had long envisioned a convalescent home for black women and housing for the elderly and the poor, this degrading and unfortunate incident accelerated

⁷⁹ Judge Joseph Buffington, “*Old Kingsley and the Epidemic*,” *The Kingsley Record*, XX (December) 1918, p. 2. Fresh Air Rest and the Lillian Fresh Air Home were for the benefit of white women, babies, and girls. The Lillian Rest also accepted white boys ages 2-6. Both facilities were situated on the same 90 acre estate in Valencia, PA. The Fresh Air Rest, a replica of a hotel resort, consisted of a central dormitory, swimming pool, outdoor pavilion, tents, and gardens. See *Kingsley Association, Inc. Yearbook 1923, April 1, 1922-March 31, 1923*.

⁸⁰Ira De Reid, *The Negro Survey of Pittsburgh*, p. 49.

⁸¹“*Hamarville Convalescent Home, A Community Chest Agency*,” p. 1. Vertical File, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

her vision to purchase a facility of their own for black women. She called a meeting of the Harriet Tubman Club to discuss the possibility of establishing a home for black women and girls which was met with an energetic and enthusiastic response. Despite the small sum of fifty dollars in its treasury, hardly enough for a down payment, these club women began searching for a house for the accommodation of black women convalescents.

The idea of setting up a home was not a new venture among black club women. In Indianapolis, for example, the Alpha Home Association opened a home for ex-slave women, July 6, 1886, and the Sisters of Charity, a fourteen room hospital for blacks in 1912.⁸² Since the late 1800s, black women had established various types of homes for ex-slave women, hospitals for blacks, and boarding homes for black girls, because they realized the lack of adequate black health care facilities, the barring of blacks from most white hospitals, and in cases where black hospital wards existed, blacks often received mediocre health care. This realization was characteristic of black health care in most states, especially where large black populations were prevalent.

In 1931, members of the Harriet Tubman Club located a substantial three-story, eight-room, brick building at 7921 Frankstown Avenue, Homewood-Brushton which would cost approximately \$6,000 for its health care facility.⁸³ However, the question of financing the property remained a grave concern among the membership, especially obtaining the \$500

⁸²Darlene Clark Hine, *When the Truth Is Told: History of Black Women Culture in Indiana, 1875-1950*, (Indianapolis: Indiana Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1981), p. 43. The Sisters of Charity was founded in 1874 and led by Mary J. Scott. Along with five other Indiana black women, the idea of a hospital for Indianapolis blacks came to fruition.

⁸³*Harriet Tubman House for Convalescent Negro Women and Girls*, p. 7.

needed for the down payment. During this particular period, black banks were non-existent in Pittsburgh and no white banking institutions would dare consider a loan to a group of black women. The aftermath of the Great Depression of 1929, greatly decreased the profits of the Harriet Tubman Club's regular fund-raising activities as many of the city's blacks were forced into the dreadful ranks of the unemployed and no longer able to financially support its activities. For this same reason, the Lucy Stone Civic Club canceled its Annual Mardi Gras which always brought lucrative profits to the organization's treasury.⁸⁴

Historically, black women's clubs were not strangers to struggle and sacrifice in their efforts to uplift the black community. Sometimes, they faltered in their institution-building, but that burning desire of self-help enabled black women's clubs to continue striving for worthwhile projects relative to improving black life, especially, black womanhood. While members of the Harriet Tubman Club pondered about their financial difficulties, three blacks offered loans to the club: Mrs. Elizabeth Gilbert and Rosa Diggs, both members of the Harriet Tubman Club, provided \$100 each and Mr. Abraham Lincoln, husband of Winona

⁸⁴Dr. Alma Illery, *The National Achievement Club*, ed. Lillian A. Friedberg, 1951, p. 20. The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA. Alma Illery, a South Carolina native, was an avid community service worker. She received an honorary doctorate from Tuskegee Institute for interracial relations. Illery was instrumental in persuading Congress to pass legislation for George Washington Carver Day on January 5th. In Pittsburgh, George Washington Carver Day became a week, honoring the scientist with a luncheon and other activities to recognize his achievements. In 1942, she was responsible for the establishment of Camp Achievement, a summer camp for underprivileged black and white children. This source is valuable in that it provides brief histories of Pittsburgh's numerous black women's clubs. Some of them include: the Tuesday Evening, Dr. Morris; Orphan Aid; Faith and Charity; Metoka; Friendship Circle; Married Women's Culture; and Golden Rule Clubs.

Idell Lincoln, contributed \$300 which made the down payment possible and the club's vision a reality.⁸⁵

These black club women worked relentlessly to provide the black community with a comfortable first-class facility to confront the problem of black convalescent care head on. Given the financial status of the Harriet Tubman Club after purchasing what became the Terrace House, was the issue of its furnishings. Chapters within the Tubman Club, along with black businessmen in the community and a few individuals, supported the efforts to equip the Terrace House. The living room was furnished by the club's Achievement Chapter; the dining room, came from a friend of Mrs. Iona Richardson and the Winona Idell Chapter; and the bedroom, was supplied by the Founder's Chapter. Several black businesses in Homewood-Brushton donated light fixtures to the Terrace House: Freeman's Cleaners, J.N. Ramsey, a realtor; Leo Loar, a barber; C.S. Whitaker, an undertaker; and the Trio Lunch Room.⁸⁶ Other household necessities donated to the convalescent home were curtains, sheets, blankets, spreads pillowcases, towels, tea-towels, face and dish cloths, and kitchen utensils by Tubman chapters; two kitchen tables from Minnie Thompkins; and four fire extinguisher from William Turner. The sacrifices of members and the generosity of local businesses contributed to the success of the Tubman Club in its quest to furnish the Terrace House. In this sense, the House was a community effort. It also demonstrates a partnership between men and women.

⁸⁵*Harriet Tubman Terrace House for Convalescent Negro Women and Girls*, p. 8.

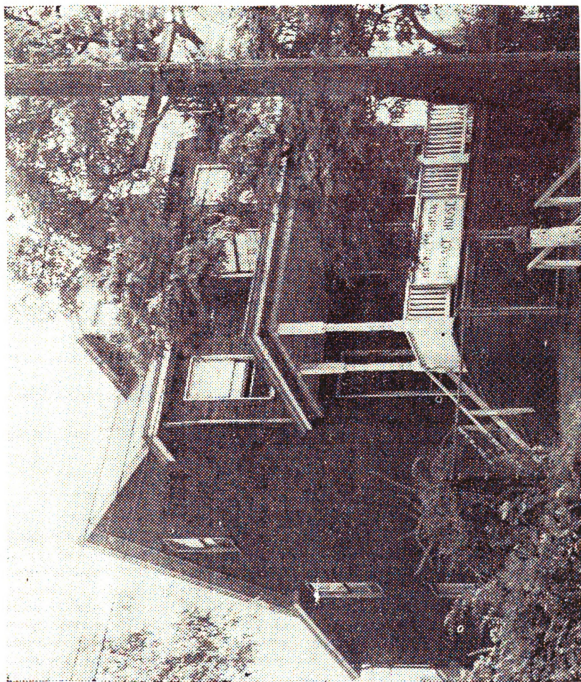
⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 9.

Members of the Harriet Tubman Club soon hired a staff and established the guidelines for the Terrace House. The first employees were Alice Campbell, the cook and housekeeper, and Ida Blythe, her assistant. They were supervised by Susie Orr, the chairperson of the Harriet Tubman Terrace House Trustee Board and head of placement services in the Home. Inez Simmons, a registered nurse, made regular visits to the Terrace House to review referrals from local hospitals and social service agencies, and to bathe patients.⁸⁷ Although the salaries were extremely minute, these black club women managed to secure a small, but competent staff to maintain the integrity of the Terrace House.

Guidelines for admittance to Tubman Terrace reflected the solid basis for which the home was established---for convalescent patients. It did not accept children or unwed mothers. For recovering patients, the costs was seven dollars per day if they could walk and, if not, tray service was ten dollars daily.⁸⁸ Even though these costs may seem insignificant, few blacks could afford to pay even the minimal fees which might have left the convalescent home with few or no patients. Therefore, black patients would have to recover at home in poor conditions with inadequate medical care. The idea of charging a fee for convalescent care was perhaps a means of maintaining the property and not necessarily a profit-making venture. These club women were already paying regular dues as high as nine dollars annually and sacrificing one day's pay monthly to support its convalescent home.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, p. 12. Simmons had an additional responsibility. She was to insure that Negro patients admitted to Tubman Terrace did, in fact, need convalescent care.

⁸⁸*Report of Committee on Harriet Tubman Guild*, p. 5. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Organizations, Federation of Social Service Agencies, Box 7, FF 314. University of Pittsburgh, Hillman Library, Pittsburgh, PA.



**Figure. 19. The Harriet Tubman Terrace House
7921 Frankstown Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

As one of Pittsburgh's new social service agencies, the Harriet Tubman Club applied for membership in the Community Fund (1922), a voluntary association of public, private, health and welfare agencies throughout Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.⁸⁹ Comprised of both blacks and whites, the objective of the Community Fund was to discuss and effectively coordinate efforts to solve community problems, and to avoid the duplication of social service work. Membership in this organization meant eligibility for financial resources and a systematic referral service of convalescents to the Harriet Tubman Home.

At the Community Fund's request, John Lawrence, acting president of the Federation of Social Services, appointed a committee of seven persons to perform a routine investigation of the Harriet Tubman Home, a procedure for all Community Fund applicants.⁹⁰ After the completed investigation of the Harriet Tubman Club, Community Fund officials understood the necessity of the home, but denied its application. It cited the following reasons for

⁸⁹ Members of the Community Fund Committee were : Mrs. Karl J. Kaufmann, Mrs. Frances Crandall, Dr. Dudley King, R. Maurice Moss, Mrs. C.L. Snowden, Helen Stevens and Isobel Kennedy. *See Report of Committee on Harriet Tubman Guild, Inc.*, p. 1. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Federation of Social Service Agencies of Pittsburgh, 1934-1941, Allegheny County, Box 7, FF 314, University of Pittsburgh, Hillman Library, Pittsburgh, PA. The Federation of Social Service Agencies was the result of a merger between the Cooperative Welfare Federation and Associated Charities. It had three objectives: the investigation of social conditions; technical assistance relative to budgets and planning; and made recommendations to improve the standards of social service agencies. *History, Federation of Social Service Agencies of Pittsburgh, Directory of the Social Resources of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, 1943*, p. 99. Vertical File, Federation of Social Service Agencies, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁹⁰“101 Social Agencies in Federation Now,” *The Gazette Times*, June 9, 1926, n.p., Vertical File, Pittsburgh Organizations, Health, Welfare and Planning Association. The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh,, Pittsburgh, PA. For more information see “*Charity Bodies of Western Pennsylvania in Big Merger*,” *The Gazette Times*, November 19, 1923.

rejecting the application: (1) the amount of funds needed to improve the House would be greater than the property itself justified, (2) the building was extremely old with several structural problems, (3) the under-utilization of the facility, (4) the standard of patient care was below minimum, (5) too much emphasis was placed on the purchasing of property and (6) the obvious internal dissension among the organization's officers which could interfere with the decision-making and smoothness of the Club's operation.⁹¹ Though the Community Fund consisted of blacks and whites, some observers might argue that of the country's black social service agencies, most were unsuitable compared to the standards of those owned and operated by whites. Nonetheless, the Harriet Tubman Home remained opened and continued to provide social service to the race.⁹²

As the demand for services from the Harriet Tubman Club increased, it meant that the social service work of the club had reached new heights. When additional Pittsburgh

⁹¹*Report of the Committee of the Federation of Social Service Agencies to Review the Application of Harriet Tubman Guild for Membership in the Community Fund August 9, 1939*, p. 1. AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Box 7, FF 314. University of Pittsburgh, Hillman Library, Pittsburgh, PA. The schism within the Harriet Tubman Guild was between Winona Idell Lincoln, president, and Mrs. Randall, treasurer, regarding a \$50 donation which was disputed in a meeting with the Guild and the Federation of Social Agencies.

⁹²The Committee had additional concerns about the Tubman House which included its building structure, cleanliness, usage of space, and a schism within the organization. For example, the Committee after a tour of the Home although the Homes; steps in and outside the building were too steep, especially those leading to the second and third floors. The Tubman house was not as clean as it should have been according to Federation of Social Service Agency standards nor was the third floor being utilized. Also of concern was the Guild's indebtedness which raised the eyebrows of committee members. The total debt on the property was \$4,338.97 as a result of the following: the mortgage balance was \$3726.97; commission owed to real estate agent, Molinare, \$175; personal note of \$300; and a \$137 loan. The indebtedness would probably diminish all possibilities of a Federation grant. However, the Committee unanimously agreed that Tubman Terrace was needed to assist with the convalescent problem among Pittsburgh blacks.

hospitals solicited their help, it became almost impossible for such a small membership to successfully complete such important tasks. The Harriet Tubman Club which had restricted its membership to twelve from its inception, immediately opened its membership to alleviate the possibility of spreading itself too thin and providing low quality social service work. It initiated the organization of Harriet Tubman Club Chapters starting with three: (1) the Harriet Tubman Club #2, Coraopolis, (2) Harriet Tubman Club #3, Meadville, and (4) Harriet Tubman Club #4, Clairton.⁹³ All of the new chapters were located outside the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

The club also had to face demographic facts. Since most of the original members were born in the mid-to-late 19th century, age became a factor among them. In 1932, the Harriet Tubman Club recruited two groups of young black women into the organization who were already engaged in some aspect of social service work. The first group of approximately twelve young women were known as the Younger Set of Harriet Tubman Club #1.⁹⁴ As members of this organization, they were assigned to West Penn Hospital and charged with combing the hair of black women in the wards, watering their flowers, writing letters for those who could not write, and on Christmas Day, singing carols in the corridors

⁹³*Harriet Tubman Terrace House of Negro Women and Girls*, p. 6.

⁹⁴Similar to the Jr. League started by Pittsburgh's Frances Harper and Lucy Stone Civic Leagues, the Harriet Tubman Guild involved and recruited younger women in its social service activities to help them understand the significance, probably, in hopes that this work might expand and continue over the years to uplift the race. The Youth Chapter of the Harriet Tubman Guild changed its name to the Hallie Q. Brown Chapter. It had specific duties which included providing medicine to Negro patients and assisting expectant mothers. *See History of the Hallie Q. Brown Chapter, 1932-1982*. This document was handwritten by Marie Charles, a Hallie Q. Brown Chapter member.

of the hospital.⁹⁵ The second group of black women were organized into the Youth Congress of Harriet Tubman Club #1 and were detailed to the Social Service Department of Presbyterian Hospital on Pittsburgh's North Side where they assumed similar duties.⁹⁶

Although the Harriet Tubman Club provided various types of aid to the black community such as paying for the lodging and breakfast for a gentleman, making monetary donations to the Kay Club and YWCA, and purchasing baby mattresses, its most successful outreach program consisted of social service in Pittsburgh hospitals. From June 1933 to January 1934, the Harriet Tubman Guild's hospital-related activities among black patients included free medicine, eye examinations and eye drops. It purchased braces, paid for blood transfusions, tonsillectomies, ambulance service, transportation for patients and volunteers to hospitals and clinics, and a radio for Western Pennsylvania Hospital.⁹⁷

In order to provide these social services, the Harriet Tubman Guild like all black women's clubs, conducted a series of fund raising activities. Each chapter of the Guild collected its own dues, paid a per capita tax to the Board of Directors Treasury, and held two annual affairs: a Hostess Party and Tag Day. But, the State of Pennsylvania required all social service agencies, churches, and other organizations to apply for a certificate under the state's Solicitation Act, giving them the legal right to solicit funds for charitable, religious,

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 13. Based on the data collected, Western Pennsylvania Hospital was the first medical facility in Pittsburgh to employ Negro girls as nurses aids.

⁹⁶The Harriet Tubman Youth Congress was under the supervision of Margaret Forrester, president of the Hallie Q. Brown Chapter.

⁹⁷The Harriet Tubman Club spent \$4.50 for transportation, eye drops, \$2.50; and \$4.00 for the radio. See the *Financial Report of the Harriet Tubman Guild, June 1933-January 1934*, p. 2. The Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.

benevolent and humane purposes.⁹⁸ To obtain the certificate, the applicant paid a ten dollar application fee and provided references able to attest to the organization's work.

For example, the Harriet Tubman Guild on its 1934 application listed Western Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh Hospitals, and the Public Health Nursing Association of Pittsburgh as references. Mildred Leshner, Director of Western Pennsylvania Hospital's Department of Social Service, wrote:

For several years this group has been interested in hospital and dispensary patients of their race whom we care for. They cooperate in making clinic attendance possible, assisted when in supplying some types of medical relief; visit hospital patients; and within the past few years extended social services to other city hospitals working through their [respective] social service departments. They are sincere in their efforts to benefit the sick.⁹⁹

Helen V. Stevens of the Pittsburgh Hospital and Director of the Public Health Nursing Association responded:

I know they are a group of earnest, sincere Negro (sic) women who have worked closely with the Social Service Department of Western Pennsylvania Hospital. The Guild offers a convalescent service...and places convalescents in private homes. This past year one of our patients, a pre-school child convalescing from pneumonia was placed by the Harriet Tubman Guild where he received excellent care and supervision according to the staff nurse who visited in the home.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸*Letter to Miss Leah S. Pollock from Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, October 20, 1936*, the Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA; *Constitution and By-Laws of the Harriet Tubman Guild, Inc.*, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 3. The "Tag Day" was a regular fund-raiser sponsored by the Guild. On June 7, 1933, it yielded \$105.16 and 1945, \$700.

⁹⁹*Letter to Charlotte B. Parrish from M. Leshner, July 12, 1934*. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA. Parrish was employed as an investigator for the Pennsylvania State Department of Welfare Social and Leshner, the director of West Penn Hospital's Social Service Department.

¹⁰⁰*Letter to Charlotte B. Parrish from Helen V. Stevens, June 18, 1934*, The Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.

Marie Kelly of the Pittsburgh Hospital's Social Service Department responded to the inquiry for the Department of Public Welfare concerning the work of the Harriet Tubman Club:

The Harriet Tubman Guild has been active in this community. The organization has assisted the Social Service Department of this hospital in many ways...financing convalescent care for colored women. On June 15th the out-patient department added an Orthopedic Clinic to the schedule for which the Harriet Tubman Guild was the first group in the community to offer to finance braces and other such suppliances (sic) for their people. Added to the list of services are the distribution of magazines and flowers to ward patients. Not only has the Guild been most generous in giving tangible material service in the community, but its whole-hearted cooperation with administrative, medical, and social service staff has been one of [the] most cooperative plans possible.¹⁰¹

The responses from both hospital officials and the PHNA represented the respect shown to the Harriet Tubman Club for its outstanding and much needed social service. It was granted a Certificate of Solicitation, but it is unclear, if the certificate offered additional benefits to the club other than authorization to solicit funds.

With a growing number of black patients in Pittsburgh and surrounding area hospitals, fourteen of the Guild's fifteen chapters assumed responsibility for a hospital in 1936: the Congress of Women, Pittsburgh Hospital; the Anne Douglass Chapter, Sewickley Valley; Laura A. Brown Chapter, McKeesport Hospital; the Cosmos Card Club, Columbia Hospital; the Hallie Q. Brown Chapter, Presbyterian Hospital; the West End Chapter, Montefiore Hospital; the Tri-Boro Chapter, Braddock Hospital; the Efficiency Chapter, Mayview Hospital; the Achievement Chapter, Passavant Hospital; the Altruist Chapter,

¹⁰¹ *Letter to Charlotte B. Parrish from Marie Kelly, June 21, 1934*, The Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA.

Allegheny Hospital; the Busy Women's Art Chapter, Magee Hospital; the Frogs Wives, Falk Clinic; and the Terrace Club, Westmoreland Hospital.¹⁰²

During the 1930s, the Harriet Tubman Club exerted a great deal of energy providing social service to five Pittsburgh hospitals: Braddock, Magee, Children's, Mercy, and West Penn. A 1937 report of the Guild revealed its Tri-Boro Chapter donated \$25 from its Tag Day to Braddock Hospital; the Busy Women's Art Chapter, made sheets, uniforms, and pillow cases for Magee Hospital; the Achievement Chapter, volunteered at Children's Hospital; and other members of the Harriet Tubman Guild worked as volunteers in the black wards of Mercy and West Penn Hospitals. As a result of the sometimes subtle, but frequent discrimination by whites and staff shortages, the volunteerism of black women at these hospitals proved a benefit to black patients who had no families or visitors, to fill the void.

Oftentimes, black organizations resembled black Baptist churches in that when schisms within the church occurred, it caused them to multiply as they divided. In other words, the division of black Baptist church congregations usually led to the emergence of another black Baptist church. This was also true of black women's clubs. Discord within the Harriet Tubman Guild, because of a dispute over funds resulted in the Achievement

¹⁰²On October 20, 1936, the Harriet Tubman Guild's Financial Report revealed its total medical expenses on behalf of Pittsburgh Negroes was \$765.20. This amount included several surgeries, braces, and tonsillectomies. Passavant Hospital, located on Reed Street, Hill District, was founded by Dr. William A. Passavant. The hospital was started in a rented house at the foot of Montgomery Hill, North Side. It was an early exception to (white) Pittsburgh hospitals, because it always accepted Negroes. Its policy was, "In the admission of patients, and treatment of the sick no preference would be tolerated in favor of one creed over another." Ira De Reid says that between 1927-1928, it handled 2,162 cases, which were all Negro. Of the 2,499 patients in Passavant's dispensary, 82 percent were Negroes.

Chapter of the Guild withdrawing and forming a club of its own---the Achievement Club.¹⁰³

Neither club, however, wasted valuable time bickering as historian Darlene Clark Hine pointed out:

... all of the women must have appreciated that too much internal rivalry was a time-consuming emotional luxury they could as a group ill-afford. They were compelled by larger exigencies to commit their time and resources to the care of the masses of impoverished and oppressed blacks surrounding them.¹⁰⁴

In other words, this understanding among black women enabled them to continue the work of improving the race. Even in the midst of controversy, the Harriet Tubman Guild paid for operations for Negro patients at Passavant Hospital where an estimated two-thirds of the patients were black and placed a black nurse on its regular staff.¹⁰⁵ On a monetary gift from the Achievement Chapter to Passavant Hospital, Ms. Marchell Neil-Ellison commented: ...it

¹⁰³Julia Bumry Jones, "*Tubman Guild Ranks Split as Achievement Unit Withdraws*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 17, 1937, p. 1. The crux of the dispute was \$76.60 raised by the Achievement Chapter from a dinner held at the home of Minnie Hines, the chapter's treasurer. The president of the Guild and other members understood the proceeds would provide for the Tubman Home's maintenance. However, the Achievement Chapter refused to "turnover the funds" to the Guild, so it withdrew from it. The Guild also claimed the Achievement Chapter had committed a constitutional infraction by refusing to pay the \$4 annual fee as required of all Guild units. On Tuesday, September 7, 1937, the Achievement Chapter held a reorganization meeting at Pittsburgh's 'colored' YWCA. Approximately 92 of its original members supported the movement to start a club of its own.

¹⁰⁴Darlene Clark Hine, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵This was in fact, a critical period for the black community, because Passavant, unlike other local hospitals, willingly provided medical treatment for blacks unable to afford it. The hospital was losing support including that of the Lutherans, who decided to discontinue their financial support to the hospital, because of its location, unless it was moved elsewhere. This could have been a financial decision in terms of the high cost of medical treatment. The Achievement Club donated \$177.55; thirty-five sheets; 45 pillow slips; sixty-four baby garments to Passavant.

was a gift from the heart of women who sacrifice time, effort to help the cause of humanity, and how badly people of low-income groups needed this medical care.¹⁰⁶

The dissenting faction of the Harriet Tubman Guild , the Achievement Chapter, elected its officers: Dr. Alma Illery, president; Louise Lee, vice president; Madeline Gales, financial secretary; Gladys Thompson, corresponding secretary; and Minnie Hines, treasurer.¹⁰⁷ This new black women's club continued in the tradition of social service to the black community and began to further developed its own agenda.

Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs

The organization of State Federations among black women's clubs raged as rampant as the growth of local black women's clubs across the country, in response to the exclusionary practices against black women's clubs by (white) State and General Federated Women's Clubs. For example in 1890, white women organized the General Federation of Women's Clubs and in keeping with the times, it practiced racial exclusion. When Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and other black women attempted to integrate the organization, they were rudely rebuffed, because northern affiliates feared the flight of southern affiliates upon the admission of black women's clubs. As in the past, the attitudes of white club women and suffragist alike, failed to discourage the visions of black women.

¹⁰⁶“*The Achievement Club Gives Generosity to Passavant.*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, December 9, 1939, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷Other officers of the newly formed Achievement Club were: Mary Clayton, assistant financial secretary; Louise Williams, assistant recording secretary; Winnie Nickens, assistant corresponding secretary; Ida Hill treasurer; Mary Leonard, chaplain; and Annie Graves, social worker.

Excluded and ignored by the (white) General Federation of Women's Clubs, but confident in their own abilities, black women organized a federation of their own. They believed that the establishment of a State Federation would give rise to larger social welfare projects. For example, State Federations of colored women's clubs emerged in Kansas and Ohio (1900), New York (1901), and Pittsburgh (1903), only nine years after the formation of the city's first black women's club. Noted club woman, Rebecca Aldridge stated, "My dear sisters, the power of the colored women will never be felt in Allegheny County or the State of Pennsylvania until there is a State Federation. The power and influence of the colored women of Allegheny County, only by organization."¹⁰⁸ Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton, a founder of the Frances E.W. Harper League was appointed by Mrs. Booker T. Washington, as Pennsylvania State Organizer. Hamilton solicited the help of Elizabeth Lindsay, a prominent Chicago club woman, to assist her in the federation process and promptly issued a statewide call to black club women.¹⁰⁹

On November 10, 1903, Hamilton, Lindsay, and five Pennsylvania black women's clubs convened at Pittsburgh's Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church.¹¹⁰ They included the

¹⁰⁸*Rebecca Aldridge, 3^d Anniversary of the Frances E.W. Harper League, November 23, 1897*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹"*The Pennsylvania State Federation*," in *The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*, (Washington, D.C.: The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1986), p. 375.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 374-375. The Reverend M.B. Lanier was the pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church. During this period, the church was located on Bryn Mawr Road, Hill District and like numerous other black churches, it was often a meeting place for the city's black organizations.

following clubs: Paul Lawrence Dunbar, New Castle; Phyllis Wheatley, Franklin; Harrisburg Progressive; Bethel Mite Missionary, and Kings Daughters, Pittsburgh. These black women's clubs were represented by Etta Peck, Doris Hill, Mrs. I. S. Lee, Mrs. Bond, Mrs. Smothers, and Luella Stewart, respectively. Before the meeting adjourned, the newly formed Pennsylvania Federation of Colored Women's Clubs elected its first officers: president, Rebecca Aldridge, Pittsburgh; vice president, Sadie Delibardie, New Castle; and Etta Peck, corresponding secretary.¹¹¹ The formation of the Pennsylvania State Federation created a stronger and more resourceful organization of black women. In 1904, the Pennsylvania Federation committed itself to “the national reform network” of colored women’s clubs by affiliating with the NACW.

The problem of general concern among Pennsylvania club women was the welfare of orphaned, poor, and uneducated black children. The first project undertaken by the Pennsylvania State Federation was the establishment of the Home for Destitute Children in New Castle, Pennsylvania. This social welfare activity was a joint venture, because fund-raising efforts among local clubs for the Federation would generate more funds than an individual black women's club needed to maintain the institution. Although the details are sketchy, the organization purchased thirteen acres of farmland and operated the Home for several years. Unfortunately, the Home for Destitute Children was closed and the “residents” were moved to another facility in Bellevue.

Social welfare projects initiated by black women's clubs oftentimes resulted in failure not because of a lack of effort, but unforeseen circumstances. For example, the Sisters of

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

Charity, a black women's club in Indianapolis, raised sufficient funds to lease a two-story frame building and established the first black hospital in the state. However, the undertaking proved too expensive and they were forced to abandon the hospital. With only seven Pennsylvania clubs affiliated with the State Federation, at the time, the Home for Destitute Children was perhaps an endeavor too enormous for a neophyte organization causing the club, like the Sisters of Charity, to abandon its social welfare institution.

An endless variety of social problems within the black communities of Pennsylvania compelled the State Federation to direct its attention to philanthropic activities intended to sustain black institutions and, in an unusual case, a white medical institution that serviced blacks. During the Pennsylvania State Federation Convention (1917) in Wilkes Barre, the organization committed to aiding four additional institutions: the Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys, Aged Women's Home, and the Davis Home for Colored Children (Pittsburgh); and the Home for the Protection of Colored Girls (Philadelphia); and Mercy Hospital (white), one of two Pittsburgh hospitals that admitted black patients.¹¹² Although it had segregated wards, no blacks were turned away when they were full, provided space was available. The motivation of the federation was to aid as many black institutions and white institutions in the resolution of social black problems.

One of the most disturbing social problems affecting blacks in the North and South, was mob violence. The black women of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs took a firm position on the subject, one which Ida B. Wells had long battled

¹¹²“*Charity Stamp Campaign*,” Domestic Science Department of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Negro Women's Clubs, February 28-March 11, 1918. *Gertrude L. Brooks Papers*, Unprocessed Collection, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 2.

against, since the 19th century. With the lynching of Zachariah Taylor in Coatesville, Pennsylvania, these black women publicly denounced this intolerable act and responded with a resolution to Pennsylvania's Governor which read:

Whereas the Spirit of lawlessness and mob rule, which for years has marked the attitude of the white race toward the colored races, especially the Negro (sic) and,

Whereas the Spirit of lawlessness having been hitherto confined principally to the Southern States has now spread to the Northern States...

Therefore, let it be resolved that we deplore and condemn the act which led to the horrible lynching of Zachariah Taylor...

Resolved that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Governor of Pennsylvania imploring him to insist upon the arrest and punishment of all guilty persons.¹¹³

However, no one was ever punished for Walker's lynching nor did the Governor acknowledge the Pennsylvania State Federation's letter.

Since the early 19th century, the pursuit of education came to be one of the great pre-occupations of African-Americans, and enlightenment was viewed by many as the greatest single opportunity to escape the increasing proscriptions and trends that whites heaped upon blacks.¹¹⁴ In northern urban communities, black leaders had successfully founded schools for black children in abandoned buildings, private homes, and the basements of black religious institutions. The success of black leaders in the basic education of black children

¹¹³“*A Set of Strong Resolutions By the Women's State Federation Club at Meeting Held At New Brighton, The Past Week,*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 26, 1911, p. 5.

¹¹⁴John Hope Franklin, p. 264.

created for many, a hunger for a college education that many of them could ill-afford. The Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs designed an educational program to help such aspiring black youth.

In the early 1920s, the organization's efforts began as a "loan" program for indigent black students to attend college. The only stipulations were that the student be a needy resident of Pennsylvania, possess a good academic standing, and good character.¹¹⁵ The program was short-lived when a five year period elapsed and not one of the loans granted was ever repaid. This, of course, did not dissuade the Pennsylvania State Federation as it sought different ways to reorganize the loan program.

During the 1930s, the Scholarship Committee under the leadership of Daisy Lampkin, changed the Federation's financial aid program three times. At the Convention of 1932, the black women of the Pennsylvania State Federation, "agreed to place a financial gift of \$200 at Cheyney Normal School," with dispensation at the discretion of the institution's president.¹¹⁶ In November 1937, the officers of the Scholarship Committee, Daisy Lampkin, Fannie Morton, and Maude B. Coleman disseminated the State Federation's monies by dividing the sum of \$200 equally among four women students who found it impossible to

¹¹⁵*The History of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs*, p. 376. There also included a stipulation that if both the applicants parents were healthy, they were ineligible for a scholarship from the Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 376. Cheyney Normal School was established by Richard Humphreys, a Philadelphia Quaker, in 1837. He created this school for Negroes "in order to prepare and fit and qualify them to act as teachers." The oldest black educational institution is located in Cheyney, PA, twenty-five miles west of Philadelphia.

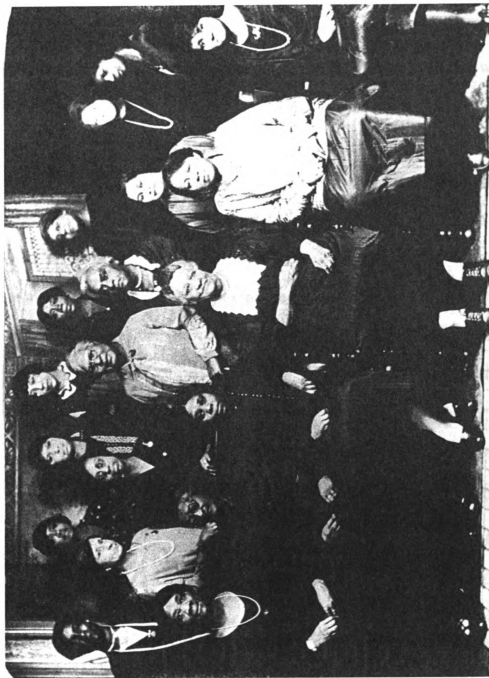


Figure. 20. The Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs

remain in college without financial assistance.¹¹⁷ With an increase in the number of black women's clubs affiliating with the State Federation, their fund-raising activities netted large sums of money, enabling the organization by 1938, to grant two four year scholarships annually to black students attending Cheyney State Teacher's College. In other words, the Pennsylvania State Federation's loan program became a grant program, because recipients of the former had not repaid their loans.

In general, the fund-raising of black women's clubs meant the survival of the black community and its institutions. Black women mobilized, held socials, and charged membership fees to care for the black community. The Pennsylvania State Federation gave a \$300 minimum appropriation to various institutions across the state each year and were able to continue in this tradition with a number of different fund-raising activities and setting high goals. As the NACW created departments within its organization to increase its effectiveness, many State Federations duplicated this process.

In 1918, the Pennsylvania State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs created the Domestic Science Department which dealt with the "social housekeeping" of the black community. Gertrude L. Brooks, Frances Bolling, Sara McClanahan and Daisy Lampkin organized the Charity Stamp Campaign, a fund-raiser, earmarked for Pittsburgh's southern migrants whose plight the Federation had become painfully aware of. With a goal to raise \$1,000, black club women appealed to the general public by asking each citizen to purchase

¹¹⁷"*Three Hundred To Attend State Confab Pennsy Club Women*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 9, 1938, p. 8.



Figure. 21. Charity Stamps

a book of charity stamps for one dollar.¹¹⁸ It is unclear if the State Federation reached its \$1,000 goal, but it realized that “the strangers within their goals demanded the highest aid in becoming useful permanent citizens.”

City-County Federation

In 1915, black club women in Pittsburgh organized the City-County Federation comprised of club women in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. It included clubs from McKeesport, Rankin, Braddock, Homestead, Sewickley and other areas. The purpose of the CCF was (1) to bring black women’s clubs closer together and (2) to fulfill an obligation to black children in effort to uncover from the partial oblivion community.¹¹⁹ What better way to solve this problem than by organization to find better ways to service the black rigorous discussions on social service in the black community.

During this same year, it convened its Fourth Annual one-day convention at the Centre Avenue YMCA where 200 delegates represented 60 clubs. On May 28, 1925, the Credential Committee of the City-County Federation reported over \$4,000 raised for charity and scholarships and two new black women’s clubs of Pittsburgh joined the CCF, the

¹¹⁸“*Charity Stamp Campaign*,” p. 2.

¹¹⁹*The Woman’s Era: Organ of the National Federation of Afro-American Women, July 1896*, p. 3. Also see “*The White Gloves of Service: A History of the Allegheny County Federation of Women’s Clubs*,” p. 3. The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.

Unity and Christian Charity Clubs. Delinquent clubs were encouraged to pay three dollars and one year's dues in advance to maintain CCF membership.¹²⁰ The leadership of Sara McClanahan, president of the City-County Federation, was largely responsible for its success.

Western District of the Pennsylvania Federation of Negro Women's Clubs

With so many black women's clubs, overlapping and a duplicating social services seemed inevitable. But, apparently, among the black women's clubs of Western Pennsylvania, it was not an issue. For the most part, they basically had the same objectives in relationship to race uplift in the black community and past experiences had proven that there was strength in numbers. On June 3, 1925, these black women formed the Western District of the Pennsylvania Federation of Negro Women's Clubs with twenty clubs represented and approximately 400 women present.¹²¹ Pittsburgh women were elected to all but one of the seven offices: Evelyn Payne, president; Iona Schwing, first vice president; Mrs. M.E. Swinson, recording secretary; Mrs. E.J. Phillips, corresponding secretary; Maude Mandexter, treasurer; Fannie Herndon, chaplain; and Frances Keith, McKeesport, second vice president.¹²²

¹²⁰"*Clubs*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 20, 1925, p. 4.

¹²¹"*Western District of Clubs Organized: Ruth L. Bennett Here*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 13, 1925, p. 4. Ruth L. Bennett spoke at Mt. Ararat Baptist Church on the subject, "The Achievements of the Pennsylvania Federation" and "What Federations Mean to Negro Women," at Warren Methodist Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, PA.

¹²²*Ibid.*, p. 4.

The organization of the Western District of the Pennsylvania Federation Negro Women's Clubs which encompassed the area south of Allegheny River, starting in Uniontown extending as far east as Lewistown and Altoona, marked another step in the progress of women's clubs. Rebecca Aldridge remarked, "the Western District of the Pennsylvania Federation of Negro Women's Clubs would no doubt be the strongest district of clubs in Pennsylvania." This newly found federation may have been the leverage needed to stronghold the leadership of the Pennsylvania State Federation which was frequently dominated by club women in the eastern part of the state.

Pittsburgh Club Women and the NACW

Pittsburgh's black club women played an active and viable role in the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. The earliest participation of Pittsburgh's black club women in the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs was the selection of Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton, a charter member of the Frances E.W. Harper League as a delegate to the NACW's first meeting in 1896.¹²³ Pittsburgh club women were appointed to leadership positions within the National organization, and hosted NACW fund-raising events and speaking engagements for NACW officers in Pittsburgh. They made significant contributions to the annual NACW's national program of protecting black women, emphasizing race progress, advocating self-help, and racial solidarity.¹²⁴ Members of the

¹²³ *Rebecca Aldridge, 3rd Anniversary Address, November 23, 1897, p. 2; "Members of the Frances Harper Club Helps National Work," National Notes, April 1942, p. 2.*

¹²⁴ *Deborah Gray White, "The Cost of Club Work, The Price of Black Feminism," in Visible Women, New Essays On American Activism, eds., Nancy Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock,*

Pennsylvania State Federation were just as effective in the NACW as they had been within their own respective clubs.

Black Pittsburgh club women made their presence felt in the NACW when they were appointed to key leadership positions and 1920, proved a prosperous year for them. During the NACW Convention at Tuskegee Institute, Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton, was appointed as Chairperson of the Juvenile Court Department; Daisy Lampkin, Head of Transportation; and Julia Bumry Jones, Chairperson of the NACW Publicity Committee.¹²⁵ Laura A. Brown, was also selected as a Trustee of the historic Frederick Douglass Home. The rise of black Pittsburgh club women within the ranks of the NACW was attributed to Mrs. Booker T. Washington's recognizing the capabilities of these black women, their dedication to black womanhood, and uplifting the race.

Hamilton's new position presented a great challenge given the large southern migration to Pittsburgh and the problem of juvenile crime. Historian John Hope Franklin pointed out that "juvenile delinquency was associated with maladjustment in urban life and ran rampant as slum areas grew steadily worse as few corrective measures were taken by either public agencies or private individuals." Upon her appointment, Dr. Hamilton spoke on behalf of the committee she was to lead:

(Chicago: University of Illinois, Press, 1993), p. 247; "*National Association of Colored Women*," in *Black Women in American: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed., Darlene Clark Hine, Volume 2, p. 845.

¹²⁵ *National Federation of Women's Clubs, The President Announces Heads of Departments*," *The Competitor*, 2 (October-November) 1920, pp. 211, 213; *The National Convention Held at Tuskegee*," *The Competitor*, 2 (August-September), 1920, p. 146-147.

It is the plan to get the women of the NACW clubs interested in juvenile court and the children brought into court...where juvenile courts do not exist there is greater need of special interest in children who are arrested to see that they get a fair trial and a just disposition of their cases. We hope to arouse more interest in the educational aims and moral development of our children and to discuss preventive measures as a means of keeping down the number of our children appearing before the court.¹²⁶

Hamilton was responsible for gathering facts concerning this “class of unfortunates,” and awakening a new feeling toward the delinquent boy and girl. She was, of course, no stranger to juvenile court work having taken into her home, colored children without pay in juvenile delinquency and became the first juvenile court worker of the colored race.¹²⁷ Hamilton also organized the Colored Juvenile Court Association in Allegheny County and conducted a symposium (of the same), at the 6th Biennial of the NACW, Brooklyn, New York 1908.

As head of the NACW's Transportation Department and Jim Crowism still in effect, Daisy Lampkin had a difficult task. In 1896, the Supreme Court upheld segregation in its separate, but equal doctrine set forth in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which meant that blacks were

¹²⁶“*The Glorious Task of Lifting As We Climb: National Association of Colored Women Plans to Reach Extensive Programs for 1921-1922.*” *The Pittsburgh Competitor*, 3 (January-February) 1920, p. 42. Hamilton realized that juvenile delinquency among black youth was detrimental to the race. A priority for her department was to collect and compile data relative to black children, and design preventive measures to thwart such a serious problem.

¹²⁷Gertrude L. Brooks, “*Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton*,” *National Notes*, First Quarter, 1943, p. 7. *National Notes*, the official organ of the NACW Clubs, contained information about the activities of black women's clubs nationwide. Pittsburgh blacks were aware of Hamilton's juvenile court work. In 1912, the Coleridge Taylor Club, named in honor of black composer, Samuel Coleridge Taylor, was a musical organization. It disbanded and gave the remaining \$6 in its treasury to Hamilton's Colored Juvenile Court Association. See “*Juvenile Court Association Thanks Club*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 4, 1912, p. 1.



Figure. 22. Dr. Sadie Black Hamilton

separated from whites on every mode of public transportation. Lampkin's task was the arrangement of rates and special accommodations for delegations to the NACW's national conventions.¹²⁸ She successfully arranged transportation to two National Conventions: the 11th Biennial in Tuskegee, Alabama (1920), and the 14th Biennial, Oakland, California (1926). During the planning stages of the Tuskegee NACW Convention, several black club women asked, "Will we be Jim Crowed to Tuskegee?"¹²⁹ Lampkin in a confident and reassuring tone replied, "No!" She arranged approximately 17 Pullman cars with first class dining which transported delegates to and from Tuskegee.¹³⁰

Since 1827, the black press had provided information about the problems and progress of the race. The NACW decided to use the black press to disseminate information about the progress of black women's clubs. As Head of the Publicity Committee, Julia Bumry Jones, editor of the "*Woman's Pages*" of the *Pittsburgh Courier* and *The Competitor*, her challenge was to forward a copy of the NACW newsletter for inclusion of its news in the estimated 200 black newspapers nationwide.¹³¹ From 1921-1922, each member of the

¹²⁸*National Federation of Women's Clubs, The President Announces Heads of Departments*, p. 213.

¹²⁹"*The National Convention Held at Tuskegee*," *The Competitor*, 2 (August-September), 1920, p. 146. The Pittsburgh contingent to this convention consisted of 18 delegates, in addition to 400 other black club women representing forty states. The Convention's agenda concerned issues in relationship to the race: support for the National Urban League; the enforcement of the 14th, 15th, and 18th Amendments to the United States Constitution; lynching; and mob violence. Of educational importance were the issues of donating Negro histories to public schools and local libraries to enlighten black children and the race.

¹³⁰"*National Federation of Women's Clubs, The President Announces Heads of Departments*," *The Competitor*, 2 (October-November) 1920, p. 212.

¹³¹"*The Douglass Home*," *National Notes*, July 1924, p. 3.

Publicity Committee gathered and sent news from their respective regions to Jones by the first of every month and furnished an article on subjects of “general interest to black women.” Jones’ use the black press would also provide the means by which indigent blacks could seek social services in cities wherever black women’s clubs existed.

Under the leadership of Mary Talbert, president of the NACW, the Frederick Douglass Home, in Anacostia, Maryland, was saved by the NACW in 1916, when Douglass’ widow lacked sufficient funds to maintain the property. Between 1916-1918, the NACW provided \$5,000 to lift the mortgage on his home and \$30,000 toward its redemption, restoration, and preservation.¹³² Given the challenge of preserving the home of this ex-slave, abolitionist, lecturer, and journalist, the NACW formulated the Frederick Douglass Home Trustee Board. Laura A. Brown, a pioneer Pittsburgh club woman, civic worker, suffragette and first Liberty Loan worker in Pennsylvania, was chosen as a member of the Douglass Home Trustee Board. Brown, along with other Board members, was responsible for raising funds for its maintenance.

In 1924, Pennsylvania club women, particularly, those in Pittsburgh, were brought to the fore when Hallie Q. Brown, president of the NACW and, herself a native Pittsburgher, proposed National Educational Week for the establishment of a permanent and substantial scholarship fund of the Frederick Douglass Home. Through the activities of the Trustee

¹³²*The History of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs*, p. 87.



Figure. 23. Frederick Douglass Home

Board, the national treasury swelled to a reported \$2 million for black youth.¹³³ Pittsburgh was chosen to host this NACW event slated to generate \$50,000 needed to endow the national scholarship fund.¹³⁴ Although there is no record of the selection process for National campaign: "Every race loving man and woman who believes in educational advancement is asked to lay ten cents aside to greet the workers in this campaign."¹³⁵ Pittsburgh women, in serious competition with black club women across the country, made a substantial contribution to the NACW's national education fund by selling scholarship stamps to the public for a dime. They sold scholarship stamps to church members, businessmen and women, both black and white, and more important to "anyone who had a dime." The sincere efforts of these black club women were intended to create educational opportunities for poor black youth. To attract black women, black club women, and the people to whom they provided social services, Bolling and her associates enlisted a powerhouse of speakers for

¹³³Hallie Q. Brown graduated from Wilberforce University in 1873. She was one of many northern blacks responding to the call for teachers in the Reconstruction South. Brown, an accomplished elocutionist, taught in the schools of Yazoo, Mississippi; Columbia, South Carolina; Tuskegee, Alabama; and Dayton, Ohio. She was a founder of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, elected president of the Ohio Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, 1905-1912, and president of the NACW from 1920-1924. Hallie Q. Brown was affiliated with the A.M.E. church. For more information see *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction*, New York, 1988.

¹³⁴"*The Educational Crusade, Hallie Q. Brown Is An Educator*," *National Notes*, July, 1924, p. 3. See "*Local Club Women to Launch Educational Drive April 22, National Officers to Attend*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 5, 1924, p. 4.

¹³⁵"*Local Club Women to Launch Educational Drive*," p. 4. A Scholarship Stamp was designed by the Pennsylvania State Federation's Department of Business. This educational drive was also a contest among black women's clubs associated with the NACW. The club raising the most money was awarded "handsome silk remnant" in the NACW's national colors.



Figure. 24. Laura A. Brown

Mrs. Brown was the first black woman who sought a political career by seeking a seat in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. She competed for the seat in the First District of the Pennsylvania Legislature, but was unsuccessful in her efforts. Politics was only one of many ways by which Laura Brown hoped to change the quality of life for Pennsylvania blacks.

National Educational Week. With sessions held at five Pittsburgh churches: Tabernacle and Rodman Street Baptist Churches, Bethel and Brown A.M.E. Churches, and Euclid Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, the voices of distinguished guest speakers filled the rooms, mesmerized and motivated black women to be steadfast in the NACW's mission to improve the quality of life for black Americans. They included, Hallie Q. Brown, NACW president, Mary McCleod Bethune, the NACW's vice president and president of Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute; Kentuckian, Mrs. Lillie B. Fouse, corresponding secretary of the NACW; Mrs. Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee, Alabama; and Ruth L. Bennett, president of the Pennsylvania State Federation.¹³⁶ Admission fees were charged for the public and club members as well with proceeds benefitting the national scholarship fund.

Conclusion

By the early 1920s Pennsylvania had 102 federated black women's clubs; two city federations, in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia with approximately 40 clubs each, 26 departments and an estimated 13,000 black women.¹³⁷ These black women founded nine different types of clubs: literary, charity, social, welfare, suffrage, self-improvement, sewing circles, and mutual-aid societies. Club organizing and affiliation was essential to race progress and social change among black women.

¹³⁶“*Distinguished Visitors Will Attend Local Celebration of National Education Week,*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 19, 1924, p. 4.

¹³⁷“*Pennsylvania Club Women Convene in Washington, PA, In 20th Session,*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 4, 1923, p. 14.

The most important function of club affiliation was to provide a support system for black women that would reinforce the belief that uplifting the race and improving the image of black womanhood was possible. The Frances E. W. Harper League, the Lucy Stone Civic League, and the Harriet Tubman Guild developed a “sisterhood” among themselves, black women, and club women on both the state and national levels. For example, they fostered the idea of noble womanhood for the city’s black women and girls by providing positive models through their own behavior. During the various conventions, black women opened their homes to black club women in attendance, because of racial segregation which barred blacks from hotel accommodations. The “sisterhood” of these Pittsburgh black club women was further demonstrated by their affiliation with the NACW allowing them to participate in the national campaign for race uplift from which the city's blacks, particularly black youth were able to benefit, especially through the scholarships they offered.

This whole idea of self-help which is equated with Booker T. Washington, but largely rooted in black antebellum communities of the North, was also a strategy of black women’s clubs. In order to defend the integrity of black women, necessitated by the condemnation of black women by white males and white society as a whole, black club women took the initiative to negate the dominant perception of black women being promiscuous, loud, and of low moral character. White women, who were well aware of the plight black women suffered at the hands of white men stood idle, knowing that black women were not at fault. The education of black youth became the responsibility of black women's clubs, especially, the Lucy Stone Civic League which awarded numerous scholarships to black youth in their communities.

The overt racial discrimination and prejudice practiced by white social service institutions forced black women to establish institutions of their own and for the most part, black women's clubs were, through their fund-raising activities, a major source of support for them. The FEW Harper League, the Lucy Stone Civic League, and the Harriet Tubman Guild's idea of "social welfare" evolved around providing financial support to the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women, the Colored YWCA and YMCA, the Coleman and Davis Homes, and the Ella Grayson Home for Working Girls. They purchased furniture and replenished the food supplies of black social welfare institutions, and furnished clothing for black youth.

The Harper League, the Lucy Stone Civic League, and the Harriet Tubman Guild are three examples of black women's clubs organized to change the quality of black life in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County and State of Pennsylvania. These women performed significant work and were actively involved in the black community. While they may not have achieved all of their goals, the impact of sisterhood, self-help, and social welfare was indelibly engraved in Pittsburgh's black and white community.

Prior to the Civil War, Pittsburgh's earliest black community as discussed in chapter one, was led by an all black male leadership and sustained by black male organizations. As black women such as Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth, Mary Shadd Cary, and Frances Harper eased their way to the forefront, more black women became acutely aware of their leadership capabilities, responsibilities to the black community, and their "noble womanhood." Pittsburgh's black women, beginning in the decades after the Civil War, took their rightful

places in the black communities they sought to change without interference from black male organizations whose activities often required the support of black women's clubs.

Chapter 3

Pittsburgh's Colored YWCA: Black Women, Women White Women, and the Black Community

During the last decade, scholars have produced an plethora of studies delving into the lives of black women in American history. These scholarly works have been an attempt to “eradicate the invisibility of such historical figures, seemingly, hidden in plain sight.” But, as historians continue to examine Black Women's History, they are confronted with an enormous task---a multitude of unexplored and under explored areas in this field. Black women in the YWCA, for example, is one of the areas needing further examination. Although regional and general studies which contain information on black women and the YWCA including Cynthia Neverdon-Morton's *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925*, (1989); Jacqueline Rouse's *Lugenia Burns Hope: Southern Reformer*, (1989), Adrienne Lash Jones', “Young Women's Christian Association,” in *Black Women in American History: An Historical Encyclopedia*, (1993), Marion W. Roydhouse, “Bridging Chasms: Community and the Southern YWCA,” in *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, (1993) and Gerda Lerner's “Inside A White Organization--The Young Women's Christian Association,” in *Black Women in White America*, (1972) more work needs to be done on the local level.

This chapter is an example of race, gender, and hegemony. Its primary focus is four-fold: (1) to construct the history of Pittsburgh's “colored” YWCA, (2) to learn more about black women's leadership in the YWCA, (3) the impact of the colored YWCA on the lives of Pittsburgh's black community, and (4) to examine the challenges they faced as staff

members and volunteers in the Association. I argue that though white YWCA women managed to maintain hegemony over Pittsburgh's "colored" YWCA that black women consistently resisted this domination in order to prove their leadership ability and to satisfy the needs of Pittsburgh's black community.

Origins of the YWCA:

As feminists and reformers recognized the plight of the working girl in the city, middle-class advocates created a network of institutions to safeguard and aid working women.¹ One of the oldest of these institutions established for urban women was the Young Women's Christian Association. In 1858, a small "prayer band" of thirty-five women met in New York City to address labor, health, and housing conditions facing young women and girls in the city. This led to the concept of women coming together from different Christian denominations quickly spread and numerous associations organized "for the betterment of women and girls."²

Though the YWCA movement began in London in 1855, the first YWCA in the United States was established in Boston (1866) during the process of industrial and

¹Kathy A. Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Working Women and Leisure in Turn of the Century New York*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 165. Some of the means by which to safeguard women were organized recreational and leisure activities, religious meetings, educational classes, access to libraries, and musical entertainment. Also see, Marion W. Roydhouse's "*Bridging Chasms: Community and the Southern YWCA*," *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, eds. Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock. Chicago: University of Illinois, 1993, p. 271.

²Adrienne Lash Jones, "*Women First for 135 years, 1858-1993*," New York: The YWCA of the USA, p. 13. Jones and Marion Roydhouse also tell us that the founding of the YWCA cut across class and racial lines.

commercial growth.³ Scholars of YWCA history point out that the Association was (1) rooted in a desire to provide a Christian home, (2) moral support for young women newly arrived in the urban, (3) to safeguard them as they were threatened by the urban environment, (4) to promote growth in Christian character and service through physical, social, mental, and spiritual training and (5) to provide a place for working women where ideals of womanhood, purity, domesticity; and sisterhood might flourish.⁴ Both black, white, and immigrant women migrated to northern industrial cities and many benefitted from the Young Women's Christian Association.

Origins of the Pittsburgh YWCA

The creation of the YWCA in Pittsburgh was similar to that described by Adrienne Lash Jones in the "*135th Anniversary Program Booklet of the YWCA*" where a prayer band of women first organized itself into an Association. It can be described in two phases: (1) Phase I, East Liberty and (2) Phase II, Downtown. The first YWCA in Pittsburgh, a facsimile of an earlier organization called the Women's Christian Association of Pittsburgh (1867), was organized in East Liberty (1875) following "a series of evangelistic meetings."⁵

³"*Dates in YWCA History, the Greater Pittsburgh YWCA*, Pittsburgh, PA, February 1973, p. 1. Subsequent YWCAs were also founded: 1881 Normal, Illinois, and a Little Girls Association in Oakland, California, 1886.

⁴Kathy Peiss, 1986, p. 166; Edith M. Gates, *Health Through Leisure-time Recreation: The Health Education Program of the YWCA*. (New York: The Woman's Press, 1931), p. 15.

⁵According to journalist Bob Hoover, the YWCA was born by the Pittsburgh's Protestant churches in response to the increasing number of young single women to the city. They sought to provide for various aspects of their well-being. See "*In the Beginning: Three Institutions, Chatham College, Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, and the YWCA-Mark Their 125th Birthdays This Year*," *The Gazette*, December 11, 1994, p. 9. The first officers of

During this period of organization, "relief work" became its main objective, because there was no organized charity in the Pittsburgh community.⁶ To acclimate women and girls to the hustle and bustle of industrial employment, they created an industrial school for women and girls. In addition, they sponsored a night school for boys and a day nursery for the children of working mothers.

Phase II began downtown Pittsburgh when a meeting of the city's prominent women met to organize a YWCA in January 1890. In May 1891, Sarah Pence and Mrs. William Reed Thompson, the first President of the Central YWCA, organized Pittsburgh's Central YWCA in a small building on Penn Avenue where rooms for rest and light lunches were available to women and girls.⁷ With the process of industrialization, women were no longer confined to domestic work and teaching, so they took advantage of expanding job opportunities. Many of these women rarely had family, friends or accommodations upon their arrival to industrial cities, but the organization of this YWCA was an attempt to fill the void.

Pittsburgh's Women's Christian Association were: Ms. Felix Brunot, president;; Mrs. William Herron, vice president; Mattie J. Fowler, treasurer; Anna Thaw, Librarian; and Lizzie Wade, secretary.

⁶The Greater YWCA of Pittsburgh, *History of the YWCA in Pittsburgh*, Typescript, September 1965, p. 1. The East End YWCA, located at 219 Collins Avenue, had accommodations for 30 women who paid a monthly fee of \$4. Baths were twenty-five cents or six for \$1.00. It also had a public dining room.

⁷**"Organizer Recalls Early Days of Branch,"** *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, January 24, 1933. Vertical File, Pittsburgh Organizations, YWCA, The Pennsylvania Department, Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Sarah Pence was a dress shop owner who employed many young girls in her shop. She led a private campaign to raise money for the erection of a YWCA in downtown Pittsburgh.

In 1893, Mrs. Thompson donated her childhood home to the Association for use as a boarding house for (white) migrant and European immigrant women. This two-story structure located on Stanwix Street, became home for many women and girls, and a place where social activities, cooking, dressmaking, and Bible classes were held on their behalf. Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn in *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945*, (1993) pointed out that “the YWCA sought to recreate the structure of a complete family’s home with a parlor, piano, and a kitchen for residents.” The boarding house also became a place for women to build and cultivate relationships with other women entering the work force, many for the first time.

The Evolution of Black YWCA's

Historian Joe W. Trotter points out in his study, *Black Milwaukee: the Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, (1985), that blacks increasingly accepted segregated services as preferable to the pattern of de facto exclusion.⁸ This was also true of blacks in other cities. Racism and discrimination by whites against blacks was characteristic of white organizations and endemic to businesses, and institutions throughout American society. In the YWCA, the Board of Directors and many of its members, particularly, in the North, encouraged membership among black women and girls, but not as affiliates of white YWCAs.⁹ Frances H. Williams, author and member of the YWCA Executive Board,

⁸Joe W. Trotter, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 120.

⁹Cynthia Neverdon-Morton points out that “YWCA officials ignored the Christian creed of the ‘Y’ when it required them to treat black women as equals.” As other scholars including

provides a vivid example of these racist attitudes:

Mrs. R. had been a member of the Association largely, because her friend had asked her. At the meeting she found herself sitting by a Negro woman. She was amazed...uncomfortable. She fidgeted for a while and at last grasped her coat, she moved, only to find herself sitting on top of the radiator. Negroes were certainly alright, but she did not want them near her. They made her nervous.¹⁰

Besides, it was uncommon for black and white women to belong to the same organizations as it was for black and white children to share recreational facilities.

A large part of the YWCA's white membership, especially in the South, was paranoid and extremely outspoken against black membership in the Association. Many white YWCA members adhered to the belief that allowing black women into the Association would lead to intermarriage and public objection.¹¹ Others considered it dangerous to allow black women the vote as directors of the YWCA, as they did during the suffrage movement, because it would empower black women and threaten the overall stability of their organization. While not all white YWCA women were against black membership, a majority favored allowing them YWCA's of their own as white Americans were willing to foot the bill for their racism.¹²

Jacqueline Rouse and Adrienne Lash Jones have already explained, black women could only be members of the YWCA in "colored" branches. This is, in fact, the reason for their creation.

¹⁰Frances Harriet Williams, *Consideration of the Negro Member in Associations Where There Is No Organized Branch*, (New York: The Woman's Press, December 31, 1941), p. 19-20.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹²Joel Williamson, *A Rage for Order: Black, White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. vii-viii. Although Williamson is making reference to the exclusion of southern blacks from full participation in economic, political, and cultural activities, it can also be applied to the actions of white women in the

But, this suggestion created a flurry of questions within the National YWCA. For example, the question of financing “colored” YWCAs, the ability of black women to provide leadership, and of white women to adequately understand the needs and interests of black women and girls were repeatedly posed. The first of these concerns was perhaps legitimate, but black women had proven their leadership skills before the antebellum period with the formation of church organizations, mutual benefit and beneficiary societies, and suffrage clubs; and during the late 19th century, the Black Women's Club Movement. On the third point, Eva D. Bowles, the first “colored” woman appointed a YWCA secretary, stated, “no person can interpret the needs and desires of colored people as well as a colored person,” a point on which both black and white women agreed.¹³

Despite the mixed feelings of YWCA Board members, historian Cynthia Neverdon-Morton explained that black women could only become members of the YWCA in separate “colored” branches. The first of such branches was organized in Dayton, Ohio (1893). Although this “colored” branch of the YWCA was “on friendly relations with the white

YWCA who continuously denied black women membership.

¹³Gerda Lerner, “*What the Colored Women Are Asking of the YWCA*,” in *Black Women in White America, A Documentary History*, (New York: Vintage Press, 1972), p. 481. Bowles was born on January 24, 1875 in Albany, Ohio. She received her education at Ohio State College and Columbia School of Philanthropy. An educator, Bowles, taught at St. Augustine’s Industrial Institute, Lawrenceville, VA. Later, in her career, she was appointed a YWCA secretary in 1913. This appointment was an experiment perhaps to test the leadership ability of black women for YWCA work and if it proved successful, would be the answer for the creation and management black YWCAs nationwide. For more information, see Adrienne Lash Jones’ “*Eva D. Bowles*,” in *Black Women in United States History: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Volume 1, pp. 152-153.

YWCA of Dayton, it was not organically a part of it.”¹⁴ By 1906, small YWCAs for blacks were organized in Washington, Philadelphia, New York, St. Louis, and Baltimore. They flourished in the North for three reasons: (1) racism and discrimination against black women and (2) with the formation of the National Board of the YWCA in 1906, the Association adopted a policy of establishing "colored" branches in areas wherever large populations of blacks resided and (3) the successful protest of black female leaders in the South, Eva D. Bowles, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Lugenia Burns Hope, and Lucy Laney for control over colored YWCA branches.¹⁵

With the onset of World War I, came an increased need for social services among a variety of groups, particularly, the tidal wave of southern migrants to northern cities. The YWCA sought to develop and implement a program of social improvement and education for young black women striving for financial, social, and familial stability in the urban North. In other words, the YWCA planned to participate in the adjustment of southern migrants.

¹⁴Mary Sims, *The Natural History of a Social Institution—The Young Women's Christian Association*, (New York: The Woman's Press), p. 67. The "Colored" Branch of Dayton, Ohio's YWCA was organized in 1893, and New York's "Colored YWCA" in 1919. Both branches were established exclusively for colored women and girls.

¹⁵Charlotte Hawkins Brown was born June 11, 1883, in Henderson, North Carolina. She received her formal education at the State Normal School at Winston Salem. She served on the National Board of the YWCA. See Kathleen Thompson's "*Charlotte Hawkins Brown*" in *Black Women in the United States: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Volume 1, pp. 172-174. Lucy Laney, a native of Macon, Georgia, was born April 13, 1854. She was one of the first students to earn a degree from Atlanta University. An educator, she founded Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia. According to historian June Patton, she was also active in the fight for "colored" YWCAs.

Racism in the YWCA Against Black Women and Girls

Prejudice against black women in the YWCA existed in every facet of the agency including black professional workers and use of YWCA facilities. Mary Sims of the National Board of the YWCA stated, “whether we like to acknowledge it or not, we realize that there is a racial prejudice. We like to express it with regard to a Christian nation as a lack of understanding.”¹⁶ Toward black professional YWCA workers, this prejudice was reflected in the experiences of Anna Arnold Hedgemann, a native of Marshalltown, Iowa and graduate of Hamline University, St. Paul Minnesota; and Eva D. Bowles, of Albany, Ohio.¹⁷

Hedgemann worked for the YWCA from 1922-1941 and Bowles 1913-1931 and both women were refused admittance to the YWCA Central Association's cafeteria, because of racial discrimination and segregation. Historian Adrienne Lash Jones pointed out that “when black women employed by the YWCA went to New York to give their reports, they were forced to ride the service elevators and drop off the reports at the Executive office,” as they were not allowed to attend Executive Board meetings.

The prejudice and racial discrimination against black women was also reflected in YWCA facilities and social services. For example, Hedgemann explained that the young people she supervised could not use the swimming pool or gymnasium in the Central building. The experience of Grace Lowndes, a migrant to Pittsburgh from Columbia, South

¹⁶Lerner, “*Reports by the Secretary for Colored Work*,” January 1924, *Article in The Woman's Press*, in *Black Women in White America*, p. 485.

¹⁷Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: the Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, (New York: William and Morrow, 1984), p. 155; Lerner, p. 478; Hedgemann earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1922. She became a schoolteacher and the wife of Merritt Hedgemann.

Carolina revealed racial discrimination in housing:

...[I] worked as a dressmaker in Pittsburgh, then moved to New York to enroll in a costume design school where [I] had been accepted through a mail application. When [my] arrival revealed that [I] was a Negro, [my] place in the school and [my] promised room at the YWCA evaporated, and [I] was left in tears, on a street corner.¹⁸

The experience of Grace Lowndes was one probably shared by numerous other black women.

Darrel E. Bigham in his study on Evansville, Indiana says, "it was understood that the city's YWCA was off limits to segregation by custom and by law." Noted black club woman, journalist, and activist, Ida B. Wells described the housing situation for black women in Chicago: While every class was welcome in the YWCA homes...not one will give a Negro a bed. Even the women's Model Lodging House announces that it will give women accommodations who need a place to sleep except drunkards, immoral women, and Negro women.¹⁹

Even amidst the racist attitudes of the YWCA Executive membership, black women maintained an interest in the Association. Historian Cynthia Neverdon-Morton in her discussion of black women in the National YWCA pointed out that the interest of black women in the 'Y' was (1) the agency's efforts to improve the quality of home life through the

¹⁸ Arthur Edmunds, *Daybreakers the Story of the Pittsburgh Urban League*. Pittsburgh: The Urban League, 1972, p. 38. After having been humiliated, Grace Lowndes returned to the Tait School and confronted its officials who subsequently, changed their position relative to her admission. Upon completing the required courses, she and her friend Frances Brown opened a dress shop on Bryn Mawr Road in Pittsburgh's Hill District. Lowndes, later became a member of the Pittsburgh Urban League's Board of Directors.

¹⁹ Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of A Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 47.

personal development of young women and (2) because it sanctioned Christian principles that formed the core of black religion.²⁰ Jacqueline Rouse in *Lugenia Burns Hope Southern Reformer*, (1989), further explained the interest of black women in the YWCA as providing leadership training and improving the moral fibers of the black community.²¹ Paula Giddings, in *When and Where Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*, (1984), tells us that black women were interested in the 'Y,' because of its concern for working women, it advocated collective bargaining, rights of workers, and economic justice and its tremendous number of resources.²²

The Establishment of Pittsburgh's Colored YWCA

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was targeted by the Colored YWCA's Colored Work Administration, headed by Eva D. Bowles, YWCA National Secretary for Colored Work in Cities (1916), and her assistant, Cordelia Wynn of New York.²³ The National Board of the

²⁰Cynthia Neverdon-Morton, *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925*, (Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), p. 207. This is a viable source of information about the establishment of colored YWCAs, especially, those in the South. She also deals with discrimination by white YWCA women against black women interested in founding and managing "colored" YWCAs.

²¹Jacqueline A. Rouse, *Lugenia Burns Hope: Southern Reformer*, (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), p. 93.

²²Paula Giddings, p. 155.

²³Cordelia Winn (Wynn) was a graduate of Columbus Normal School and attended Columbia University. A social worker, Winn worked at a home in Columbus, Ohio. Her affiliation with the YWCA began in Washington, D.C. in 1918. She later became a field secretary for the National YWCA and played a significant role in the establishment of Pittsburgh's "colored" YWCA.

YWCA established this committee for three reasons: (1) to bring about racial understanding, (2) to facilitate and coordinate the growth of colored branches, (3) and assume responsibility for the work of black branches. The prospect of a colored YWCA in Pittsburgh was influenced by a Wynn's report on the Work of the National YWCA Board on Behalf of Colored Girls. Delivered by Wynn, December 17, 1918, members of Pittsburgh's Executive Board present at the National Board meeting, responded: "the time and need for reconstruction work was most urgent as we [had] a colored population of 40,000 in our city and near our center."²⁴

The establishment of Pittsburgh's "colored" YWCA occurred in three stages. In 1917, the Central YWCA appointed a Committee on Colored Work with Mrs. Samuel B. McCormick, wife of University of Pittsburgh Chancellor Samuel McCormick, as chairperson. She appealed to the National War Work Council for financial assistance to support colored branches. Second, Mary E. Jackson, National Industrial Secretary of the YWCA, was sent to Pittsburgh to investigate the city's living conditions only to find congestion, poor housing and sanitation, a lack of restaurants, and numerous 'Rooms to Let,' deemed unsuitable for women.²⁵ Third, the local Pittsburgh YWCA pledged its full

²⁴*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, December 17, 1918, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.; Jane Olcott, "*The Work of Colored Women 1919: Information From War Work Centers Indicating Industries in Which Colored Women are Employed and Those Which YWCA Club Membership Represented.*" This particular document is a chart found in the YWCA of the USA Archives and contains other valuable information relative to "colored" women and the YWCA. Prior to the establishment of the 'colored' YWCA were: the student YWCA, University of Pittsburgh (1911); and the International Institute of the YWCA (1918) which later became the Oakland branch.

²⁵*Work Among Negro Women and Girls, Centre Avenue Branch [YWCA]*, Pittsburgh, PA, (undated), The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel

cooperation to a center for colored women and girls and \$5,000, provided the War Council supply two workers.

The National War Work Council which supported numerous “colored” YWCAs, responded favorably to McCormick’s request to finance the “colored” YWCA and two workers, and the local YWCA donated \$5,000 as promised. During this organizational period, Pittsburgh's Executive Board concentrated on management and policy issues. Board member Esther Hawes, presented the following policy matters: (1) a committee be composed of one chairperson (a member of the Association), two other white women, and six “colored” women; and that three staff persons be hired, a General Secretary; a Girls Worker; and a House Head (sic).²⁶ Approved by Pittsburgh's YWCA Executive Board, two of the three persons were hired to staff the “colored” YWCA: Ms. Nelsine Howard, a native of Denver, Colorado, General Secretary; Mrs. Harper, the Girls Work Secretary, and the third staff person had yet to be hired.²⁷

In 1919, the Pittsburgh YWCA Board of Directors launched an extensive search to find permanent quarters for the “colored” YWCA. Mrs. S.B. McCormick and the Special

#211.3, p. 1. Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn says other significant factors to the problems of black women in Pittsburgh included exorbitant rents, a lack of recreational facilities, and residential segregation. *See Chapter 4: From Mother Power to Civil Rights.*

²⁶*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, October 28, 1919, MSS # 79 YWCA, Box 108, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

²⁷Nelsine Howard was trained as a YWCA worker in Louisville, Kentucky. She had resided in Pittsburgh for almost eighteen months prior to accepting the position in the city’s “colored” YWCA. Upon her employment, Howard’s initial monthly salary was \$1000 which increased to \$1200 on October 1, 1920. *See Afro-Notes, The Pittsburgh Press*, Theatrical and Photo-play Section, November 28, 1920, p. 5. Not much is known about Ms. Harper including her first name. Harper’s salary, however, increased from \$900 to \$1000 at the same time Nelsine Howard received her raise.

Committee on Colored Work sought temporary space and use of facilities in the Pittsburgh Public Schools which were available by special arrangements and a required fee, until permanent quarters could be found.²⁸ It is important to note that because of segregation, black women were relegated to the use of alternative facilities for colored work.

Nelsine Howard, the first General Secretary of the “colored” YWCA began to build a program for black women and girls. As there was no building to house the “colored” YWCA, she organized programs in the Watt Street and Moorehead Schools, and the Parish House of the Holy Cross Church for YWCA activities. In September 1919, the participation among black women and girls rapidly increased to sixty-eight and Howard requested an additional room at the Watt Street School. Encouraged by these growing statistics, the Board of Directors thought it beneficial to send two delegates to the YWCA Conference in Cincinnati, October 23, 1919, on behalf of colored women and girls with hopes of expanding and improving colored work.

A number of important developments occurred during 1920 relative to Pittsburgh’s “colored” YWCA: (1) the Executive Board of the city's YWCA approved the budget presented by the Colored Work Committee headed by Mrs. Follansbee (white), (2) defined the powers of the “colored” YWCA’s staff and determined their salaries, (3) the first

²⁸*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, June 24, 1919, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. The Committee on Colored Work looked at several sites to house the “colored” YWCA. Between November 1919 and November 1920, including the McElveen property which commanded \$16,000 and the Ewart property which was for sale, but not for a “colored” YWCA. The committee also attempted to lease the property of a Dr. King, but a question of its suitability arose. During the organizational process, Winn created the ‘colored’ YWCA’s first Committee of Management, with Sadie Black Hamilton in charge.

Committee of Management was appointed by Cordelia Winn, and (4) after almost two years of searching, an affordable site was located to house the “colored” branch in October. Pittsburgh's black YWCA women were not as fortunate as those in St. Louis where a wealthy white woman heard of the good work “colored” women were doing, and donated a house to the Association for an indefinite period of time.²⁹

On November 28, 1920, the Colored Branch of the Pittsburgh YWCA officially opened at 2215 Wylie Avenue and was subsequently, called the Wylie Avenue Branch of the Association.³⁰ Anna Arnold Hedgemann, in *“Reminiscences of a YWCA Worker,”* (1964) explained that in northern cities, the separate branches of the YWCA were not called Negro branches publicly, but were named for the street on which they were located making them easily identifiable---a practice she referred to as “sugar-coated” segregation.³¹ According to

²⁹Julia Childs Curtis, *“A Girls Clubhouse,”* *The Crisis*, October 1913, Volume 6, p. 295. This philanthropic gift of a house was the generosity of a Mrs. Chapman. Although the house was dilapidated, the hard work of many of the city's black women led to the official opening of the St. Louis branch of the Wheatley House May 13, 1912. The two black women making this possible were May Belcher and Arsanias Williams. The Phillis Wheatley House in St. Louis consisted of a dormitory and office, and a reading and club room.

³⁰Pittsburgh's ‘Colored’ YWCA was the former home of J.F. Collison. It was a two-story frame structure with ten rooms, a bath; a spacious attic; a substantial porch; and glass-paneled front doors. To the left upon entering the building, was a reception parlor and classroom. On the right was an office, dining room, pantry, and kitchen. The second-story of the Wylie Avenue Branch of the YWCA was used to house between ten and twelve women, provided recreational area for children, and a bath and comfort room. The building also had a basement. The “colored” YWCA was situated on grounds comprising 100 x100 feet. The opening of this institution had four advantages: it would provide “race women” relocating to Pittsburgh or passing through the city a safe haven; an opportunity for educational training; organized recreation; and instruction on Christian living.

³¹Lerner, p. 25. Though most of the “colored” YWCAs were, in fact, called Phillis Wheatley Homes, Pittsburgh's “colored” YWCA was an exception.

YWCA policy, black branches were also called Phillis Wheatley homes.³² Although the Wylie Avenue branch, had a place to call home the building was similar to other colored YWCA's in that it had no swimming pool, gymnasium, auditorium or cafeteria.

Despite its shortcomings, the Wylie Avenue YWCA settled into its new home, and was embraced by the city's Negroes in a number of ways. A committee of eighty YWCA members contributed to its furnishings. For example, black organizations including black women's clubs, gave monetary donations and furniture, while other black Pittsburghers volunteered their time and services to YWCA programs.³³ The National YWCA Field Secretary, (white) Laura Young, reported the Wylie Avenue Branch as being "one of the best equipped YWCAs in the entire field," even though it lacked the basic recreational necessities. Nonetheless, the staff of the Wylie Avenue YWCA was committed to developing similar programs to that of white YWCA's with general religious and education classes, and girls clubs.

The Central YWCA which included all Pittsburgh branches which included Chatham Street, International Institute, the North Side, Lawrenceville, and Wylie Avenue offered cooking classes to their membership, but the Wylie Avenue Branch had yet to offer such

³²*Ibid.*, p. 25. Phillis Wheatley, enslaved in Gambia, West Africa, was transported to Boston and purchased by John Wheatley, a wealthy merchant. Although a nursemaid for his wife, Phillis was taught to read and write by members of the Wheatley family. A poet and writer of revolutionary works, she was the first black woman whose writings were published. The first Phillis Wheatley Home was established in 1897, as a Home for the Aged by black Detroit club women. YWCAs were subsequently, named in Wheatley's honor in both northern and southern cities including Indianapolis, Charlotte, Harrisburg, Cleveland, Little Rock, Atlanta.

³³*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, November 16, 1920; February 16, 1921. MSS 79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

classes as of 1921. It was not long before the colored leadership and YWCA membership requested a cooking class at the Wylie Avenue branch. For example, Bethel A.M.E. Church registered a number of colored women and girls and its pastor, the Reverend J.C. Anderson, sent \$128.50 on their behalf. Many of the colored women and girls volunteered to pay ten cents per cooking lesson as “they did not want them to be free.”³⁴

Black Female Leadership in Pittsburgh’s “Colored” YWCA

Similar to the initiatives of Eva D. Bowles, Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Lugenia Burns Hope, three southern women, who sought to assert control over “colored” YWCA branches in the South, Pittsburgh's black female leadership led by Ruth B. Moore, acting secretary of the Wylie Avenue branch, sought this same degree of autonomy for the city’s “colored” YWCA. As black women, they were able to easily identify the needs of the other black women and girls as well as those of the black community. To meet these needs, Moore, Mrs. A.L. Hamilton, Chairperson of the Committee of Management, and black women who volunteered their time and services to the “colored” YWCA organized (1) a number of fund-raising campaigns, (2) membership drives, (3) attended YWCA Conferences on Colored Work to enhance their leadership skills, and (4) tactfully confronted the Pittsburgh's Executive Board of the YWCA on the race issue. In doing so, they hoped to build a cohesive black community and to ease unwarranted racial tension between blacks and whites, especially, within the Association.

³⁴*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, September 27, 1921, p. 3. MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2; *Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, November 15, 1921, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

Most “colored” YWCA’s were not self-supporting which had many white YWCA members “up in arms,” during the earliest discussions regarding the establishment of “colored” YWCAs. The staff of the Wylie Avenue branch, despite this major detail, made every effort to pull its own weight, but only to be discouraged by the Executive Board. Within three years, the membership increased from 30-330 outgrowing their leased quarters, the current structure needed extensive repairs including a new roof, and the staff wanted to purchase a building. ³⁵

In 1923, Ruth Moore and Mrs. A.L. Hamilton, requested permission from the dominant Board to raise funds for another building and conduct a membership drive. Additional funds were needed for more programs and the staff envisioned one much bigger than that planned and budgeted by the Executive Board. This attributed to black women understanding the needs of the black people they serviced, a fact many white YWCA members refused to accept. Furthermore, this action was a demonstration of their leadership ability, a quality, according to many white women, black women did not possess.

After much discussion, the YWCA Advisory Board and Eva D. Bowles, head of the Colored Work Administration, thought it “inadvisable,” to allow the Wylie Avenue YWCA

³⁵“*Wylie Avenue Branch Campaign Fund*,” (undated), MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF 2, p. 461. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. The problems necessitating additional space for YWCA work and repairs included decision-making relative to renewing the lease for \$100 monthly. The Central Branch of the YWCA, of course, was responsible for making the decision. The roof repairs were estimated at \$175. However, it is interesting that the YWCA was responsible for repairs on a building it did not own. The black female leadership of the ‘colored’ YWCA had already made it clear that what they actually needed was a larger structure to effectively conduct its programs.

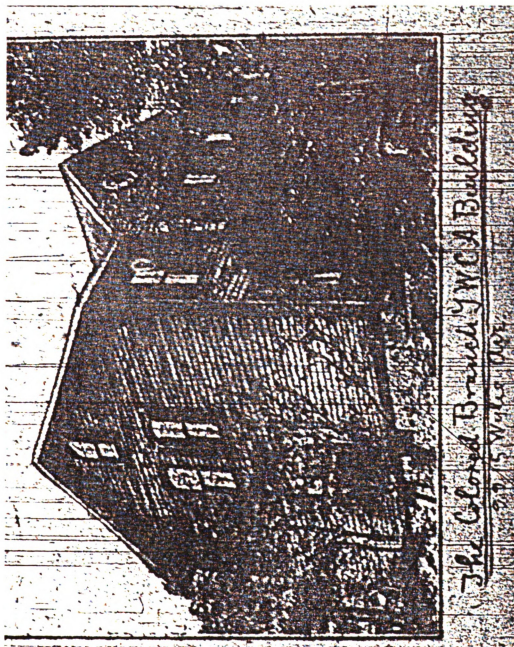


Figure. 25. Wylie Avenue Branch YWCA (1920)

staff to conduct a fund-raising campaign.³⁶ But, the Centre Avenue staff felt that the timing was perfect for a fund-raiser, because black ministers, women's clubs, and other facets of Pittsburgh's black community offered to help with the publicity and pledged their financial support. Perhaps the Advisory Board feared a desire for power and independence among these black women and, Eva Bowles, the fear of failure that might cause her embarrassment or allow her judgement to be questioned by white YWCA leadership. A letter from National Board member, Laura Young to Pittsburgh's Executive Board regarding the fund-raiser read:

Mrs. Bowles (National Executive Secretary of the Colored Work) does not approve of having a campaign of this sort put on as an entire enterprise of the colored branch alone. She has no objection to the women up there going out on a quiet campaign for running expenses just as being done by the Central Association. She has no objection to the property being secured and a definite plan being made to have a campaign possibly next Spring or in the Fall with the YWCA seeking money to pay for the property. Ms. Bowles does favor having the colored women make a definite effort after sufficient publicity has been given toward paying off the loan.³⁷

The negative attitude of Bowles was perhaps an effort to protect her executive position as Colored Work Administrator. If black women were able to make decisions, and successfully plan and implement their own programs without her supervision, Bowles position could have been eliminated. Young, however, asked Bowles to explain the situation to Ruth Moore to "make it easier." She also stated, "I do hope that some adjustments can be made, so that

³⁶*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, April 18, 1923, p. 2. MSS# 79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

³⁷*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, March 20, 1923, Re: Wylie Avenue Branch Campaign Fund, p. 461. MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

there can be more attractive quarters secured for that branch.”³⁸ This statement implies that the Wylie Avenue branch quarters may have been substandard when initially leased in October 1920.

Despite the decisions of both the Advisory Board and Bowles, an overall vote of Pittsburgh’s YWCA Board approved the request for the “colored” YWCA staff to organize a fund-raiser, but stipulated its confinement to the black community. In addition, the Board explained to the staff that \$1200 of their \$5000 goal would be extracted for the budget fund and the remaining funds, in all likelihood, would not make the first payment on the property they might purchase.³⁹ Those white YWCA members who supported the efforts of the colored women, believed them to be earnest sincere, and anxious to raise the money entirely on a cash basis, not pledges.

In general, black women were confident about their fund-raising abilities. They had been organizing fund-raisers since the early 19th century. For example, Martin Delany’s newspaper, *The Mystery*, was in dire financial straits and on the verge of collapse. Black women of Pittsburgh’s antebellum community, held soirees and festivals to restore and stabilize this important publication. Because many black women affiliated with the YWCA were club women, they were not strangers to organizing fund-raising activities. On June 27, 1922, the Wylie Avenue branch held a fund-raiser at the grand opening of its Blue Triangle

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 461.

³⁹*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, June 28, 1922, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

Tea Room, which netted \$1,150.⁴⁰ There was no record available of the funds raised during the 1923 campaign. However, in 1928, a fund-raiser grossed \$2,625.14 as “scores of campaign workers” led by Mrs. Hendrickson “covered Pittsburgh like the morning dew in its annual budget drive.”⁴¹

Membership

Recruiting members for the “colored” YWCA was a critical aspect of its existence. A lack of membership, nullified the need for a branch Association in the black community. Like the fund-raiser, the staff had to ask the Executive Board for permission to organize a membership drive. Membership within the “colored” YWCA was initiated by the Wylie Avenue staff for two reasons: (1) to share and expose black women and girls to the programs they offered and (2) to provide opportunities for service and training.

On June 28, 1923, the staff conducted its first membership drive at the Wylie Avenue branch with Julia Bumry Jones, a prominent clubwoman, member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and journalist for *The Pittsburgh Courier*, leading the booster speech and outlining the purpose and course of YWCA work. Mrs. George L. Winstead, Daisy Lampkin, Mrs. A.L. Hamilton, Mrs. Robert L. Vann, Cora Wood, and Dr. Marie S. Kinner

⁴⁰*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, March 20, 1923, RE: Wylie Avenue Branch Campaign Fund, p. 461, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF 2. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁴¹ “*City-Wide Campaign With All Pittsburgh Branches of YWCA*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 14, 1928, p. 7. Hendrickson along with YWCA staff and volunteers engaged a “door-to-door” fund-raising campaign. Cora B. Jones stated, “Just tell everybody we will call around a be home, please.”

emphasized the salient points of the membership campaign.⁴² Approximately forty members gathered for the occasion to attract more women and community participation in the “colored” YWCA. The YWCA staff and volunteers hoped to attract 1000 women and girls to the ‘Y’ “to connect with opportunity for service and training.”⁴³ The campaign theme was, “*More Women, More Girls.*” The data do not reveal the actual number of members recruited during the membership drive.

Conferences

To enhance their effectiveness in the black community through leadership, black women of the Wylie Avenue staff and volunteers attended YWCA Conferences and even organized a conference of their own. For example, two delegates from the “colored” branch participated in the Conference on Colored Work in Frankfurt, Kentucky (1920). In 1925, Jean Hamilton, executive secretary, Helen Jeffries, and Ada Dunbar attended the Industrial Girls Conference in Canton, Pennsylvania; and Mrs. McFall, Cora B. Jones, Mrs. W.C. Matthews participated in the Ninth National Convention of the YWCA in Milwaukee (1926)

⁴²“*YWCA Launches Big Drive Here, June 28th*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 30, 1923, p. 9.

⁴³Fifteen of Pittsburgh’s black women were involved in the YWCA campaign: Grace Lowndes; Sadie Bond; Mrs. R.L. Vann; Minnie Foote; Sadie B. Hamilton; Mrs. Ira Lewis; Mrs. George Cole, C. Hayden; Jeannette Washington; Rose Hill; Olga Banks; Marie Kinner; Daisy Lampkin; Sadie Brown; and Mary Johnson. They were not salaried employees of the “colored” YWCA, but women who volunteered their time and services to ensure a successful endeavor.



Figure. 26. Jean Hamilton

which included women from all parts of the world.⁴⁴ Jones was also elected to the nominating committee. Rachel Taylor attended the YWCA Convention at West Virginia State College and on another occasion, selected as the representative to the 1929 National YWCA Conference in Chicago.⁴⁵ Between 1920-1930, they participated in at least ten YWCA Conferences.

In December 1935, the Centre Avenue Branch of the YWCA organized the "Pittsburgh Area Branch Conference" to discuss problems and leadership training in "colored" YWCA branches. The conference theme, "*For More Effective Service to Youth, The World's Future*," included discussions on (1) making leadership effective, (2) increasing YWCA membership, (3) volunteers and volunteer training, and (4) resolving problems in interracial work.⁴⁶ The participants were black women representing Pittsburgh, New Castle, and Washington, Pennsylvania; Wheeling, West Virginia; and Youngstown, Ohio with five

⁴⁴ Elizabeth N. Elliott, "***Many Race Women Attend Big YWCA Convention Being Held in Milwaukee***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 1, 1926, p. 1. The purpose of this particular conference was "to spread Christianity throughout the world." Approximately 3,000 women of various ethnic backgrounds were in attendance. "***At the Blue Triangle***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 27, 1925. Jean Hamilton, the daughter of Sadie Black Hamilton, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh (1910); earned a Master's degree from Howard University (1912); and was the first black woman to earn a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh (1937). She once taught at Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina, and later, established a music studio on Centre Avenue. Jean Hamilton was also the organist at Holy Cross Church.

⁴⁵In 1930, Cora B. Jones, Mrs. R. L. Vann, and Rachel Taylor were elected as alternates, visiting and voting delegates, respectively, for the Eleventh National Convention of the YWCA of the USA. Rachel Taylor was also one of ten voting delegates.

⁴⁶Marion Cuthbert, "***Report of the Pittsburgh Branch Conference, December 6-7, 1935, Centre Avenue Branch***," Community Files of the YWCA, January 9, 1936. The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, p. 2.

delegates from each city, except Pittsburgh which had fifteen delegates.⁴⁷ The discrepancy in the number of delegates may have been because the Centre Avenue branch hosted the event or perhaps the number of delegates was determined by the size of branch membership. The black women of Pittsburgh's "colored" assumed a leadership role in organizing this conference to deal with the problems confronting colored YWCAs and their future.

Historian Joel Williamson, in *A Rage for Order: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*, (1986), wrote "in politics, in economics, in every phase of our national life, race continues to be a divisive issue." This was also true in the social agencies such as, the YWCA. One of the major problems facing black YWCA women and girls was race---a recurring issue within every aspect of its existence, in spite of its Christian orientation. Although the National Board of the YWCA established the Committee on Colored Work and an Interracial Committee to bring about racial understanding between the Association's black and white membership, tension remained strong.

For example, twelve Girl Reserves of the Centre Avenue 'Y' attended the Annual Conference and white Association members utterly refused to accommodate them. So, the Centre Avenue staff took the girls to Sheridan and with the cooperation of the Lily White Baptist Church and Ovella White, a club advisor, "stopping places" were secured for them in the homes of blacks. A report by Rachel Taylor, General Secretary of the Centre Avenue branch revealed: "One black woman could not take a girl, but could furnish meals. Another

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 1. Mrs. Alice Warner of Youngstown, Ohio, played a leadership role in the planning of this conference and served as chairperson of the program and leadership committee. During the planning stages of this conference, discussions occurred on the following subjects: current problems facing black women and girls and the black community; branch development; interaction with other agencies; and participation in federal projects.

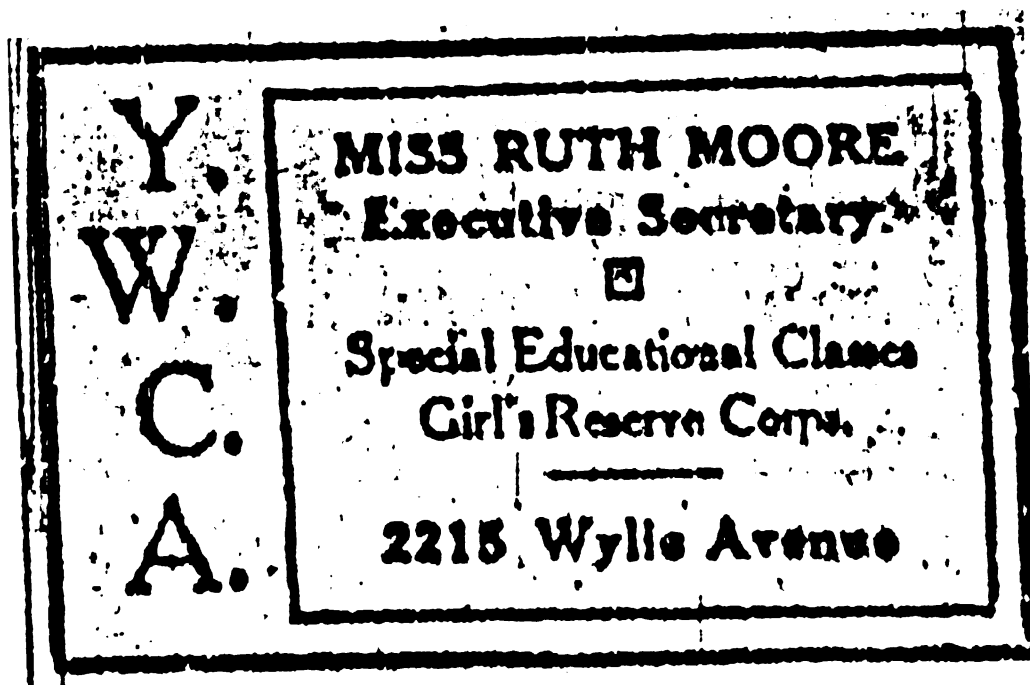


Figure 27. Girl Reserves Corps Advertisement, Centre Avenue Branch

woman could not furnish meals, but could take girls.”⁴⁸ The attitudes of the “colored” YWCA contingent as a result of this degrading experience, was reflected in the following statement:

The conference was a disappointment to our girls from the angle of unfriendliness on the part of the white YWCA delegation. The girls regretted that the conference was held in a prejudiced neighborhood where an atmosphere was that of unfriendliness towards colored people.⁴⁹

Black women of the Centre Avenue YWCA attempted several methods to ease the pain of racism by explaining racist behavior to the colored girls of the YWCA. First, the Health Education Committee sponsored interracial forums to discuss the race question led by students of the University of Pittsburgh’s YWCA Interracial Committee and black student representatives who also participated as speakers. The topics concentrated on the social ramifications of racism on college campuses and in the Pittsburgh community. It is logical to deduce that a few forums would not change the face of race relations in Pittsburgh or Spring Conference in Crafton, Pennsylvania, April 16-18, 1926.⁵⁰ No “colored” people lived

⁴⁸ “*Rachel Taylor Makes Fine Report for April*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 12, 1926, p. 6. Taylor’s report also revealed that 155 high school, 117 junior high, and 128 grade school students engaged the Girl Reserves.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6; The following girls attended the conference: Bernice Brown; Myrdene Eddings; Harriet Law; Alice Turfley; Coreda Bailey; Lillian Davis; Vera Duskin; Ida Edmundsun; Vivian Bailey; Louise Bryant; and Alice Edwards.

⁵⁰ The organization of the YWCA Girl Reserves was to “develop leadership initiative among the teenage girl with emphasis on individual spiritual growth and expression, a movement within the YWCA to give girls through natural activities, the habits, insights and ideals to mold responsible women.” Largely organized in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Girls Reserves constituted at least 45 clubs and 2500 girls in the Central YWCA. They were involved in discussions on boy and girl relationships, religion, and economics. The Girl Reserves of the Centre Avenue ‘Y’ were active in GR activities. For example, eight of them attended a conference in Newton-Hamilton, Pennsylvania, and four from the Leisure Hour Club went to the

elsewhere. Black and white relations in America was a problem that “will not go away.”

Second, black YWCA women used “direct confrontation” to correct the racist policies of the Central YWCA. For example, when “colored” girls of the YWCA were barred from the Association’s summer camp, because of racial discrimination, Mrs. Robert L. Vann, Secretary of the Centre Avenue Board of Management, sent a letter to Mrs. Bell, chairperson of the YWCA Camp Committee.⁵¹ Vann requested this Committee “carry on an interracial experiment,” during one of its summer sessions. The YWCA Camp Committee honored this request and, for the first time, black and white Association girls would attend the same camp, July 17-29, 1932. No documentation, however, exists regarding the success or failure of this experiment, but the records do indicate an initiative by the Federal Government to establish a camp for Negro children. Mrs. Samuel Parr of the Centre Avenue branch was urged by the Executive Board to obtain all pertinent information regarding this segregated camp.⁵²

Industrial Girls Conference at Pleasant Hill Farm in September 1926. Dorothy Hollin became the first ‘colored’ Girl Reserve to represent the Centre Avenue Branch on the World Committee of the Inter-City Council. She was installed as chairperson of this council.

⁵¹ *“Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting,”* June 29, 1932, p. 78, MSS# 79 YWCA, Box 1, FF3. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. No immediate decisions were made during this meeting regarding the camp issue, because it was poorly attended by YWCA board members. However, this “interracial” experiment was decided by the Metropolitan Board which responded favorably. This decision perhaps demonstrated efforts to enhance interracial relations between the “colored and white” YWCAs. Urban historian Richard Thomas points out that, “before the establishment of Detroit’s Camp Green Pastures, most black children in the slums spent their summers on the streets while white children had access to well-supported summer camps.” This was also indicative of how Pittsburgh’s black children spent their summers.

⁵² Mrs. Samuel Parr was a native Pittsburgher. She attended the Pittsburgh Public Schools and was a charter member of Bethesda Presbyterian Church, the Aurora Reading Club, and Pittsburgh Urban League. Parr has been a member of the ‘colored’ YWCA since 1920.



Figure. 27. Mrs. Jessie L. Vann

Jessie L. Vann, the daughter of William and Mary Walker Matthews, was born in Flora Dale, Adams County, Pennsylvania in 1885. She received her early education in the public schools of Harrisburg and Gettysburg. In 1910, she married noted Pittsburgh publisher and noted attorney, Robert L. Vann. In addition to the YWCA, she was a member of the Lucy Stone Civic League, the Pittsburgh Urban League, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, a life member of the NACW.

Third, the Centre Avenue Branch staff and its Board of Management were disturbed by the blatant segregation perpetuated on various YWCA Boards, where white where decisions were made on behalf of black women by white women. For example, the "colored" branch was a member of the Central and Metropolitan YWCAs, but black women were not represented on either Board of Directors, because of their racist behavior and exclusionary policies. Several white YWCA members thought "[black] representation on the board was unnecessary, "refused to discuss the issue with the Centre Avenue staff or its Board of Management, and selected Mrs. Follansbee (white), to represent them on the Metropolitan Board.⁵³ A purported insult to black women, they refused to let the issue of Board representation die.

Black women of the Centre Avenue branch, continued to "agitate" for inclusion on the Metropolitan Board by turning to the Pittsburgh community for help. They contacted "a prominent Jew and President of the Pittsburgh Urban League and colored ministers" who wrote letters to the Metropolitan Board demanding black women represent themselves as Board members.⁵⁴ This action made some members of the Executive Board uneasy causing them to seek advice from the National Board. A telegram from Mary Sims, a YWCA chronicler, to Marion Nicolovious read: "If any changes regarding this matter occur, it would attitude the group and make it more harmful to push colored representation now than to go

⁵³*Western Union Telegram to Mary Sims from Marion Nicolovious*, April 16, 1924, The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel # 210.6. *Letter to Eva D. Bowles from Cora Jones*, April 22, 1925. The YWCA of the USA, New York, New York, Microfilm # 210.6.

⁵⁴*Western Union Telegram to Mary Sims from Marion Nicolovious*, April 16, 1925. The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York.

without [black representation] for the one year period.’’⁵⁵

Cora B. Jones and Mrs. A.L. Hamilton, fought with contempt, those forces that continuously excluded black women from participation on YWCA boards for two reasons: (1) they knew that other cities had colored (sic) representation on the Metropolitan Board and (2) YWCA policies mandated that black women be represented on this board. For example, a telegram from Mary Sims of the National YWCA to Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious, Executive Director of Pittsburgh’s Central YWCA, confirmed the right of black women to be represented on the Metropolitan Board:

Our experience with the metropolitan organization has proved (sic) that the best plan to represent the colored branch is by (sic) the Chairman of the Committee of Management on the Metropolitan Board. This is our regular procedure. We advise you to work out your first years' policy with the branch committee and board of directors together with keeping this in mind.⁵⁶

The Pittsburgh YWCA Board of Directors admitted that they understood the procedure, but continued to question the inclusion of colored women who chaired Committees of Management, and subsequently, refused to adhere to YWCA policies and procedures. They were, of course, unwilling to admit that race was the real issue.

Jones addressed the Metropolitan Board regarding the representation of black

⁵⁵*Ibid.* Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious graduated from St. Margaret’s School in Waterbury Connecticut. During world War I, she was a hostess house worker and Director of Camp Dix. Her career as a YWCA worker included an appointment as executive of the room registry Department in Philadelphia; National Secretary of the Room Registry Department; Executive Director of Pittsburgh’s Central YWCA. She was also active with the Traveler’s Aid.

⁵⁶*Letter to Cora B. Jones from Eva D. Bowles, April 17, 1925.* The YWCA of the USA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel #210.6. This document was initially sent to Mrs. Nicolovious. The sharing of this information with Jones was perhaps an effort by Bowles to fore warn Jones of the decisions being made that she may not have otherwise been privy to.



Figure. 28. Cora B. Jones

women, but was defeated in her quest to occupy her rightful seat on the Board. In a letter to Eva D. Bowles, Cora Jones wrote:

I did all I could possibly do to try to make them see that we have women that are capable and have the ability to represent any group of women black or white. Realizing that we are not self-supporting, I did try to impress upon them that we have capable women. I feel that after this outburst, they have a greater respect for us and I know we understand them thoroughly.⁵⁷

The behavior of YWCA Boards was a vivid example of hegemony and a clear illustration of what Paula Giddings referred to as the YWCA's "spotty" record on racial matters.

Hamilton's name, with minimal support from white Central Board members, appeared on Metropolitan Board ballot, because several white members believed that black women were capable of represent themselves, including Mrs. Follansbee. Hamilton was defeated in the Board election, where six of eighteen seats remained vacant. Numerous comments were made regarding the outcome of the election. Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious commented, "We lived through the meeting and voted on the Metropolitan Board without overly fussing. Mrs. Hamilton, the colored woman of the branch received various votes in place of Mrs. Follansbee, but Follansbee carried."⁵⁸ Esther Hawes of the Executive Board, stated, "All is done now and although personally, I am extremely sorry not to have a colored representative this year for I do think they are ready for it and I do believe it is

⁵⁷*Letter to Eva D. Bowles from Cora Jones, April 22, 1925.* The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm # 210.6, pp. 1-2. Jones seemed really upset about the situation regarding Mrs. Follansbee's appointment to the board. Jones wrote, "our co-workers seem to think it was not necessary to talk or discuss the situation with us and simply notified us that the chair of Colored Work would represent us on the Metro Board the first year."

⁵⁸*Letter to Mary Sims from Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious, April 20, 1925.* The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm #210.6, p. 1.

better to do without [one] than to force things.”⁵⁹ The Board members were obviously divided on the race issue and it seemed as if some YWCA women did not expect Hamilton to make the ballot or even successfully obtain any votes.

According to Cora Jones, the women elected were “unfamiliar with ‘Y’ work, industrial conditions, and a good many things that affect the [black] community.” Jones’ point was similar to one made by historian Stephanie Shaw in “Black Club Women and the creation of the National Association of Colored Women,” in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*, (1995). She wrote, “black women could speak more profoundly about problems specific to them as black women and problems affecting them as they affected the race.”⁶⁰ Despite the remaining vacancies on the Board, and charges by Jones, alleging that the newly elected women to the Metropolitan Board were unqualified, the exclusion of black women prevailed.

Cora B. Jones, as Chairperson of the Committee of Management, assumed her seat on the Metropolitan Board, but only after the Centre Avenue branch had been represented by Mrs. Follansbee for one year. Mary Sims, in a communication to Mrs. Nicolovious revealed: “I do hope the matter of the colored women on the board will work out all right

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 2. During discussion on the issue of a “colored” woman on the Metropolitan Board of the YWCA, one YWCA member in particular, Mrs. McEldowney, was the object of much criticism by several board members. According the board members at the meeting, she “knew nothing of the colored work” and implied that she had no right to pass judgement on the leadership ability of black women. Although Follansbee was appointed to the position, she stated that she too felt black women were ready to represent themselves on the Metropolitan Board of Directors.

⁶⁰Stephanie Shaw, “*Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women*,” in *We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible*,” eds. Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma A. King, and Linda Reed. (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1995), p. 433.

(sic). It seems to me that it isn't the newness of the Metro organization that makes a difference, but the place where a community is interracial.”⁶¹ Esther Hawes did not understand the problem of a “colored” woman on the Board. She stated, “A colored woman was on the New York Metropolitan Board and that one colored woman could not hurt anybody. The difficulty in New York seemed to be that they could only have one colored woman instead of two, so that she might perhaps be less lonesome.”⁶²

The persistence of the Centre Avenue YWCA’s leadership played a major role in the future race relations in the Association. By 1932, the branch assumed responsibility for its own budget which was previously prepared by the Committee on Colored Work, spent its own money after the budget was approved by the same, hired its own staff, and represented the Centre Avenue YWCA on each of the city-wide YWCA committees.⁶³ After twelve years of Pittsburgh's black women fighting blatant racism and resisting dominant behavior in the Association, the attitudes of many white YWCA members toward the “colored” YWCA began to change. Their racist attitudes, however, remained intact, but were reduced to a more subtle form of racism.

⁶¹*Letter to Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious, from Mary Sims, Executive of the City Department, April 27, 1925.* The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel #210.6.

⁶²*Letter to Mary Sims from Mrs. Alfred Nicolovious, April 20, 1925.* The YWCA of the USA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel #210.6, p. 1-2. In a previous letter to Mrs. Sims, Nicolovious asked her about the absence of a “colored” woman on the New York board, but she never responded. She apologized for not doing so and explained that “when the New York Metro Board organized [we] had not yet reached such a stage in our development.”

⁶³*Letter to Eva D. Bowles from Esther M. Hawes, Metropolitan, General Secretary, March 17, 1932.* MSS #79 YWCA, Box 60, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

Dissension in the Ranks

The black women of the 'colored' YWCA worked diligently to establish programs and raise funds to support them. However, the leadership often faced obstacles other than finances, racism, and inadequate space. On a six day visit to Pittsburgh's 'colored' branch, Cordelia Winn noted in her 1930 report that: The greatest problem is the chair of the Committee of Management, Mrs. Jones, [who] instead of considering her position in an advisory capacity to the branch, [she] has grown to see the position as a dictator. Even though various women are working, [there is] much resentment and attitude.⁶⁴ Winn, aware of the possible disruption of the Association's 'colored' work, spoke to Mrs. Jones about not seeking the position for the upcoming year, but was totally ignored.

In 1931, an ongoing dispute between Rachel Taylor and Mrs. Jones, caused excessive friction within the ranks when Taylor submitted her letter of resignation to Bowles. It impacted the leadership of the 'colored' YWCA and National Board to the extent that Eva D. Bowles and Esther Hawes intervened. A letter from Hawes to Bowles read:

⁶⁴*Report by Cordelia Winn on Centre Avenue Branch of the YWCA, October 28-November 2, 1930.* The YWCA of the USA, The YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel #211.3, p. 1. Winn also reported that with the exception of the dissension, the "secretaries and committees were carrying out the work well."

...unfortunate that Mrs. Jones allowed herself and used the means to get herself elected again as branch chairperson. Of course this was irritating to Ms. Taylor and seems an almost unbearable situation. Mrs. Jones, as chairperson is using her nominal power as a dictator. Ms. Taylor who wanted to keep peace has not taken her proper place as executive of the branch. She has the ability, but is a victim of circumstances. This will be true of any other executive who attempts to administer work under the present conditions unless certain policies are clearly understood by the chairperson and Committee of Management.⁶⁵

Despite Taylor's resignation, Bowles sent Taylor a telegram which read:

Unwise to resign now. Stiffen your backbone. Branch administration from now on must be based upon principles rather than persons. With the help of Metropolitan, branch will function differently in the future. Stand by us as we do you. A long letter follows for your earnest consideration.⁶⁶

It is clear that Rachel Taylor earned the respect of the National Board for her leadership and work at Pittsburgh's 'colored' 'Y,' because of the support she received during this tumultuous time. Taylor, nonetheless, resigned and was replaced by Ms. Isabel Lawson as chair of the Committee of Management for 1931, and Jones by Mrs. Harry McClanahan, a noted Pittsburgh clubwoman. Both women, in assuming these leadership positions, were determined to recruit more black women and girls, because this was one of the Centre Avenue YWCA's major goals.

⁶⁵*Letter from Esther Hawes from Eva D. Bowles*, January 30, 1931. MSS #79 YWCA, Box 60, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁶⁶*Telegram to Rachel I. Taylor from Eva D. Bowles*, January 30, 1931. MSS #79 YWCA, Box 60, FF1. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. Taylor was first appointed executive director of Pittsburgh's Colored YWCA in 1927, a position held until she resigned in 1931. Jones chaired the Committee of Management from 1924-1931, when she was forced out of the position.

Impact of the “Colored” YWCA on Black Women and Girls

Black women and girls benefitted greatly from the programs and services provided by local colored YWCAs in urban communities, particularly, in the important areas of housing, employment, recreation and religious training. The YWCA first began as a housing service. In her 1925, *Study of Girls in Pittsburgh*, (Made for the Central Y of Pittsburgh), Anne Rylance Smith, described the housing situation for black women and girls as hopelessly bleak, because within the city limits, only two homes for self-supporting black women existed, the [colored] YWCA and Ella Grayson Home.⁶⁷ There were, however, a number of “flea-bag” hotels for blacks, but exorbitant prices and unsuitable quarters were a deterrent for blacks seeking shelter.

Combined, both facilities could only accommodate twenty-six women and usually there were three to four beds per room.⁶⁸ Given the enormous number of women seeking housing, single accommodations in the YWCA and the Ella Grayson Home were an impossibility. Compounding the housing problem was the fact that young black women arriving in the city could not stay at the main (white) YWCA, because of segregation policies, but when possible they were confined to rooming services provided by the Colored Work Administration. However, the Pittsburgh YWCA did not provide this service.

⁶⁷ Anne Rylance Smith, *Study of Girls in Pittsburgh*. (Made for the Central YWCA of Pittsburgh, PA, 1925), p. 74; Alice Brady, “*The YW Has First Report Tea*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, (undated). The New Future Home, operated by the New Future Association, was as a home for delinquent white girls, but occasionally, became an alternative for Negro girls. If one was taken into the home, it was an exceptional social welfare case. The NFA was a member of the Allegheny County Federation of Women’s Clubs, a white organization.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

Although other YWCA branches in Pittsburgh such as the East End and Central branches provided housing for women and girls, the Wylie Avenue Branch had no such facility during the early stages of its development. But, in a desperate attempt to protect black women and girls from the viciousness often awaiting them in northern urban communities, the Wylie Avenue YWCA staff created a housing facility within its extremely limited quarters. During the summer months, when fewer meetings were held, two second floor club rooms were transformed into dormitories. For example, in July and August of 1923, sixty women and girls were accommodated on the average of one to seven days and, occasionally, a minimal number of transients, and several permanent lodgers were housed at the Wylie Avenue branch.⁶⁹

One year later, Pittsburgh's "colored" YWCA, after having long outgrown its leased quarters on Wylie Avenue, moved to permanent quarters at 2044 Centre Avenue, where its staff planned accommodations for at least twenty women and girls.⁷⁰ This facility, a three-story structure in the city's Hill District, had rooming space for twenty-two girls, attractive parlors, club space for civic and social meetings, a dining room, and an employment service for women. It was certainly, a far cry from its previous headquarters on Wylie Avenue.

⁶⁹"*At the Blue Triangle*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 18, 1923, p. 7.

⁷⁰*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting*, November 18, 1924, p. 599. MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF3. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. The new home of the "colored" YWCA was formerly owned by the Improvement of the Poor which made the Central YWCA a reasonable offer for the property. Once the "colored" YWCA's leadership was authorized to move, it instructed to purchase a medium-sized stove for not more than \$130, to engage the lowest bidder at \$60 to move its furnishings from the Wylie Avenue facility, and have the water heater cleaned.

As the years passed, the Centre Avenue YWCA, in all of its efforts, was unable to accommodate black women needing housing, because increasing numbers to the city made it virtually impossible to meet housing demands. For example, in 1929, it housed 226 black women, but lacked sufficient space to accommodate thirteen others. The YWCA staff developed a housing network among black women in the Pittsburgh community who could provide emergency shelter. In cases like this, the staff successfully contacted the homes in its emergency file and made referrals to those women whom they could not house.

Each year the services provided by the Centre Avenue YWCA increased as did the demand for them. By 1938, Annie B. Graves, Residence Secretary of the Centre Avenue YWCA, reported that it had a total bed capacity of twenty, eighteen permanent residents, two transients, and a total of eight sleeping rooms.⁷¹ It provided housing for 191 transients and three indigents were given shelter with reimbursement from another social service agency such as the Traveler's Aid Society, Children's Service Bureau and the Salvation Army.⁷² Permanent paying membership in the Association, but the minimum age was eighteen and the fee seventy-five cents guests for the year was 6,205 and transients 322. Residency in the YWCA did not require per night.⁷³ A limited stay of one month applied to transients and,

⁷¹*Residence Survey, Centre Avenue Branch of the YWCA, December 19, 1938*, The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel #211.3, p. 1. The intricacies of the YWCA were: a dining room with a seating capacity of twenty and club rooms. It had hot water and was heated by coal.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁷³The weekly room rate for permanent residents without meals for a double room (two beds) was \$3.10 and one dollar less for a room in excess of three beds. A double room for transients without meals was seventy-five cents for a double room and fifty cents for the dormitory. The daily rate for indigents was thirty cents. Graves, in her report, points out that the Centre Avenue YWCA's rates were lower when compared to the city's hotels, boarding houses, and private homes.



Figure. 29. Centre Avenue YWCA (1924)

for indigents, until arrangements were made with other social service agencies. Meals were available with at least seventy-five percent of the residents using this service, and clean towels and bedding were furnished to YWCA residents.

Employment

Employment opportunities encouraged women of all ethnic backgrounds to migrate to industrial cities. However, jobs opportunities for black women were by no means comparable to those of white women. Historians Peter Gottlieb in *Making Their Own Way: Southern Migration to Pittsburgh, 1916-1931* (1987), John Bodnar's *Lives of Their Own: Black, Poles, and Italians in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*, (1984) and Allan Spear's *Black Chicago: The Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1920* (1967), have all pointed out that black women were confined to domestic and personal service positions. A survey conducted by Ann Cox Green (1918) of the National War Work Council also indicated that a high percentage of Negro girls well-educated and holding positions inferior to those for which they were qualified, the largest number of them working in domestic service.⁷⁴ Similar findings were called to the attention of Mrs. Buchanan of the YWCA Public Affairs Committee and, as a result, a new department was established at the Centre Avenue branch.

In September 1925, the Employment Department of the “colored” YWCA officially opened its doors operating between 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. under the supervision of Mrs. Rose White. The purpose of this new department was to afford the Branch a larger opportunity

⁷⁴ “*Work Among Negro Women and Girls, Centre Avenue Branch, Pittsburgh, PA,*” (undated). The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, Microfilm Reel # 211.3, p. 1.

for service to the young women in the community.⁷⁵ Although an exact amount was not revealed in the data, a fee was charged to those individuals seeking employment services. For some black women, the required fee may have deterred them from taking advantage of a viable service, but for others, the benefit was solely theirs. In 1927, the Centre Avenue YWCA's Employment Department placed 540 persons of 715 most of whom were largely employed in domestic service, restaurants, and a small number of clerical positions.⁷⁶

Despite the limited number of positions open to blacks, they continued to use the YWCA's employment service. For example, in 1929, 4,728 interviews were conducted with only 454 placements which may have been the result of the Depression and the collapse of many local businesses.⁷⁷ Because a majority of jobs available to black women were in domestic service, the Centre Avenue YWCA instituted a Domestic Training Class to better prepare YWCA women for employment with its first class numbering 65 women and girls.⁷⁸ This overwhelming demand for domestic workers in Pittsburgh was similar to that described by Richard W. Thomas in his Detroit study. In both cases, steps were taken to meet the demand for domestic labor.

⁷⁵"*At the Blue Triangle*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 12, 1925, p. 4.

⁷⁶"*We'll Be Around Is Promise of Captains*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 14, 1928, p. 7.

⁷⁷"*YWCA Campaign Opens January 11*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 5, 1929, p. 2. Other statistics reveal 279 girls housed and twelve turned away because of a lack of space; the dining room served 3,153 meals; 214 persons enrolled in classes; and 2,317 participated in class activities. The overall attendance for 1929, was 22,093.

⁷⁸"*Work Among Negro Women and Girls, Centre Avenue Branch, Pittsburgh, PA*" (undated) Microfilm Reel #211.3, p. 1. The Chatham Branch of the Pittsburgh YWCA had a Domestic Science Department as early as 1910. See History, The Greater YWCA of Pittsburgh, September, 1965, p. 9.

Recreation

Noted historian John Hope Franklin, tells us that segregationist policies often restricted blacks from utilizing white recreational facilities including (white) branches of the YWCAs and YMCAs and few, if any, organized recreational programs existed for black youth.⁷⁹ As a result, black leaders and organizations were often forced to create recreation of their own in northern urban communities. In Detroit, the Young Men's Progressive Association (YMPA) organized recreational activities for the city's youth as well as migrants.

In Pittsburgh, Negro girls clubs throughout the city were limited to black women and girls affiliated black churches, the Girls Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, the YWCA, Soho Settlement, Morgan Community House and Pittsburgh Urban League.⁸⁰ But, Anne Rylance Smith contends that the YWCA had done the largest piece of club work for colored girls. Actually, the first organized activities for black youth in Pittsburgh during the World War I era, were initiated by the "colored" YWCA which represented the larger part of its existence. The staff of the "colored" YWCA found creative ways in which to provide recreation for black women and girls by first initiating three clubs for black women and girls: (1) the Girl Reserves, (2) the Business and Professional Girls, and (3) the Industrial Girls Clubs.⁸¹ The Girl Reserve Club, designed for girls of all ages, was a movement with emphasis on individual and spiritual growth, and expression, but its major objective,

⁷⁹John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th edition,(New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994), p. 427.

⁸⁰Smith, p. 78.

⁸¹The Industrial Girls Club was comprised of girls working in factories, restaurants, laundries, telephone and elevator operators, and hospital and household employees. Some of the activities they engaged were economics classes; discussions on hours, wages, and unemployment.

however, was to develop leadership and initiative among them. In 1922, Ruth Moore, General Secretary of the Wylie Avenue YWCA, reported 250 high school and 360 grade school girls enrolled in the Girl Reserve Clubs. Its activities included field trips, overnight excursions, hiking, story hours, holiday celebrations and playhouses which were open to any girl who cared to participate in them.⁸² Of special importance, was a banking system initiated in these clubs to encourage thrift among the city's black girls.

Sociologist Ira De Reid, in a 1928 study, reported 7,830 girls enrolled in the Girl Reserves; 1,621 in the Business and Professional Girls Club; and 543 in the Industrial Girls Club.⁸³ The response to the Girl Reserve Club was so great that Mrs. Parr, Chairperson of the Centre Avenue YWCA contacted the Central YWCA and successfully requested the hiring of two additional Girl Reserve Advisors. Based on these statistics, the larger population of black females were enrolled in the Girl Reserves. This can be attributed to three factors: (1) recruitment within the city's schools for the Girl Reserves Club, (2) a wider range of activities for this particular age group, and (3) because of their youth they probably had fewer household or other responsibilities than those women involved in the Business and Professional, and Industrial Girls Clubs.

In addition to YWCA clubs, approximately fifteen classes were offered and opened

⁸²*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting, June 28, 1922*, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF2. Library and Archives, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. Summer activities at the 'colored' YWCA were led by Helen Patterson; Ruth Stevenson; Ellen Taylor; Alma Thompson; Harriet Larson; Edna Kinchion; Alene Briggs; Rheta M. Arter; and Mrs. George L. Winstead, chairperson of the Girl Reserves.

⁸³Other 1929 statistics were: attendance in religious work activities, 1,006; health education, 207; educational work 1,355; social and recreational activities 756; all activities, 22,703. Also included were dining room and employment bureau statistics.

to the public. Some of these classes were recreational and others were more technical in nature. For example, classes were offered in china painting, swimming, piano, and drama. The more technical classes included: (1) beauty culture, designed to prepare girls for assistants in beauty parlors, for thirty cents per lesson or ten dollars for the entire course; (2) interior decorating with instruction in wall finishing, textile hangings, and floor coverings for \$4; (3) millinery, for the making of a variety of hats, \$2.50 per lesson; and (6) hook rug-making, \$3 for each lesson.⁸⁴ Many of the technical skills acquired in these classes perhaps created employment opportunities for those completing them as well as possibilities for self-employment.

The numerous programs and recreational activities sponsored by the "colored" YWCA did not satisfy the YWCA staff, because recreation in the city was still inadequate. The Publicity Committee of the Centre Avenue 'Y' called a meeting inviting a group of black ministers and social workers to discuss the problems relative to recreation facilities for "Negro boys and girls" of Pittsburgh.⁸⁵ Alonzo T. Thayer, executive secretary of the Pittsburgh Urban League presided and Rachel Taylor, presented the situation by pointing out the deficiencies of recreational equipment throughout the city. Three committees were appointed to: (1) sound out church leaders and groups on the subject, (2) draw up plans for tentative summer program, and (3) start a survey of the city to ascertain the facts on the

⁸⁴"Y" *Announces Classes for Second Semester*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 9, 1929, p. 7. Each year the number and types of classes increased. For example, in 1927, the classes offered were beauty culture, music appreciation, social etiquette, dramatics, poetry, and piano technique. See "*At the Blue Triangle*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 22, 1927, p. 1. In 1929, there were classes in first-aid, home decorating, charm school, and current events. See "*Y Announces New Fall Class Schedule*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 12, 1929, p. 6.

⁸⁵"*YWCA News*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 28, 1928, p. 7.

situation.⁸⁶ Black women of the YWCA were bent on improving recreation for blacks in Pittsburgh.

Health

Historian Darlene Clark Hine tells us that proper and adequate health care for black Americans has always been a major concern of black community leaders and organizations, because of excessively high incidence of maternal and infant mortality, tuberculosis, venereal disease, and other manifestations of poor health.⁸⁷ In Pittsburgh, the “colored” YWCA leadership demonstrated a great concern for health care among the race by (1) establishing a Health Education Committee, (2) orchestrating and facilitating health classes as part of the YWCA's regular program, (3) working in conjunction with other social service agencies, and (4) participating in National Negro Health Week, initiated by Booker T. Washington during the late 19th century to inspire blacks develop a cleanliness that would help them become a stronger more effective racial group.⁸⁸

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 7. During this meeting, the following officers were elected: Mr. A.C. Thayer, chairman; Reverend C.B. Allen, vice chairman; Margaret Mann, secretary; and Rachel Taylor, chairperson of the committee. The community was invited to all meetings perhaps to solicit their input and make them aware of the diligent efforts of the city's black leadership to resolve the recreation problem impacting blacks.

⁸⁷Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950*, (Indiana, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 89-90.

⁸⁸David McBride, *Integrating Medicine: Blacks in Philadelphia Health Care, 1910-1965*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989, p. 45; John Hope Franklin, p. 428; Richard W. Thomas, *Life For Us Is What We Make It: Black Community-building in Detroit, 1915-1945*, (Indiana, Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 82. Tuskegee Institute, black health care providers, and educators in conjunction with black businesses, initiated the National Negro Health Movement to curtail the heavy death rate, particularly, among urban blacks. Durham,

In January 1926, the movers and shakers of the Centre Avenue YWCA: Elizabeth Mackey, Sadie Hamilton, Mrs. G.W. Worfley, Ms. Johnson, Bertha Lawrence, Azalia Blackmore, M. Davis, and Eva Hall and the Centre Avenue YWCA Board of Management organized a dental clinic on-site. Open twice per week from 12:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. and evenings by appointment, the clinic was serviced by Irvin Austin, G. Princas, Harold Taylor, and Robert S. Leo, but it is unclear if these dentists were race men.⁸⁹ By March of this same year, seventy-six treatments were given to twenty-eight patients. Every facet of the community, through various kinds of publicity, was encouraged by the YWCA to utilize the free services of the dental clinic, but few, according to the statistics took advantage of the opportunity. In 1929, the YWCA's leadership developed regular health classes and worked in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Urban League and the Medical Association on the health problem. Dr. Jane Curtis, conducted health classes and participants were given information regarding "corrective measures" on general physical conditions, posture, and weight. The collective efforts of the "colored" YWCA, the PUL, and the Medical Association held a joint health program May 11-18, 1929, which included physical and dental examinations, baby clinics in the city's black churches and libraries, radio programs on health care, and health films shown at the Roosevelt Theater.⁹⁰

North Carolina's Mutual Life Insurance Company also played a major role in this movement. In Pittsburgh, National Negro Health Week was observed by various social clubs, high schools, the YWCA, YMCA, and Urban League.

⁸⁹"*Community Dental Clinic of YWCA*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 19, 1926, p. 4. "*Race men*" merely refers to black men. During this period, the term was frequently used by blacks as opposed to using "colored" or Negro. The debate as to what term should be used to describe people of color had been ongoing since the 19th century.

⁹⁰The campaign to improve the health among Negroes was a continuous project of the 'colored' YWCA's Health Education Department. In January 1929, for example 328 persons

Under the leadership of Mrs. Nannie Taylor, chairperson of the Health Education Committee, the Centre Avenue YWCA celebrated National Negro Health Week, April 1-8, 1930 with five events: (1) Pharmacy Day, conducted by two licensed pharmacists and drugstore owners, Dr. Lettie Gibbs and Dr. Hawkins who discussed medicines and drugs; (2) Dental Day, with University of Pittsburgh Dental students providing free dental examinations; (3) Medical Day, when three race women physicians, Dr. Marie S. Kinner, Dr. Jane Curtis, and Dr. Lettie Perkins administered free physical examinations to the public; (4) a Health Pageant, sponsored by the YWCA Girl Reserves who distributed free samples of toilet articles, medicines, and health literature; and (5) an Evening Meeting, conducted by Jeannette Washington, the city nurse, who spoke to the girls on sex education.⁹¹ The efforts of the “colored” YWCA to diminish the excessive cases of poor health among blacks, was not limited to black women and girls, but included the entire community.⁹²

Impact of the YWCA on the Black Community

Whereas the city’s black religious institutions were the backbone of the black community, the YWCA was a pillar with its positive affect on the lives of the people it serviced. The utilization of the “colored” YWCA was inclusive of Pittsburgh's the black

were enrolled in the health program and 307 actually attended the YWCA’s health programs. This was a positive effort among everyone involved for better health.

⁹¹“*Clinic Week At the YWCA*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1929, p. 7. Gibbs and Hawkins whose drugstore was located at 2166 Centre Avenue, Hill District also provided displays of cosmetics and medicines. Dr. Marie S. Kinner was a member of the Irene Kaufmann staff in its settlement clinic; Jane Curtis, earned her medical degree from Harvard University; and Dr. Lettie Perkins was a chiropractor. Free examinations for babies and children were administered in the mornings and in the evenings for adults, during Negro Health Week.

organizations, because it provided attractive parlors and space for social and civic meetings as well as celebrations. For example, the Federation of Colored Women's Clubs and individual black women's clubs often held their regular meetings in the parlors of the YWCA. In the past, their meetings were held in the homes of its members or in black churches. In March 1924, 78 meetings were held at the "colored" YWCA and two years later, during the same month, 108 meetings.⁹³ It was also used for anniversaries, Halloween, Christmas and New Years celebrations. The frequent use of the YWCA by various organizations shed light on its importance to Pittsburgh's black community.

Programs scheduled by the staff of the "colored" YWCA were often designed to expand the cultural horizons of Pittsburgh's black community through a series of lectures. Samuel Tuboka Metzger, a native of British West Africa, and student at Carnegie Technical School and Dr. Albert Vail of Chicago and B'hai National lecturer, spoke on the subject: "*The Rise of Mohammedanism*" (sic); and Michael Smirnoff of Russia presented a lecture on "*The Development of Socialistic Policies in Russia*."⁹⁴ Negro History Week was also celebrated in the Centre Avenue YWCA and in 1928, prominent attorney Frank Steward spoke on the subject, "*The Negro In History*;" during the 1929 Negro History Week celebration, Mrs. Oliver Johnson addressed the audience with "*Negroes Who Have Achieved*;" and Blanche Taylor Dickinson, an employee of *The Pittsburgh Courier* and

⁹³*Minutes [YWCA] Board Meeting, April 15, 1924*, p. 563. The YWCA of the USA, YWCA Archives, New York, New York, MSS #79 YWCA, Box 108, FF3. Library and Archives Division, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁹⁴"*Mohammedanism (sic) Discussed At YWCA.*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 24, 1928, p. 6; "*Passion Week Service At Y, Dr. T.J. King Principal Speaker*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1929, p. 7.

published poet, on "*The Cultural Values of Negro Poetry*."⁹⁵

While the issue of adequate and affordable housing did not rest with that created for black women and girls at the "colored" YWCA, overcrowded living conditions in northern urban communities continued. Gilbert Osofsky, Abraham L. Epstein, and Richard W. Thomas, in their studies of Harlem, Pittsburgh, and Detroit maintained that housing was uninhabitable and the availability of decent housing scarce. With the influx of southern migrants to the North more housing was essential as their presence compounded an already existing problem.

On November 30, 1929, Mrs. Richard Jones, chairperson of the YWCA's Health Education Committee; Cora B. Jones, chairperson of the Industrial Girls Committee; and Naomi Brown, chairperson of the Girls Reserves, organized a community meeting on Public Housing at the Centre Avenue YWCA. The purpose of this meeting was (1) to introduce the Pittsburgh community to public housing being constructed by the Federal Government as a means of creating decent housing and (2) to discuss the possibilities and availability of public housing units in Pittsburgh.⁹⁶ Howard Jordan of the Pittsburgh Housing Authority staff

⁹⁵"*Negro History Week at the Y*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 2, 1929, p. 6. Negro History Week was established by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. He was born in New Canton, Virginia, December 19, 1895. He earned an LiTT from Berea College in 1903; a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degree from University of Chicago 1907 and 1908, respectively; and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1912. Woodson also studied at the Sorbonne in France. He later, founded Associated Publishers, an outlet for black scholars to publish their works and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Pittsburgh also hosted several of the ASNLH meetings. Woodson founded the *Journal of Negro History* (1918) and was the author of numerous books including *The Negro in Our History* (1921) and *The History of the Negro Church* (1927).

⁹⁶"*YWCA Packs 'Em in At Public Housing Program*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, December 9, 1939, p. 9. This community event was sponsored by the Health Education Committee in cooperation with the Industrial and Girl Reserve Departments.

addressed an overflow crowd and responded to questions. A sound film (sic) was also shown illustrating deplorable living conditions in the nation's urban communities before the erection of public housing. The black female leadership provided the community an opportunity to envision the thought of having decent housing and all of the amenities including plumbing and adequate space.

Conclusion

Pittsburgh's colored YWCA staff and volunteers were faced with numerous challenges were as follows: (1) racism and discrimination by (white) YWCA members including YWCA administrators; (2) domination by (white) YWCA women which, in some cases, stifled its growth and productivity, because of the limitations imposed upon them; (3) meeting the demand of migrant women in housing and employment; (4) generating a greater community interest in YWCA work; and (5) convincing white women that even though the "colored" 'Y' was not self-supporting, that black women were capable of planning and operating its programs without their supervision. The Centre Avenue staff and volunteers readily confronted these day-to-day challenges head on by implementing various strategies.

Several methods were used in meeting these numerous difficult challenges. At every corner, the Centre Avenue staff and Board of Management challenged the racism and discrimination of the National and Pittsburgh Boards of Directors regarding their segregationist policies which barred black women from vying for leadership positions, participating in policy-making issues and using YWCA facilities. Direct confrontation and letter writing were other methods used by the "colored" YWCA leadership. "Outbursts"

were made sending a message to white YWCA Board members that black women were just as capable as white women and that the voices of black women would be heard. They notified prominent Pittsburghers to support their concerns by writing letters on their behalf.

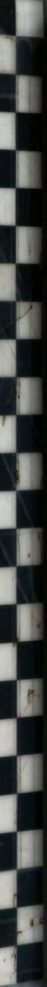
In an attempt to enhance their effectiveness, black women involved in the daily operations of the YWCA, eagerly participated in conferences and conventions, and organized a conference for black YWCA women. The use of lectures, forums, and films helped them deal with the problems of racism, health, housing; a variety of classes, recreational programs, leadership and skill training. As a strategy for housing black women, black YWCA women developed a housing network among the city's black women needing emergency shelter and operated an employment agency for them.

For Pittsburgh's black YWCA women, the struggle for autonomy and respect was not a new challenge facing black women. From slavery to this point in Black Women's History, they have managed to function even under the most dehumanizing, and mundane circumstances for the sake of black women, the family and community. As time passed, the hegemony imposed on black YWCA women eased, as white women began to realize that black women possessed leadership qualities, were able to identify and resolve the problems of black women, and more importantly, they had the courage of their convictions.

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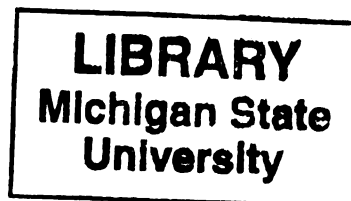


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**"SELF HELP AND INSTITUTION BUILDING IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA,
1830-1945"**

Volume II

By

Pamela Annette Smoot

"A DISSERTATION"

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Chapter 4

Somebody Won't You Help Me Now?: Black Female Leadership in the Pittsburgh Urban League and Black Female Migrants, 1918-1930

In these days of trials and temptations let the woman (sic) not forget their duty towards one another, and especially towards those girls of our race who throng the large cities without homes, influences, and without friends.¹

Historically, the roles and contributions of black women in American history have been virtually ignored, and nowhere is this more true than in studies of the Great Migration. Historian Carole Marks, in *Farewell---We're Good and Gone*, (1989), points out that this neglect is (1) reflective of the general disregard of women and women's work in society, (2) the way in which the migration is studied, and (3) that much of the social science literature [on the migration] traditionally viewed as a male theme, is about the recruitment of black workers to northern industries.

To be sure, a few studies have begun to fill this void, including Darlene Clark Hine's essay, "*Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: The Gender Dimension, 1915-1945*," in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender, 1915-1945*," (1991) and chapter three of Jacqueline Jones' *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, From Slavery to the Present*, (1985), "*To Get Out of this Land of Suffering: Black Women Migrants North, 1900-1930*." The previous efforts of scholars have, in some way, provoked the writing of more studies on the migration of black

¹ "*Woman Must Take Courage*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 8, 1911, p. 8.

women such as, the relationship of Northern black women to southern black female migrants.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify, explore the roles, contributions, and strategies of two volunteers and five black women employed by the Pittsburgh Urban League, in the urbanization of black female migrants. Many case studies on urban cities such as, Richard Walter Thomas' *Life For Us Is What We Make it: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*, (1994), present solid, but incomplete discussions on the subject by focusing on black male leadership without mentioning the roles black women played in the organization. Because the primary leadership of the National Urban League and its affiliates were dominated by black males, I argue that the guidance and participation of the above mentioned black women, was necessary in helping to facilitate this great "watershed" in American history.

Origins of the National Urban League

Gilbert Osofsky's *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, Negro New York, 1890-1930*, (1963), tells us that there were "reformers in every major northern city to which migrants came in large numbers, because of a deep concern for the welfare of Negro people."² In 1911, the National Urban League was founded in New York City when three organizations comprised of black and white social reformers merged: (1) the Committee on Urban

²Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto, Negro New York, 1890-1930*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), p. 53. For the most part, these reformers focused especially, on the employment of southern migrants, housing, and sanitation which posed health concerns. The protection of the multitude of domestic service workers was also an issue.

Conditions Among Negroes, (2) the National League for the Protection of Colored Women, and (3) the Committee for Improving Industrial Conditions Among Negroes which set up headquarters on West 40th Street in New York.³ In 1913, the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes was incorporated under laws of the State of New York.⁴ With the consolidation of these three bodies committed to social work among Negroes, a new epoch opened in the effective consideration of this phase of the American city problem.⁵

Historian Nancy J. Weiss in *The National Urban League, 1910-1940*, (1974) points out that “the National Urban League's social services closely approximated programs of immigrant aid societies such as, the Immigrant Protective League (1908) and the Association for the Protection of Jewish Immigrants (1884),” established to ease the adjustment of European immigrants. The NUL like these organizations, sought to do the same for southern migrants. It duplicated, to some extent, the same programs for Negroes to northern urban communities. For example, the National Urban League's mission was to provide southern migrants access to suitable temporary shelter, wholesome recreational activities, employment programs. Meanwhile, the influx of Negroes rapidly spread to other northern cities necessitating the creation of local Urban Leagues.

³Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We make It: Black Community-Building in Detroit, 1915-1945*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 52. Elsa Barkley Brown, “National Urban League,” in *Black Women in United States History: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1990), p. 869. Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks, The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 24.

⁴ L. Hollingsworth Wood, “*The National Urban League*.” *The Journal of Negro History*, 9 (April) 1924, p. 121.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 119.

Falling within the “crunch” of southern migrants, numerous leaders of northern industrial communities of Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee made inquiries to the Urban League's New York office about establishing League affiliates. However, the NUL had no formal policy on expanding its work among southern migrants, but adopted the following guidelines: (1) affiliates had to incorporate constitutions and principles governing local Urban Leagues, (2) implement them in practical activities based on the particular needs of the community, (3) establish inter-racial boards, and (4) the standard program for local work had to begin with an investigation of black living conditions.⁶ Branches were developed in many of the large centers with programs for meeting the migrants at train stations, directing them to jobs and lodgings, and providing lectures on northern living. By 1918, the National Urban League had approximately twenty-seven affiliates.

The Origins of the Pittsburgh Urban League

Arthur J. Edmund's *Daybreakers: The Story of the Urban League of Pittsburgh: The First Sixty-Five Years*, (1983), tells us that Reverend G. B. Howard, pastor of the Central Baptist Church; Dr. Charles R. Zahniser, executive secretary of the Pittsburgh Council of Churches; Samuel Morsell, director of the Center Avenue YMCA; and Charles Cooper, director of the Kingsley Association initiated the reform movement in Pittsburgh as a result of the migration which began in 1914. Like other northern industrial cities, Pittsburgh

⁶Nancy J. Weiss, *The National Urban League, 1910-1949*, 1974 p. 112-113. This historic work contains a map illustrating Urban League affiliates. For example, some of those formed were in the cities of Chicago, St. Louis, Brooklyn, Detroit, Boston, Pittsburgh, and Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio. For more information on Urban League affiliates see “*Field Directors Who Handle the Work of the Urban League*,” *The Pittsburgh Competitor*, 1920-1921, p. 8.

experienced a wave of southern migrants creating overcrowdedness, disease, crime, racial strife, and related social problems demanding solutions. These men organized the Association for the Improvement of Social Conditions in the Hill District, the community which became a haven for black migrants.

In addition to this Association, another inter-racial group of citizens organized the Pittsburgh Council for Social Service Among Negroes (1915), but realized the demands of resolving the migrant problem, were much greater than imagined. Moreover, the membership lacked the professional skills to minimize the difficulties of black migrants which they felt required trained social workers. Members of this organization: Robert L. Vann, attorney and owner of *The Pittsburgh Courier*; Dr. Frances Tyson, University of Pittsburgh economics professor; Walter May, president of May Drug Company; and Edith Spurlock Sampson, organization secretary, contacted the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes in New York where a similar problem of southern migrants existed.⁷ In response to their request, John T. Clark, a member of the League's industrial staff, was sent to Pittsburgh by Eugene Kinckle Jones, the National Urban League's executive director.⁸

⁷Arthur J. Edmunds, *Daybreakers: The Story of the Pittsburgh Urban League, the First Sixty-Five Years*, (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Urban League, 1983), p. 13. Walter May and his family owned as many as ten pharmacies in Pittsburgh. Ms. Edith Spurlock was one of the city's few black social workers.

⁸John T. Clark was a Louisville, Kentucky native, with a degree in sociology and economics from Ohio State University. He also taught at Louisville's Central High School. One of Eugene Kinckle Jones' valued employees, Clark worked as a member of the National Urban League's Industrial staff for almost five years before being sent to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to establish and manage the city's Urban League." Upon his arrival, he developed a plan to ease the city's urban crisis, as a result of the southern migration, including the problems of employment, recreation, housing, health, juvenile delinquency; and sanitation. In April 1911, Jones became

Following the guidelines adopted for League affiliates, Clark performed the necessary investigation of living conditions among the city's blacks, sharing his findings and recommendations with the Pittsburgh Council for Social Service Among Negroes. Subsequently, the Urban League of Pittsburgh was founded January 15, 1918, but its doors were not officially opened until February 12, 1918, when headquarters were obtained. Led by John T. Clark, it sought, like seventeen other northern cities, to resolve the numerous and rapidly escalating problems caused by the migration.

Clark's solution to these problems was the promotion of any work for the industrial, economic, social, and cultural advancement of the Pittsburgh Negro which included cooperation with other agencies in doing so.⁹ As he built coalitions with other Pittsburgh social service agencies, recruited volunteers from the community, and raised funds for new programs, Clark also hired the Urban League's staff. It included a paid staff of two persons: W.P. Young, the welfare worker; and Tom Barton, the industrial secretary. Strapped for funds and unable to hire additional staff, Elizabeth Elliott worked as a volunteer and was responsible for black women seeking employment. Grace Lowndes, a social worker; and Margaret Mann, the Home Economics Worker were added to the Pittsburgh Urban League staff during various periods of 1918. They immediately began to implement the series of programs designed by Clark which involved legitimate employment opportunities, adequate

field secretary of the Committee on Urban Conditions Among Negroes in New York. For information on Eugene Kinckle Jones see Tammi Friedman's "*Eugene Kinckle Jones*," in *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, Volume 4, pp. 1477-1479.

⁹Wendell P. Grigsby, "*Pittsburgh Plans For its Future*," *Opportunity*, 17 (December) 1939, p. 363.



Figure. 29. John T. Clark

housing, recreation, penal reform, and improving the overall quality of life for black female migrants.

Black Women in the Pittsburgh Urban League

Historian Elsa Barkely Brown in “The National Urban League,” in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, (1993), tells us that “the expertise of black women in local Urban League affiliates was crucial to its development.”¹⁰ Black women in slavery and freedom have always been the nurturers and social workers of black communities. And, as club women, they had, since the 19th century developed a national network among themselves and with other black organizations. They were, however, just as crucial in the implementation and success of its programs. The creation of the Pittsburgh Urban League in January 1918 was led by John T. Clark, but black women played a major role in the planning and execution of programs directed toward the urbanization of black female migrants. They were: Margaret Mann, Elizabeth Elliott, Grace Lowndes, Christina Jeffries, and Georgine Pearce. As sociologist George Edmund Haynes pointed out, “it was hard enough for anyone brought up in the country to fit into patterns of city living.” These northern black women were dedicated to assisting black southern migrants in their adjustment to city life.

Large numbers of black females migrated to northern cities for various reasons. Kelly Miller tells us that [black] “women being unequal to the heavy work on the farm, went in larger numbers than men to urban areas where they might expect to find lighter labor.”

¹⁰Elsa Barkley Brown, “*National Urban League*,” p. 870.

Darlene Clark Hine points out that “southern black women quit the South to escape the physical abuse of black men and sexual abuse of white men.” Nancy J. Weiss contends that black women migrated to northern cities “leaving the kitchen and laundry for workshops and factories.” The consensus, however, among scholars of urban history contend that like black men, black women migrated for higher wages and better employment opportunities. Other migrant women did so by the persuasion of relatives as the following quote shows:

An old woman was persuaded by her son to sell out (sic)her little business in Sheffield, Ala (sic) which was a lunch room and come North and he would take care of her. The woman lost one arm and thought it a good plan...She sold her business...and started North with her son, who was without funds, so she gave him most of the money she had received from the business she sold. When they reached Louisville, KY, (sic) she discovered he had brought another man's wife with him. The son deserted her.¹¹

This migration of southern women created a demand for social services, especially, for those who migrated alone or without “justice tickets.”¹²

Black female migrants according to Darlene Clark Hine, were victimized by northern urban life. For example, they were often (1) tricked into prostitution, (2) forced to accept inadequate housing, (3) lured North by false misrepresentations regarding wages and

¹¹*Report, Home Economics Worker*, May 1919, AIS 81:11, Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, Box 3, FF 137.

¹²The use of “justice tickets,” was a method devised by northern industrial employers to hire southern migrants. The companies would send labor agents to the South where they would provide migrants with train tickets to the North with guaranteed employment once they arrived. The migrants signed a contracts to work for the company providing the transportation and reimbursed the company for the price of the ticket. Repayment was usually equivalent to two or three months pay.

Table III.
Negro Females in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1890-1930

Year	Females
1890	4,478
1900	9,133
1910	12,272
1920	17,812
1930	27,021

Source: *United States Bureau of the Census, 13th Population in the United States*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910 p. 156.

The population among black females in Pittsburgh increased substantially from 1890 with almost as many as 5,000 more migrants coming to the city. As the table shows, the largest increase was between 1920 and 1930. It was during this particular period that the Pittsburgh Urban League and *The Pittsburgh Courier* urged southern blacks not to come to Pittsburgh because of an “employment slump.”

employment, and (4) were unfamiliar with the rudiments of urban living.¹³ The black women of Pittsburgh's Urban League sought to resolve the problems black female migrants faced by providing them with the necessary social services and sometimes making referrals to other social service agencies.

Elizabeth Elliott: The Women's Employment Secretary

Historian Joe Trotter, explains that black female migrants were almost totally confined to common laborer, domestic, and personal service work in the pre-World War I era, a trend that seemed to continue throughout World War I.¹⁴ Sociologist Florette Henri in *The Black Migration Movement North, 1900-1920*, (1975), substantiates Trotter's statement with "most working black women were in domestic and personal service." Over eighty per cent of black women worked as personal servants and domestics between 1910-1920.¹⁵ According to Jacqueline Jones, in *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, From Slavery to the Present*, (1985), 1920, fully 90 per cent of black

¹³Darlene Clark Hine, "*Black Migration to the Urban Midwest: the Gender Dimension, 1915-1945*," in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*, ed. Joe W. Trotter, Jr., (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 99. Nancy J. Weiss, p. 17.

¹⁴Joe W. Trotter, Jr. *Black Milwaukee: The Making of An Industrial Proletariat, 1915-1945*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 3. Urban historians explain that the high volume of domestic employment available to black women was created by the lack of European immigrants.

¹⁵Florette Henri, *Black Migration Movement North, 1900-1920*, (New York: Anchor Press, 1975), p. 32.

Table IV.

Negro Females in Pittsburgh, Classified by Age, 1910

All ages	12,272
Under 5 years	1,112
5 to 9 years	964
10 to 14 years	972
15 to 19 years	973
20 to 24 years	1,369
40 to 44 years	1,784
25 to 29 years	1,424
30 to 34 years	1,294
35 to 39 years	822
40 to 44 years	536
45 to 49 years	359
50 to 54 years	235
55 to 59 years	167
60 to 64 years	92
65 to 69 years	53
70 to 74 years	29
75 to 79 years	17
80 to 84 years	10
85 to 89 years	2
90 to 94 years	0
95 to 99 years	3
Age unknown	55

Source: *United States Bureau of the Census, Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*. New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1968, p. 202.

women in Pittsburgh made their living as day workers, washerwomen, or live-in servants.¹⁶ In other words, Pittsburgh offered few positions outside domestic service for women.¹⁷ This was perhaps the result of racial discrimination which restricted certain occupations to blacks. Of equal importance, was the constant demand and frequency of which domestic service jobs were offered to black women and girls as the following excerpt shows:

You have my name for a good maid for general work no laundry or porches. I will be home in a day or two if you can possibly obtain one by Thursday, September 18 (sic). Call me up at that time and I shall appreciate it so much. The laundress you sent me has been so satisfactory. I want an "honest" girl first of all. I will pay good wages.¹⁸

In many cases, black women received much lower wages than white women for the same work. The astounding number of black female migrants to Pittsburgh presented a great challenge to Elizabeth Elliott whose responsibilities were: job development, job placement, follow-up on employees, resolution of complaints, and preparing monthly reports.¹⁹ Clerical

¹⁶Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Sorrow, Labor of Love: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 164.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁸*Letter to Elizabeth Elliott from Mrs. C.H. Cook*, September 12 (ca. 1919), Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137, Hillman Library, University, Pittsburgh, PA. The data reveals that employers readily notified the PUL when domestic service positions became available. However, the non-service positions acquired for migrant women were developed by Elliott through contact in person, by telephone, and correspondence with Pittsburgh businesses.

¹⁹Elizabeth N. Elliott, the wife of George Elliott, was eventually added to the Pittsburgh Urban League's payroll after having volunteered for three months. As the Women's Industrial Secretary, Elliott, had a successful placement rate of seventy-one percent, during the first ten months of the League's existence. Approximately forty percent of the applications made to her department were from 'colored' women, although the League serviced whites as well.

and teaching occupations were closed to black women and, manufacturers employing women, gave preference to white and immigrant women. Elliott's earliest efforts in locating employment for black women were obtained in department stores as stock girls, sheet writers, filing clerks, and general office assistants. By the end of 1919, 96 black women and girls were employed as clericals in Boggs & Buhl Department Store.²⁰ Despite the confinement of black female migrant workers to domestic and personal service positions, as Gottlieb, Trotter, and Spear have pointed out, Elliott eagerly sought other employment opportunities for them.

Through persistence and persuasion, she contacted and worked with local employers to develop various kinds of factory positions for women seeking desirable employment. For example, she successfully placed black female migrants in a company which manufactured parts of gas stoves; Burlap and raincoat factories; the Famous Biscuit Company, and in a bakery. Elliott also secured for black female migrants, employment in the coarser trades including "the stripping of tobacco leaves, separating rags, and refuse." Few northern blacks engaged in employment in tobacco companies with the exception of a group of college students sent to the tobacco fields of Connecticut by the National Urban League, as a result of a labor shortage. Elliott managed to find non-traditional employment for black women and because of her efforts, black female employment opportunities experienced a gradual expansion.

²⁰The other Pittsburgh department stores hiring Negro girls were: the Joseph Horne Company, Rosenbaum Company, and Kaufmanns. These stores made specific requests for available positions. For example, Joseph Horne's requested two sheet writers; Kaufmanns, five stock girls; Boggs & Buhl, ten wrappers; and Rosenbaums, ten clerks.

To maintain her relationship with employers, Elliott's strategy was "to interview superintendents of employment to ascertain if the service of the girls placed was satisfactory and if there was any discord with the working help." She was informed by store officials that [the] "help placed giving the very best of service."²¹ At one of the stores, however, several complaints were brought to Elliott by black female migrant workers concerning one girl reported to be "an agitator and disturber of the peace" in the department store where she was placed. Elliott looked into the matter and had the disturbing element dismissed. This was perhaps an action necessary to preserve the integrity of migrant black women employed, the future placement of others, and that of the Pittsburgh Urban League.

The success of the "department store girls" as they were called, led to the organization and development of an Urban League Auxiliary comprised of these black females which benefitted the League. Struggling financially since its inception, the Pittsburgh Urban League was given a \$600 donation from the "department store girls."²² Although no unions admitted blacks during this period, Mary E. Madden of the Consumer's League, addressed them on the minimum wage law as their numbers continued to increase.²³

²¹*Report of Women's Employment Secretary*, November 1918, Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Elliott also reported that the League's department store placements, hired during the Christmas season, who performed well, stood an excellent chance of being retained as permanent employees.

²²"*Urban League Happenings*," Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11, *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 7, FF 291. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

²³*Ibid.* Several of Pittsburgh's black women's clubs were affiliated with the Consumer's League: The Madame C.J. Walker, Violet Art, Married Women's Culture, and Della Robia. This was an indication of a collective effort among the city's black club women to assist the PUL in easing the migrant problem. See the Minutes, Executive Board Meeting, December 16, 1919. AIS 81:11 *Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh*, Box 1, FF 19, Hillman Library, University of

She apparently, felt it important and perhaps they would start a union of their own.

Although Elliott managed to obtain other types of employment for black women, it is important to note that there were some jobs that many black migrant women refused to accept. They included domestic work, elevator operators, and positions at health care facilities. Elliott received numerous requests for domestic workers from the city's prominent whites. A letter from Mrs. Kornhauser read:

I require a girl for general housework, she need not be a compitent (sic) cook, but must wash, iron, and clean; we are five grown up people, she can have her evenings, every Sunday afternoon and every other Thursday afternoon off. I pay \$8 a week. Hoping you will send me some one (sic) just as soon as possible.²⁴

Contrary to Kornhauser's request was a letter to Elliott from Elizabeth Butler on July 11, 1918, who was seeking employment, but not as a domestic worker:

I am writing to ask that you use your influence to place me about the second week of August. I would like to get into the stockroom as a clerk or something similar. I have [a] common education and can furnish good references. I am looking for some good paying position aside from domestic work. Call me up before 11 am or after 4 pm.²⁵

With regard to the refusal to accept domestic employment, some black women resolved that because they were relegated to domestic service in the North, they could have remained in the South.

Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

²⁴*Letter to Dear Sir from Mrs. Kornhauser*, Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137, February 25 (ca. 1918). Kornhauser, resided on Hastings Street in Squirrel Hill, one of Pittsburgh's Jewish communities.

²⁵*Letter to Elizabeth Elliott from Elizabeth Butler*, July 11, 1918. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11, *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

In spite of their desire for employment, many requests to Elliott for black women were left unfilled. The Hotel Henry, one of Pittsburgh's many hotels, requested five elevator girls, but black women were reluctant toward accepting such positions, because of nervousness, fear, and danger in operating elevators.²⁶ Another example of black women refusing employment, was at the Protestant Home for Incurables which had several positions available, but Elliott could find no takers. This was possibly due to the institution's clientele as well as the nature of the work. Elizabeth Elliott's value as the PUL's Women's Employment Secretary went beyond the confines of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and that of black female migrants. She received a letter from an employer in Columbia, South Carolina seeking a superintendent of "colored" delinquent girls. On August 1, 1919, Ms. Lottie S. Olney, of the Juvenile Department Municipal Court wrote:

I have had two applications, but neither of them give promise of being satisfactory, one having no institutional experience and the other neither institutional nor work with delinquent girls. If you can recommend to me any colored women who have the same views on the race question, who is of the Brooker (sic) T. Washington rather than the DuBoise (sic) type and who has the other qualifications...I will greatly appreciate it.²⁷

This particular quote was also an example of interstate networking between the Pittsburgh Urban League, social service agencies, and the courts.

²⁶*Report, Women's Employment Secretary*, To-date, Elliott had 97 jobs to fill; 125 new applications; and 84 'colored' women had been referred to employers.

²⁷*Letter to Elizabeth N. Elliott from Mrs. Lottie Olney*, August 1, 1919. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers of Pittsburgh*, Department of Industrial Employment, Department of Women's Service, 1918-1919, Box 3, FF 137, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

During the Depression years, employment for black women remained the same. The majority of positions available to black women, again, were in domestic service. In the 1930s, an estimated 38,000 worked as maids and housekeepers. A very critical period in American history, black women, in many cases, supported the entire family when their husbands were laid off from the city's steel mills. It was in times like this, when almost any type of work, even domestic service, was appreciated.

Grace Lowndes and the Morals Court

Crime in northern urban communities reached record numbers during the World War I migratory period. Ghetto life threatened the well-being of southern migrants in ways unimaginable on the cotton plantations of the South, where blacks routinely worked and went to church.²⁸ In northern urban communities, crowded living conditions and a lack of organized recreational activities attributed to delinquency among southern migrants. Black youth created a larger problem, because many were sometimes left without supervision by mothers who worked as domestics. They often worked long irregular hours and sometimes six or seven days a week cleaning white women's kitchens, working as chambermaids, ironers, laundresses, and laborers in garment and lampshade factories.²⁹ Enticed by popular music, alcohol, and easy money, many

²⁸Jones, p. 185.

²⁹Henri, p. 99. Black migrant women, for the most part, were forced to work in order to provide a decent living for their families. Also, the cost of living in the North was much more expensive than the South. They often worked to supplement the incomes of their husbands and fill the void when they were laid off.

Table VII.

***Black Female Occupations
in
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 1910-1920***

Personal Service Occupations	Total # Female Domestic Workers in 1910	Total # Black Female Domestic Workers in 1910	Total # Female Domestic Workers in 1920	Total # Black Female Domestic Workers in 1920
Total	51,678	4,729	17,502	4,537
Barbers, Hairdressers, manicurists	258	84	315	153
Boarding House, lodge keepers	1,427	124	1,162	94
Charwomen and cleaners	555	120	542	68
Janitors and sextons	472	38	1,162	74
Housekeepers and stewardesses	1,120	142	603	119
Laundresses (not in laundry)	1,947	924	1,939	197
Laundry operators	1,036	40	709	59
Midwives, nurses (not trained)	801	55	737	21
Servants	12,970	2,212	1,811	2,575
Waitresses	561	40	1,111	122

Source: *Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 13th Census of the United States 1910, Population 1910 Occupation Statistics, Volume IV.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914, p. 592; *Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census, 14th Census of the United States 1920, Population 1920, Occupations, Volume IV.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920, p. 1200.

These statistics show that the largest number of black females employed in personal service positions were servants, laundresses, and housekeepers. Though the statistics for white women are not included in this table, they comprised 2,019 of 12,970 servants while black women comprised 2,212. Large numbers of native-born white women also worked as housekeepers and stewardesses. In 1920, native-born white women were mainly employed in boarding and lodging occupations while black women remained primarily as servants.

migrants ventured into something almost unheard of in the South—"streetwise trouble."

Historian Richard W. Thomas points out that Detroit's black leaders realized the seriousness of crime in the urban community had to be dealt with.³⁰ In New York, Detroit, and Pittsburgh, the city's judicial officials sought relief in the courts from the astronomical number of crimes committed largely by southern migrants. As the New York, the Urban League solved its crime problem by appointing its probation worker as one of its regular probation officers in the Court of General Sessions, the Pittsburgh Urban League appointed Grace Lowndes, as the Morals Court Worker. Her appointment was an effort by the League to build a city-wide program for a constructive means of decreasing crime among Negroes and facilitate the court procedure.³¹

The Morals Court was created by the Mayor and Pittsburgh's City Council, March 22, 1918, to hear cases that were generally moral offenses, and had largely to do with social evils.³² Its main objectives were to employ methods of re-establishing the perpetrator instead

³⁰Thomas, p. 112. In Detroit three methods were used to combat crime among the city's blacks, especially, southern migrants. Black police officers were assigned to migrant neighborhoods; a special agent was selected by the DUL to alert police to potential criminal behavior; and preventive measures were used to decrease criminal activity among blacks.

³¹"*Ms. Lowndes (sic) Will Make Special Survey of Local Problems of Groups, The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 31, 1926, p. 7. The Morals Court which made referrals to the PUL, also dealt with the issues of abandonment, child abuse, and abused women.

³²"*Now Functioning: First Session Held This Morning With Magistrate Tensard DeWolf Presiding*," *Chronicle Telegraph*, July, 17, 1918, Vertical File, Morals Court, Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA. The impetus for the Morals Court was the Pittsburgh Council of Churches; Dr. Zahniser, who agitated for police court reform; and Reverend Shelton Hale Bishop and a group of Negro citizens, who met with the PUL Board of Directors to assist the court, because of the large number of Negro arrests. The Morals Court was also referred to as the "poor man's" court. For more information see *The Bulletin, Pittsburgh's Weekly Magazine*, February 17, 1944; Lucretia Ruth Stevenson, *The Pittsburgh Urban League*, A.B. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1936, p. 89.

of incarceration and to remedy some of the conditions harmful to the Pittsburgh community's welfare.³³ The city ordinance creating the Morals Court required the Pittsburgh Police to do as follows:

...bring charges in all cases against minors, persons who may be found engaged in or charged with disorderly, bawdy or assignation houses, street walking, prostitution, solicitation, white slavery, abuse or neglect of family, illegal liquor sales and lewd or lavisious conduct.³⁴

Although, a substantial number of migrants appeared before the Morals Court, it was not created solely for black migrants, but all Pittsburghers alike. Southern migrants, already suspect among many of the city's law enforcement officers, were almost certain to encounter the Morals Court.

Grace Lowndes, a native of Columbia, South Carolina, was a graduate of Barber-Scotia College, Concord, North Carolina. She later studied at the Tailor Pattern School in New York and after relocating to Pittsburgh attended the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Tech.³⁵ Lowndes, a Christian woman, was a member of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church and Superintendent of its Sunday School; a member of the Lucy Stone Civic League; an organizer of the "colored" YWCA; a board member of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women; and founder and editor of *The Informer*, the official organ of

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁴ *Municipal Record, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Council of the City of Pittsburgh for the Year 1918*, Volume 29, (Pittsburgh: McClung Printing Company, 1918), p. 342.

³⁵ *Who's Who in the Aurora Reading Club, Souvenir Booklet*, Pittsburgh, PA, 1957, p. 14. Grace Lowndes was the organizer of the Young Women's Auxiliary, the precursor to the Pittsburgh Urban League and 'Colored' Branch of the YWCA.

the Pittsburgh Urban League, established September 1928.³⁶ She brought a wealth of experience to the Pittsburgh Urban League.

One of the major indulgences of migrant women was prostitution. Abraham Epstein in *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh* (1918) explains that black female migrant prostitution was the result of the migration of single men and married men who left their families behind them and the entire break-up of the normal family standard.³⁷ Also, without financial means of survival, black female migrants were often forced into prostitution to feed themselves and oftentimes their families. Henri tells us that a larger proportion of black women than white women were incarcerated, particularly, those between the ages of 18-24 in overall migratory cities, for loitering and prostitution.³⁸ In 1921, twenty-one per cent of the total number of black women and girls were arrested and scheduled for appearances in Pittsburgh's Morals Court.

Ten thousand persons both black and white appeared in the Morals Court annually,

³⁶*The Informer* contained information about the activities of the various PUL neighborhood units devised to improve the quality of life in Pittsburgh's black community. They were formed on Whiteside Road, Stanton Heights, Lawrenceville, and Upland Street, to name a few. Some of these units provided children's activities such as Easter egg hunts and neighborhood "clean-ups," while others made garments for the city's and indigents.

³⁷Abraham L. Epstein, *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1918), p. 51. Epstein, a European immigrant, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a B.S. degree in economics. He volunteered to study the city's Negro migrants, the problems they encountered adjusting to city life, and submitted the study to the proper agency.

³⁸Henri, p. 123.

Table V.

The Number of Cases Referred to the Morals Court

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1918-1926**

DELINQUENT GIRLS

Year	White	Colored	Total
1918	129	33	162
1919	145	24	169
1920	143	36	179
1921	201	46	247
1922	179	36	215
1923	178	49	225
1924	173	61	234
1925	189	39	228
1926	131	42	173

Source: *Report of the Morals Court Worker, 1926.* AIS 81:11Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Office Files, Morals Court, 1926, Box 10, FF 267, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

The statistics clearly indicate that the number of white girls appearing before the Morals Court judge nearly tripled those of the 'colored' girls. In several cases, the numbers exceeded 'colored' girls four-fold. It is logical to deduce that crime rate of Pittsburgh's 'colored' girls was not as excessive as some scholars have implied. This, however, did not diminish the need to use preventive measures by the Urban League or the significance of the Morals Court worker to the court.

with approximately, 4,000 men and boys, and the remainder women and girls.³⁹ Although statistics do not reveal a breakdown of southern migrants included in these figures, Grace Lowndes, spoke on their behalf. In 1924, she represented 1,033 black migrants in the Morals Court. Forty of these cases involved persons under sixteen years of age; 121 from sixteen to twenty-one; and 872 cases over the age of twenty-one.⁴⁰ Approximately 240 other migrants contacted Lowndes before their scheduled court hearings. To prevent the incarceration of the black migrant population, especially, black women, she directed them to various Urban League programs including its women's employment service.

Lowndes' responsibilities went beyond the Morals Court. She prepared at least two studies on black female migrants and black migrants in general. The first study which concentrated on black female migrant employment was designed to "bring to light the disadvantages they found in securing opportunities for work and job retention," once employment was obtained. Lowndes, in the completion of her task and as part of her strategy, held interviews with white men and women who oversaw the work being done by colored people, to get attitudes concerning Negro workers, and to correct those falsely held.⁴¹

Grace Lowndes also prepared a study of new migrant families into the Hill District with emphasis on housing and rental costs. This information was one of the League's major

³⁹"*The Morals Court of Pittsburgh*," Vertical File, Morals Court, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. This pamphlet was issued by the Department of Women's Work, a Division of the Pittsburgh Council of Churches in 1922. The individuals appearing in the Morals Court were tried by a City magistrate.

⁴⁰"*The Urban League of Pittsburgh*," March 15, 1924, Volume 7, Number 1, p. 4.

⁴¹"*Local Urban League Secretary Finishes First Year's Work*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 9, 1926, p. 8.

Table VI.

**The Number of Cases Referred to the Morals Court
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
1918-1926**

DELINQUENT BOYS

Year	White	Colored	Total
1918	1,006	73	1,079
1919	871	94	965
1920	808	82	890
1921	924	130	1,054
1922	671	92	763
1923	770	105	875
1924	829	107	936
1925	857	145	1,002
1926	767	102	869

Source: *Report of the Morals Court Worker, 1926*. AIS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh, Office Files, Morals Court, Box 10, FF 267, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

As the above statistics show, the number of 'colored' boys who encountered the Morals Court was minimal compared to those of white boys. They also reveal that the number of reported cases involving colored boys never exceeded 145 whereas those for white boys, in one instance, reached over 1,000. Perhaps the Pittsburgh Urban League's influence and recreational programs contributed to the smaller number of 'colored' boys arrested.

concerns, because of the commonality of high rents for inadequate and dilapidated housing charged by landlords. In July 1926, Lowndes was transferred from the Morals Court by the League to general work among delinquent Negroes in Pittsburgh. Her new responsibilities were to analyze the results of her court work, and study the causes contributing to Negro delinquency.⁴²

Solicitation of Donations

With some resolve to the problems of southern migrants including employment and court representation, other difficulties had yet to be dealt with. Sufficient clothing for migrants during the northern winters was a grave concern of Urban League affiliates as well as those with extenuating circumstances. In both cases, preparations had to be made. Few white charities concerned themselves with blacks, because they were often established to accommodate their own respective ethnic groups as Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn observed in *Black Neighbors: Race and Limits in the American Settlement Movement, 1890-1945*, (1993). So, League affiliates sought donations from the black community. A New Jersey affiliate solicited clothing for southern migrants.

Christina Jeffries, the PUL's intake clerk and financial secretary, planned and executed the solicitation and distribution of donations. Jeffries, the daughter of Charles F. Armistead, Esquire, and Harriet Clifton was born in Gallipolis, Ohio. She attended Ohio

⁴²*Miss Lowndes Will Make Special Survey of Local Social Problems of Groups," The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 31, 1926, p. 7. Grace Lowndes, represented the PUL in the Morals Court for eight years. In addition to redirecting the lives of migrants from criminal behavior, she was also responsible for scrutinizing the manner in which they were treated in the Morals Court and analyzing its court procedures.

State University and received a B.S. degree in Business Administration and earned a MLD. degree in Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh (1937). Christina Jeffries belonged to the following organizations: the American Association of University Women, the American Sociological Society, a charter member of the National Association of Social Workers, Alpha Kappa Sorority, Inc.; the Lemuel Chapter of the Eastern Star; the Aurora Reading Club; the National Council of Negro Women; the 'colored' YWCA; Camp Achievement's Board of Directors; the Foreign Policy Association; and founder of the National Urban League's Quarter Century Club.⁴³ She was also a member of the Bethel A.M.E. Church.

Christina Jeffries, solicited donations of clothing from white businesses and women's organizations throughout the city of Pittsburgh. For example, she developed an ongoing relationship with and successfully solicited children's garments from the "Sisterhood of Rodef Shalom," a Jewish women's organization. In a letter to members of this organization, Christina Jeffries wrote:

We are indeed grateful...for the children's garments given us to distribute among the needy and deserving Negro children. Three Negro families having from two to eleven children have had their homes destroyed loosing (sic) practically everything they possessed. We want to assure you and other members that we will make the best possible use of all garments given us for distribution.⁴⁴

⁴³"Christina Jeffries," *Who's Who in the Aurora Reading Club*, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 11.

⁴⁴*Letter to Mrs. Marcus Rauh from Christina Jeffries*, March 13, 1926. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh*, Office Files, General Clothing, Donations, Box 6, FF 252. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Mrs. Rauh was chairperson of the Sisterhood of Rodef Shalom which made charitable donations to the less fortunate individuals.



Figure. 31. Christina Jeffries

The excessive needs of black migrants went beyond those of migrant children and Christina Jeffries was committed and compelled to provide those social services critical to the Urban League's existence. Southern migrants, many unaccustomed to wearing shoes in their native South, found them a necessity in the urban North, because of inclement weather, industrial employment, and in many service positions. Jeffries sent a letter to Petty Bootery, Incorporated which distributed annually, more than 1,000 pairs of repaired shoes requesting a donation of the same. An excerpt from her letter of September 30, 1926, read:

On looking over our files, I find that we had the privilege of sharing in the distribution of repaired shoes sent out by your establishment during the winter. May we have the opportunity to distribute repaired shoes to the needy along with other organizations which receive a supply from you?"⁴⁵

On December 29, 1926, Petty Store officials notified Christina Jeffries of Pittsburgh's Urban League inquiring as to the number of shoes the agency could use and instructed her to "call for the same on January 4, 1927."⁴⁶ Jeffries responded by letter to Mr. D.F. Petty that "we would like to have 100 pairs of women's shoes and 100 pairs of men's shoes."⁴⁷ Upon

⁴⁵*Letter to Petty's Bootery from Mrs. C.F. Jeffries*, September 30, 1926, Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Office Files, General Clothing, Donations, Box 6, FF 252, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Petty's Bootery was located in Jenkins Arcade, downtown Pittsburgh. On the corner of Penn Avenue at Stanwix Street, Petty Bootery had an established a reputation as an exclusive retail shop.

⁴⁶In this same letter from Petty Bootery, the writer explained to Jeffries that the donation of shoes would not include any for children, because it did not have a children's department. The men and women's shoes were delivered by Petty Bootery to the PUL office on Wylie Avenue.

⁴⁷*Letter from Christina Jeffries to The Petty Bootery, Inc., Mr. D.F. Petty*, December 30, 1926, AIS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Office Files, General Clothing, Donations, Box 6, FF 252. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

successfully obtaining 200 pairs of repaired shoes, Jeffries and other black women of the PUL distributed them to not only southern migrants, but needy blacks as well.

For example, Carl E. Southall of Menon Company Pocket Billiards, in a communication to Christina Jeffries, requested a pair of "repaired" shoes for an unemployed gentleman: "I understand you have some repaired shoes for those that really need them. This young man, George Keenan, 24 years old, needs them pretty bad. You will, if possible, look after him."⁴⁸ Petty Bootery, donated repaired shoes to the PUL "as a way of showing good will for the New Year," and Christina Jeffries solicited these donations as a way of showing her commitment to providing social services to the race.

For example, extenuating circumstances were also a factor in the solicitation of donations for southern migrant women. An excerpt from the May 1919, Report of the Home Economics Worker read:

Mrs. Birch, an aged widow of Birmingham, Ala (sic) came North three weeks ago. A Negro man coming North from Mobile, Ala (sic) was helping the old lady in changing trains and he walked off with her suitcase which contained all of her clothes. She arrived in Pittsburgh almost penniless and without clothes.⁴⁹

Situations like this were common and southern blacks soon came to realize the dangers of city life and that northern blacks were, perhaps, not as trustworthy as southern blacks.

⁴⁸*Letter to Christina Jeffries from Carl E. Southall* (undated). Archives of Industrial Society MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Office Files, General Clothing, Donations, Box 6, FF 252. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁴⁹*Report, Home Economics Worker, May, 1919*, p. 2. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Jeffries and the League took exception to such criminal behavior, but their challenge was to supply Mrs. Birch with other clothing, because it was highly unlikely that her suitcase would be returned.

Margaret Mann: Urban Living

While little is known about Margaret Mann, she was a well-trained worker in the basic principles of homemaking. Appointed December 16, 1919, she became the Pittsburgh Urban Leagues's Home Economics worker and Mann's task was "to make living conditions better for the poorer element of black people, especially, those who have recently, come from the South."⁵⁰ Mann's work was conducted in neglected neighborhoods including the Hill District, Soho, Manchester, Lawrenceville, and the Second Avenue District, where most of the southern migrant families had crowded into already densely populated Negro homes. For example, 250 homes housed 1,203 persons with sixty per cent including children in the household.⁵¹ Using black neighborhood facilities such as, churches and social centers, Mann organized weekly "get togethers" with migrant women to provide them an opportunity to dialogue, discuss various problems in their adjustment to city life, and build cordial

⁵⁰The finances of the PUL frequently had a "drought-like" quality, so Mann's salary was assumed by the Council of National Defense. Mann's first task was to find ways to reduce the high cost of living among the migrant population. One of the ways she sought to accomplish this goal, was to teach migrant women food conservation and preparation. The Home Economics Report of February 1919, revealed that Margaret Mann surveyed 1400 migrant homes in eight months engaging migrant women. In addition to Mann's appointment, was the Home Economics Committee comprised of Mrs. Helen G. Tyson, chairperson; Mrs. Dudley Pendleton; and Mrs. William Neale. Its responsibility was to work in conjunction with Margaret Mann and John T. Clark in planning the work of the Home Economics Department for the upcoming year.

⁵¹Edmunds, p. 42.

relationships with their neighbors.

In building these relationships, migrant women were able to resolve problems on their own, especially, those who worked outside the home. For example, the children of migrant women often played in the city's dangerous streets where horse drawn wagons were sometimes driven at excessive speeds, instead of nearby playgrounds. This non-usage of city playgrounds may have been the result of black migrants being accustomed to open spaces for recreation in the South. Mann responded by organizing a group of southern migrant women who volunteered to supervise the children, and ensure their safe arrival to the playground and return home. Mrs. Denning of the Second Avenue District, situated in an area with a nearby steel mill, volunteered to "superintend" the work of the recreation committee.⁵²

As part of the urbanization process, Margaret Mann, served as a transition guide, teaching black female migrants the rudiments of urban living. During the organized meetings, they were instructed in the use and conservation of gas and electricity, saving a part of the man's earnings, making use of public facilities such as, libraries and night schools, and purchasing and preparing cheap cuts of meat.⁵³ Mann also warned black women against salesmen from credit houses and fake insurance men, because "crooks of all kinds

⁵²*Report, Home Economics Worker, May 1919*, Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁵³*Committee on Home and Community Work, March 3, 1926*. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh Papers*, Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting, Box 2, FF 52. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Daisy Lampkin was chairperson of this committee and Mrs. H.H. Kennedy, vice chairperson. The purpose of the committee was to supervise the work and make suggestions to the Home Economics Department and Morals Court of which they were active participants.

searched for this ignorant and easy prey.” The strategies Margaret Mann used in the transition of black female migrants to urban living offered some relief and understanding to the adjustments needed made.

Grace Lowndes' experience as the Morals Court Worker may have been an asset to Mann in dealing with familial problems of migrant women. Her familiarity with the courts enabled Margaret Mann to use the judicial system to assist migrant women experiencing family problems. In 1920, a migrant wife asked for assistance when her husband deserted her and her children: “...a warrant was gotten out for the man, but he continually changed his place of employment to keep his wife from locating him and never let her know he where lodged. He was finally caught at the home of his wife and the Court ordered him to pay \$10 per week to his family.”⁵⁴

A Report of September 1925, revealed a similar case:

A mother and father separated, two girls ages 9 and 14. All expenses [were] left on [the] woman---[the] rent was \$65 per month. Roomers were brought in to pay rent and other expenses. She did general house work and left her children with the roomers; one roomer 40 years of age and married became intimate with her 14 year old girl and she was 4 ½ months pregnant.⁵⁵

Margaret Mann referred the case to the Children's Service Bureau and, subsequently, the roomer left town and a warrant was issued to the father for child support. This incident

⁵⁴*Report of the Home Economics Worker, July 20, 1920*, p. 2. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. In this particular case, there were two children involved, ages two and four.

⁵⁵*Report of the Home Economics Worker, September 1925*, p. 1-2. Archives of Industrial Society MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137, Pittsburgh, PA. The young migrant girl in question, subsequently, had a miscarriage.



Figure. 32. Margaret Mann

reflected the danger of taking in roomers and the devastation of black family life brought on by the migration.

Jeannette Washington and Dr. Marie S. Kinner and Black Health

While black women across the United States worked diligently to uplift the race, many worked at solving the multitude of problems created by the Great Migration. One of the most disheartening and complex problems among black migrants was poor health as increasing southern migrant populations contributed to overcrowdedness, poor health, and sanitary conditions which led to contagious and other diseases. The need for medical care was at a premium in the black community and black women“ shouldered the responsibility for nurturing and caring for the health and well-being of both the family and community.” Black women sponsored projects which reflected the needs of black people arising from local conditions, particularly, the education and care of the sick.

In Pittsburgh, tuberculosis spread at an alarming rate and accounted for over half of all deaths among blacks; pneumonia deaths escalated by nearly 200 per cent in 1917; and for every 100 children born, 148 persons died.⁵⁶ From 1920-1925, the infant mortality rate decreased from 180 per thousand to 132 per thousand.⁵⁷ Pittsburgh's black women faced the

⁵⁶Henri, p. 149. This author says that the above mentioned diseases were the culprit of more than half the deaths in at least three of the largest migratory cities: Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Scholars of this period agree that the factors attributing to disease were inadequate food, insufficient clothing, unsanitary conditions, poor diet, and a lack of rest. In some cases, had medical treatment been sought by black migrants, perhaps the inevitable could have been prevented. It stands to reason, however, that segregation in the South erased any thoughts of black southerners going to the hospital. The same discriminatory practices, weaseled their way to northern white hospitals.

⁵⁷Stevenson, p. 104.

difficult task of finding ways to combat poor health among the city's blacks that crippled and killed them, and was often the cause of an increase in juvenile delinquency. Parents, because of illnesses, were unable to supervise their children and, in cases of death, migrant children were sometimes orphaned. They included nutritional and infant care demonstrations, health exhibits, participation in National Negro Health Week, and clinics for children.

Black health care professionals existed in Pittsburgh, but black female health care professionals were almost unheard of. This city's black community consisted of two black female health care professionals of whom assisted the Urban League in improving black health: Ms. Jeannette Washington and Marie S. Kinner. Jeannette Washington became the Pittsburgh's first black Public Health Nurse September 1, 1922. She received her license as a Registered Nurse from Mercy-Douglass Hospital School of Nursing in Philadelphia, the only institution in Pennsylvania where young black women could receive training in nursing education.⁵⁹ During this period, black women, because of racial discrimination, were barred from admittance to white nursing schools, and employment in white hospitals. Moreover, they were not allowed to provide for white patients. Between 1910-1920, "black women constituted less than three per cent of trained nurses" and Pittsburgh was fortunate in having one to care for its black community. According to Darlene Clark Hine, public health nurses provided a great deal of the medical care administered to migrant women.

In addition to Jeannette Washington, was Dr. Marie S. Kinner, a native Pittsburgher

⁵⁹Edmunds, p. 59; David McBride, *Integrating Medicine: Blacks in Philadelphia Health Care, 1910-1965*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p. 20. Ms. Washington may have graduated from Mercy or Douglass Hospital Training School for Nurses, but not Mercy-Douglass, because the two hospitals did not merge until the mid-20th century. See Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 26-27; David McBride, p. 156.

and graduate of Howard University Medical School. After completing her residency at Mercy Hospital in Philadelphia, she was one of seven African Americans, and the only black female to pass the Pennsylvania Medical Board examination in 1922.⁶⁰ Pittsburgh's white medical community had already refused to acknowledge the city's black male physicians, because of racial discrimination. But, Dr. Kinner became the first black medical practitioner in the city and was, for the most part, ignored by both the city's black and white physicians. Like Washington, Kinner, was barred from working in white hospitals and caring for white patients, but remained dedicated to serving the race. Dr. Kinner, who stated, "I want to devote my life to the study and practice of medicine and rejuvenate the old, strengthen the weak, and administer to the suffering." She subsequently, opened clinics on the North Side and in the Hill District where substantial numbers of blacks resided to begin a prosperous and self-fulfilling career in medicine.⁶¹

The expertise of Jeannette Washington and Dr. Marie S. Kinner made a difference in the lives and health of Pittsburgh's black community. They organized and participated in

⁶⁰"*Pittsburgh's New Physician*," *The Pittsburgh Competitor*, 3 (May 1921), p. 34. When Kinner took the Pennsylvania Medical Board Examination, she was also one of seventy candidates and sixty-three were white. Prior to returning to her hometown, Marie Kinner was employed as a medical advisor to a children's clinic in Philadelphia's black community. By the time Kinner received her medical license, she was one of few practicing black female physicians. In 1920, for example, there were only sixty-five black female doctors. For more information on black female physicians see Hine, "*Nineteenth Century Physicians*," pp. 923-924; and Vanessa Gamble, "*Twentieth Century Physicians*," pp. 926-928, in *Black Women in the United States : An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1990).

⁶¹*Pittsburgh's New Physician*, p. 34. Office hours for Kinner's Northside office located at 1406 Boyle Street, were 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. The remaining hours of Dr. Kinner's workday were probably spent in her Hill District office and volunteering for community health care activities.



Figure. 33. Dr. Marie S. Kinner

the following health related activities: (1) clinics for babies, Negro women and children, (2) health screenings, and (3) health campaigns throughout Pittsburgh's black community. The fruits of their labor relative to preventive health care measures had a positive impact on the black community. For example, additional clinics for Negro women and children were created and subsequent reports indicated that attendance increased threefold in three years. Both women assisted the Urban League in successfully conducting health campaigns, baby shows, and health screenings throughout Pittsburgh's black community.

Leaders and medical personnel in migratory cities made organized efforts to deal with the health problems of migrants. In Philadelphia, for example, the Migration Committee was established by the Philadelphia Armstrong Association, to attack social and health problems stemming from heavy migration.⁶² Similar organizational activities occurred in Pittsburgh. Dr. Kinner, in conjunction with various black community groups, conducted health demonstrations and lectured to several groups on health care and healthy diets. During one the health campaign of April 1931, pastors of thirty-one black churches preached on the seriousness of black health.⁶³

As the message of good health quickly spread throughout the city, Jeannette Washington, Dr. Marie S. Kinner, and Christina Jeffries, organized the annual observance of National Negro Health Week, June 16-23, 1935. Under the auspices of the National

⁶²Edmunds, p. 60.

⁶³"*Negro Health Campaign*," AIS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, Office Files, History, 1917-1929, Box 5, FF 235. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. David McBride, p. 57. During this important event, an estimated 20,000 pieces of health-related literature provided by the federal government, Pittsburgh's city government, and Metropolitan Insurance Company, was distributed. The efforts of these three entities signified a serious mission to combat the health problems of Pittsburgh's black community.

Association of College Women, Pittsburgh Chapter, two nutritional exhibits were displayed and supervised by the Public Health Nursing Association of Pittsburgh. The purpose of these exhibits held at Macedonia Baptist Church and the Homewood Library was twofold: (1) to acquaint black women with the proper foods and food values for their families, and (2) to explain the nutritional exhibits to black women which were held in connection with the well-baby clinics.⁶⁴ Black female health care professionals and black organizations continued to deal extensively with the problem of poor health among Negroes.

Georgine Pearce: Education

In the South, few or no laws existed mandating school attendance for colored children, so many of them did not attend school. school attendance of southern children: (1) they had to work in the fields, (2) southern black communities had no schools, and (3) communities could rarely afford to purchase adequate school supplies or hire a black teacher. This was not characteristic of all southern black rural communities which sometimes established schools with minimal instruction in black churches. Much of this behavior continued in the North where citizens were mandated by state laws to send their children to school on a regular basis, a law to which many southern migrants did not adhere.

⁶⁴*Report of the Nutritional Demonstration, June 20-29, 1935*, AIS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, National Negro Health Movement, Box 5, FF 330. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Given the high death rate among black babies, dietary information was provided for expectant mothers. The significance of iron and vitamin-intake were also included during the health campaign lectures. Approximately 75 mothers were in attendance at the Macedonia Baptist Church affair where church members Ms. Washington, Ms. Durstine, Ms. Birk, Ms. Gordon and Ms. Mason assisted. Ms. Sullivan, Ms. Bryan, Ms. Alten and Ms. Kegrice volunteered at Homewood Library where 45 women participated in this health care activity.

Georgine Pearce was hired by the Pittsburgh Urban League as its Home and School Visitor on February 1, 1923.⁶⁵ Pearce, a native Pittsburgher and daughter of George and Mollie Goines Pearce, graduated from the Pittsburgh Training School for Teachers in June, 1920. She was a charter member of the Bethesda Presbyterian Church and a Sunday School teacher; a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; the Junior So-Re-Lit Club; the Women's Auxiliary of Lincoln University; and the first 'colored' visiting teacher in Pittsburgh working through the Urban League.⁶⁶

Pearce, however, was not Pittsburgh's first black Home and School Visitor as the following quote revealed:

I beg to state to the public and friends that I am prosecuting the duty assigned to me by them as school visitor of the Fifth Ward to the best of knowledge and ability. The day of hope and success of the race is gradually moving eastward. I now appeal to the parents and guardians to take a deeper interest in their children by seeing to it that they attend schools regularly and dutifully as our future depends largely upon the percent.⁶⁷

This communication was from William H. Thompson who was probably the first Home and School Visitor. However, the idea of such important work regarding the serious need for the education of black children, perhaps set the tone for migrant children during the World War I era.

⁶⁵*Urban League of Pittsburgh, March 15, 1924*, p. 3. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 6, FF 240, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁶⁶*“Georgine Pearce,” Who's Who in the Aurora Reading Club*, p. 11.

⁶⁷*“School Visitor Doing Good Work For the Negroes,” The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 11, 1912, p. 1.

The purpose of the Pittsburgh Urban League's Home and School Visitor was to serve as the connecting link between the home and school and interpreter in the absence of Negro teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.⁶⁸ On a weekly basis, Pearce, visited five of the city's schools with the highest percentage of black children, in addition, to fourteen other schools with smaller populations of black students. As the Home and School Visitor, Georgine Pearce, worked diligently to correct the problems experienced by black school children, particularly, migrant children. The number of colored children in ten Hill District schools increased an average of forty per cent and, in one school, seventy-six per cent within ten months.⁶⁹ Pearce also built relationships with school principals and teachers who recognized the outstanding social work conducted. As a result they systemically notified the League when the difficulties of migrant children emerged. She successfully handled cases relating to (1) poor scholarship, (2) chronic tardiness, (3) irregular attendance, and (4) disciplinary problems.⁷⁰ According to Urban League officials, the causes were indicative of a "serious lack of cooperation on the part of the parents and children leaving home with a chip on their shoulder."⁷¹ In 1923 alone, Georgine Pearce, had disseminated 467 cases and made 606 home visits in connection with them.

⁶⁸Stevenson, p. 90.

⁶⁹Abraham L. Epstein, p. 26.

⁷⁰"*Urban League of Pittsburgh*," March 15, 1924, p. 4. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Office Files, 1918-1924, Box 6, FF 240. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. Migrant children were not accustomed to such a structured educational system. Florette Henri says they were "accustomed to brief sessions, lax attendance rules, and disorder."

⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Her role in the urbanization of black migrant women was to explain the importance of education and school attendance. While some many migrant children consistently went to school, others did not. In northern cities, large numbers of school-aged migrant children who should have been in school, were working to help support their families or supplement the family income. One of the secondary reasons black southerners migrated North was for the education of their children. But, it is important to mention that not all migrant women favored Pittsburgh's educational system. For example, Mrs. Cook stated, "I do not like the schools of the North, they do not teach much, but dancing and singing. [My] children do not learn anything here and [I] expect to send them back to Alabama in the Fall."⁷² Nonetheless, Pearce was committed to increasing the school attendance of black children.

The fact that Pearce had been "locked" out of the Pittsburgh Public School system, because of its discriminatory policy barring qualified black teachers from its schools, did not crush her spirit. She found creative ways in which to practice her profession. Georgine Pearce's leadership and initiative concerning the education of black children included those with disabilities and high school students needing guidance and counseling. For example, a hearing impaired elementary school student remained in first grade for six semesters and, Pearce successfully enrolled her in the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

Interested in the future of black high school students, Pearce solicited scholarships from the Lucy Stone Civic League for her clients. Pearce also used the Pittsburgh Urban

⁷²*Report of the Home Economics Worker, May 1919*, p. 2. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.



Figure. 34. Georgine Pearce

League office to counsel migrant children with adjustment problems and to tutor young people who needed additional help with their studies. These activities represented several ways in which Georgine Pearce helped to ease the transition of southern migrant women to city life in Pittsburgh.

Conclusion

Five black women: Elizabeth Elliott, Margaret Mann, Grace Lowndes, Christina Jeffries, and Georgine Pearce; and two volunteers, Jeannette Washington, R.N. and Dr. Marie S. Kinner, urbanized the population of black female migrants in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Their leadership and guidance in the transition from rural to urban life involved solid organization, careful planning, execution of programs, and the development of strategies. Focusing on home economics, education, employment, recreation, health, and crime intervention and prevention, they were able to ease much of the heavy burden of adjustment for migrant women, largely by “pounding the pavement” performing home and school visitation. They also prepared studies to better understand the migrant problem and satisfy employers. After all, “migrants were in a place where many had never known want or deprivation having come North from South where food was never a problem and eviction unknown.”⁷³

The black women volunteers and employees of the Pittsburgh Urban League played three roles in the urbanization process: (1) as “bridge builders” allowing southern migrant

⁷³*Annual Report of the Home Economics Worker (undated)*. AIS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, Box 3, FF 137. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

women to cross over to northern life, (2) as “chain-makers” linking them together to create a support system of their own, and (3) “gatekeepers” in helping them to maintain control over their families. The writer is by no means implying that black women employed by the Pittsburgh Urban League solved all problems facing black female migrants, because that is certainly not the case.

For example, were unable to assist a migrant woman with employment, because she was an elderly woman with only one arm. But, an attempt was made to send her back to Alabama. Pearce was adamant about school attendance and, although all mothers of migrant children did not advocate education, the works of Abraham Epstein and Alexander Pitler tell us that enrollment in Hill District schools experienced a substantial increase between 1917-1929. Grace Lowndes did not resolve the problems of all southern migrants appearing in the Morals Court, but the Judge noticed a significant decrease in the number of cases involving migrants and expressed his disdain when the Urban League discontinued its services in the court. Furthermore, not all migrant women changed their southern ways concerning the use of electricity instead of kerosene or gas instead of coal, but many of them did, in fact, make the transition.

Public Health Nurse, Jeannette Washington and Dr. Marie S. Kinner were just as valuable to the Pittsburgh Urban League as the other five black women in the adjustment of migrant women. As with the "colored" YWCA, they engaged in activities to reduce infant mortality and encouraged better health among migrant women through various kinds of clinics and health lectures. Although neither woman could obtain employment in Pittsburgh's numerous hospitals, because of racial discrimination, like most other black

health care professionals, they were dedicated to serving the race.

In all of their hard work as employees and volunteers of the Pittsburgh Urban League, these black women were victims of sexism within the League. Christina Jeffries, assistant to John T. Clark since the onset of this local affiliate, was appointed acting executive secretary when he relocated to St. Louis, Missouri. She held this position from 1926-1927, when Alonzo Thayer, former Industrial Investigator of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations and Civic and industrial Secretary of the Chicago Urban League, was retained. In spite of her education and experience in the League, gender was apparently the issue. This was prime example of what Patricia Morton points out in her book, *Disfigured Images: A Historical Assault on Afro-American Women*, (1991) dealing with the myths or disfigured images held by whites and black men. In Jeffries' case, the myth was that black women were incapable of effectively leading an affiliate of a national organization. For Jeffries, a permanent appointment as executive director would never become a reality.

From 1918-1930, the Pittsburgh Urban League had five male presidents and three male executive directors. When John T. Clark established the Pittsburgh office, two black males were hired. Subsequently, five exceptionally qualified black women were employed who immediately set out to implement the programs designed to help southern migrant women in the urbanization process. Although they were not acceptable as managers nor provided an opportunity for advancement, their deeds in contributing to the success of the Pittsburgh Urban League, the relationships they developed with black female migrants, the fact that they fought white YWCA women "tooth and nail" in defining the needs of the black community and for control over the Colored YWCA, have not gone unnoticed.

Chapter 5

Helping Me to Help Myself: Black Institution-Building

Pittsburgh's black club women made great contributions to sustain the black community as the previous chapter has shown. Still, the needs of black Pittsburghers remained unmet. The continuity of the black migration to the city and segregation triggered and influenced a market for black institutions and social welfare organizations. Some of these institutions were maintained solely by blacks and others by whites. However, social welfare agencies, financial institutions, homes for the aged and working girls, orphanages, and hospitals founded and supported by blacks flourished in urban northern communities, especially, between 1900-1920. While little surplus among blacks could be channeled into philanthropic and charitable undertakings, blacks were devoted to helping the unfortunate and underprivileged.¹ Furthermore, the largest hope for the ultimate rise of the Negro lied in the mastery of social organized life.

In this "search for order" in Pittsburgh's black community, three types of social service institutions were established: those owned and maintained by whites for whites; those owned and operated by blacks for blacks; and those organized by whites for blacks. This chapter concentrates on nine institutions founded by blacks between 1894-1921: the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women; the Ella Grayson Home for Working Colored Girls; the Beulah Rescue Mission; the Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys; the Davis

¹W.E.B. DuBois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*, Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 1899, p. 540.

Home for Colored Children; the Fairfax Baby Home; Livingstone Memorial Hospital; and the Steel City and Modern State Banks. Also included are two institutions established by whites, but for the welfare of blacks: the Young Men's Christian Association and Kay Community Club. I argue that blacks who founded these institutions clearly took the initiative toward self-help. And, despite the criticisms of many white Pittsburgh social service agencies that blacks were not doing enough to help themselves, and several black social workers blaming black professionals and businessmen for "giving little to welfare work among his own kind," Pittsburgh's black institution-builders struggled to improve the condition of the underprivileged.

Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women

After the Civil War, many of the black women who migrated to Pittsburgh were former slaves, children wandered without parents or had parents unable to properly care for them. Sympathetic blacks nationwide began to establish various kinds of institutions. For example, in Cleveland a Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People founded 1893; in Philadelphia, William Still, organized a Home for Aged Colored Persons in 1896; and a group of black women in Chicago opened a Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People in 1898.² The establishment of this type of home became common in black communities

² Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape, Black Cleveland, 1870-1930*, (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 148; Lane Rogers, *William Dorsey's Philadelphia and Ours: On the Past and Future of the Black City in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 296; Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 102.

during the early 20th century.

Black Pittsburgh's first secular institution founded after the Civil War was the Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored Women. The Home was founded by Mary Peck, born February 22, 1837 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania to the Reverend John and Sarah Peck.³ She later, married James H. Bond of Philadelphia. Mary Peck Bond with four friends, established the Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored Women in 1884, when an elderly black woman was found living in dilapidated housing. They made provisions for her and during the Spring of 1884, held a fundraiser grossing an estimated \$900 which was used as a down payment for a nine-room house on LaPlace Street.⁴

From the onset, the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women, a place of comfort for the aged, was conducted entirely by "colored" people. In 1894, it had fourteen residents in its care which created a dire need for additional space prompting the officers to purchase a larger structure on Lemington Avenue, East End.⁵ By 1912, it housed thirty-four elderly and destitute black women between fifty and ninety years old. The Home, incorporated in 1885, contained two beds in each room and became black Pittsburgh's "family of old

³ *"Founder of Aged Women's Home Answers Call of Great Reaper," The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 6, 1926, p. 9.

⁴ *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 6, 1926, p. 9; Bond's four friends were: Nancy Williams, Mrs. James Johnson, Jane Grandison, and Mrs. Samuel Golden.

⁵ The officers of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women were: Jane Grandison, president; Sarah Dorsey, vice president; Josephine Gatewood, 2nd vice president; George B. Knok, treasurer; Daniel Dorsey, financial secretary; and Mary Moseby, recording secretary.

women."⁶

Financing black institutions became the burden of all facets of Pittsburgh's black community many of whom contributed whatever they had, but it seemed never enough. Forrester B. Washington, wrote that "Negroes of means, the professional classes, and the intelligentsia were still selfishly individualistic," and partly responsible for the financial woes of black institutions.⁷ Oftentimes, the meager funds donated by blacks to maintain their institutions were accompanied by grants from government agencies.

For example, the State of Pennsylvania began to appropriate funds ranging from \$1,000-\$1,500 annually since 1891, for the maintenance of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women.⁸ Assistance from the State, however, was not limited to black social welfare institutions, but also available to white institutions as well.⁹ To further support the Home, the officers sponsored a number of fund-raisers throughout the year. In 1912, they held dinners and Donation Days and accepted contributions from the city's various black

⁶ ***"Let Everyone Help This Most Worthy Charity: The Annual Fair and Dinner for Benefit of the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women," The Pittsburgh Courier, April 27, 1912, p. 1.***

⁷ Forrester B. Washington, ***"Professional Men Give Almost Nothing to Poor And Needy, Claim," The Pittsburgh Courier, March 31, 1928, p. 5.*** Washington, extremely critical of Pittsburgh's black middle-class and its unwillingness to do all it could to minimize the financial burdens of maintaining the city's black institutions did not hinder the efforts of those individuals who "made do."

⁸ Sarah H. Killikelly, ***The History of Pittsburgh: Its Rise and Progress***, (Pittsburgh: B.C. Gordon Montgomery Company, 1906), p. 406.

⁹ Some of Pittsburgh's white social welfare institutions reaping benefits from the State of Pennsylvania were the Home for Orphans; the Curtis Home for Destitute Women and Girls; the Protestant Orphan Asylum; and the Pittsburgh Newsboys Home.

women's clubs and strangers alike. In 1925, Mrs. Florence McKee of Bellevue bequeathed \$1,000 from her estate to the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women.¹⁰ Despite the efforts of the Home's officers, it often suffered cash flow shortages and unable to pay the staff, but the Home continued to operate with help from whomever and wherever it was available as did the Ella Grayson Home.

Ella Grayson Home

Black women in northern urban communities, particularly, those from the South, were exposed to employment opportunities away from the farm, but without a decent place to live. The first home for working colored girls in Pittsburgh was founded by Ella Grayson and named in her honor. Born Ella Carter, she married William Grayson when she reached adulthood and became the mother of two daughters. Grayson, a prominent member of Bethel A.M.E. Church, its Stewardess Board, and Auxiliary #98 of the S. of V.

Ella Grayson initially began as an employment office for young girls and while in the business, she recognized the need for a working girls home.¹¹ In 1903, Grayson established a Home for Working Colored Girls in a ten-room frame house on Francis Street, Hill District. The purpose of the Ella Grayson Home was to offer a respectable atmosphere

¹⁰ *"Aged Women's Home is Bequeathed Part of \$105,000 Estate," The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 25, 1925, p. 1.

¹¹ *"Mrs. Ella Grayson Died At Her Home," The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 11, 1912, p. 1.

to underprivileged colored girls and women having a small job.¹² Similar to the White Rose Working Girls Home in New York (1897), the Grayson Home was designed to rescue black female migrants who were taken advantage of by "unsuspecting profiteers and unscrupulous labor agents."

The Ella Grayson Home for Working Colored Girls was largely supported by black women's clubs of the city as were other black charitable institutions. Two of its major contributors were the Frances E.W. Harper League and the Lucy Stone Suffrage League which made regular contributions to the Home. A group of young women not affiliated with the NACW also provided financial support to the Grayson Home. The Young Women's Civic League organized to aid in the philanthropic and welfare work among the needy of the race held a benefit for the Home.¹³ The proceeds were used to furnish a room in the Ella Grayson Home.

Unlike Victoria Earl Matthew's program whose agents met black women and girls at depots and train stations, escorted them to the Home; and provided them with training; safe housing; and job placement; the Grayson Home employed a matron who accepted and dispatched black women to jobs. The Grayson Home which had a capacity of fifteen,

¹² Ira De Reid, *Social Conditions of the Negro in The Hill District of Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh: General Committee on the Hill Survey, 1930), p. 110.

¹³"*Young Women's Civic League Hostesses To Initial Benefit Tea At Ella Grayson Home*, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 10, 1934, p. 1. Members of this organization were: Lena Wood; Marian Grimes; Theresa Moon; Andrea Willman; Thelma Hopson; Mary Wylie; Edith Dougan; Helen Phillips; Edith Carpenter; May Kinckle; Helen Matthews; Margaret Marr; Eleanor Burton; Dorothy Arnold; Bernice Leftridge; and Myrdene Eddings. The benefit included musical entertainment by Helen Brown Fowler and Raymond Walls. Sadie Black Hamilton was mistress of ceremonies and Alma Thompson read the history of the Ella Grayson Home. Guest made voluntary donations for this viable institution.

charged a fee of \$2.50 per week for accommodations. There were no single rooms available, usually three to four persons to a room, and the Home was always filled to capacity.¹⁴ When space was available, it often accepted homeless women.

The Beulah Rescue Home

Homes for black women and girls were prevalent in northern urban communities, because numerous social welfare institutions were continuously established on their behalf. In Pittsburgh, Beulah Ella Mason, born February 10, 1873, in Caroline County, Virginia, organized the Beulah Home for Destitute Women and Girls. The wife of William Mason, she was a member of Good Hope Baptist Church, and for seven years, the traveling directress of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Union Baptist Association.¹⁵ Beulah Mason also organized a Baptist church in Oakmont where she conducted church services until a minister was called and at least three funerals.

While there were no existing records on the Beulah Home, other evidence suggests that Beulah Mason, the home's matron, started the institution at her Beltzhoover residence with her husband's assistance. During its first year, the Beulah Home provided for twelve black girls and assisted 35 persons outside the Home. With the purpose of "rescuing" black

¹⁴ Anne Rylance Smith, *A Study of Negro Girls*, Made for the Central YWCA, Pittsburgh, PA 1925, p. 74; Ira De Reid, p. 110. This particular study focuses on recreation, housing, employment, and church participation in relationship to Negro girls. It is a detailed study and one that is viable on the subject of Pittsburgh's Negro girls and women.

¹⁵ "*Beulah Ella Mason*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 18, 1911, p. 5.

women and girls, she focused her attention on those having financial difficulties, southern migrants, unwed mothers, ex-convicts, and working mothers. Beulah stated, "a man may get out of work and can't find anything, his land lord (sic) puts him out, and his wife and children have nowhere to go," so I provide for them "until they can help themselves again." For southern migrants arriving in Pittsburgh unable to locate relatives, the Traveler's Aid Society made referrals to the Beulah Home for lodging.

Mason also accommodated unwed mothers until the babies were adopted or they were able to assume full responsibility for all parties involved, and often sought employment opportunities for them. She did not discriminate against anyone as Mason helped an ex-convict after eight years of incarceration. The woman located Mrs. Mason who "found her a job and helped her get straight." The woman is now married and doing well in Ohio.¹⁶ In addition, Mason operated a day nursery in the Beulah Home to provide for the needs of working mothers.

Dependent upon support from Pittsburgh's black women's clubs, juvenile court, church organizations, and white philanthropists, the Beulah Home managed to survive. The only home of its kind in the city for black women and girls, it was geared toward moral, mental, and domestic training. It must also be pointed out that the Beulah Home was different from other black institutions servicing women in that it accepted black women from all walks of life. It was, however, similar to the (white) Bethesda Home (1890) established for the care Destitute women and Girls (1893) which provided for white women when their husbands

¹⁶ "*Pittsburgh Social Workers Readily Endorse Courier's Welfare Emergency Appeal*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 24, 1923, p. 1, 6.



Figure. 36. Beulah Ella Mason

or fathers were unemployed, causing women and girls to become destitute.¹⁷

The Beulah Home for Destitute Women and Girls was often criticized by white social workers who deemed it unfit for habitation, because of its close living quarters, coupled by dinginess, insufficient space, and dampness. Even amidst such negative criticisms, the Home remained open and continued to be a fortress of refuge for homeless black women. Also, the Social Welfare Department of Allegheny County, a major critic of the Beulah Home, hesitated to close it, because few black institutions of this kind existed and similar white institutions refused to accept black women and girls. In 1924, the Home relocated to 211 Erin Street, Hill District and by 1929, it was estimated to have provided for 1200 women and children.¹⁸

Institutions for Black Children

Black children, like the elderly, were the most vulnerable and fragile members of the race. Unable to care for themselves, sometimes delinquent, and frequently orphaned, every community had its share of child-related problems. Numerous homes for children were established in Pittsburgh by prominent whites, especially, for white children. They included the Protestant Orphan Asylum (1833), the Pittsburgh Newsboys Home (1887), the Baptist

¹⁷ Samuel Church Harden, *A Short History of Pittsburgh*, 1758-1908, (New York: The De Vinne Press, 1908), p. 48. Killikelly, p. 405.

¹⁸ “*Pittsburgh Social Workers Readily Endorse Courier’s Welfare Emergency Appeal*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 24, 1923, p. 16.

Orphanage and Home Society (1910) and St. Rita's Institution for Infants (1917).¹⁹ There were also, however, well-to-do white women who founded institutions on behalf of black children including, the Termon Avenue Home for Colored Children (1880).

During the first decade of the 20th century, three orphanages were established by blacks for the large number of unattached black children in Pittsburgh: the Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys (1906); the Davis Home for Colored Children (1909); and the Fairfax Baby Home. The efforts of these blacks to take control over the plight of black children became a significant part of community-building in black Pittsburgh.

The Coleman Home For Industrial Colored Boys

Samuel and Luella Coleman, two former slaves, founded Pittsburgh's only black institution for colored boys. Both were born in Frankfort, Kentucky where they met while owned by different slave masters as children. After Emancipation, Luella, a teenager, migrated to Louisville, Kentucky where she became a masseur and hairdresser. Samuel Coleman, a graduate of the School of Carl L. Wilson in Saginaw, Michigan, was an artist, photographer, and carpenter.²⁰ After graduation, he moved to Frankfort, Kentucky where he

¹⁹ *"Infants Home Opened," The Pittsburg Dispatch*, July 16, 1917, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages; *"Home for Colored Children," The Pittsburg Dispatch*, January 30, 1916, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. St. Joseph's Industrial School for Homeless Boys (1893) and the Home for Babies were the only two white owned and operated institutions admitting black children.

²⁰ *"Twenty-Four Boys Cared for At The Coleman Home on Wylie Avenue," The Pittsburgh Press*, August 10, 1910, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

worked as a hotel waiter. He remained in Frankfort until he learned that Luella had moved to Louisville and set out to find her. Upon locating Luella, they moved to Indianapolis, Indiana and married in 1873, where they remained until 1907.

In June of this same year, the Colemans migrated to Pittsburgh and after several months opened the National Industrial School of Arts and Domestic Science with courses in massage, scalp and facial treatment, hairdressing, paper-hanging and cooking. Although with much success, the Coleman's redirected their focus upon noticing the plight of abandoned colored boys in Pittsburgh. Samuel and Luella Coleman began to care for "unfortunate children deprived of their parents love and care: "My husband and I promised the Lord that we would give ourselves up completely to this work and so far no matter how hard pushed, we have always been taken care of. We can't expect things to come very easy, but there are some very generous people who give me clothes for the boys."²¹ The main purpose of the Home was parental care of delinquent and homeless colored boys.²²

In 1909, the Coleman's planned and established the Coleman Home for Colored Boys in a ten-room house located at 2816 Wylie Avenue, Hill District with accommodations for thirty boys.²³ The Home's first residents consisted of twelve boys ranging in age from eight to fourteen. They wore uniforms of white trousers; blue shirts and caps; black shoes and

²¹ Gertrude Gordon, "*Twenty-four Boys Cared for At the Coleman Home on Wylie Avenue*," *The Pittsburgh Press*, August 19, 1910, p. 4.

²² "*Does Good Work for Colored Boys: An Ex-slave Carries Out Plan of Local Juvenile Court*," Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

²³ "*Twenty-Four Boys*," Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.



Figure. 37. Luella Coleman

stockings; and neat white collars. They received vast training from Samuel and Luella Coleman, in self-help which included washing, ironing, cooking, and general housekeeping. Although they attended public school, Mr. Coleman also trained the boys as tradesmen as they were taught carpentry and brick masonry. For their own enjoyment, the Coleman Home boys leveled the hillside next to the home and carved out a baseball diamond.

By August 1910, the number of Coleman Home residents soared from twelve to twenty-four. With reported success, the Home was no longer only for orphaned colored boys, but also became a home for young juvenile offenders. An Allegheny County Juvenile Officer asked Mrs. Coleman to take responsibility for a young colored boy deserted by his parents. Rather than see him placed in Morganza, a sanitarium, Mrs. Coleman accepted him as a resident of the Coleman Home. Shortly thereafter, the officer appeared again with two more boys the Court offering a small monetary sum to the Coleman's for their lodging.

It is important to note that the Coleman's received no other funds from the City or state government to manage the Home. With the exception of the few dollars provided by Juvenile Court, it was operated at the Coleman's expense. Mrs. Coleman worked as a hairdresser, gave facials and massages; and Mr. Coleman sold his paintings and other artwork to maintain and supplement the Home's income. However, in their efforts to keep the Coleman Home financially sound, the residents were not without responsibility. During the summer months, they worked at odd jobs for pay throughout Pittsburgh. For example, the Coleman Home boys had an eighteen piece brass band, and for a small fee, furnished music for picnics, parades, and special occasions for community organizations and

churches.²⁴ Additional finances were contributions obtained from black churches, women's clubs, fraternal organizations, black businesses, and individual donations from both blacks and whites.

During the Fall of 1912, as the Coleman's searched for larger quarters, a fire ravaged the Home on Wylie Avenue destroying the facility and the boy's entire clothing stock. With help from neighbors and Juvenile Court, temporary quarters were made available until new quarters could be found. It took almost an entire year before the Coleman's located a structure large enough to accommodate its residents at 1721 Bedford Avenue which contained fourteen rooms. Unlike the Wylie Avenue structure, it had no bathroom or laundry room. Luella Coleman, to resolve these hygiene and sanitation problems, called on the Pittsburgh Community, Allegheny County, and surrounding areas to assist the Coleman Home in its struggle to complete the facility with essentials and replenish clothing and blankets lost in the fire.

In 1924, Pittsburgh's black church community and women's clubs immediately responded to the Coleman Industrial Home's needs. For example, Macedonia Baptist Church donated \$35; Ebenezer Baptist Church \$30; John Wesley \$13; Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church \$27.10; and Bidwell Community Church \$21.06.²⁵ Black women's

²⁴ It was not uncommon for orphans to raise money for their room and board. White orphans also worked to defray such costs. For example, St. Joseph's Home for Boys worked either in the printing office or as messengers for a messenger service they created themselves in January 1909. It was an important source of revenue for the maintenance of the Home as was the income from the odd jobs performed by the Coleman Home boys.

²⁵ *"Members of the Coleman Home Board Thank Many Donors," The Pittsburgh Courier*, (undated, no page number).

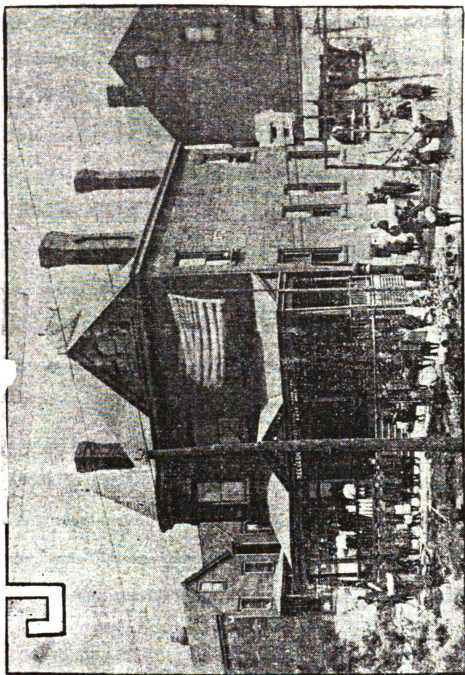


Figure. 38. Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys

clubs supporting the Coleman Home in its misfortune were the Madame C.J. Walker Benefit, the Golden Rod Social, and Metoka Clubs; and Frances E. W. Harper League, to name a few. In addition, Great Hiram Lodge had given three quarterly donations and the B.P.Y.U. of Monumental Baptist Church monthly donations.²⁶ Some of these clubs gave monetary donations while others supplied food, clothing, shoes, and blankets.

The Home also sponsored fund-raising activities of its own and solicited the help of Pittsburgh's newspapers. Bake sales, bazaars, and dinners sponsored by the Coleman Home Board of Managers also helped sustain the Coleman Home. The *Post*, *Press*, *Gazette*, *Telegraph*, *Leader*, and *Dispatch*, initiated strong advertising campaigns for the Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys. For example, they advertised "Tag Day" where workers of the home sold tags to benefit its 50 residents with monies used to purchase winter clothing. The tags donated by the Newsboys Homes raised \$1,449.53 exceeding the \$1,000 goal.²⁷

Luella and Samuel Coleman successfully managed the Coleman Industrial Home until their deaths in 1917, and 1923, respectfully, but it continued to operate. Since its inception, it provided a safe haven for more than 500 colored orphans and juvenile delinquents. Several success stories also existed in the life of the Coleman Home. For example, Terry Godfrey, an honors graduate from Minersville Public School and Pittsburgh

²⁶ "*Coleman Home Notes*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July, 5, 1924, p. 4.

²⁷ "\$1449.53 On Tag Day," *Gazette Times*, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages, November 5, 1912, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

High School, was an eighteen year resident of the Coleman Home, who became a physician.

The Coleman's were major contributors to Pittsburgh's black community development as were George and Louise Davis, founders of the Davis Home.

The Davis Home for Colored Children

The foundation of the Davis Home was established in 1900 when Reverend Dr. Senior organized a *Bible* class in Beulah Mason's Home. As a result, work among colored children soon developed and black women became interested in their welfare. Joining the effort to save black children, were the Davises, in 1907, established the Davis Home for the welfare of underprivileged, orphaned, and neglected "colored" boys and girls from various parts of Western Pennsylvania.²⁸ It especially, provided social service for the institutional care of dependent "colored" girls whom were often easily led astray and an assurance that those children confined to the Home attended school regularly. One of the few institutions caring for adolescent children, the Davis Home was located on the site which once housed the Colored Women's Relief Association on Simonton Street, East End.²⁹

Orphaned children were usually placed in alms houses, but with the help of fund-raisers by the black community, orphaned colored children could be provided for at the Davis

²⁸“*Davis Home Will Mark 42nd Anniversary Celebration Will Be Held Thursday At Institution on Simonton Street,*” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, November 8, 1948, n.p. Vertical file, Orphanages, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.

²⁹ “*State Urges Child Home Closure Here,*” *The Pittsburgh Press*, March 21, 1954, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages, Davis Home for Colored Children, Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Home. A group of black women, for example, held a benefit in Arcade Hall to secure sufficient funds for the installation of necessary improvements.³⁰ On one occasion, the City of Pittsburgh granted permission to close a street during the evening sessions of the three-day Victory Bazaar for the Davis Home. At a planning meeting prior to the bazaar, the events organizers raised and turned in \$70 from a button sale. The Lucy Stone Civic League provided an annual donation of \$5.00. Other Davis Home supporters held donations days for food and clothing for the children and the Pittsburgh Urban League often supplied coal during the winter. The self-help and institution building efforts of those associated with the Davis Home represented laudable work for the Pittsburgh's "colored" orphans.

During the 1930s, the Davis Home was "under fire" by the Pittsburgh Urban League Board members concerning a completed study on the conditions of four Pittsburgh orphanages. For whatever reason, Juvenile Court sent the Davis Home a number of delinquent girls, mixing them with dependent younger girls making the situation very bad.³¹

This was perhaps the result of over-crowding in Juvenile Court, but the possibility of corrupting the behavior of the Davis Home children existed. A complaint was filed by the Davis Home matron to Judge Kim, probably of Juvenile Court, and they were returned to that facility. Although Kim stated that the placement of these children was a mistake, it may

³⁰"*Davis Home for Colored Children*," (undated), *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA. This fund-raiser was organized by Mrs. E.C. Garcher; Mrs. Frances Steward; Daisy Lampkin; Mary Nunn; and Mrs. R.L. Vann; and Mrs. Ira F. Lewis.

³¹"*Special Call Meeting*," May 27, 1930, p. 2. AIS MSS 81:11, The Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Institutions and Homes, Termon, Davis, Coleman, Box 6, FF 259, Hillman Library University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

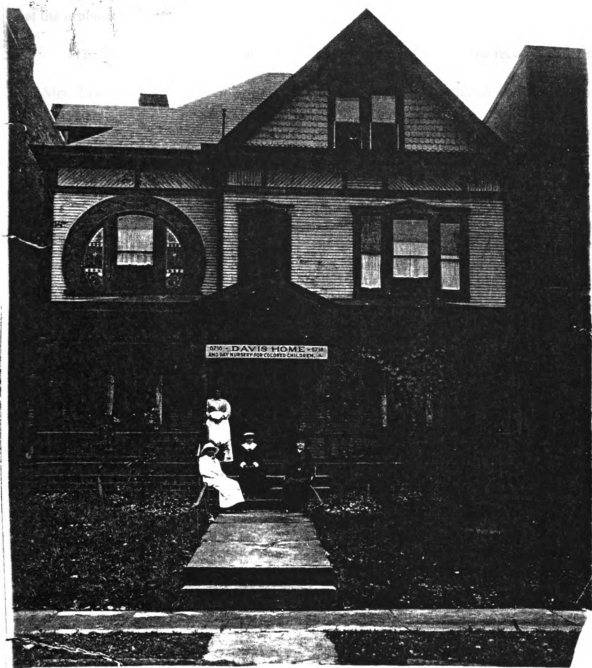


Figure. 39. Davis Home

have not been. The Coleman Home, for example, often accepted boys sent from Juvenile Court and if the Davis Home matron had not complained the girls they may have remained at the orphanage.

The Davis Home functioned as normal after this incident, but the recommendation of Mrs. Tyson was against Fannie Louise Finley's vision— race betterment in establishing a home for dependent children. Tyson's recommendation to the Board of Directors of the Davis Home read:

Various needs for the social service are much more important today than institutional; care of dependent colored girls. They include the need for a Convalescent Home, under good medical supervision, to which patients could be sent who are no longer in need of hospital care but who are still unfit to go home. The committee urges that the Davis Home Board consider directing their future service toward convalescent care, fresh air work for children, or some equally urgent and unmet community need.³²

Part of the problem was that the Davis home was not filled to capacity nor were the other three orphanages. Also Helen Tyson and the committee were concerned that many of the children in the Davis and other homes had children who were not from Allegheny County or Pennsylvania which was illegal, because they received an appropriation from the state. The recommendation made was mute as the Davis Home Board of Directors continued to maintain it as an orphanage for colored children.

³²*Report on Institutions by Mrs. Helen Tyson*, Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh,, Institutional Homes, Termon, Davis, Coleman, Box 6, FF 259, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

The Fairfax Baby Home

Among the homes owned and operated by blacks for black children was the Fairfax Baby Home, organized June 26, 1910 by Reverend T.C.H. Messer, pastor of Good Hope Baptist Church, Lawrenceville.³³ He was assisted by twenty-five earnest Christian women who provided financial support and volunteered at the orphanage. The Fairfax Baby Home was first located in a rented structure on Cherokee Street in Pittsburgh's Hill District. During the first year of its existence, it cared for six orphaned babies. In February 1911, the Home moved to Susquehanna Street in Homewood after receiving a charter through the legal expertise of noted black attorney, W.H. Stanton.

During this same year, twenty-one infants were cared for in the Fairfax Baby Home where Mary Guthrie was matron. The Home, like most black institutions, was supported by donations from individuals, churches, and organizations. For example, Good Hope Church donated \$17.35; the Fairfax Baby Club of Philadelphia, a barrel of flour; and Jane Madison of Wayne, Pennsylvania, a large box of food, and clothing.³⁴ Black women who helped maintain the Home also solicited clothing, food, and other articles for these abandoned babies. They also extended an open invitation to the Pittsburgh community to visit the babies and "help bring sunshine into their hearts."

The officers and Board of Managers of the Fairfax Baby Home were black women:

³³ "*The Fairfax Baby Home*," *The Pittsburg Dispatch*, January 9, 1916, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Orphanages, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

³⁴ *Ibid*, n.p.



Figure. 40. Fairfax Baby Home

Mrs. S.A. Webb, president; Mrs. Sallie Byres, treasurer; and Carrie Polk, secretary. Through the inspiration of Reverend Messer and a solid support system, the Home thrived by filling a void on this category of black institution-building. Whereas other black institutions for children accepted those between the ages of two and sixteen, the Fairfax Baby Home catered specifically to black infants. Although the establishment of the Fairfax Baby Home provided a much needed social service as did the other black social service agencies and with their creation, all age groups were embraced. Nonetheless, these institutions did not resolve the black community's health care problems.

Pittsburgh Hospitals

The first hospital in Pittsburgh was Hand's Hospital (1778) founded by Edward Hand, an assistant Army surgeon, for the British. Hand, upon his arrival to America and understanding the reasons for the rebellion against the Crown, joined American colonists in their fight for independence. Disgruntled about the haphazard medical treatment and convalescence of fallen American soldiers, Edward Hand sought means by which to resolve these two problems. In 1777, Hand successfully petitioned the Continental Congress for the erection of a hospital in Pittsburgh.³⁵

It was not, however, until the 19th century that hospitals began to emerge throughout Pittsburgh. Between 1847-1900, there were approximately ten hospitals: Passavant (1846), Mercy (1847), Western Pennsylvania (1853), Pittsburgh Homeopathic

³⁵Samuel R. Ohler, *Pittsburgh: Graphic Studies In Photographs and Pictures Pertaining to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*, (Pittsburgh: Ohler, 1983), p. 22.

(1866), St. Francis (1868), Allegheny General (1882), Pittsburgh Hospital for Children (1887), Southside Hospital (1891), The eye and Ear Hospital (1895), and Elizabeth Steel Magee (1896).³⁶ Over the next two decades, eleven more hospitals were established including a black hospital.

Origins of Black Hospitals

The origins of black hospitals began with the intensification of Jim Crow politics in the South and anti-black intimidation throughout the North.³⁷ Blacks, in general, were denied hospital facilities and black physicians membership in white medical societies prompting the black medical community to establish such facilities and organizations of their own. For example, the first black hospital, Providence Hospital founded by Dr. Nathan Hale Williams.³⁸ Thus, began black hospital movement in the United States.

Numerous black hospitals emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century such as, Providence Hospital (Chicago), 1891; Mercy Douglass Hospital (Philadelphia) 1910; Mercy Hospital (Detroit) 1917; and Alpha Hospital, (Columbus, Ohio).³⁹ Black physician

³⁶ Killikelly, p. 393-394, 402-404; Stephan Lorant, *Pittsburgh: The Story of an American City*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979), p. 34; Leland Baldwin, *The Story of a City*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1937), p. 213.

³⁷ David McBride, *Integrating Medicine: Blacks in Philadelphia Healthcare, 1910-1965*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), p. 8.

³⁸ Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 27, 34; McBride, p. 9.

³⁹ Gustavus Adolphus Steward, "Alpha Hospital," *The Competitor*, Pittsburgh, Volume 1, 1922, p. 182; Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Black Community-*

and author, Vanessa Northington Gamble, explained that black hospitals were crucial for the survival of the blacks in the medical profession, because they provided internships, training, and employment for black nurses and physicians who were otherwise excluded from such opportunities in white hospitals. Black hospitals were the result of racial discrimination, but became a self-help institution within urban and southern black communities. By 1919, there were approximately 118 black hospitals in the United States.⁴⁰ Historian Darlene Clark Hine has pointed out that "these new hospitals aimed to improve the health care available to black citizens while facilitating the professional development of physicians and nurses."

During World War I, the need for black hospitals increased, particularly, in the North, where large numbers of blacks migrated in search of employment in war plants and better lives. Gustavas Adolphus Steward, in his article, "The Alpha Hospital," explained that the inability of newcomers to adjust to the Northern climate produced an unusual amount of sickness and numerous hospital cases." Some blacks refused to seek medical treatment, because they were afraid, many wanted to be treated by only black physicians, while others had an aversion to hospitals, because of inclinations of voodooism and superstition.⁴¹ All of these factors may have contributed significantly to poor health among blacks.

Building in Detroit, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 180; Allan Spear, p. 97.

⁴⁰ Vanessa Northington Gamble, ***Making A Place For Ourselves: The Black Hospital Movement, 1920-1945***, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. xi.

⁴¹ Ira De Reid, ***A Survey of the Negro in Pennsylvania***, p. 47; Abraham L. Epstein, ***The Black Migrant in Pittsburgh***, (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), p. 58.

Black Hospital Movement in Pittsburgh

Black medical professionals in Pittsburgh experienced similar difficulties like those everywhere. Although there was one black physician to every 2,165 blacks; one dentist to every 2,660 blacks; and one black nurse for every 13,000 inhabitants, they could not receive training or practice their profession in Pittsburgh's numerous white hospitals.⁴² For example, there were no black physicians on staff at Mercy, Allegheny General, or Montefiore Hospitals. The first efforts to establish a black hospital occurred with the founding of two private sanitariums by two black Pittsburgh physicians. Another initiative for such a health facility emerged when the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association was formed in the Hill District. Organized by Dr. Charles H. Carroll, Dr. D.G. King, Dr. George Strickland, Dr. George L. Winstead, and Dr. Jerome Hill, the purpose of this association was to build a black hospital, provide quality health care to the black community, and black physicians and nurses opportunities for training, research, and professional activity otherwise ill-afforded them in white Pittsburgh hospitals.

The need for a black hospital in Pittsburgh was critical. In 1910, 53.2 percent of blacks under forty years old culminated the highest death rate. Blacks suffered from poor living conditions such as bad housing, poor sanitation, overcrowding, the use of featherbeds, and low economics.⁴³ Blacks were, more often than not, humiliated by white hospital officials when they were refused treatment, treated and released when admittance was

⁴² Ira De Reid, *A Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, p. 51.

⁴³ Abram L. Epstein, *The Negro Migrant in Pittsburgh*; Ira De Reid, *Negro Survey in Pennsylvania*, Harrisburg: Department of Public Welfare, (undated), pp. 48-49.

absolutely necessary or admitted to white hospitals in segregated wards, because of their race. White hospital policies and behavior infuriated race leaders: "You know how welcome we are in white hospitals and treated like colored people. There is no use in deceiving ourselves. We cannot get the two year's internship in a hospital here as required by law. Our young women cannot train for nurses in any hospital here. Do you think it is about time for us to have our own."⁴⁴ Inadequate treatment for Pittsburgh blacks in the city's hospitals may have also been a contributing factor to their high mortality rate.

The Livingstone Memorial Hospital's first quarters were in the former Kingsley House at Bedford Avenue and Fullerton Street, Hill District. In April 1923, the Morgan Community House, a temporary home for indigent men, moved to 73 Fullerton Street to make way for Pittsburgh's first black hospital. Consisting of an estimated 33,000 square feet of property, the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association planned to build a nurse training school and home for nurses on the vacant property and to remodel the building housing the hospital which contained approximately 7,000 square feet. While it is unclear if the remodeling project was so extensive causing the LMHA to abandon its plans for the Bedford Avenue site or if it were only temporary quarters, new plans were made.

The LMHA initiated the effort to build Pittsburgh's first black hospital, but like a majority of other black medical facilities, it would face financial barriers. It organized a number of fund-raising activities which included benefits, door-knocking campaigns, and

⁴⁴ *"Livingstone Memorial Hospital To Give Outing, Governor Pinchot Unable to Be Present, Sends Best Wishes For Success of Big \$25,000 Drive," The Pittsburgh Courier, ca. August 1924.*

donations from black women's clubs. On September 9, 1924, the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association sponsored a picnic charging one dollar with all proceeds benefitting the hospital. Pittsburgh's black population was approximately 25,000 and the strategy was for each black person to donate one dollar to the campaign generating \$25,000 for the construction of Livingstone Memorial Hospital. In a plea to Pittsburgh's black community, the LMHA hoped it would assert itself by supporting the black hospital:

Do not delay in mailing your \$1. You can send it to the *Courier* and the ticket will be mailed to you. You can call or mail it to the campaign office at Fullerton Street and Bedford Avenue. Tickets will be handed to you or mailed to your address." Toward this end your support is earnestly needed. Let it not be said that the white citizens of Pittsburgh worked harder and gave more to Livingstone than Negroes (sic) whom the hospital will benefit than did themselves. It will be your institution, operated by your physicians and nurses.⁴⁵

The hospital campaign met with little success and was criticized by both whites and blacks, so the LMHA Board of Directors secured the services of an experienced campaign director on institutional finance, Reverend Amos Carnegie. The founder and executive secretary of the National Negro Hospital Foundation, Inc., Carnegie's expertise energized Pittsburgh's black hospital movement with a solid plans for the Livingstone Memorial Hospital. The cost of the hospital was \$250,000 including the purchase, fireproofing of the property, equipment, and a home and training school for nurses. Carnegie and the LMHA hoped to raise at least \$100,000 to begin the hospital's construction in October 1924. They agreed that building a structure with at least forty beds, although the initial plans specified

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, n.p.

a 100-bed hospital for blacks, would suffice and vowed to continue working to enlarge the facility as contributions were received.⁴⁶

In Philadelphia, W.E.B. DuBois tells us that "the movement for a black hospital was condemned by the city's whites as an unnecessary addition to a bewildering number of charitable institutions." Contrary to the attitudes of Philadelphia's whites, many of those in Pittsburgh were eager to help blacks establish a race hospital perhaps as a means of maintaining its segregationist policies toward black medical professionals. The Social Security Department of Mercy Hospital advocated the need for a black hospital. An "unidentified, white friend offered to donate \$5,000 to the construction of Livingstone Memorial Hospital once the Association had raised a substantial portion of the necessary funds to begin construction." In a letter to Dr. Charles Carroll from Dr. Roy Meyer of Pittsburgh's Department of Public Health read:

It is with deep sympathy that I endorse the proposed Livingstone Memorial Hospital for blacks. An excess of deaths and sickness occur among the colored people of this community as compared with the white population. It is estimated that life expectancy of the American Negro is shorter by ten years than the white man. Caring for Negroes has taken a toll in the cost of sickness, unemployment, poverty, and misery. The cost of medical care presents a real problem. I feel that the proposed hospital for colored people will aid us in our local solution. I assure you of cooperation of this Department in any way we can help.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ *"Livingstone Memorial Hospital Launches Big Drive: \$250,000 in Eight Days," The Pittsburgh Courier*, December 15, 1923, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Letter to Dr. Charles Carroll from Dr. Roy Meyer, April 10, 1934*. Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11 The Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Organizations, Box 5, FF 254, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

The problem Dr. Meyer referred to was that, in most cases, white hospitals which treated blacks, often did so free, therefore, the construction of a black hospital would drastically reduce those costs assumed by white hospitals.

In its continuous struggle to build a black hospital, the LMHA considered purchasing Montefiore Hospital in 1930. During a meeting at the Centre Avenue YMCA to which Pittsburgh's entire black community was invited, but dissension among the ranks regarding the purchase of Montefiore circumvented the meeting held on February 10, 1930. The Association, as of this date, had raised \$36,000 and voted unanimously to purchase Montefiore for \$75,000, but a debate occurred between Dr. C.H. Carroll and attorney Robert L. Vann, after the vote occurred. The debate was on the question of voting eligibility. Vann thought every race person in the community and, especially, those attending the meeting, should have the right to vote for or against the black hospital. Carroll decided that only members of the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association should vote on the erection of the black hospital. Although the issue was never resolved, the meeting continued.

Mr. Spear, a representative of Montefiore Hospital and present at this meeting, outlined the proposed sale of its property to the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association. The property for sale was worth \$100,000 and the Montefiore Hospital Board of Directors would donate \$25,000 to the Association. When he finished his proposal, Spear made the following statement:

Dr. Carroll, Dr. Winstead, Dr. King, and Dr. Brown have all been calling on me for a number of months and we have been discussing the proposed purchase. I have tried to impress them with the fact that the Montefiore Hospital is not so much interested in selling its property as it is in seeing a colored (sic) hospital established in Pittsburgh. The board of Montefiore Hospital realized the necessity for one.⁴⁸

Robert L. Vann pointed out that if the Association agreed to accept Montefiore's proposal, "only \$25,000 need be paid down to take over the property." The Association never purchased Montefiore Hospital's discarded property, but decided to proceed with its fund-raising plans for a new hospital facility.

The apparent struggles of Pittsburgh's Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association for a black hospital continued for another eight years. A series of meetings were held with white civic leaders; physicians; members of the Allegheny County Medical Society including its president, Dr. C.L. Palmer; Pittsburgh Urban League officials such as, R. Maurice Moss; Reverend H. R. Tolliver, pastor of Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church, and Dr. Francis Tyson of the University of Pittsburgh. In 1938, an Interracial Committee, headed by attorney Edward O. Tabor, was organized to seek financial support for Livingstone when it became apparent that the city's blacks alone, could not finance a new hospital. But, members of the LMHA knew from the onset of the first hospital campaign that Pittsburgh's black community lacked the economic ability to construct such a large hospital.

As of December 1938, a number of committees were formed to plan the construction of the Livingstone Memorial Hospital. By this time, the cost of the hospital planned by the

⁴⁸ "**\$75,000 Purchase Approval**," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 26, 1930, p. 1, 9.

Association skyrocketed from \$250,000 to a one million dollar project proposed by the Interracial Committee. Although the initial hospital was to be devoted solely to "colored" people with facilities to train race nurses, physicians, and surgeons. New plans for the hospital included an interracial staff and a new location, near the University Pittsburgh Medical Center instead of the "heart" of Pittsburgh's black community.

The establishment of a black hospital in Pittsburgh was perhaps doomed from the beginning. It is ironic that with the help of white supporters the LMHA could not raise \$250,000, and yet, the Interracial Committee concocted a plan to solicit one million dollars for the hospital's construction. Even with the expertise of Reverend Amos Carnegie, executive secretary of the National Negro Hospital Association, the dreams of Pittsburgh's black community, the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association, and its white supporters, dried up like a raisin in the sun.⁴⁹ However, other race leaders were not discouraged by the Association's failure to build a black hospital, and continued efforts toward black institution-building in their community by establishing financial institutions.

History of Banking Institutions in Pittsburgh

Financial institutions in Pittsburgh were first established during the 19th century with the development of the city's booming industry and commerce. On January 19, 1804, Discount and Deposit opened as Pittsburgh's first bank when the Bank of Pennsylvania,

⁴⁹The writer was unable to locate additional information about Amos Carnegie or the National Negro Hospital Association.

situated in Philadelphia, expanded its banking operations with a branch office in Pittsburgh.⁵⁰ It was followed by the Bank of Pittsburgh (1810), Farmer's and Merchants Bank (1814), the United States and City Bank of Pittsburgh (1817), and Nathaniel Holmes and Sons Bank (1822), to name a few.

Pittsburgh was noted among banks nationwide. For example, it was the second city in the United States in banking capital and surplus to gross deposits with 47.1 percent. Pittsburgh also ranked sixth among United States cities with clearing house exchanges behind New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and St. Louis.⁵¹ By 1906, Pittsburgh had 179 banks and trust companies which grew steadily throughout the 20th century. Although the city's numerous financial institutions were organized during the 19th century, it was not until the second decade of the 20th century that Pittsburgh's first black bank was organized.

Black Banking Institutions

Black banking institutions were founded on the same premise as other black institutions, racism and discrimination. But, they were also organized for the economic growth and independence of blacks in the North and South.⁵² Black banks were a necessity, because they took care of every phase of the black community's financial needs. They led

⁵⁰ Killikelly, p. 261; Engineers Society of Western Pennsylvania, (Pittsburgh: Cramer Printing and Publishing Company, November 1930), p. 103.

⁵¹ Samuel Church Harden, *A Short History of Pittsburgh, 1758-1908*, (New York: The DeVinne Press, 1908), p. 85-86.

⁵² George W. Blount, "*A Live Bank in a Live City*," *The Competitor*, February 1920, Volume 1, p. 29.

to the development of new business enterprises; provided business capital for blacks allowing them to take advantage of business opportunities; provided black employment, and contributed to the retention of black funds within the black community.⁵³ Most black financial institutions sought to teach blacks thrift and economics; and that the possession of money wielded power and influence.

Blacks established banking institutions in a number of cities to meet the needs of the black community. Some of the early black banks were, St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank (1903) of Richmond, Virginia founded by Maggie Lena Walker; Citizens Bank, Nashville, Tennessee (1904); and Chicago's Binga Bank (1908).⁵⁴ In the South, the Tidewater Bank and Trust Company of Norfolk, Virginia (1919) was the first black bank to qualify as a Trust Company in the United States. In 1926, an estimated seventy black banks existed in the country, thirteen north of the Mason Dixon line and fifty-seven south of the same. A majority of these banks were most often established by black entrepreneurs.

The Steel City Bank

One of the black banks above the Mason Dixon Line was Pittsburgh's Steel City Banking Company founded November 17, 1919, by Reverend J.C. Austin, pastor of the

⁵³ Alex Benson Henderson, "**Richard R. Wright and the National Negro Bankers Association: Early Organizing Efforts Among Black Bankers, 1924-1942**, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, (January-April) 1993, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Gertrude L. Marlow, "**Maggie Lena Walker**," in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Volume 2, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company), 1990, p. 1215. "**Maggie L. Walker—Banker: President 25 Years Now Heads Merger**," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 4, 1929, p. 2. Allan Spear, p. 75.

Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Steel City Bank, a private partnership among blacks, was located at 801 Wylie Avenue in the Hill District, and two years later, a second branch opened at 6309 Broad Street, East End.⁵⁵ The bank had five objectives: to have a bank account for every race man and woman in Pittsburgh and environs, to encourage depositors to deposit something every week in the savings department, provide financial advice, and encourage them to join vacation and Christmas Savings Clubs, and to build one of the largest, and strongest banking institutions of the race in existence.⁵⁶ Its motto was: "If you are not satisfied, we are not satisfied."

Black businesses often sought innovative ways to attract customers and maintain business. For example, the owners and staff of the Tidewater Banking and Trust Company in Norfolk, Virginia found innovative ways by which to encourage depositors to use the bank and make it convenient for them to do so. The Tidewater Bank extended its hours three days a week to accommodate depositors who worked during its normal hours. The Steel City Banking Company adopted a similar policy. It enlisted "outside agents" consisting of three black women with full authority to accept absentee deposits and place them in the bank to the credit of the depositor with same degree of safety, as a personal visit to the bank would assure.⁵⁷ The establishment of several types of savings clubs were another method to attract

⁵⁵ **"2 Banks Close Doors As Land Deals Collapse,"** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 14, 1923, p. 1.

⁵⁶ **"Annual Deposit Day At Steel City Bank,"** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 14, 1923, p. 1.

⁵⁷ **"Local Bank Plans New Program,"** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, December 19, 1925, p. 3. The outside agents for the Steel City Bank were: Fannie Chandler, Emma K. Johnson, and Celia Smith who were employed in its Field Workers Department.

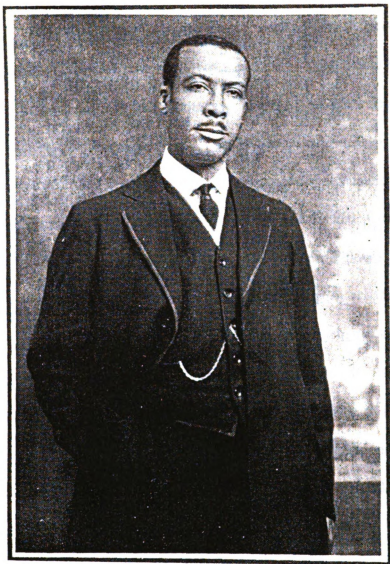


Figure. 41. Dr. J.C. Austin

Dr. J.C. Austin received his education at Philadelphia's Temple College and Virginia Theological Seminary and College, Lynchburg, Virginia. Prior to accepting pastorate of Ebenezer Baptist Church (1915), Austin pastored churches in Clifton Forge (1910) and Staunton, Virginia (1912). He was married to Inez Klossing Pollard of Covington, Virginia and became the father of two children.

Dr. Austin was one of Pittsburgh's most progressive ministers. During his pastorate at Ebenezer, the People's Gospel Tabernacle was built with a seating capacity of 2,500 and a network was established in the church by which its members met southern migrants at Pittsburgh's train station to help them find living quarters.

a wide range of depositors. For example, the banking officers initiated a Sick, Accident, and Unemployment Savings Club whose purpose was to create "stash" funds to protect the depositor when cases like these arose. All monies deposited in the SAUSC would be paid the depositor. By 1923, the Steel City Banking Company had more than 5,000 depositors with plans to attract 5,000 new ones through a series of credible recruitment campaigns.

Within a short period, the Steel City Banking Company expanded its business realm by merging with the Home Finder's League founded by Dr. J.C. Austin in 1920. Created by a unanimous vote of over 400 Steel City Bank stockholders, the Home Finder's League became its real estate corporation. Together, the Steel City Banking Company and the Home Finder's League had assets of \$750,000. The purpose of the HFL was to help blacks obtain loans to purchase homes when white banking institutions refused to provide blacks this financial service. In this sense, the Steel City Banking Company, the only black financial institution in Pittsburgh during this period, invoked an opportunity to make living more comfortable for blacks as they were less frequently forced to pay high rents for dilapidated housing.

With the rapid growth and success of the Steel City Banking Company, a charter from the Banking Commission of the State of Pennsylvania was necessary as it had outgrown the limitations under its licensed qualifications.⁵⁸ In 1925, three of Pittsburgh's leading race men successfully petitioned the Pennsylvania State Banking Commission for

⁵⁸ *"State Banking Department in Charge, Frozen Assets Cause of Banks Trouble,"* Vertical File, Pittsburgh Banks, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

THE STEEL CITY BANKING COMPANY

PROTECT YOUR MONEY

PROTECT YOUR MONEY—The honest and steadfast principles of THE STEEL CITY BANKING COMPANY, with this ideal firmly established, has created confidence in the public, to whom it is responsible. Within the last year THE STEEL CITY BANKING COMPANY has doubled its assets. Efficient management in all departments and the character and standing of the officers and Board of Directors warrant to our patrons the highest standard of banking business, giving our people wonderful advantages to develop the community.

PROTECT YOUR MONEY

It will demand equality and respect.
It will destroy conceited expressions.
It will remove the contemptible grin.
It will bridle the slanderer's tongue.
It will level the difference in work and pay.
It is the world's greatest compromise.

PROTECT YOUR MONEY

The Steel City Banking Co.

PITTSBURGH, PA.

Under State supervision and affiliated member of the
American Bankers Association and the
Pennsylvania Bankers Association

801 Wylie Avenue

TWO BANKS
Grant 5462
Hiland 7813-R

6309 Broad Street

OPEN TILL 9 P. M. EVERY SATURDAY

Figure. 42. Steel City Banking Company
Advertisement

a charter with Robert L. Vann's assistance.⁵⁹ It authorized the Steel City Banking Company to provide more services with an extensive scope of operations including trust and the sale of capital stock to the public.

The Steel City Banking Company enjoyed much success for seven years before it was forced to close January 12, 1926. Prior to the passage of legislation in May 1925, giving the State Banking Department control of the privately owned banks, the Steel City Banking Company had not been subjected to such an examination by this body. The examination disclosed that practically all its cash was invested in real estate and mortgages; and the availability of bank funds were insufficient to meet the daily demands of depositors.⁶⁰ However, the bank audit also revealed nothing of a criminal nature in the operations of the bank and that heavy-handed land investments made it land poor.⁶¹ The assets of the bank, estimated in excess of \$500,000, were frozen until the liquidation process was complete. Each depositor was to be paid the amount of his savings deposited in the Steel City Banking Company.

As black Pittsburghers, especially, depositors of the Steel City Banking Company began to point fingers at the parties responsible for their individual losses, the manager of

⁵⁹Dr. James Burwell, Shedrick W. Fields, and William E. Hance petitioned the State Banking Commission for the Steel City Bank's charter. See "***Steel City Trust Company Chartered***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 14, 1925, p. 1.

⁶⁰ "***State Closes Negroes Bank: Frozen Assets Blamed As Wylie Avenue Institution Is Taken By Examiners***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 13, 1926, Vertical File, Pittsburgh Banks and Banking, Steel City Banking Company, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

⁶¹ "***State Banking Department in Charge***," (undated, no page number).

the Home Finder's League, Reverend Moses S. Hunter, was accused of "wrecking" the bank. Between 1923-1925, he allegedly used the depositors money to invest in real estate at "inflated" prices. The Home Finder's League owed the Steel City Banking Company \$195,000. According to bank records, 5,000 persons had deposited approximately \$800,000; total assets of \$488,000 and 40 percent was consisted of mortgages.⁶² In the liquidation process, all property owned by the Home Finder's League's was sold to compensate Steel City depositors.

Tension ran high among the Steel City Banking Company's all black depositors for two reasons: (1) the bank's closing, and (2) the slow progress toward settling its affairs caused considerable protest among investors. The Steel City Bank was sued by the Fifth Ward Citizens Protective Association in Common Pleas Court in January 1927. This community organization claimed that the bank paid \$12,000 to the receivers for their work when only \$10,000 was collected; the receivers did not take advantage of the opportunity to redeem \$181,000 in the form of realty assets; and if done properly, Steel City Banking Company depositors would have received 42-80 percent more from the liquidation of the banks assets.⁶³

Mixed reactions to the failure of the Steel City Banking Company clouded over the city. The Fifth Ward Citizens Protective Association and much of Pittsburgh's black community invested in the Steel City Banking Company, because it was deemed the greatest

⁶² *"State Banking Department in Charge."*

⁶³ *"Steel City Hearing Monday," The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 29, 1927, p. 1.

achievement of the city's blacks. But, "hardworking men and women saw their savings of a lifetime swept away by one full stroke of fate." More disheartening to Pittsburgh blacks even those without an investment in the bank, was reflected in the statement of Courier columnist John L. Clark: "Blacks expressed not only surprise, but considerable disappointment when they saw the purely Negro organization taken from their own hands and put into the hands of six unknown white men to colored people, and five colored men selected by Frank Jackson of the Pennsylvania State Banking Commission."⁶⁴ Anguish and deception shredded the confidence of black Pittsburgh in its banking institution.

Some black Pittsburghers chose to take advantage of the Steel City Banking Company's problems. For example, they attempted to fraudulently obtain money from the bank when they had no accounts. Rumors and complaints raged when persons alleged that their checks were not honored at the bank only to find that they had no money in the bank or their accounts were overdrawn. Even worse, the Steel City Bank's depositors and a large facet of the black community maintained that "preachers belonged in the pulpit" and had no business operating a bank, without formal training and banking experience. In other words, they lacked the expertise necessary to conduct a successful banking operation. This "falling out" not only led to an attack on the city's black ministers who managed the daily operations of the bank, but created unfair suspicion and a greater distrust toward other black clergymen. The Reverend J.C. Austin, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church subsequently, accepted a "call" from the Pilgrim Baptist Church of Chicago.

⁶⁴ "*Court Orders Public Sale of Steel City Bank Assets: Prominent Citizens in List of Debtors,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 13, 1929, p. 1, 4.

The Modern Savings and Trust Company

The Modern Savings and Trust Company was an offshoot of the Modern Land Improvement Company, a real estate agency, organized in 1916 by twelve race men.⁶⁵ Realizing the additional need more financial institutions peculiar to the needs of blacks, the Modern Land Improvement Company established the Modern Savings and Trust Company in February 1921. Located at 6311 Frankstown Avenue, Homewood, the bank was convenient for blacks residing in this area, even more so, than the Steel City Bank's branch office on Broad Street. The bank opened with a capital of \$125,000 and became black Pittsburgh's second banking institution.

The Modern State Bank began a series of advertising campaigns to solicit depositors. One advertisement read: "We need the services of such a company was best attested by our lack of adequate credit facilities to properly finance our business enterprises, protect our homes, and secure reasonable conditions, and surety protection companies run by white people refuse to treat us fairly."⁶⁶ It also attempted to dissuade potential black depositors from doing business with white banks by pointing out that the city's blacks often "deposited their earnings in the banks of other races while knocking their own, and not having taken advantage of opportunities offered by their own race." The Modern State Banking Company was merely asking for an opportunity to service the black community.

Although the bank was open for business, it began to experience difficulties at an

⁶⁵The founders of the Modern Savings and Trust Company were Jacob L. Phillips, E.J. Bullock, Thomas Richardson, George Arvin, A.E. Evans, Willie S. Jackson, Charles Jordan, Robert Vaughn, Dr. George L. Winstead, Denis Mosby, M.C. McCowan, and Robert L. Vann.

⁶⁶"*The Modern Trust Company*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 23, 1923, p. 14.

early stage. A grave problem facing the bank were complaints by depositors regarding the demeanor of its staff toward customers. For example, one depositor complained about the lack of efficient personnel. Another withdrew his account from Modern Savings Bank, because the teller handling his money, "was about as skillful and adept in making change or counting deposits as a bull would have been in handling a rifle." The bank's officers were abreast of these problems and made attempts to correct them by screening and training personnel more carefully. At the same time, they pointed out that there "should be no lack of faith in placing money in Modern State Bank."

Second, many of its stockholders had begun to pay their subscriptions by installments in 1921, when Pittsburgh experienced a devastating employment decline and many employees lost their jobs. Others failed to pay or deposit any money at all sending the bank into a financial slump. The Modern State Bank, Pittsburgh's second black banking institution, was closed May 22, 1922, after only one year, and its assets liquidated. As the Steel City Banking Company, Modern State was also closed by the Pennsylvania State Banking Department. Assistant Attorney General John N. English, revealed that the Modern State Bank failed, because stockholders did not pay their subscriptions when demanded by the State Banking Department so, it suspended the bank's operations until the State found a workable solution to its problems. Similar to the findings of the Steel City Bank audit, theft and fraud were ruled out.

The following year, the Pennsylvania State Banking Department and Jacob L. Phillips, president of Modern State Banking Company met to discuss reopening the bank. Phillips made several suggestions to state officials which included the sale of stocks. Only

Paid Up CAPITAL \$125,000.00

OF
BY THE PEOPLE
FOR

OPPORTUNITY
THE MASSES' SAFETY
SERVICE

MODERN

Savings & Trust Co.

6317 FRANKSTOWN AVENUE

PITTSBURGH, PA.

"THE BANK OF SERVICE"

Solicits your Savings and Checking Account, and pays
4%--Four Per Cent on Savings 2%--Two Per Cent on Checkings

This Bank renders the following service to its patrons:

REAL ESTATE DEPARTMENT	Buying	Titles Examined	INSURANCE DEPARTMENT
	Selling	Fire	
	Renting	Life	
	Mortgages	Liability	

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

JACOB L. PHILLIPS, President E. J. BULLOCK, Vice President
T. W. PRIMAS, Sec'y and Treas.

Monroe Groome	Robert Vaughn	Sherman Dudley
Thomas Richardson	C. W. Posey	W. S. Jackson
Dennis D. Mosby	A. E. Evans	Philip Kusie
Charles Jordon	Fielding Strothers	Samuel Parr

INCORPORATED UNDER THE CHARTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
AND LICENSED BY THE NATIONAL MONETARY BOARD

Figure. 43. Modern State Bank Advertisement

\$15,000 was needed to re-open the bank and Phillips, who had encouraged the sale of stocks from \$50-\$1,000 as a means of raising funds rapidly, hoped to declare the bank solvent between February 1-15, 1923.⁶⁷ On June 25th of the same year, the Modern State Banking Company re-opened and the Pennsylvania State Banking Commission appointed Phillips trustee of "running the assets of the company" and four other bank officers.

When the bank reopened Jacob L. Phillips made the following statement concerning the banks' successes and failures:

We have struggled through many difficulties and overcome great handicaps in our efforts to contribute our bit to our day and generation. Personally, I am deeply grateful to those who so loyally supported our efforts, because the successful results obtained could not have been realized without their support. If what we shall accomplish makes it a little easier for those who follow us; if our homes and investments are made a little more secure and desirable; employment made possible for our boys and girls who are graduating from our schools, we shall consider ourselves amply repaid for whatever sacrifice we may have made. The Modern State Bank is the people's bank and our constant desire to serve them faithfully and well.⁶⁸

Given the fact that the Modern Savings and Trust Company operations were suspended by the Pennsylvania Department of Banking, reluctance by the city's blacks to do business with the bank was not without understanding. However, when the Banking Commission granted Modern State Bank a charter on January 24, 1924, it perhaps offered some reassurance of the bank's solvency to potential customers.

⁶⁷"*Local Bank To Open Doors: Modern State Bank Boasts Big Capital*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 22, 1924, p. 1.

⁶⁸"*Local Bank To Open Doors*," p. 1.

Two years later, the Steel City Bank closed leaving the Modern State Bank struggling to instill and maintain the confidence of the black community. In a possible attempt to encourage Pittsburgh blacks to entrust their money to the Modern Savings and Trust Company understand the importance of patronizing black businesses, a statement by its officer's read:

No one can say definitely, but it is reasonable to assume that there are millions of dollars of colored people's money deposited in the various white banks of Pittsburgh. These institutions are making fabulous profits out of the money of our group while our business ventures are languishing because we will not get behind this institution and put our money in it. If every colored person in Pittsburgh would deposit an average of \$5 in this bank on a savings account and leave it for one year, there would be sufficient capital to meet the business demands of this institution...⁶⁹

With the successful establishment of two black banks in Pittsburgh, white bankers sought an opportunity to compete with them for depositors and began to solicit accounts from black patrons. Historian Peter Gottlieb explained that white banking institutions preferred not to service blacks, especially, black steelworkers, because they would "deposit their checks on payday only to return to the bank the next day to withdraw all monies." But, People's Savings and Trust Company (1864) appointed Solomon Page, a black man, to a position on its field staff, in addition to his other duties as a People's employee. Page, who began working for People's in 1902, was a member of the Odd Fellows, North Side Lodge

⁶⁹*"Interest Growing in Drive of Modern State Bank: Sentiment Stronger As Daily Deposits Show Public Faith in Bank," The Pittsburgh Courier, January 2, 1928, p. 12.*

Number 124, where he was also president of the marching club, and the I.B.O.E. of W.⁷⁰

Although People's Savings and Trust Company's intentions to extend banking services to all Pittsburgh citizens, it perhaps realized the other advantages of soliciting black depositors. For example, Pittsburgh's increasing black migrant population, successful in obtaining steady employment although with menial wages, was encouraged by agencies such as, the Pittsburgh Urban League, to open savings accounts. Once the Steel City Bank revealed its assets and number of depositors, white banking institutions clearly saw the benefit of soliciting black customers and Page was assigned the task. Page, as supervisor, had six subordinates, who sought savings accounts from black friends, and acquaintances. They were also instructed by People's Bank officials to solicit accounts from the general public, perhaps in an effort to camouflage its ulterior motive---to lure Steel City and Modern State Banking customers into its fold.

Despite the success or failure of Page's staff in the solicitation of black savings accounts, the question must be raised, however, if Page would have been appointed to a leadership position by People's had Steel City not revealed its assets and the closing of both banks not occurred? Also, did People's give black customers loans to establish businesses and purchase homes as did the Steel City and Modern State Banks? While these questions remain unanswered, it is clear that this white banking institution took advantage of the opportunity to compete with, and later, capitalize on black business lost by both Pittsburgh's black financial institutions. One must wonder if black Pittsburghers, "burned" by the bank

⁷⁰ *"Race Man Appointed," The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 15, 1925, p. 5.

closings, reverted to the traditional ways of keeping their money by "hiding it underneath the rug or mattress," rather than face the thought of again, losing their earnings albeit a black or white banking institution.

Origins of the YMCA

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) movement in Pittsburgh began in 1854 when William Hunt, a seminary student read about the YMCA movement in London, initiated by George Williams, a merchant apprentice, in 1844.⁷¹ Hunt's interest in the YMCA prompted him to write a letter to the YMCA secretary in Washington, D.C. inquiring about this Christian association. Upon receiving this information, he, in turn, submitted a series of articles to local Pittsburgh newspapers concerning the YMCA and upon their publication, sparked the interest of three other young men who subsequently, organized a meeting March 16, 1854, in Second Presbyterian Church.⁷² An estimated 30 persons attended the first meeting resulting in a decision to form Pittsburgh's first YMCA and construct a constitution which was adopted March 23, 1854, at First Presbyterian Church. The formal organization of the city's YMCA whose purpose was "the religious and social

⁷¹William Hunt was a New Jersey native and after spending several years in Philadelphia, moved to Steubenville, Ohio to attend Jefferson College. In 1849, he attended Grove Academy also in Steubenville and later the Western Pennsylvania Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. "*Start of YMCA In Pittsburgh*," *The Pittsburgh Sun*, October 24, 1914. Vertical File, Pittsburgh YMCA, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁷²The three other men instrumental in the organization of a YMCA in Pittsburgh were Samuel T. Lowrie, a graduate of Miami University, and student at Western Theological Seminary; Robert Totten; and S.S. Bryan.

improvement of ourselves, and other young men in our midst," did not occur until March 27, 1854.⁷³ Once Pittsburgh's YMCA was organized, officers were elected for effective leadership, management, and service.

Origins of Black YMCAs

The work and reputation of the YMCA had spread rapidly to black communities and was soon to become one of the most important organizations for black men on both local and national levels. Jesse E. Mooreland of the YMCA's New York office, tells us that YMCA work with and by blacks began in 1853, when Anthony Bowen, a free Negro and friend of William Chancey Langdon, founder of the YMCA's International Committee and corresponding secretary of the white YMCA, established the first "colored" association in Washington, D.C.⁷⁴ It resulted because of Bowen and Langdon's overwhelming concern for the welfare of young black men. During the 1867 YMCA Convention, the following resolution was passed: "Resolved that the committee on Association of this convention be instructed to report such measures as in their judgement will best promote the formation of YMCAs among colored brethren throughout the United States."⁷⁵

⁷³ ***"Original Constitution Returns Miraculously: Old Document Loaned to Central YMCA Branch By Ohio Woman,"*** Vertical File, Pittsburgh YMCA, Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh; ***Four Young Men: A Brief History of the YMCA in Pittsburgh,*** (Pittsburgh: Herbick and Held Printing, Company, 1954), p. 4.

⁷⁴ ***"YMCA Beckons To You: Local Campaign Offers Right Opportunities to Develop The Body, Spirit,"*** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 10, 1929, p. 11; Jesse E. Mooreland, ***"Young Men's Christian Association Among Negroes,"*** *Journal of Negro History*, Volume IX (April) 1924, p. 127.

⁷⁵ Jesse E. Mooreland, p. 127.

In a subsequent move to solicit black membership and establish black YMCA's, William A. Hunton became the first black employed by the association in 1888. He worked as the International Secretary for Negro Work across the country, performed duties at the Norfolk, Virginia YMCA, and assisted Mooreland in the organization of black YMCA branches. The purpose of "Negro work" in the YMCA was to promote its cause in terms of improving spiritual, intellectual, and social conditions of young black men. Black branches of the YMCA emerged in Boston, New York City, and Brooklyn.

Many black men in northern urban communities, were attracted to the YMCA mainly, because of its facilities and organized activities which most of their communities lacked, and therefore, sought the establishment of the association in their respective communities. But, there were also other reasons. In New York, Reverend Charles T. Walker, pastor of Mount Olive Baptist Church, "wanted to establish a YMCA for southern migrants, because so much trouble was made by poor fellows not having a place to go."⁷⁶ A "colored" YMCA in Philadelphia was necessary, because "a grave and dangerous lack of proper places of amusement and recreation for young men existed." In Chicago and Evansville, Indiana, racism and discrimination prompted the city's black men to request a YMCA for their communities as the (white) YMCAs were "off limits" to them. This movement for "colored YMCAs soon spread to Pittsburgh.

⁷⁶Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem the Making of a Ghetto, 1890-1930*, (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1963), p. 15; Russell H. Davis, *Black Americans in Cleveland*, (Associated Publishers: Washington, D.C. 1972), p. 151; Lane Rogers, p. 296; Darrel E. Bigam, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: Black Community in Evansville, Indiana*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 123; DuBois, p. 232.

The "colored" branch of the Pittsburgh YMCA was the fourth branch founded in the city in 1893, preceded by the Downtown branch (1854); East Liberty (1874); and Pennsylvania Railway Pitcairn (1883). The executive board of Pittsburgh's YMCA "felt the need to bring the Negro into the YMCA when a representative body of black men from the Wylie Avenue district definitely requested us to consider forming a branch. They cannot be disregarded."⁷⁷ In September 1893, the YMCA branch for blacks was formally organized with approximately 80 men in a rented store room on Wylie Avenue. W.T. Poole, a mortician and trustee of Ebenezer Baptist Church, was the first black director of the "colored" YMCA in Pittsburgh and under his leadership the association moved into a three-story building at 1847 Wylie Avenue.⁷⁸

Fund-raising Campaigns

The activities of Pittsburgh's "colored" YMCA were sketchy during the late 19th century and first decade of the 20th century due to a lack of sources, but an attempt has been made to tell the story as accurately as the data has permitted. Beginning the second decade of the 20th century, the leadership of the "colored" YMCA engaged a series of building fund campaigns, membership drives, educational, religious, and recreational activities. In 1911, it ran a series of advertisement campaigns in *The Pittsburgh Courier* soliciting subscriptions for its YMCA headquarters:

⁷⁷*Four Young Men: A Brief History of the YMCA of Pittsburgh*, p. 28.

⁷⁸*Secretarial Newsletter, International Committee of the YMCA*, New York City, November 1928, Volume 6, Number 2, p. 5.



Figure. 44. Centre Avenue YWCA (1893)

It behooves every man or woman who subscribed to the Building Fund (sic) for the YMCA to redeem their pledges at once. The building now bought at a cost of \$25,000...\$12,000 pledged and \$5,000 collected. With the equipment of this building, needed improvements will be necessary to make it adaptable for YMCA purposes and the race will have in Greater Pittsburg (sic) a building of which you need not be ashamed.⁷⁹

The financial records were not available to ascertain whether the black community responded to the "colored" YMCA's pleas to pay their subscriptions.

However, some headway was obviously made, because three years later, the "colored" YMCA with the help of 200 black women, sponsored a one week Inter-Society Bazaar at Knox Presbyterian Church which netted approximately \$650 targeted to mortgage the current Wylie Avenue site. Fund-raising campaigns were a priority among the YMCA's leadership as they were a significant part of all institutions, both black and white to finance program operations, purchase furnishings, recreational equipment and to maintain the facility.

As Pittsburgh's YMCAs expanded their programs, the membership and use of the facility steadily increased which led to campaign for new buildings October 7th through November 6th, 1916, for designated Pittsburgh branches. The National Board of the YMCA agreed that the lack of modern YMCA buildings in the city made it difficult for the association to carry on its work. During the YMCA meeting of January 1917, the Forward Movement Program was established to build four YMCA structures and modernize existing YMCAs. Included on the list for a new facility was Pittsburgh's "colored" YMCA with the

⁷⁹ “*“Pay Your Subscriptions’ Redemption of Pledges in Full Means Much to Race in Pittsburgh,”* *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 3, 1911, p. 1.

following amenities: a spacious dormitory for 85 men, baths, locker rooms, a swimming pool, classrooms, lecture halls for night school, a social hall, and cafeteria.⁸⁰ The dormitory was especially important, because black students attending local universities were barred from residence halls as were Pullman porters from white hotels.

Dr. J.E. Mooreland, campaign director and secretary of the International Committee of the YMCA, New York City, organized teams of 100 workers to raise money for the YMCA expansion project. Both white and black members were expected to participate in this fund-raising endeavor and to raise specific sums of money, because all of Pittsburgh's YMCAs would benefit. For example, the colored people of Pittsburgh were mandated to raise \$10,000 to obtain a \$25,000 grant from Julius Rosenwald.⁸¹ To the surprise of whites and probably, themselves, they successfully raised \$15,512, almost \$6,000 more than required to receive the Rosenwald gift. In three days, the Flying Squadron, composed of black high school young men, raised \$586.50. With both successes, the construction of a new "colored" YMCA began in the Spring of 1917.

The Centre Avenue YMCA was completed in 1923, with a large dedication service attended by some of the most renowned YMCA leaders and members.⁸² Dr. J.E. Mooreland,

⁸⁰ *"Let's Finish the Job,"* June 1, 1923. Vertical File, Pittsburgh YMCA, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁸¹ *Pennsylvania Association News*, November 1916, Number 81, Volume XXI, p. 29. Julius Rosenwald was a white philanthropist who made substantial contributions to the establishment and improvement of "colored" YMCAs across the country.

⁸² Some of the speakers for the occasion were Frederick B. Shipp, executive secretary of the Pittsburgh YMCA; Ralph Harbison, president of the Pittsburgh organization; Samuel R. Morsell, executive secretary of the Centre Avenue branch of the YMCA. Arch Deacon James S. Russell gave the dedicatory prayer which was pronounced by Father Shelton Hale Bishop. Mary

secretary of the Negro Men's Department of the YMCA, gave the dedicatory address:

I dedicate this building to the physical, intellectual, social, moral, religious welfare and development of the young men and boys of this community. I dedicate it to the maintenance of goodwill among men, the aidance (sic) of the church, sacredness of the home and establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.⁸³

During the ceremony attended by more than 500 people, the keys to the new facility were presented to Ralph Harbison, president of the YMCA with a response from noted attorney, Homer S. Brown. With the closing of the dedication ceremony, the special programs for black males of the community organized by Samuel R. Morsell were soon implemented.

YMCA Activities

Numerous activities occurred inside the walls of the "colored" YMCA. For example, Joseph Garner, a graduate of Lincoln University and the Chicago YMCA Training School, and current Director of Boys Work, conducted open-air meetings on Saturday and Sunday nights during the summer, and parents meetings throughout the city. A Father and Son Banquet was held March 23, 1916, with approximately 60 boys and their fathers attending this family-oriented activity. For boys whose fathers were absent from The home or deceased, "Banquet Dads," were provided. An illustrated lecture reviewing composer, Samuel Coleridge Taylor, and a study on "The Musical Status of the Pittsburgh Negro were

Burwell Turner sang a solo.

⁸³ Julia Bumry Jones, "*Dr. Mooreland Tells Aim of Organization, Magnificent Structure, Pittsburgh's Dream—Formally Opened, Memorable Occasion,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 6, 1923, p. 1.

also featured at the "colored" YMCA; and sponsored a Wednesday Noon Luncheon Forum Series.⁸⁴

During the 1940s, the Program Committee of the "colored" YMCA, to expose its membership and the Pittsburgh community to culture and art organized the First Annual Photographers Show, February 4, 1945, with exhibits featuring the works of the city's most renowned black photographers.⁸⁵

The Centre Avenue YMCA began to establish recreational programs. In most northern urban communities, organized recreation for blacks was undesirable or unavailable. However, the founding of Pittsburgh's "colored" YMCA provided numerous opportunities for them to engage. The athletic prowess of Captain Henry A. Clay, led to the organization of a baseball team. Black men and boys using the YMCA played a variety of organized sports including basketball, boxing, and swimming.

Sports leagues became a large part of the Y's program with the establishment of in church and local basketball leagues in 1927. The city's black men and boys participated in these leagues and national competitions. For example, it played other "colored" YMCAs such as the "Motor City Quintet" from Detroit, Michigan; and the 'Y' Vandals played the Central Baptist Church Five. In 1945, the 'Y' Big Five won the national championship. Boxing, one of the most exciting sports, was part of the "colored" YMCA's program

⁸⁴ *Pennsylvania Association News*, Representing the YMCA of Pennsylvania, May 1916, Volume XX, Number 79, p. 23; "*Lensmen Show Work at YMCA*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 3, 1945, p. 2.

⁸⁵ The black photographers included: Teenie Harris, Filbert Olmstead, Luther Johnson, Percy Garland, Matt Lewis, Oceania Sockwell, M. Larrington; and William Stanley. Also the works of black artists, Samuel Milai and Wilbert Holloway were displayed.

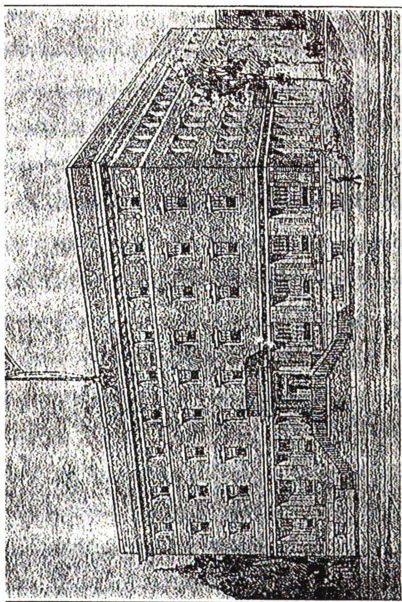


Figure. 45. Centre Avenue YMCA (1923)

attracting such sports figures as, Billy Conn, Joe Louis, Harry Bobo, a local heavyweight fighter, and Henry Armstrong who frequented the Centre Avenue YMCA.

Membership Campaigns

During the 1920s the Centre Avenue branch of the YMCA met many successes relative to staff increases, membership, attendance, and benevolence. In 1923, the YMCA employed a secretarial staff of four persons. Two hundred thirty-two men and 308 boys were members of the "colored" YMCA and a total of 17,886 black men attended various programs and participated in association activities. According to statistics, more than 20,000 black males between the ages of 10 and 50 resided in Pittsburgh, but only 1.5 percent were involved in the "colored"YMCA.⁸⁶ Although memberships were minimal, attendance statistics for the YMCA revealed extensive use of the facility by non-members. The small membership may be attributed to its expensive joining fee. In other words, the lack of funds could have hindered numerous black men and youth interested in the YMCA from purchasing a membership.

Since the "colored" YMCAs inception, membership campaigns were conducted on a regular basis by its black leadership. It was significant, because the association assumed the greatest responsibility for the development of Negro youth by providing guidance, establishing and making available programs intended to convey the meaning and importance

⁸⁶Ira De Reid, *A Survey of the Negro in Pittsburgh*, p. 107.

of citizenship and responsibility.⁸⁷ During these campaigns, the YMCA's leadership sought new members, membership renewals, and to enroll as many persons as possible into the Y's variety of programs and classes, so that they might enjoy the full benefits of the association.

However, the "colored" YMCA's leadership constantly engaged in membership drives. The Annual YMCA Report of 1927, revealed a successful membership campaign in May which captured 524 new members. During this campaign, the YMCA staff also raised \$1000 for the sole purpose of purchasing memberships for those individuals unable to afford one. But given the large number of black males in the city, the number of YMCA members was only a "drop in a bucket." This may have been a result of the YMCA's religious philosophy or reputation as a Christian association. In other words, large numbers of black males refused to join, because it was not a secular institution. They may have also been dissuaded from joining the YMCA, because they were already affiliated with a religious institution.

Even though black males were not "racing" to become members of Centre Avenue YMCA, W.T. Poole and Robert L. Vann two of its "movers and shakers," continued to raise money with hopes of accommodating a larger membership. In 1928, W.T. Poole chaired an \$8500 fund-raising campaign which netted \$10,000 in subscriptions.⁸⁸ Vann and his seven member Royal Order of the Spizzerinktum, a local lodge founded by R.B. DeFrantz, raised

⁸⁷ *"The 'Y' Is A Symbol of Democracy—Join Now! The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 11, 1941, p. 3.

⁸⁸ *Secretarial Newsletter*, International Committee of the YMCA New York City, Colored Men's Department, Volume 6, Number 2, November 1928, p. 5.



Figure 46. W.T. Poole

\$2600 cash in five days for the "colored" YMCA. Part of Pittsburgh's black "upper crust," they were inducted into the Centre Avenue YMCA's Red Triangle Hall of Fame for their fund-raising achievement.⁸⁹

Between 1929-1941, the YMCA's leadership used several methods to increase its membership. In 1929, under the leadership of Robert L. Vann, a campaign was launched to secure 500 men and boys within five working days. To reach this goal, prospect cards and letters were mailed to residents, but more importantly, every large industrial plant and commercial enterprise throughout the city was canvassed by YMCA members and volunteers. In 1941, the Centre Avenue YMCA workers were so successful in increasing its enrollment that they won possession of the Holgar Johnson Trophy placing first in the competitive YMCA city-wide membership campaign by exceeding the \$6,000 goal.

Impact of the YMCA on the Black Community

Given the few places where large meetings and dinners could be held, the Centre Avenue YMCA became one of the most utilized facilities of the city's black organizations and institutions. The Pittsburgh Urban League used the YMCA for a social workers conference and, in 1935, its Sixth Annual Forum Meeting with Eugene Kinckle Jones, Chief

⁸⁹ "*In Red Triangle Hall of Fame*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 16, 1929, p. 9. Members of Robert L. Vann's lodge were: Richard Jones, an attorney in the law firm of Brown and Jones; Henry Kennedy, a mortician with funeral establishments on the North Side and East Liberty; William Fitts, a real estate broker; John W. Lemon, an insurance broker whose business was located on Wylie Avenue; John Branch, owner of a light installation business; an employee of Duquesne Light; and Maxwell Thompson whose occupation was unlisted.

Division of Negro Affairs, United States Department of Commerce, as speaker. On November 9, 1943, Warren United Methodist Church celebrated its 63rd Church Anniversary Banquet featuring Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Sr., at the "colored" YMCA.

The major benefactors of the "colored YMCA were black male college students. While the city's colleges and universities admitted black students, racism and discrimination restricted them from dormitory living. The Centre Avenue YMCA became home for those students struggling to uplift themselves and the race. Dormitory space accommodated young men in the YMCA. At least twenty-five percent of YMCA residents were students at the University of Pittsburgh, and the Pittsburgh School of Technology. The remaining seventy-five percent were working men, many of whom were currently, employed by Westinghouse Electric Manufacturing Company.

Kay Community Club

The Kay Boys Club evolved as a result of four prominent citizens both black and white who were disturbed by the distasteful environment in which black Hill District youth were exposed, during the peak of the Depression. Unemployment, delinquency, health, leisure activities without proper supervision, and disjointed families provided an unhealthy environment for black youth. Mrs. Charles Longenecker, George L. Hailman, Board of Managers of the Old Newsboys Home; and Homer S. Brown and Harry K. Craft, representatives of the "colored" YMCA; engaged in discussions to minimize, if not, alleviate the difficulties facing the Hill District's black youth.

The consequence of these discussions was the establishment of the Kay Community

Club in 1931, an extension of the Pittsburgh's Newsboys's Home. It was named in honor of James Kay, a noted white Pittsburgh patent attorney, whom also served as president of the Pittsburgh Newsboys Home.⁹⁰ The Kay Club financed mainly by the Pittsburgh Newsboys Home was a social agency for underprivileged black males under eighteen years old.⁹¹ Established at 2038 Bedford Avenue in a three-story building which formerly housed a factory, the Kay Club had several objectives: to develop character and leadership; promote better neighborhoods, community pride; encourage a higher standard of family and community life; inter-racial goodwill; promote the interest in individual and community health by encouraging preventive health measures; education; recreation; employment assistance; and to provide space for community activities, vocational classes, meetings for civic groups, and clinics.⁹² For the next four years, the Kay Club was led by C.W. Hawkins.

During the 1930s, Pittsburgh black males associated with the Kay Boy's Club participated in numerous athletic competitions against other males in both the city and Allegheny County. In 1934, they won three track meets, sponsored by Allegheny County, the United Spanish War Veterans, and the AMA Championships for Men. Victorious in boxing, members of the Kay Boy's Club boxing team, in 1937, won the Jr. AMA and AAU

⁹⁰ "**Kay House**," *The Bulletin Index*, November 10, 1938. Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, Kay Boys Club, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁹¹ The Pittsburgh Newsboy's Home was chartered in 1888 to assist homeless newsboys. However, it amended its organizational charter to expand its work to underprivileged boys.

⁹² "**12th Anniversary Celebration Kay Boy's Club**," Sunday April 11, 1943. Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, The Pennsylvania Department, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Championship sponsored by the Metropolitan Club and its baseball team, the Metropolitan Baseball Title sponsored by Honus Wagner in 1938.⁹³ While it is unclear who the opponents and participants of the Kay Boy's Club were in these athletic competitions, their victories suggest that organized recreational activities were an asset to Kay Club members who once lacked such supervision.

By 1939, the Kay Club experienced its first set of difficulties. First, more than 800 boys had joined the club causing severe overcrowding. However, this problem was resolved when management purchased a building next to the Kay Club to alleviate overcrowding and simultaneously, expanded its programs. The additional facility included a gymnasium, library, three craft rooms, a kitchen, music rooms, and two large game rooms. It also allowed the Kay Community Club establish a children's health clinic and pre-school playroom on the premises. Second, the Kay Club was short of staff due to the overwhelming participation of Hill District young black males. The data do not reveal how or if this problem was eliminated, but suggests that none of the programs were discontinued nor was the Kay Club's membership closed to interested persons. As a matter of fact, a limited program for girls and camping opportunities were initiated amidst this staff shortage.

Operating since the club's inception was the Women's Auxiliary of the Kay Boy's Club which developed into three units: the first organized in 1931 by Adrena Allen; the second, in 1943 under the leadership of Rosa L. Hand; and the third by Margaret Lampkin

⁹³ *"Kay Club Celebrates Ten Years of Progress: Agency Devoted to Problems of Pittsburgh Youth Is One of Nation's Unique Projects," The Pittsburgh Courier, June 28, 1941, p. 3.*

in 1944. These black women assumed responsibility for building improvements and provided support services for Kay Club participants with specific problems related to home, school, and employment. The Women's Auxiliary also organized a variety of fund-raising activities such as, bake sales, card parties, and banquets to support the Kay Club's program's. It was perhaps the help of these auxiliaries totaling approximately 30 women, that supplemented the Kay Club's staff shortage.

Impact of the Kay Boy's Club

The 1940s showed significant signs of the benefits the Kay Club provided not just for black males in the black community, but for parents as well. Dr. Roderick Brown, a black Pittsburgh physician administered physical examinations and treatment for minor injuries to Kay Club participants and by June 1941, had examined an estimated 200 patients. Employment opportunities for young black males were obtained as 46 of them were placed in jobs. The types of employment, however, were not revealed, but given the ages of these young men, the jobs were probably of a menial nature as well as the pay. But, perhaps these earnings were used to improve the low economic status of their respective households.

With various aspects of the Hill District community engaged in Kay Club activities and its outreach program, a nursery school for Negro children was created for ages 2-4 and led by Eunice Wright Cook, a registered nurse; a Negro Art School under the direction of John Gore which involved art exhibits, art classes open to the public, and offered charcoal and pencil work; and a Community Needs Program, established which provided seeds and garden plots for low-income families to grow their own vegetables. The Kay Club also made

accessible to the Hill District community registration for public housing, summer day camp, free employment services in conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Employment Bureau.

In addition to the Wylie Avenue Branch of Carnegie Library, the Kay Boy's Club also maintained a library with approximately 500 volumes to be used by its members as well as the black community. Classes in drama, cooking, sewing, and music were also offered to black underprivileged Hill District residents. The Kay Club provided entertainment in the form of "talking picture shows" with two hour shows weekly at a cost of three cents with an average attendance of 175.⁹⁴

By 1943, the managers of the Kay Boy's Club had substantial statistics which demonstrated its commitment and importance to the Hill District community. For example, 260 young black males received counseling for various types of problems including "personality corrections;" 1,325 participated in arts and crafts; 32,680 used the facility's game rooms; 53,659 participated in numerous activities sponsored by the Kay Club; 55 special events were held in the Kay Club and attended by 4990 persons; 5400 children attended the "talking picture shows;" and an average of 250 persons daily used the club.⁹⁵ It was undoubtedly, this kind of participation and support of the Hill District community that the Kay Club impacted black Pittsburgh. The following year a modern building was purchased at the corner of Wylie Avenue and Green Street for the further expansion and

⁹⁴ *"Kay Club Celebrates Ten Years of Progress,"* p. 3.

⁹⁵ *"Kay Boy's Club, Program Dedication, September 10-17, 1944: New Kay Boy's Club Building."* Vertical File, Pittsburgh Charities, Kay Boy's Club, Pennsylvania Department, the Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh.

commitment of Kay Club work.

Conclusion

Pittsburgh's black community established an old folks home; a home for working girls, three black orphanages; one black hospital; and two black banks. This number of black institutions was small compared to those in Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Philadelphia, simply, because Pittsburgh's black population was not comparable to these cities and therefore, unable to financially support as many institutions. However, DuBois, Allan Spear, Kenneth Kusmer, and other scholars have pointed out that even larger cities where blacks were concentrated struggled to maintain their institutions. So, black Pittsburgh's struggles to do the same were not isolated.

Contrary to Forrester B. Washington's unfair charge that, "the Negro was pathetic as ever (in social welfare work) and apparently, still willing to let the other fellow carry him," Pittsburgh blacks, Mary Peck Bond; Ella Grayson; the Colemans; the Davises; Beulah Ella Mason; and Reverend Messer, should be credited with having taken the initiative toward self-help as no other blacks had assumed responsibility for the old, young, and indigent through the establishment of homes and orphanages. First, white philanthropy to black institutions, with few exceptions, was often to maintain segregation. Second, the behavior of Pittsburgh's black professional class and businessmen was questioned, because it focused on only the needs of the "colored" YMCA and YWCA. We must remember, however, that Pittsburgh's black women's clubs, as we have seen in chapter two, supported the city's black institutions on a regular basis.

The Steel City Banking Company and Modern State Banking Companies were an asset to the black community and Pittsburgh blacks enjoyed the benefit of having them, of course, until they collapsed. Bank closings, however, were not unusual, because white banks had also been closed by the Pennsylvania State Banking Commission for the same reasons, but were not publicized to the magnitude of black banks. Despite the demise of Pittsburgh's black financial institutions, Austin and Phillips ventured into untread waters to improve the quality of life for black Pittsburghers by providing financial and real estate opportunities otherwise unavailable from white banking institutions.

Since slavery in the Americas, health among blacks has been a major problem confronting society and the medical profession. Black medical professionals successfully established black hospitals to deal with sickness, disease, and high mortality rates. Though black Pittsburgh physicians attempted to build a hospital to better accommodate the city's blacks, because the current site of Livingstone Memorial Hospital on Bedford Avenue, was no longer sufficient, they failed. A lack of cooperation from the black community, the Livingstone Memorial Hospital Association's inability to raise funds, infighting, and the ease with which the new plans for the hospital, implemented by the Interracial Committee, were stretched far beyond their reach. And, perhaps the intervention of whites and failure of the new hospital for blacks was designed to keep blacks in "their place." Nonetheless, the LMH continued to operate its hospital on Bedford Avenue.

A lack recreation in northern urban communities was prevalent and attributed to high crime rates and delinquency rate among blacks. In Pittsburgh, the "colored" YMCA and Kay Community Clubs provided an outlet for black males. Although they were established 37

years apart, the educational, social, and organized recreational programs available contributed to exposure, friendships, and competition, and more, importantly, the building of character. With the presence of these two institutions in the Hill District community, black males had new opportunities and were probably less likely to become involved in criminal activity. The YMCA made it easier for black males to attend the city's educational institutions without housing concerns and the Kay Boys Club even found jobs for many of its participants.

Despite the small number of black institutions in Pittsburgh, its founders realized they were a necessity and attempted to "take care of their own race." These institutions, even in the midst of criticism and financial difficulties, served their purpose by touching the lives of those blacks which would have otherwise remained untouched. The disappointment does not lie in the controversies they faced, but in the insufficient number of institutions and low economic status of Pittsburgh blacks who could not adequately support them. And, the reality according to Kenneth Kusmer, was that "blacks were frequently unable to establish separate race institutions without at least some white assistance." Even so, three of Pittsburgh's black institutions created by sympathetic blacks: The Coleman Industrial Home for Colored Boys, the Davis for Colored Children, and the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Women survived beyond 1945.

Chapter 6

Local Black Politics in Pittsburgh: Leadership or Leaderless?

As the city's blacks engaged self-help initiatives through the founding of black institutions, they also began to help themselves in other ways. Political participation among Pittsburgh blacks was not common as Chapter One has elicited. For example, during the antebellum period, Pittsburgh's black leadership along with that of other northern urban communities, fought for enfranchisement, racial equality, and an end to racial prejudice through a number of vehicles including petitions, resolutions to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and the Negro Convention Movement. They realized that solutions to these issues would improve black lives in some significant way.

At the turn of the century, not much, however, had changed for Pittsburgh blacks. They remained disfranchised, black activists were unsuccessful in their efforts to mobilize the community for political participation; racism became more pronounced in every aspect of black life; and racial equality was still an unfulfilled wish among the city's blacks. What then, were black Pittsburghers to do? How were they going to resolve these problems? Black political participation, they thought, was the answer to these questions.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore local black politics in Pittsburgh including political participation and mobilization, patronage, and the founding of black political organizations. This study further examines the important role of Robert L. Vann and *The Pittsburgh Courier*, and its influence on Pittsburgh's black voters in local, state, and national elections. It was thought by Pittsburgh's black leaders that political participation would lead

to self-respect, respect from white politicians and white society as a whole.

Origins of Black Political Participation

The history of black politics began in the late 19th and 20th centuries and was chiefly the history of black Republicanism.¹ Most blacks, especially those from the South, were indelibly ingrained in the Republican Party as an expression of gratitude to former President, Abraham Lincoln, whom they believed freed the slaves. Similarly, blacks in the mid-west also favored the Republican Party. For example, blacks in Evansville, Indiana, believed the party of Lincoln was the only guarantor of race progress.² Renowned national black leaders, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington were supporters of the Republican Party and their influence on the nation's blacks may have also had a significant impact on their political party affiliation.

During the Reconstruction Period, approximately twenty southern black Republicans were elected to Congress and two black United States Senators. They included southern Congressmen Joseph H. Rainey, Robert Elliott, and Josiah T. Walls, Blanche K. Bruce and Hiram Revels, respectively. Black political leaders also received federal appointments. Frederick Douglass, under the Presidential administration of Ulysses S. Grant, was appointed

¹Dorsey J. Travis, *An Autobiography of Black Politics*, (Chicago: Urban Resource Press, 1987), p. 131.

²Darrel E. Bigam, *We Ask Only A Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 194. Bigam paints a vivid picture of black politics in Evansville as local blacks struggled for political rights, attempted to understand party politics, and carve themselves a place in the political arena.

Commissioner of Haiti and several other blacks to consular agent, collector for the Internal Revenue Service, and postmaster of a small city.³ This was an early demonstration of patronage to black leaders, a practice that would continue and escalate on various levels of government throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. There were, in fact, northern blacks elected to State Legislature such as, John P. Green, Jere Brown, and Harry C. Smith, all of Ohio, during the late 19th century.

All of the early black politicians were Republicans and received white Republican support. Most had college educations while others were self-trained. More importantly, most black candidates for political offices were not professional politicians, but race or civic leaders who regarded politics as one of several avenues to black advancement.⁴

From this point, blacks actively participated in politics. They continued to run for political offices, allowed themselves to be recruited by both the Republican and Democratic parties, sought patronage jobs, personal favors, services for their communities, and campaigned for white politicians as well as their own. Blacks interested in politics and black politicians formed local political organizations to mobilize the black community, support black candidates, “get out” the vote on election day, and select candidates sensitive to the needs of blacks. In New York, blacks formed the United Colored Democracy; St. Louis, the Negro Jefferson League; Cleveland, the Twelfth Ward Republican Club; Philadelphia, the

³ Harold F. Gosnell, *The Negro in Politics: The Rise of Negro Politics In Chicago*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 7. Despite this book's age, it is an extremely important work on black politics and can possibly be used as a model for other political studies on urban communities or at least lend itself as a tool for comparative studies.

⁴ Allan Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 119.

Citizens Republican Club; and Chicago, the Appomatox Club which were all established during the late 19th and first decade of the 20th centuries.⁵ In Pittsburgh, no political clubs existed before the turn of the century except the Colored Voters Council organized in 1874. This was by no means an indication that Pittsburgh blacks were not interested in politics, but the seeds had yet to be sewn.

Disfranchisement of Blacks

Blacks were drafted into the military and yet, denied participation in the electoral process. Blacks were the victims of “taxation without representation.” Although black children attended public schools, their parents were refused participation in the election of school officials. The disfranchisement of blacks in the South spread to the North, because racist whites felt that blacks were unqualified to exercise the ballot. Southern states, for example, based black voter qualifications on literacy, property ownership, and payment of taxes. In cases where blacks did meet the qualifications imposed upon them by white law makers, other tactics were used to keep blacks from the polls such as, intimidation.

But, during World War I, the influx of blacks to northern cities had political connotations. The race massed in certain counties and wards were often able to control the selection of local officials in cities such as, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and

⁵Haynes Walton, Jr. and Mervyn Dymally, “*Democratic Party*,” in the *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, Volume 2, Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornell West, eds. (New York: MacMillan Library Reference USA, 1996), p. 744; Spear, p. 78; Roger Lane, *William Dorsey’s Philadelphia and Ours: On the Past and Future of the Black City in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 206; Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland 1870-1930*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 143.

Cleveland.⁶ Realizing the strength of black voters, white politicians began to reward them with patronage jobs on all levels of government. For example, blacks on the federal level of government were appointed as janitors and clerks. As blacks began to realize their own political power, they asserted themselves to demand significant patronage jobs with more responsibility.

Overview of Pittsburgh Politics

Pittsburgh was the birthplace of the Republican Party. It was the site of the first National Convention of the Republican Party February 22-23, 1856, to organize emerging groups of Republicans which had increased in states where slavery was prohibited.⁷ Republicans had maintained control of Pennsylvania throughout the 19th century. For example, on the local level they dominated the city of Pittsburgh when attorney Tommy Steele, organized the Republican machine and, was later, seceded by his nephew Christopher Lynn in 1887, who headed the Allegheny County Executive Committee.⁸

By 1917, there were no Democratic State Senators or governors and the Pennsylvania State Legislature was dominated by the Republican Party as was its congressional delegation. Historian Andrew Buni, points out that the “Republican control

⁶John G. Van Deusen, “*The Negro in Politics*,” *Journal of Negro History*, 21 (July) 1936, p. 266.

⁷Samuel Church Harden, *A Short History of Pittsburgh, 1758-1908*, (New York: The DeVinne Press, 1908), p. 53. At the meeting, the platform of the Republican Party was to repeal of all laws allowing the introduction of slavery into free territories.

⁸Buni, p. 90.

of the city was so complete that there were few challenges to its power.” This was, in part, because Pittsburgh’s Republican Party consisted of the city’s power brokers including prominent bankers and wealthy industrialists. In short, the Republican Party actually dominated Pittsburgh politics until 1932, the age of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, when the city’s black shifted from the Republican to the Democratic Party.

Pittsburgh was comprised of 32 wards of which the Third and Fifth Wards contained the largest concentration of black voters. More than half of the black voters resided in these two wards with an estimated potential of 17,000 votes. In twenty-one wards, blacks constituted less than five percent of the registered voters; in four wards five to ten percent of the voters; and in five wards eleven to twenty percent of the voters.⁹

Local Black Politics

During the first three decades of the 20th century, almost 100 percent of Pittsburgh blacks were registered to vote and voted Republican. As blacks in northern and southern cities alike, black Pittsburghers were not recognized by the Republican Party which knew that black voters would support the Party of Lincoln without question. From 1900 to the early 1930s, nearly all black voters were registered Republicans and not a single black vote was cast for the Democratic Party.¹⁰ Northern blacks were virtually as helpless as those in

⁹Ruth Louise Simmons, *The Negro in Recent Pittsburgh Politics*, M.A. Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 1945, p. 3.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 4. Though Simmons asserts that no blacks voted for a Democrat during this period, she presents no evidence to that effect. As Darrel Bigham points out in the case of Evansville, Indiana, Republicans usually took most if not all of the predominantly black precincts. This may well have been the case in Pittsburgh.

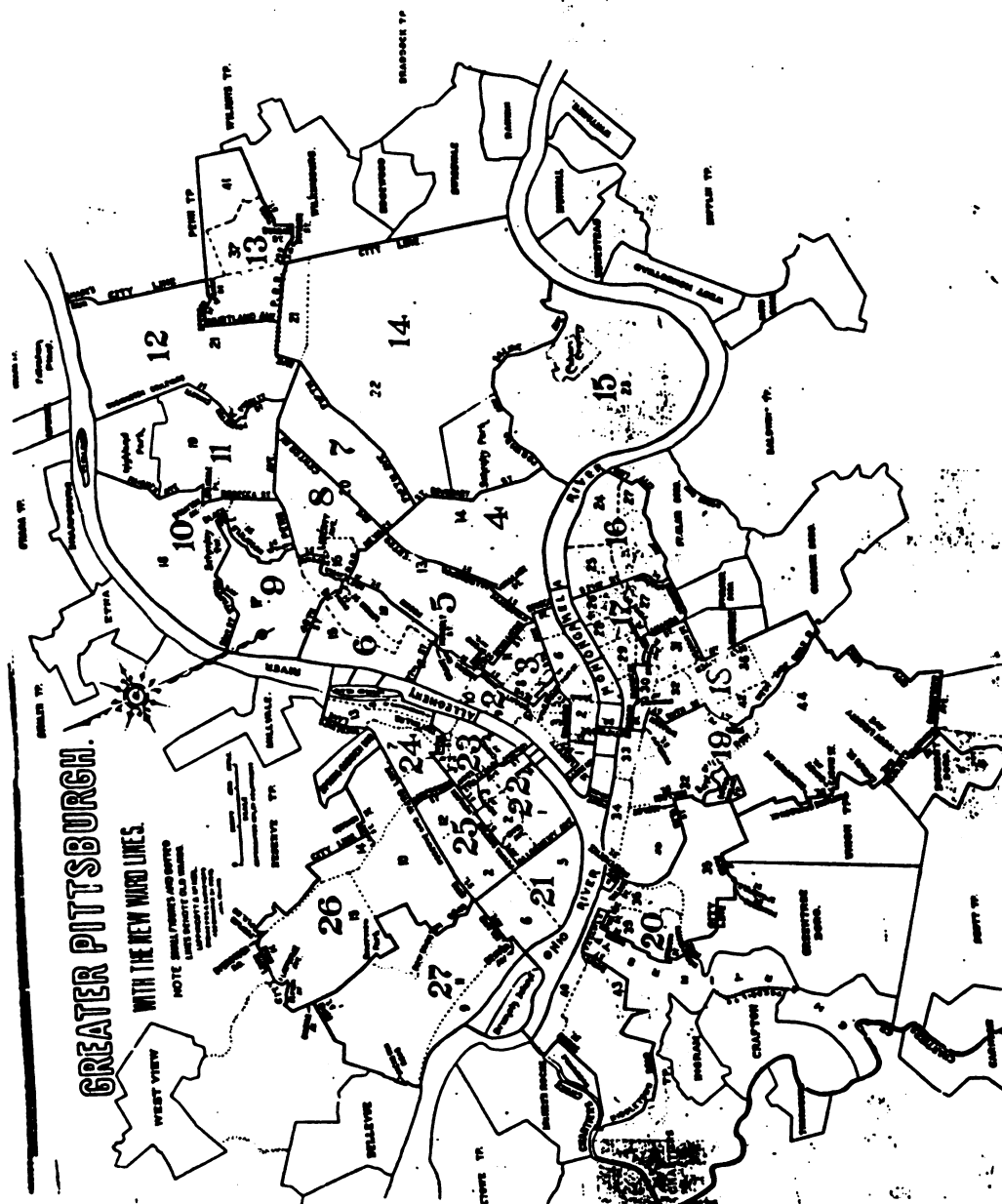


Figure. 46. Ward Map of Pittsburgh

the South, because they vested their political support in one party---the Republican Party.

Robert L. Vann was significant to Pittsburgh's black politics and ultimately had exerted some influence over black voters in national politics. Vann, a native of Ahoskie, North Carolina, was born to former slaves in 1879. He received his education at Water's Normal School in North Carolina; Virginia Union in Richmond, Virginia; and a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1909, where he subsequently, established his law practice. The following year, Vann purchased a newspaper from John Harleston which became *The Pittsburgh Courier*.¹¹ This was Pittsburgh's second black newspaper since the publication of Delany's *Mystery*.

Between 1917-1919, Robert L. Vann, launched an editorial campaign in *The Pittsburgh Courier* for the mobilization of the local black vote, to encourage voter registration of all blacks the city and Allegheny County. Vann was probably, the first Pittsburgh black to engage politics by campaigning for a white Republican mayoral candidate, A.M. Jenkins in 1917. Successful in his bid as mayor of Pittsburgh, Jenkins repaid Vann for obtaining the city's black vote, with a patronage job as a clerk in the Office of the Mercantile Appraiser. This was perhaps, the onset of more black political participation in Pittsburgh politics and further encouragement to venture into the political arena.

¹¹*The Pittsburgh Courier* was initially founded in 1910 and incorporated by William E. Hance, Samuel Rosemond, William N. Page, and C.W. Posey, Sr. and Edward Harleston with Vann's expertise. During this period, the newspaper suffered extreme financial difficulty, so Vann's legal fees were paid with ten shares of stock in the *Courier*. Vann whose journalism experience was as editor of the University of Pittsburgh's student newspaper transformed the failing newspaper into "the world's most influential Negro-owned newspaper." See William G. Nunn Sr.'s, "*The Pittsburgh Courier Story*."

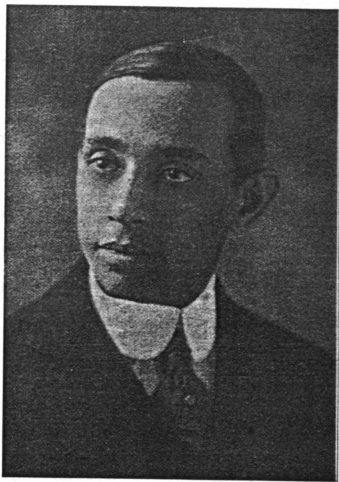


Figure. 47. Robert L. Vann

William Nunn, Sr. described Vann's writing as "vitriolic, incisive, and at times abrupt. He found issues aplenty and spared no one." He also points out that Vann wrote about economics, black culture, social development of blacks, and politics. Vann, in spite of his many talents and notoriety, was also no stranger to controversy.

Black Pittsburghers began seeking local political offices as early as 1912, at least a decade later than black Chicagoans and Clevelanders.¹² This was perhaps because the city's blacks were not politically astute, apathetic, and significant numbers of Pittsburgh blacks failed to register to vote. Gunnar Myrdal also tells us that this "failure of blacks to vote were ignorance, poverty, and timidity caused by violence in the South" which was often perpetuated in the North. All these factors implied that black candidates would be unable to muster substantial support from the race to become viable candidates and succeed. However, some of the city's prominent blacks entered the political arena despite the impossible odds of winning an elective office.

The political offices sought by Pittsburgh blacks from 1919-1937 were alderman, city councilman, ward chairman, and State Legislator. In 1919, Robert H. Logan, a fireman, and former employee of Allegheny County's Assessor's Office, became the city's first black alderman. Logan's defeat of incumbent Martin J. Griffin (white) was the result of a black, Jewish, and Irish coalition led by Colonel John Elmore, an Irishman and political leader, and George S. Oliver, which subsequently, split the white vote in Pittsburgh's Fifth Ward. Logan's victory signified blacks could successfully run for political office, but only with white support.

This was true in other northern cities as well. For example, in Chicago, Ferdinand Barnett, a black attorney who ran for a city office, could not have won the election without

¹²In 1912, black attorney Frank R. Steward, was a candidate for the First Legislative District in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Also called "Capt. Steward" by his peers, he lost the primary election to fellow Republican, Thomas P. Geary, although he was endorsed by (white) George S. Oliver, a leading Pittsburgh Republican.

white support. Those blacks elected to Ohio's State Legislature during the 19th century, needed white voter support to win their elections. The black populations of these cities and other northern urban communities where blacks voted, were entirely too small to elect black political candidates on their own.

Robert Logan served as Fifth Ward alderman until 1925, when his constituents became disgruntled by many of his decisions. For example, Pittsburgh black leaders complained that "where arbitration presented a Negro (sic) against a white face, the white face favored."¹³ Bob Logan refused to support the Fifth Ward's colored (sic) political organizations and leadership. A case in point, was his endorsement of Richard Martin as District Attorney when black political organizations endorsed Samuel Gardner. Under Logan's political leadership, blacks received no patronage jobs from the Republican party for their support. Voters of Pittsburgh's Fifth Ward in the 1925 election, returned their political support to Martin J. Griffin, whom they helped Logan defeat in the 1919 aldermanic race. This proved that blacks could also not win an election without the support of black voters.

Other aspiring blacks were also defeated in local elections. Aldrich Brown, for example, a candidate for the Sixth Ward constable in 1923, was endorsed by influential race men and women. A World War I veteran, Brown announced: "the office of constable requires the knowledge of laws, loyalty, and willingness to give conscientious service. This

¹³ "*The Passing of Bob Logan*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 2, 1926, p. 1. Upon Logan's success, he began to study law as a means to effectively administer the same. Many Pittsburgh Negroes who referred to him as the "colored squire," expected him to become a major player in the national political arena.

I am prepared to do and will do to the vest of my ability. If my group will pull together, we will be victorious.”¹⁴ However, Brown, even in his enthusiasm, was defeated.

On the national level, the black press in its responsibility to the black community, kept it abreast of issues impacting them including those of a political nature. *The Pittsburgh Courier* used several methods to assist black voters in selecting political candidates. It investigated all candidates, published their political or other records such as, criminal records regardless of party affiliation, exposed Klu Klux Klan members vying for political office, and provided a slate worthy of the vote of any citizen.¹⁵

The pages of Pittsburgh’s only black newspaper endorsed and denounced black and white candidates; and accepted political advertisements from the same. For example, in 1923, *The Pittsburgh Courier* endorsed (white) Charles M. Shoaf of Elizabeth for Allegheny County Clerk of Courts: “colored voters should take interest in the statement of Mr. Shoaf made recently to *The Pittsburgh Courier* to the effect that “the Race (sic) would continue (working) in the office in the event of his election.” It also endorsed incumbent John D. Graham for Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds and Samuel Gardener for District Attorney. It is unclear if these endorsements would really benefit Pittsburgh’s black community other than providing insight on the candidates, all of whom were Republicans. After the election, black voters still maintained the “wait and see” attitude relative to

¹⁴ “*World War I Veteran Out for Constable*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 25, 1923, p. 4.

¹⁵ “*Shoaf Is Man for Clerk of Courts*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 1, 1923, p. 14. The editor of the Pittsburgh Courier described Shoaf as a reformer, well-suited for Allegheny County Clerk, and a man of good reputation in Pittsburgh’s and Allegheny County’s legal community.

patronage for black political support.

Despite a series of defeats in Pittsburgh's local political arena, blacks such as Henry Payne, sought a victory on the state level of government. Payne, born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1884, was educated in Washington, D.C.'s public schools and Howard University. He migrated to Pittsburgh and was employed in the Homewood Postal Station for approximately 18 years before becoming an undertaker.¹⁶ Payne vied for the First Legislative District seat of Allegheny County encompassing the First and predominantly black Third and Fifth Wards, whose votes were thought guaranteed to Payne.

Payne's campaign chairman, Grant Taylor, sought the endorsement of Pittsburgh's white politicians to support Payne's candidacy. He solicited the help of City Councilman James F. Malone, president of Pittsburgh's City Council.¹⁷ During a March 24, 1928, interview Malone stated: "Gentlemen, I will be frank with you---I am not for him; the time had not yet come for a Negro representative to Harrisburg; it may come later, but it is not here yet."¹⁸ Henry Payne nor his campaign committee was discouraged or surprised by Malone's comments concerning his candidacy or that of other aspiring black politicians. But, Payne responded to Malone in the following manner:

¹⁶ "*Candidate*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 17, 1928, p. 11.

¹⁷James Malone was born August 28, 1879, in Pittsburgh's 6th Ward. He attended parochial schools in Pittsburgh and prior to launching a political career, Malone was employed by C & W Ziegler, a Penn Avenue meat dealer. His participation in politics was in 1911, when he sought a seat on City Council. After suffering two defeats, Malone, a Republican, was appointed by Mayor, E.V. Babcock as Director of the Department of supplies, a job he held until 1921. Malone was elected to Pittsburgh City Council during this same year. In 1928, he was elected City Council president.

¹⁸ "*Malone Refuses to Endorse Henry Payne's Candidacy*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1928, p. 8.

For many years the Negro (sic) votes in the Hill District have been the football of the politicians, both black and white, and all they received by the way of reward for their support were promises which have never materialized. We are fighting for the right and defy the right of any man or group of men to tell us that the time is not ripe for us as a people, to hold elective offices in Harrisburg or anywhere else on the face of the globe.¹⁹

At the same time, Payne criticized local black political leaders who he claimed were “more selfishly inclined and did not hesitate to sell their birthright...for a mere mess of pottage.” In other words, they continued to allow themselves to be used by white politicians without compensation. Payne’s inability to obtain support from white voters and local black political leaders, cost him the primary election held April 24, 1928.

Since 1882, when Pittsburgh first established its municipal government, the city’s blacks were not represented on City Council. Blacks, during this period, did not seek political office, because they were disfranchised in Pennsylvania. In March 1928, the Reverend Arthur V.B. Hightower declared himself Pittsburgh’s first black City Council candidate with a platform against vice and crime in Pittsburgh’s black community, problems he stated were ignored by the city’s police and government. In his criticism of both the police and white politicians, an investigation by the United States Prohibition Administration led to a series of raids in the Hill District. With approximately 25 prohibition agents, John D. Pennington, head of this investigation, 23 speakeasies were raided, 80 stills and 3,000 rounds of unexpected ammunition were confiscated, houses of ill-repute were closed, and

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

at least 35 arrests were made.²⁰

In Hightower's effort to become Pittsburgh's first black City Councilman, he gained and lost support. Using the radio as a campaign mechanism, Hightower, gained a considerable amount of support beginning with an organized campaign committee comprised of local mortician Peyton Rose, campaign chairman; W.H. Campbell, chairman of the campaign committee; and J.R. Wimble, executive secretary.²¹ While on the campaign trail, Hightower stated: "I am out for Council not only to insure race representation in the City Council, but to secure for my people, positions in all departments of our city's government." This statement was sure to arouse black voters, whom in the past, had not benefitted from patronage jobs at a level satisfactory to black political leaders.

Hightower, also sought the political support of local black ministers, because the black church was the most organized body in the black community and represented large numbers of the race, but the ministerial association, according to Hightower, never responded. This may have been the result of his aggressiveness or black ministers not wanting to alienate themselves from the "powers that be." Hightower's aggressiveness was reflected in the following statement:

²⁰ "**Reverend Hightower Leads Raids on 23 Dives,**" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1928, p. 8. During Hightower's campaign for City Council, he was mugged by several unknown assailants. He contends that the beating was the result of his outspokenness against crime and vice. Also, the impact of the above mentioned raids affected the economics of those owners of houses of ill-repute, speakeasies, and gambling houses activities. Perhaps the physical attack on Hightower was an attempt to scare him into changing his political platform to rid vice in the Hill District community.

²¹ "**Hightower for Council Following Increases,**" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 1929, p. 8. Peyton Rose's undertaking establishment was located on Wylie Avenue, Hill District. He had an established reputation as both a mortician and womanizer.

Here is the thing I want to bring home to you white people. Black men are not the organizers of commercialized vice in the Hill District and other sections of the city where the colored man is forced to live by reason, color, or economic limitations promoted by the underworld of white people. [They] take advantage of the fear of black men was for the police and his district for the institutions you have learned to depend on.²²

In others words, if the city's black clergymen openly supported Hightower, any future favors from local white politicians may have been jeopardized. However, this does not mean that the city's black ministers and their respective congregations did not willfully support him at the polls.

Nonetheless, the Pittsburgh City Council election of September 1929, proved unsuccessful for Reverend A.V.B. Hightower, despite his having fared well in Pittsburgh's predominantly black, Third, Fifth, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Wards. Like those black candidates before him, he lacked the support of white politicians, white voters, and was crippled by political apathy among Pittsburgh blacks who failed to register and vote. The first five wards, however, showed more than 7,500 votes casts with Hightower receiving approximately 90 percent of the votes.²³ Overall, Hightower received 15,000 votes

²² ***“Reverend Hightower Stirs City Officials: Makes Telling Speech to United Churches,”*** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 3, 1928, n.p.

²³ ***“Official Returns to Date Give Hightower 15,000 Votes,”*** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 28, 1929, p. 11. Though sources contend that Hightower obtained a substantial number of votes, his efforts did not seem to encourage other blacks with political aspirations to seek that particular office. Even after his first attempt, Hightower did not seek political office again. It may have been his inability to capture any portion of white votes; intimidation by white politicians aggravated by his platform; apathy among those blacks who felt that City Council was beyond the reach of any black candidate; and an alleged lack of support by black clergymen. However, the number of votes Hightower garnered was at least a step in the right direction for more blacks who were beginning to participate in the electoral process.

throughout the city. However, his political future ended abruptly, when he switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party, supporting Democratic mayoral candidate, Thomas Dunn. He was abandoned by his campaign chairman and lost much, if not all, of his support from the city's black Republicans. His behavior, similar to Bob Logan's, perhaps created a greater distrust among black voters toward local black politicians.

Efforts to Increase Black Voter Participation

After a series of political defeats, black political leaders in Pittsburgh made several efforts to encourage and increase black political participation, and make demands on white politicians. For example, they enlisted the aid of prominent black ministers and politicians including Reverend J.C. Austin, current pastor of Chicago's Pilgrim Baptist Church, and Republican Congressman, Oscar DePriest of Illinois whose victory "gave the race new hope and courage." DePriest, whose political career began as a Chicago ward chairman, was elected to the United States House of Representatives in Illinois' First Congressional District in 1928.²⁴ Pittsburgh's black leadership also organized local black political organizations including: Third Ward Voters League; the Fifth Ward Independent Club; the Fifth Ward Progressive Club; the Independent League of Voters, and the Metropolitan Civic League. They endorsed political candidates both black and white.

²⁴Historian Wanda A. Hendricks' article, "*The Alpha Suffrage Club*" points out that this women's organization was largely responsible for DePriest's victories as Chicago's first black committeeman, alderman, and later, Congressman. Led by Ida B. Wells Barnett, the Alpha Suffrage Club's block-by-block canvassing of black neighborhoods to encourage political participation, register and mobilize black voters, and campaign for black candidates, generated a heightened interest in politics as evidenced by the DePriest's series of victories. There were, however, some whites who voted and supported DePriest.

The Third Ward Voter's League, for example, endorsed mayoral incumbent, Charles H. Kline for re-election based on his previous record and achievements.²⁵ Moreover, they knew that he personally hand-picked appointments to city departments from which members of the Third Ward Voters League had obviously benefitted. The Fifth Ward Progressive Club endorsed Walter E. Tucker, black, as a candidate for State Representative in the First District against another race man, attorney Theron B. Hamilton. Walter Tucker, a resident of the Fifth Ward, had been extremely active in ward politics, although he never sought political office. Tucker also worked on a numerous political campaigns for race men including that of attorney Frank Steward and Henry Payne for State Representative. He also organized the Fifth Ward Progressive Club. Local black political leaders believed that the "time was ripe for a Negro from Western Pennsylvania to sit with the lawmakers of the state."²⁶

The Metropolitan Civic League, led by W.T. Poole, a local mortician, held a mass meeting at Central Baptist Church featuring Dr. J.C. Austin, July 31, 1929, "to interest colored (sic) voters in registering to vote and voting solidly as a unit for those office seekers

²⁵Charles H. Kline, a native of Indiana, Pennsylvania, was admitted to the Pennsylvania State Bar Association in 1898, and permitted to practice law in Philadelphia, and the Allegheny County Bar Association in 1899. His career as a politician started as "a lieutenant" for other politicians. He worked for State Senator, Max G. Leslie who later, supported Kline for the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1904. Kline was elected to the State House of Representatives during that same year and, in 1910, the State Senate. From 1917-1919, Kline was chairman of Pittsburgh's Republican City Committee. He was also appointed a judge in the Court of Common Pleas, March 17, 1919 by Governor William C. Sproul.

²⁶ Joseph Engleberg, (white) Third Ward chairman, pledged to seek political support for Tucker from white ward leaders in the First and Fifth Wards. Engleberg stated that Tucker was "a logical man."

who would be fair and just to the race after elections.”²⁷ On September 10th of this same year, DePriest spoke at Ebenezer Baptist Church’s People’s Gospel Tabernacle on the topic, “The Working Machinery of Organization.” This important event, organized by Robert L. Vann, emphasized the mobilization of Chicago’s black voters attributing to DePriest’s successful bid for a Congressional seat. Specific points were made about infighting among blacks and its stifling of black political progress. His timing was perfect as Pittsburgh’s black political leadership was “cut up into factions and feuds over candidates---all white whom were seeking office.” DePriest encouraged Pittsburgh blacks to do the following: “Do away with the type of leaders who bob up on every corner and try to tell colored race how to get in office by selling them out for a mop and broom which they themselves prefer rather than see the whole group improve all along the line.”²⁸

In 1930, a move to strengthen black voters, two of the city’s black political organizations merged: the Metropolitan Civic League and the Fifth Ward Citizens Protective Organization which simultaneously created dissension in the ranks. Sidney Ray and Walter Tucker, who headed the Fifth Ward Progressive Club, refused to affiliate with these two other political organizations, although its representatives voted in favor of the merger. A meeting regarding the merger with approximately 300 persons attending, was

²⁷ W.T. Poole was president of the Metropolitan Civic League; C.A. Wallace, secretary; and Dr. George Winstead, treasurer. Poole was born near Montgomery, Alabama in 1877, educated in the areas colored school, and graduated from Alabama State Teachers College. He married a woman named Eva and migrated to Pittsburgh in 1907, where he became a businessman, opening the Poole Funeral Home (1918), and a pillar of the community. “*Reverend Austin to Speak At Citizens Meeting, The Pittsburgh Courier, July 27, 1929, p. 9.*

²⁸ “*DePriest Coming Tuesday,*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 7, 1929, p. 1.

disrupted by members of the Fifth Ward Progressive Club, but the merger was solidified with only the Metropolitan Civic League and the Fifth Ward Citizens Protective Organization.²⁹

Despite all the efforts made by the city's black political leadership to increase black voter participation, it was not until 1934, that a black candidate in Pittsburgh successfully ran for a political office and won. Homer S. Brown, a candidate for State Representative in the First Legislative District won the primary election on both the Democratic and Republican tickets. On November 6, 1934, Brown garnered 5,534 and 4,595 votes in the General Election.³⁰ This office had been previously sought by two other race men. However, Brown received support from both black and white voters and politicians alike which was an accomplishment unattainable by his black predecessors. Attorney and founder of Pittsburgh's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Homer S. Brown, was highly respected in black and white circles, because of his education, articulateness, outspokenness, ability to mobilize people, and reputation for fighting for equal rights in Pittsburgh.

²⁹ Officers were elected at the meeting. They were: W.T. Poole, president, N.B. Russell, vice president; N.B. Frazier, financial secretary; Lulu Province, recording secretary; and John W. Robinson, treasurer. The meetings were held the third Tuesday of each month and open to Fifth Ward residents only. Members of the Fifth Ward Protective League employed by the City of Pittsburgh could not hold office in the organization. Homer S. Brown, Robert Logan, and Mr. Bellinger comprised the Constitution Committee.

³⁰C.H. Westbrook, ed. *The Pennsylvania Manual, 1935-1936*, (Harrisburg: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1935), p. 440. This manual is a compilation of Pennsylvania State elected officials including judges; representatives of the Pennsylvania General Assembly; and the treasurer to name a few. Photographs of state elected officials along with biographical sketches are also part of this manual. It also contains the history of the state and counties in Pennsylvania; explains the type of government in Pennsylvania; and population and election statistics by city, county and ward.

Homer S. Brown's fine qualities shed new light on Pittsburgh's black political leadership and changed the attitudes of blacks who felt they had been continuously used by local black politicians and abused by whites ones. Brown's victory brought about a sense of honesty and confidence among the city's blacks as the following statement shows: "Although there are many undesirable exploiters of the race in our group, there are others who serve us and are deserving of our loyal support in their endeavors to bring about better conditions for the race."³¹ Brown, soon, demonstrated his commitment to his constituents shortly, after having been sworn into office.

Brown used his political office to benefit the black community in a number of ways. First, he sought financial support for the construction of Pittsburgh's first black hospital by encouraging Governor George H. Earle to endorse financial aid from the State of Pennsylvania. Brown, as the later pages show, used his political position to introduce legislation calling for an investigation of alleged discrimination of the Pittsburgh Board of Education toward Negro teachers in the Public School system. As a result, a special committee was appointed and the first of several hearings were scheduled April 24, 1937, in City Council chambers.³²

Furthermore, Brown used his position as a State Assemblyman to halt funds from the

³¹ **"Tribute to Homer S. Brown,"** *The Pittsburgh Crusader*, 1937, Archives of Industrial Society, *Homer S. Brown Papers*, 78:8, Volume 5, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

³² **"Negro Assemblyman Starts Controversy Into An Open Investigation in Pittsburgh,"** *Homer S. Brown Papers*, 78:8 Archives of Industrial Society, Volume 5, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA; **"School Prejudice Hearing Tomorrow,"** *Homer S. Brown Papers*, 78:8, Volume 5.



Figure. 48. Homer S. Brown

Homer S. Brown, the son of William R. Brown, a Baptist preacher, and Maria Wiggins Rowlette Brown, was born September 23, 1896 in Huntington, West Virginia. He was educated in the schools of Roanoke, Virginia until 1911, when his father decided to migrate to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He continued his education in the Pittsburgh Public Schools; and earned an undergraduate degree from Virginia Union. In 1923, he earned a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Attorney Homer S. Brown began his career in private practice opening his law office in Pittsburgh's Hill District.

Tuberculosis League of Pittsburgh. The hospital staff attempted to force colored tuberculosis patients to go to Leech Farm; often refused to treat blacks; discriminated against colored physicians who worked at the Tuberculosis Hospital without pay, were restricted in medical activities, and using special medical instruments. Brown approached his colleague, Al Tronzo, to discuss the hospital's state appropriation for two reasons: hospital superintendent Alice E. Stewart gave the impression that she did not want to deal with a colored (sic) legislator; and Tronzo was head of the State Appropriations Committee.³³ The Tuberculosis Hospital had received an annual appropriation of \$50,000 which Tronzo decided not to support unless it was willing to openly correct Jim Crow abuses causing public complaints and discontent.³⁴ His support indicated that he favored "fairness" in the distribution of the State funds to viable institutions without regard to race.

Attitudes of White Politicians Toward Black Voters

Black political leaders had no control over the behavior of white politicians, many of whom, had unfavorable opinions of black voters. The attitudes of white politicians in Pittsburgh were highly visible, especially during election time when white politicians "flexed" their muscles. They often harassed and arrested local blacks in the Third and Fifth

³³Al Tronzo, a Democrat, was born in New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, June 18, 1908. He attended public schools and earned a B.A. from the University of Pittsburgh. Tronzo also completed two years of law school at Duquesne University. He once served as Chief Clerk in the City's [Pittsburgh] Treasurer's office and subsequently elected to the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

³⁴"*Hospital: Subtle Jim Crow Policy Ties Up funds in House*," *Homer S. Brown Papers*, 78:8, Volume 5. Archives of Industrial Society, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Wards. For example, the Third Ward was plagued by a series of raids by Republican Alderman, John Verona, who ordered the arrests of blacks to provide a false image of his political achievements.³⁵ These methods were used to intimidate black voters into voting for white politicians, especially incumbents. It seemed, however, that black voters would be discouraged by this type of behavior and not vote at all.

Despite the behavior of Verona, the re-election of Pittsburgh's Republican Mayor, Charles H. Kline, in the General Election of September 1929, he endorsed Walter Tucker for State Representative in the First District. This move was in return for black voter support in his re-election bid as the black vote was said to have been the determining factor of the mayoral race against Malone. Orchestrated by the Hill Districts's black political organizations led by D.R. Lewis and Walter Tucker, Kline's victory was possible. According to Harry Feldman, Fifth Ward chairman, Kline ensured his entire support to whatever race man the Third and Fifth Wards endorsed.³⁶ Although Kline publicly endorsed Tucker for the State Legislature, it is unclear if this support was monetary or voter support at the polls. To be sure, the endorsed black candidate, like unendorsed black candidates always suffered

³⁵*"Third Ward Raids Just Political Assault," The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 31, 1929, p. 1, 8. John J. Verona, a Pittsburgh native and an Italian-American, became one of Pittsburgh's most noted white politicians. Involved in politics after World War I, he was elected alderman of the Third Ward. Verona's victory, political observers say, stemmed from a solid Italian vote. His office was located on Wylie Avenue where Italians requesting political favors and white political candidates seeking campaign support frequented.

³⁶*"Political Harmony in Offing," The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 2, 1929, p. 7. Harry Feldman delivered Kline's message, but he was the same white politician who refused to acknowledge the success of black politician, Isaac Hall, who replaced Feldman's deceased wife, Mary as Judge of Elections in the Fifth Ward, Second District. He attempted to oust Hall from the position by unsuccessfully petitioning the Quarter Sessions Court for Hall's removal and slandering him as a drunkard.

defeat. In other words, white politicians continued to deceive black politicians.

Pittsburgh's black political leaders did not defer to the abuse they experienced for years and by 1929, sought retribution against white politicians who continued to take them for granted. For example, blacks, particularly, in the Third Ward expressed evidence of dissatisfaction with Republican John J. Verona, Third Ward constable, who reneged on a promise to appoint a colored deputy constable inasmuch as his office is located in one of the most thickly colored districts in the whole city of Pittsburgh.³⁷ When confronted, Verona told black political leaders that James F. Malone, Fifth Ward alderman, made the appointments, but they knew Malone had no such authority in the Third Ward. In retribution for Verona's deceit, the black political leadership directed its political support for Third Ward alderman to (white) Samuel J. Price during the September 17th election. Although Pittsburgh blacks supported Price in retaliation of Verona's treatment of blacks, he lost the aldermanic bid.

Black Political Initiatives

The more blacks were disrespected by white politicians, the more they became disgruntled forcing them to use of the political system to alleviate some of the black communities problems. Pittsburgh's black political organizations were geared toward encouraging black political participation and obtaining patronage jobs, but individuals also exerted their efforts in getting a fair share of city services.

³⁷*"In Fight to Finish Says Ward Leader," The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 31, 1929, p. 1. Verona was also accused by some Third Ward whites (not of Italian descent) who complained that he transformed the area into an Italian colony and could be called "Little Italy."

In 1939, members of the Independent League of Negro Voters led by William Thornton presented a resolution to City Council calling for “strict supervision of Hill District meat markets.”³⁸ During a scheduled hearing before Pittsburgh City Council, they made the following requests: that all Hill District meat markets place an inspection card stamped with the date of inspection and name of the inspector; meat market owners be fined \$100 for selling rotten meat; all rotten meat be sprayed with kerosene or a similar substance prior to loading on smelting trucks; and to prohibit cut portions of meat from being removed from one retail meat store to another.³⁹ Although Pittsburgh City Council’s reaction to the issue is unknown, the Independent League of Negro Voters sought political redress for rotten meat sold in their community, they knew of the health hazard it imposed on those who purchased it.

Individual black voters also took their concerns to city government officials, because their failure to hold themselves accountable for uncollected garbage in the Hill District. Several property owners and businessmen and women complained to Frank M. Roessing, Director of Public Works. Daisy Lampkin, a property owner sent Roessing a letter protesting the refuse piles on street corners and empty lots. She wrote:

³⁸“*City Hears Bad Meat Charges*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 11, 1939, p. 1.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 1.

As a property owner living at the corner of Webster and Watt Lane, I have complained repeatedly about these conditions and had sanitary inspectors come see me. They have stated that it is better to have refuse thrown out into the streets than hidden in cellars where it might become a health menace. It is ridiculous that a city the size of Pittsburgh should have to accept this condition as a lesser of the two evils.⁴⁰

The issue of bad health raised by city sanitary inspectors as a result of the garbage being stored in basements, was no different than the refuse piles she referred to. In other words, garbage posed the same problem whether inside or outdoors if not disposed of properly.

Business owners complained to not only the city, but the editors of *The Pittsburgh Courier* hoping the publicity would apply pressure and compel the city officials to correct the garbage problem. Kathleen Holloway, beauty shop owner stated: "Garbage was piled outside my place and had been there since I opened for business more than two months ago...under any circumstances, the city should have cleaned it up in all this time." L.A. Bellinger, an architect and resident of Centre Avenue, remarked: The refuse collectors came down once since that first big snow on December 11th and were going to take my rubbish, but it was frozen in the cans and they refused to take it. In the mean time, I'm being run over with rats."⁴¹ The Loendi Club and Kaufmann's Printing Company were also affected by the city's willful neglect to pick-up and dispose of the garbage.

Despite the vocal complaints and the articles in *The Pittsburgh Courier*, perhaps they

⁴⁰"*Failure to Collect Garbage Scored*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 3, 1945, p. 1. The Hill District was a densely populated community, but many residents and business owners respected their community and demanded it not be further neglected by city officials responsible, in part, for its maintenance.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 1.

not use their ward chairmen and committee persons to serve as liaisons with city officials to solve the refuse problem, it may have attributed to their heartless response. The question must also be raised as to the extent of the problem—as one in the black community or the Pittsburgh community as a whole. At some point, the garbage had to be retrieved, because other complaints revealed that it overflowed in many of the streets and alleys making traveling difficult for cars in the Hill District community. This may also be one of the reasons why black voters eventually concluded that political party affiliation really made little difference in their lives.

Pittsburgh Blacks Shift Political Parties

During the 1930s, Pittsburgh's black loyalty to the Republican party began to fade as it had in most northern urban communities, as a result of President Herbert Hoover's inability to find a solution to the 1929 Depression, his consistent knack for "snubbing" blacks nationwide and his segregationist policies in the federal government. In 1932, black Pittsburghers defected from the Republican party in support of Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This campaign to "switch" from the Republican to the Democratic party in Pittsburgh was led by Robert L. Vann and his *Pittsburgh Courier*. As a political strategy, "he used it more than any other [black] newspaper publisher or paper to help convince Roosevelt that he needed the black vote; to campaign for vehicle for FDR's campaign; and discredit Hoover."⁴² For example, he published a series of articles and

⁴²Harry Amana, "*The Black Cabinet and Roosevelt*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 17, 1990, p. C-9.

campaign; and discredit Hoover.”⁴² For example, he published a series of articles and editorials rationalizing the need for blacks to leave the Republican Party such as “*Time to Turn the Party of Lincoln to the Wall.*” In addition, Vann made a public speech in Pittsburgh announcing his defection from the Republican party and other blacks followed him into the Democratic ranks.

The 1932 Presidential Election proved unsuccessful for Herbert Hoover and his running mate after a “thrashing” by Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In explaining the “switching” of political parties, Vann stated:

The shift of the colored vote from the Republican to the Democratic party in the last election was due to the liberalism of the latter than party nomenclature. The greatest obstacle to overcome the Negro was his fear of the name Democratic. The interesting feature of this awakening was that a hastily made survey in Western Pennsylvania disclosed that 77 percent of the Negroes who voted the Democratic ticket were between the ages of 21-35. The people of Pennsylvania voted the Democratic ticket as a means of retrieving their self-respect lost under the leadership of the Republican party long since divorced from the principles of the great Lincoln.⁴³

Vann and other black Pittsburgh voters realized their voting potential and, because they campaigned for FDR were expecting changes in the country’s economy relative to finding relief from the Depression and patronage jobs exclusive of the normal custodial employment slated for blacks.

In the past, black political appointments on the local level often proved fateful,

⁴²Harry Amana, “*The Black Cabinet and Roosevelt*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 17, 1990, p. C-9.

⁴³“*Tells why Race Vote Shifted*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 11, 1934, p. 1,4.

Table VII.
Official Vote For President Electors
1928-1944
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Ward 5

Year	Democrats	%	Republicans	%	All Voters	%
1928	2,284		3,649		5,933	
1932	2,347	3%	2,679	-36%	5,026	-18%
1936	7,976	71%	2,441	-10%	10,417	52%
1940	9,743	18%	2,849	16%	12,637	18%
1944	10,224	5%	2,821	-36%	13,045	3%
Total		78%		-29%		55%

Ward 3

Year	Democrats	%	Republicans	%	All Voters	%
1928	1,282		1,496		2,778	
1932	1,369	6%	973	-54%	2,342	-19%
1936	5,992	77%	645	-51%	6,637	65%
1940	7,785	23%	1,324	51%	9,109	27%
1944	5,892	-32%	1,132	-17%	7,024	-30%
Total		78%		-32%		60%

Both Wards

Year	Democrats	%	Republicans	%	All Voters	%
1928	3,566		5,145		8,711	
1932	3,716	4%	3,652	-41%	7,368	-18%
1936	13,968	73%	3,086	-18%	17,054	57%
1940	17,528	20%	4,218	27%	21,746	22%
1944	16,116	-9%	3,953	-7%	20,069	-8%
Total		78%		-30%		57%

Source: *The Pennsylvania Manual* (1928-1944). The statistics were compiled by Delbert Tyler.

The statistics show that the greatest shift of Pittsburgh's black voters from the Republican to the Democratic Party became evident in 1936 in Pittsburgh's heavily black populated 3rd and 5th Wards. Black Democrats, for example, increased by almost 5,000 voters in the 5th ward and 6,000 in the 3rd Ward by 1936. By 1944, 78% of black voters in both wards were registered Democrats.

earning \$3 per day, as matron of Kennard swimming pool, Hill District. ⁴⁴ She was discharged from her patronage job, because Moon supported James F. Malone instead of Charles Kline for Mayor of Pittsburgh. Approached by Sidney Ray and John H. Robinson, two of Kline's black "hinchmen," she was propositioned: "If you declare for Kline, you will get the matron's job position and a permanent job after the pools close [for the summer] and told that Ray was given a commission by Mayor Kline to give out the matron's job."⁴⁵ Moon refused to support Kline for re-election, was fired by Vincent Sexton, supervisor of the Bureau of Recreation; and told that an error had been made in her appointment. Moon, who initially supported Kline in the previous election, probably learned a political lesson as did many other black voters from her patronage experience. Nonetheless, the Third Ward Voter's League endorsed Kline with a resolution, and at least one female hoping to be appointed matron of Kennard swimming pool.

After the 1932 Presidential Election, Vann was appointed to the Negro Advisory Committee of the Planning Council for the Department of Commerce and the Interdepartmental Group concerned with Special Problems of Negroes.⁴⁶ At this point,

⁴⁴"*Pool Matron Was Improperly Appointed, Claim*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 6, 1929, p. 8. Nannie Moon was scheduled to work Sundays, Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, when women had access to the pool. It is apparent that men and women did not share the pool and perhaps had different hours and days designated for its usage. Kennard swimming pool is located in the heart of Pittsburgh's Hill District providing easy access to the black community. This swimming pool exists, because of the efforts of the Crispus Attucks Post of the American Legion which lobbied Pittsburgh's City Council to build a swimming pool in the Hill District.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁶Harry Amana, p. C-9. Other black leaders nationwide benefitted from Roosevelt's victory. William J. Thompson, Julian Rainey, and Dr. Joseph L. Johnson were also appointed to the Negro Advisory Committee representing Kansas City, Boston, and Wilberforce; Mary

Pittsburgh blacks were encouraged by Vann's appointment, the positive prospects of black political participation, and that perhaps the race would no longer be taken for granted by white politicians whom often thought of them as without leadership and therefore leaderless.

The defection from the Republican party did not stop on the federal level of government for blacks in Pittsburgh. In 1934, George Earle, a Democrat won Pennsylvania's gubernatorial race. Under this political administration, black political leaders received more patronage jobs than the Republicans, during their 42 year stronghold on Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. Governor Earle appointed blacks to a variety of positions including: state compensation referee, state boxing commissioner, two state deputy attorney generals, two parole officers, and several stenographers.⁴⁷ This was a far cry from the mediocre patronage positions blacks had previously received from the Republican party. Blacks thought they had finally gained respect and recognition among Democrats, but it was short-lived.

By 1941, blacks had switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party in most northern urban communities, but what for? In 1941, Pittsburgh blacks had taken offense to treatment by the city's Democratic Party which made several unfulfilled campaign promises to black political leaders regarding patronage appointments. They supported the mayoral bid of Cornelius D. Scully against Harmar Denny by an estimated 3,600 votes, 5,000

McCleod Bethune, National Negro Youth Association; Robert Weaver, the Advisor on the Economic Status of Negroes; and Ferguson Dutton, the *Courier's* distribution manager, was named secretary of FDR's Black Cabinet. For more information see, Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks* and Nancy J. Weiss' *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*.

⁴⁷Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln*, p. 94. Weiss's book is an excellent source of information explaining the shifting of black voters from the Republican to the Democratic party. It is especially a good source for this aspect of black politics in Pittsburgh of which she uses as an example of the shift and its mechanics.

delivered by blacks in the Third and Fifth Wards. After Scully's victory, no talks between black political leaders and Scully's administration were ever scheduled, although black leaders made several unsuccessful attempts to see the Mayor. *Pittsburgh Courier* columnist, John L. Clark, described the Democratic Party's political behavior as "political propaganda to acquire the black vote."

In 1945, black political leaders asserted that they were not satisfied with either political party. First, the Republican Governor, Edward Martin, refused to acknowledge the support of black voters in Pittsburgh. Second, of 300 jobs in Allegheny County, Republicans, who controlled county government, hired only six black men. Black political leaders observed that the same methods used to give whites patronage jobs should have been sufficient criteria for blacks. As a result of perpetual political "snubbing," Pittsburgh's black political leadership did not endorse Democratic or Republican candidates, because they felt no obligation to either party. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that blacks did not exercise their right to vote, but that they were non-committal.

Conclusion

Black political leaders in Pittsburgh struggled for recognition from local white politicians and to mobilize Pittsburgh's black community into a force of political strength. This was necessary in order to make demands on local politicians, to have some influence on positive changes in their community, and to obtain employment in exchange for black voter support. Plagued by infighting among the city's black political leadership, the efforts to increase black political participation failed until the candidacy and subsequent, victory of

Homer S. Brown, as Pittsburgh's first black State Representative.

The efforts of Pittsburgh's early black politicians including Robert Logan, Reverend A.V.B. Hightower, Aldrich Brown, and Henry Payne set the stage for aspiring local black politicians, but their lack of experience in organizing an effective political campaign and the inexperience of blacks in the electoral process perhaps hindered any chance of winning an election. Of course, the problem of local black politicians gaining white political support did not help their political aspirations. To make matters worse, black politicians like Hightower who "switched" from the Republican to the Democratic party, created an air of dissension and distrust among blacks involved in local politics.

Moreover, when white politicians prior to Brown's victory, publicly endorsed black candidates, they always lost the election. Local black political leaders began to question the sincerity of these endorsements and conceded they had been deceived by white political leaders, especially, those they helped obtain the black vote which frequently, led to political victories. Also of importance, was the lack and quality of patronage jobs given black political leaders. In most cases, they were ignored after the elections and left helpless, because they could not make demands on white politicians.

Despite the political struggles of Pittsburgh blacks, they continued to participate in the electoral process with hopes of one day becoming a political force to be reckoned. With a multitude of faith in State Representative Homer S. Brown, a substantial increase in political participation occurred among blacks, especially, when he wrote and introduced legislation for Fair Employment Practices in Harrisburg. Brown's election encouraged more aspiring local black politicians to seek political office and Brown's continued political

accomplishments were a clear indication that blacks could use a political office to change their quality of life. The bottom line, however, was that black Pittsburgh had leadership and was therefore, not leaderless.

Chapter 7

Protests: The Fight for Racial Equality and Economic Respect

Pittsburgh blacks protested their unfair and oftentimes inhumane treatment by racists whites. Locked out of employment opportunities and public places, blacks were also stifled in their economic lives. While other northern urban cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, and New York experienced riots by angry whites during WWI as a result of black protests, blacks in Pittsburgh founded several organizations to change the status of blacks, economically, socially, and politically.

Through non-violent protests, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Pittsburgh Housewives League, the Hill District Citizens Coordinating Committee organized themselves and formulated an agenda with the intention of accomplishing specific goals. Each of these protest organizations shared a common goal—race uplift, racial solidarity, and racial equality. Their agendas included black economic independence, equal employment opportunities, and an end to racial segregation. Homer S. Brown also developed and implemented an agenda of his own by to fight for black civil rights. All three organizations and Brown used a variety of means by which to correct the discriminatory behavior of the city's white businessmen, whites in general, the Board of Public Education, and to obtain an equal share of jobs and services for the black community.

Black leaders and organizations attempted to eliminate white racism and discrimination by whites peacefully, if possible. In Pittsburgh, black leaders sought a number of different strategies by which to mold the black community into a tightly woven

fabric, earn the respect of whites, and to no longer be treated as second class citizens. This chapter examines the methods used by outsiders such as Marcus M. Garvey the city's black leadership to deal successfully with issue of racial equality and black civil rights through protest.

Universal Negro Improvement Association

While Pittsburgh blacks protested racism and discrimination using the Equal Rights Bill, the courts, and political channels to seek redress, there remained a need to solidify the black community. The black community was sometimes disjointed by class status, southern migrants not knowing where they belonged, and the overall struggle of blacks to get ahead. Many blacks in cities across the country found Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association as the means by which to do so. Historians Earl Lewis, Joe W. Trotter, Richard Walter Thomas, and Gilbert Osofsky, to name a few, have included in their case studies, the influences of the UNIA on blacks in Norfolk, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Harlem. Garveyism, a black nationalist movement, led to the founding of other satellite cities of Marcus Garvey's UNIA including Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he sought to bring the black community together and promote race pride.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey was born to Sarah and Marcus Garvey in St. Ann's Bay, British West Indies, August 17, 1887.¹ The youngest of eleven children, Marcus Garvey,

¹Randall Burkett, *Black Redemption: Churchmen Speak for the Garvey Movement*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), p. 19. For more information on Marcus Garvey, see Edmund David Cronon's, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal*

Jr. attended school until age fourteen when his parents could no longer afford to finance his education. He moved to Kingston, Jamaica, accepting employment in a family-owned printing business from 1903-1907. By the age of twenty, Garvey became a master printer eventually, editing a newspaper of his own, *The Watchman*. Garvey traveled extensively to at least five South American countries and London during the next few years, in observance of black workers only to find that they faced a serious race problem. As a result, Garvey in July 1914, decided to create an organization for racial uplift and racial unity, an organization to embrace the purpose of all black humanity.²

On August 1, 1914, Garvey founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and African Communities League in Jamaica. Marcus Garvey argued that it was, “an insult to God to accept a view of oneself as inferior to any other man or any other race.” He advocated the only protection against injustice in man was physical, financial, and educational power, and the UNIA encouraged Negroes to obtain them. The UNIA, was designed to establish a universal confraternity among the race; to promote the spirit of race pride and love; to establish commissaries in the principal countries of the world for the protection of all Negroes, irrespective of nationality, and conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse.³

With little success in Jamaica, Marcus Garvey relocated the U.N.I.A.’s headquarters

Negro Improvement Association, University of Wisconsin Press (1955) and ***Marcus Garvey***, Prentice-Hall (1973).

²Burkett, p. 22.

³Edmund David Cronon, ***Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association***, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 1955, p. 52.



Figure. 49. Marcus Garvey

to New York City in 1918. Historian Randall Burkett writes that "only after Garvey came to the United States did [the U.N.I.A.] mushroom into a mass movement." One of the reasons accounting for his organization's new found growth was that New York City was one of those northern urban communities which experienced a large black population increase, as a result of the Great Migration and emigration of thousands of West Indians. They too, were attracted to New York, mainly because of employment opportunities. This extremely large population of blacks and West Indians provided a wide audience for Garvey and his movement.

By Spring 1919, Garvey went on a nation-wide tour of 38 states issuing calls for racial unity through the UNIA and membership in the organization.⁴ Garvey's message spread to the throughout the United States with divisions emerging in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Chicago; Evansville, Indiana; and Philadelphia. As Garveyism spread to large urban cities, it found its way to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. On September 25, 1919, the Universal Negro Improvement Association of New York held a meeting in Pittsburgh's Rodman Street Baptist Church, East End. The purpose of the meeting was to explain to black Pittsburghers the aims and objects of the UNIA and the principal speakers were Marcus Garvey, president-General, and Ms. Henrietta Vinton Davis, the International Organizer, who previously worked with renowned abolitionist, Frederick Douglass.

Ms. Davis, whom often accompanied Garvey to various cities promoting the

⁴Memberships in the UNIA were available in two categories: the *active member* who joined the division or branch of the Association and paid regular monthly dues, according to the constitution and by-laws of the organization making them eligible for all benefits such as death and sickness; and the *ordinary member* which meant all Negroes were members by virtue of their race. This faction was eligible for charity if they could prove they were needy.

movement, opened the meeting in Pittsburgh with the following statement: "I am indeed glad to be with the people of Pittsburgh to be able to tell them about the great uplift movement now sweeping the entire world of Negroes...the time has come for every Negro to link himself and herself up with the greatest of all movements, for united we can break away from the barriers that have been placed in our way for these hundreds of years, and carve a way to a brighter destiny."⁵ Garvey explained the UNIA to blacks attending the meeting and sought to recruit them as well:

The Negro has lost 4 hundred million strong to atrocities committed by whites against him. He ought to organize 4 hundred million strong. And we have come to you good people of Pittsburgh tonight to ask you to link yourselves up to the millions who are now flocking to the leadership of this Association. When we leave your fair city, we trust we will be able to say to others in other parts of the world that Pittsburgh did her duty.⁶

Although the records do not reveal the actual number or socio-economic classes of Pittsburghers joining the UNIA, it was clear that enough had joined to form a new division of Garvey's black nationalist movement.⁷

⁵Robert A. Hill, ed. *"U.N.I.A. Meeting in Pittsburgh,"* Volume 1, September 26, 1919, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986). p. 28. Hill's edited work of Marcus Garvey's Papers consists of a series of volumes. The original documents are housed at the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.. Fisk University also has a collection of Garvey's personal papers that were donated by one of his sons. This collection is called the Marcus Garvey Memorial Collection.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷In Pennsylvania, there were 40 Divisions of Garvey's U.N.I.A. and fifteen chapters of the same including East Liberty and Woodlawn. For more information see Tony Martin's *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA*, 1976.

However, many of the city's black ministers were opposed to Garveyism.⁸ One of the key figures in the Pittsburgh division of the UNIA was James Young, a delegate to the UNIA Convention, signer of the Association's Declaration of Rights, and leader of the Pittsburgh Division of the U.N.I.A. and Black Star Steamship Line. He organized a series of meetings for Garvey in Pittsburgh in September and October 1920. In a report to Garvey, he wrote, "the preachers are our biggest hold back." This was perhaps a reflection of the attitudes of national black leaders such as DuBois who considered Garvey ignorant and a buffoon. Although racism in Pittsburgh was alive and well, many of the black clergy may have feared Garvey's presence would complicate and accelerate racist behavior toward the city's blacks and that his "Back to Africa Movement" was not the answer to racism.

Despite these attitudes, Garvey made it a point to recruit black ministers for the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Pittsburgh and other satellite cities. First, they were a direct link to the masses of black people. Second, they were able to raise money and could help provide the financial resources necessary to support the Black Star Steamship Line. Third, in his half acknowledged antagonism toward Negro preachers he did not ignore their powerful influences and attempted to fuse religious experiences of the Negro with his

⁸Scholars of Garveyism point out that the creation of Universal Negro Improvement Association chapters across the country were often met with some opposition. Various reasons could have persisted in the rejection of Garveyism among urban blacks. It may have been an issue of class; the rejection of the "Back to Africa Movement" by those blacks who had never been to Africa, felt no cultural ties to it, and therefore, no reason to return; and the rejection of Garvey's movement of which many blacks considered a West Indian movement and not a mass movement among African Americans.

program.⁹

It was therefore, extremely important for Garvey to devise ways to bring black ministers into the fold. He managed to secure the confidence of Reverend G.W. Gaines, pastor of John Wesley A.M.E.Z. Church, Hill District, who held a UNIA meeting at his church, June 25, 1920.¹⁰ In his opening remarks, Gaines stated: "I have been advised by certain other colored ministers not to allow Garvey to speak, claiming he was too radical." Gaines ignored the appeal of the clergy thus supporting Marcus Garvey in his race uplift efforts.

An overflow crowd of an estimated 500 people attended the meeting concerning the "treatment of Negroes by white people." The aisles were filled, doorways crowded, and people also stood outside, unable to get into the church to hear Garvey's message and file complaints. For example, Mrs. Nettie Clayton, complained about housing conditions in the city. She stated, "much discrimination was evidenced against the colored people, because only the dingy, dilapidated houses were being rented to them." While there is no data available that reveals if Garvey followed up on this or any other complaints, his Back to Africa Movement would provide one acre of land to each Negro adult and child in which to build a home.

⁹E. Franklin Frazier, "*The Garvey Movement*," in *Essays in Negro Life and History: The Making of Black America*, Volume II, eds. August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 206. In this article, Frazier stresses Garvey's emphasis on race pride, self-esteem, and the mobilization of black people to "Be Black, Buy Black, and Build Black."

¹⁰This meeting was well publicized with posters on telegraph poles which read: "Black Star Line, I am Sailing for Africa. Come out and hear the Honorable Marcus Garvey, the greatest leader to-day. Be on time, June 24, thru 26th at 8:00, John Wesley A.M.E.Z. Admission Free."

Evidence suggests that there was some truth to Garvey being “too radical.” During his visits to Pittsburgh, the Federal Bureau of Investigation became regulars at UNIA meetings, an attraction never experienced by the city’s local black organizations.¹¹ S.A. Franklin of the Hill District and principal speaker at the Woodlawn UNIA meeting called the audiences’ attention to the presence of agent F.M. Ames and explained his conducting and investigation of the Association, because it was too radical and should be disbanded. Franklin asserted: “Someone in this room is a traitor and has been carrying lies to whites and that he knew who the guilty one was. If I were sure, I would kill him myself and no government in the land would question it because it would only be another Negro our of the way.”¹² He also pointed out that the purpose of the Klu Klux Klan currently organizing in Pittsburgh, was to further suppress Negroes, but once the Universal Negro Improvement Association was complete, it would have “an organization far more terrible than the Klu Klux Klan ever was.”¹³ This type of behavior was perhaps what many blacks feared along with the possibility of unnecessary racial violence in Pittsburgh.

While Pittsburgh whites had not yet publicly responded to Garvey’s activities, F.B.I. Agent Lenon was busy trying to disrupt them. Garvey, who had a reputation for parades in Harlem which often attracted as many as 10,000 people, including his Military Corps, Black

¹¹Some of the F.B.I. agents attending Universal Negro Improvement Association meetings in Pittsburgh were H.J. Lenon, F.M. Ames, J.G. Tucker, and R.B. Spencer. The meetings often continued without disruption by the agents who were merely there to observe the meetings and the message.

¹²Robert A. Hill, "*Report by Bureau Agent H.J. Lenon*," September 28, 1920, in *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Volume III, September 1920-August 1921, pp. 34-35.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 3.

Cross Nurses and U.N.I.A. Band, planned a parade for Pittsburgh September 30 and October 1-3, 1920. Garveyite James Young was responsible for obtaining the parade permit, but Lennon contacted the Pittsburgh Police Chief, Mr. Alderdice to inquire if the permits had been issued for the parade by the “colored gentry of Pittsburgh’s black belt.” The chief replied:

Yes, I know all about it. They want permits, but they won’t get them. We know all we want to know about this gang and if any of them attempt to pull off a meeting or stage a parade here, they will all land in the work house. There won’t be any meetings here... We will save you the trouble of covering any meetings for they won’t be held.¹⁴

Chief Alderdice (whose first name was not revealed) was correct in stating there would be no U.N.I.A. parade, but only because it rained.

However, the spirits of Pittsburgh Garveyites were not dampened when approximately 1500 of Garvey’s 2,000 followers attended the meeting at the Labor Temple to hear Garvey’s message about driving all other races from Africa and colonizing it for black people. These episodes could have strained the relationship between the city’s blacks and police while Garvey, on numerous occasions, peacefully returned to New York after U.N.I.A. meetings, black Pittsburghers may have been left to bear any possible brunt resulting from his activities.

Even though Garveyism in Pittsburgh appeared surrounded by controversy, it attracted two of the city’s most prominent blacks: the Reverend J.C. Austin and Robert L. Vann. Austin, once opposed to Garveyism was overruled by Ebenezer Baptist Church deacons and trustees who allowed Garvey to speak at the church where the church was filled

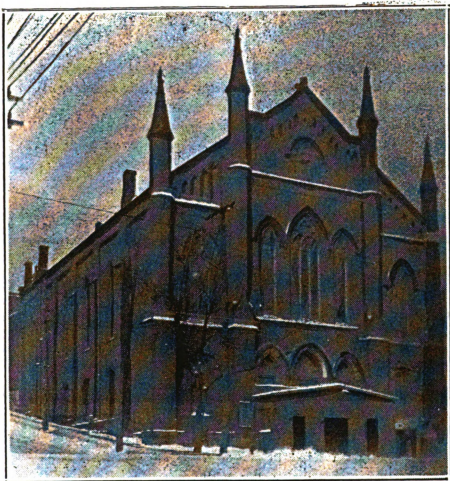
¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 3.

to capacity. For whatever reasons, Austin, subsequently, joined the U.N.I.A. Some observers pointed out that he sought financial gains while others stated he wanted to be the center of attraction. Garvey, in his arrogance, asserted, "When he could do neither, he jumped on the band wagon." Given Austin's impeccable credentials and national reputation as an outstanding orator, he may have perhaps, in retrospect, saw some validity in Garvey's movement.

The U.N.I.A. began to receive a monthly donation of \$24.00 from Ebenezer Baptist Church and Austin became a regular speaker at its meetings, and a defender of the organization.¹⁵ He characterized it as a peaceful organization—one not meant to fight Negroes or destroy them, nor was it meant for a particular crowd. "Segregation, Jim Crowism, and class distinction, he says, were all lines that the white man had drawn and are not as injurious to the race as the lines we have drawn for ourselves." Robert L. Vann, joined the U.N.I.A. December 1921, and created a column in his newspaper, *U.N.I.A. News*, to reach the masses of blacks, and promote and defend the Universal Negro Improvement Association. This was to Garvey's advantage, because Vann's paper had the largest circulation of black weekly newspapers in the United States during this period.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association left a permanent memory in Pittsburgh during the mid-1920s. In 1921, when the Pittsburgh Division of the U.N.I.A. was led by Reverend Jacob Slappey of the Hill District, Ebenezer either rented or donated the facility permanent meeting place was necessary. On August 3, 1925, Ebenezer Baptist Church sold its edifice on Colwell and Miller Streets to the African Communities League,

¹⁵*Ebenezer Baptist Church Archives*, Financial Record Book, 1924, p. 106.



**Figure. 50. Ebenezer Baptist Church
Wylie Avenue and Davis Street**

This property was formerly the church home of the (white) Tenth United Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. On December 1, 1914, the structure was purchased by Ebenezer Baptist Church for \$35,000. Ebenezer made two mortgages, one on December 1, 1914 to William H. Knox, President of Tenth United Presbyterian Church of \$11,600 and the other in the amount of \$9,900. The balance on this edifice was \$14,100.

to Garvey. With the constant growth and popularity of Garveyism in Pittsburgh, a U.N.I.A. had club rooms at 2514 Wylie Avenue and an undisclosed location in East Liberty.

Four years later, when Garvey was deported by the federal government for fraud, Ebenezer Baptist Church sued the African Communities League for failing to pay the mortgage and taxes on the property as stipulated in the contract. An excerpt from the affidavit for his particular case read:

...the defendant has made default in the payment of the installment of principal which was due and payable on July 1st 1927 in the amount of \$500 and in the payment of the quarterly interest in the amount of \$67.50 on the aid principal balance on July 1, 1927; and has also failed to pay city and county taxes for the year 1928, which said default continues; \$4,500 with interest from July 1st became justly due.¹⁶

The African Communities League was unsuccessful in meeting its financial obligations, but not without an effort to keep Pittsburgh's Liberty Hall. Zebeedee Green, a laborer who resided on the city's North Side, vice president of the Pittsburgh U.N.I.A. No. 61 in 1927, and author of several pamphlets including, *Why Am I Dissatisfied?* He and his wife Mathilda, frequently, lent money to the Division, the parent body, and the *Negro World*, the official organ of the U.N.I.A. They also contributed to special loans for mortgage and building funds for Pittsburgh's Liberty Hall. However, the debt was too great, so Zebeedee cabled the imprisoned Garvey to inform him of the organization's legal troubles and eventual sale of the building. The case was decided against the African Communities League

¹⁶Office of the Prothonotary, "*Affidavit, Ebenezer Baptist Church v. African Communities League*," Allegheny County, April Term 1929, Pittsburgh, PA.

Know all Men by these Presents,

That ----- AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE -----
New York
a corporation or a body politic, created by and existing under the laws of the Commonwealth of ~~NEW YORK~~ having its
domicile in the city of New York --- County of New York --- in said Commonwealth, 1
held and firmly bound unto EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH -----
a corporation or body politic, created by and existing under the laws of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, having its dom-
icile in the city of Pittsburgh --- County of --- Allegheny ---, in said Commonwealth,
in the sum of Thirteen thousand (\$13,000) ----- Dollars,
lawful money of the United States of America, to be paid to the said Ebenezer Baptist Church of
Pittsburgh -----
its certain attorney, successors and assigns; to which payment well and truly to be made, the said
-----AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE -----
does bind itself, its successors and assigns, and every of them, jointly and severally firmly by these presents.
And said corporation does hereby empower any Attorney of any Court of Record within the United States, or elsewhere, to
appear for it, and after one or more declarations filed, confess judgment or judgments against it in favor of the said
-----EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH -----
as of any term for the above penalty, together with costs of suit, attorney's commission of 5 per cent. for collection,
with waiver of inquisition and condemnation of any property that may be levied upon by virtue of any execution
which may issue forthwith on failure to comply with the conditions hereof, and hereby waiving the Act of Assembly,
passed the ninth day of April, A. D. 1849, exempting property to the value of \$300 from levy and sale on execution, &c.,
and with a release of all errors.
In Witness Whereof, The said party of the first part has to these presents caused the common seal of said Corporation
to be affixed hereto, duly attested on the ---Third --- day of ---August --- A. D. 19 25.

Now the Condition of the above Obligation is Such, That if the above bounden,

----- AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE -----
its successors or assigns shall and do well and truly pay, or cause to be paid unto the said
EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH ----- its certain attorneys
successors or assigns, the just sum of Six thousand five hundred (\$6,500) -----

dollars like lawful money as aforesaid as follows: Not less than Five hundred (\$500)
Dollars on the principal debt, together with lawful interest on said
principal debt, on October 1st., 1925 and a like sum of not less than
Five hundred dollars on the principal debt, together with lawful inter-
est on unpaid principal, on the first day of each and every third month
thereafter -----

with interest thereon from the date hereof, at six per cent. per annum, payable quarter-annually, until
the whole of said principal debt or sum be fully paid; and shall also, from time to time, until said debt and interest be
fully paid, renew and keep alive, by paying the necessary premiums and charges on such policies of insurance as may be
taken out to the amount of at least Six thousand five hundred (\$6,500) -----
Dollars, by or in behalf of the said Ebenezer Baptist Church of Pittsburgh -----
its successors and assigns for the further security of the said debt upon the buildings and improvements described in the
mortgage accompanying and securing this present obligation, all State corporation and also all taxes, municipal assess-
ments or charges, assessed against or upon the mortgaged premises, and in case default be made in payment of said prin-
cipal debt or sum, or of any installment of interest or premium of insurance as aforesaid, or of all State corporation taxes
and any taxes, municipal assessments or charges, assessed upon the mortgaged premises as aforesaid, or of any part thereof
when due and payable, respectively, by the terms of this obligation, or by law, for the space of ---thirty---
days, as aforesaid, the whole of the said principal debt or sum, and interest then unpaid, shall thereupon become due and
payable, and execution may issue forthwith for the collection of the same, together with all fees, costs and expenses of
collecting the same, including an attorney's commission of five per cent., without any fraud or further delay, then
this obligation is to be void, otherwise it is to remain in full force and virtue.

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE (SEAL)
by W. T. Sherrill, Acting President
Witnessed:

G. Emonei Carter
Secretary.

\$3.25 I.R.S. Cancelled.

Figure. 51. Ebenezer Baptist Church Deed

October 6, 1927.¹⁷

In Garvey's absence, the Pittsburgh Division of the U.N.I.A. attempted to continue his program until his release. However, in Pittsburgh as well as other cities, the movement faltered. J.C. Austin left Pittsburgh for Chicago's Pilgrim Baptist Church; Robert L. Vann continued to publish the *Courier*; and Zebeedee Green was committed to a sanitarium. There was no additional information on the whereabouts of Reverend Slappey and S.A. Franklin, but it may be logical deduce that they went on with their lives and held on to the dreams which Marcus Garvey hoped would become a reality.

The Pittsburgh Housewives League

Sociologist W.E.B. Dubois points out that "it is apparent that the largest hope for the ultimate rise of the Negro lied in his mastery of the art of a social organized life." While this may have been true, the ultimate rise of the [Negro] was also indigenous to economics. Better housing, spending, and employment, for example, were chief concerns of many black men and women. The Pittsburgh Housewives League worked diligently to solve the economic problems of the city's blacks through boycotting, pressuring white employers to hire qualified blacks in their businesses, mobilizing the black community, and conducting economic surveys.

¹⁷On April 7, 1930, Pittsburgh's Liberty Hall was purchased by Meilich Mallinger for \$2,499.65. The purchase price was the amount owed in taxes by the African Communities League which included: the cost of the writ, \$191.38; county taxes, \$3981.75; city and school taxes, and water rent \$1488.50; corporate tax \$24.75; and W.H. Stanton, attorney for Ebenezer Baptist Church, \$430.27 for legal fees.

EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OF
PITTSBURGH, a corporation

versus

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE,
a corporation.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,

County of Allegheny.

No.

April Term, 1929

D. S. G.

Statement and Confession.

Debt,	\$4,500.00
Penalty,	
Interest,	\$ 459.75 ; 4,959.75
Attorney's Commission,	\$ 247.98
Total,	\$ 5,207.73

ss.

The Plaintiff's claim in this case is founded on a judgment bond duly signed, sealed and delivered by the defendant to the plaintiff

AFRICAN COMMUNITIES LEAGUE, a corporation.

I, late of said County, --WAS-- summoned to answer EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH OF PITTS-
BURGH, a corporation,

of a plea that it ~~is~~ render unto
said plaintiff the sum of Five thousand two hundred seven and 73/100 ---- Dollars,
lawful money of the United States, which to it, it ~~is~~ owe ~~is~~ and unjustly detain ~~is~~, etc. And whereupon the
said plaintiff by ----- W. H. Stanton, its ----- Attorney
complain ~~is~~ for that whereas the said defendant heretofore, to-wit, on the ----3rd. ----- day of
August ----- in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred twenty-five
at New York ----- to-wit: in the County and State of ~~XXXXXX~~ New York, by its --- certain bond or writing obligatory,
(a true copy of which is attached hereto), accompanying a certain mortgage of even date therewith, which mortgage is re-
corded in the County aforesaid in Mortgage Book, Vol 200, page 74 and made a part hereof by reference thereto, under
its ----- ~~XXXXXX~~ seal, had bound itself -- unto the said plaintiff in the penal sum of
Thirteen thousand (\$13,000) ----- Dollars,
to be released upon payment of the sum of Six thousand five hundred (\$6,500) --- Dollars,
with interest at six per cent. per annum, in installments after the date thereof upon which
the balance now due and owing is Four thousand five hundred (\$4,500) -----
----- Dollars, with interest from ----July 1st., 1927

Nevertheless the said defendant, although often required, the aforesaid sum of money, or any part thereof to the said
plaintiff yet ~~he~~ ~~is~~ not paid, but hitherto altogether refused, and still refuse ~~is~~ to pay. Whereupon the said
plaintiff is damaged to the value of Thirteen thousand (\$13,000) ----- Dollars,

and therefore bring ~~is~~ suit, etc. And bring ~~is~~ here into Court a true copy of the Judgment Bond or writing obligatory
aforesaid, which the debt aforesaid, in form aforesaid, doth testify, the date whereof is the ~~1st~~ and year aforesaid.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

County of Allegheny

By virtue of the annexed Power of Attorney --I--do hereby appear for the said defendant AFRICAN
COMMUNITIES LEAGUE

and confess judgment against it --- and in favor of the said plaintiff in the penal sum of -----
Thirteen thousand (\$13,000) ----- Dollars,
to be released upon payment of Five thousand two hundred seven and --- 73/100 Dollars,
liquidated as follows:

Real debt,	\$4,500.00
Interest from July 1st., 1927	459.75
Attorney's Commission 5%	247.98

\$ 5,207.73

Total,

With costs of suit, release of all errors, and without pay of execution and extension upon any levy on real estate in hereby waived, and condemnation agreed
to, and the execution of any property from levy and sale on any execution herein, is also hereby expressly waived and no benefit of suspension to be claimed under and
by virtue of any suspension law now in force, or which may be hereafter passed.

March 14th., 1929

Attorney for Defendant
pro hac vice.

Figure. 52. The Affidavit

The idea of the Pittsburgh Housewives League was the result of the Detroit Housewives League, founded June 10, 1930, by Fannie Peck, the wife of an African Methodist Episcopal minister. The purpose of this black women's organization was to help black families and black businesses survive the 1929 Depression.¹⁸ The founding of this organization can also be attributed to A.L. Holsey, secretary of the National Negro Business League, who spoke at Bethel A.M.E. Church about the economic power of black housewives.¹⁹ With approximately fifty black women meeting in Bethel's gymnasium, the Housewives League of Detroit was established. Historian Richard W. Thomas described the League as "part of a long tradition of black women's involvement in black community-building." This tradition was also that of black women in Pittsburgh.

A spin-off of the Detroit Housewives League, was the Pittsburgh Housewives League, designed to change the face of black economics based on the principles of economic nationalism, mutual aid, and self-determination.²⁰ It encouraged local blacks to patronize black businesses, provided information on the pricing of goods, and instructions on household budgeting. Historian Darlene Clark Hine explains that the Detroit Housewives

¹⁸Darlene Clark Hine, "*The Housewives League of Detroit*," in *Black Women in American: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Volume I, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1993), p. 585. For more information about the Detroit Housewives League, its records are housed in Detroit Public Library's Burton Collection.

¹⁹Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We make It: Building the Black Community of Detroit, 1915-1945*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 214. Fannie Peck's husband was pastor of Bethel A.M.E. Church where Hosley gave this encouraging speech hoping it would lead to an increase in the number of Detroit's black businesses.

²⁰Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Reconstructing Women's History 1915-1945*, (New York: Carlson Publishing Company, 1996), p. 137. For more information on the Detroit Housewives League, its records are housed in the Detroit Public Library's Burton Collection, Detroit, Michigan.

League used a variety of methods to deal with black economic woes. For example, it organized a research committee to gather and compile data on the black community's business needs and dealt with issues relative to direct spending. What initially began as a local organization of Detroit black women, became a national organization by 1933 as Housewives League were established in other cities including Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.²¹

The Pittsburgh Housewives League was spearheaded in August 1937, by Daisy E. Lampkin, a noted black clubwoman, secretary of the NAACP, and vice president of *The Pittsburgh Courier*. Although a series of meetings were held in 1937, it was not until January 1938 that it was formally organized. Through the eyes of black women in the Detroit Housewives League, black women in Pittsburgh realized the true economic spending power of black Americans. For example, statistics from the Pittsburgh Urban League revealed that 83,000 blacks resided in Allegheny County and spent approximately \$63 million annually.²² At a meeting, Daisy Lampkin asserted, "We have talked about education, physical and cultural [issues], but neglected to educate our dollars. Let's take off our kid gloves and get to work."²³

In a concerted effort to accelerate this movement of black economics among

²¹The National Housewives League was organized in Durham, North Carolina. Housewives Leagues were also created in Chicago, Baltimore, Harlem, and Cleveland.

²²*Minutes of the Housewives Cooperative League*, September 15, 1937, p. 1. AIS, MSS 81:11, Box 7, FF 321, Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

²³"*Big Meeting Next Friday First of Series To Educate Your Dollars*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 31, 1937, (no page number). The Pittsburgh Housewives League collected a donations from those attending its meetings to help support their efforts. These monies were basically used for operational costs such as stamps for mailings and mailing cards reminding members of upcoming meetings. On October 22, 1937, they collected \$7.05.

Pittsburgh's black women, Frances Stewart, Mrs. Bethel, Cora Jones, Alma Illery, Mrs. Bayless, Mrs. Hightower, and Laura Parr joined Lampkin in a quest to direct black spending.

“If [black dollars] are wisely spent they would open new avenues of employment in the way of clerks, white collar, and some skilled jobs...break down Jim Crowism in Pittsburgh, and abolish discourteous discrimination. There is no reason why we should not have something in return for the money we spend.”²⁴

The Pittsburgh Housewives League vowed to educate local housewives to be more discriminate in spending, organize buying power, make black dollars get more respect, and obtain jobs for blacks by concentrating their buying power.²⁵ Determined to “Teach Their Dollars to Have More Cents,” by banding together, these women felt they could do a constructive job of making black dollars work for black people in Allegheny County.²⁶

They employed many strategies to boost the organization's membership which included hosting speakers from other cities active in Housewives Leagues. These lectures focused on various aspects of black economics. On August 6, 1937, the Pittsburgh Leaguers formed seven committees: General Steering, Program, Publicity, Meeting, Finance, and Research. The Research Committee, probably the most important of these seven committees, conducted surveys of Pittsburgh's black businesses, the types of products used by blacks,

²⁴*Minutes of the Pittsburgh Housewives Cooperative League, September 15, 1937*, AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Organizations-Housewives Cooperative League, Box 7, FF 321, p. 1.

²⁵*Minutes of the Housewives Cooperative League*, (undated), AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Box 7, FF 321, p. 1.

²⁶*Minutes Housewives Cooperative League, September 15, 1937*, AIS, MSS 81:11, Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Box 7, FF 321, p. 1. Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

made maps designating black businesses, and distributed literature about the same.²⁷ Surveys of white businesses in the black community were also completed in order to ascertain where blacks spent their money. If these surveys were not done, it would have been extremely difficult to initiate a “change the face of black economics.”

On behalf of the city’s black consumers, the Pittsburgh Housewives League in September 1937, orchestrated several projects including “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work Campaigns.” This tactic was characteristic of many northern cities such as Chicago, Cincinnati, Harlem, Cleveland, and Detroit where black consumers similarly, experienced economic disadvantages because of racial discrimination. For the most part, this strategy was designed to end the victimization of blacks in a vicious economic system from which they obtained few or no benefits.²⁸ The PHL was interested in successfully pressuring white businesses to hire blacks by first completing a survey on the basic commodities used by black consumers which were bread, milk, gasoline, and coal. Second, it completed a roster of the two types of black businesses: service, i.e., barbershops, beauty salons, mortuaries; and distribution which included confectioners, news dealers, and grocery stores.²⁹ Third, the Research Committee pressured white businesses into purchasing advertisements in *The*

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 2. On the important point of constructing maps of black businesses, it was suggested that university students perhaps from Carnegie Tech assist the League in three areas of this project: spot maps; block maps; and draw graphs designating areas with the largest populations of blacks and businesses. It was also suggested that a project of this size would require at least twenty-five students.

²⁸Hine, *Hine Sight*, p. 79.

²⁹*Committee Meeting, Housewives Consumers’ League, September 7, 1937*, p. 2. AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Box 7, FF 321, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Pittsburgh Courier and hiring blacks in exchange for establishing and maintaining the patronage of black consumers. These projects produced positive attitudes among black consumers and, at the same time, irritated selected local white businessmen.

According to the research committee's findings, blacks were large consumers of milk and bread. The Pittsburgh Housewives League then, led a "frontal attack" against two of the city's dairy companies, Meadow Gold and Otto. They contacted both companies to discuss black employment opportunities, solicit advertisements for the *Courier*, and on October 23, 1937, requested information regarding the number of blacks employed only to find it had none. The inquiry also dealt with the possibility of Meadow Gold hiring a black driver, but Mr. Churchfield, the owner, of Meadow Gold Milk Company stated "he was not interested."³⁰ The PHL's Publicity Committee responded to Churchfield by launching its first "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work" campaign and sent him a letter telling him why "Negroes would no longer buy his milk."

The dissemination of information about boycotting Meadow Gold Milk Company spread among black housewives and expanded to Pittsburgh's larger black community. For example, Elizabeth Bass assumed responsibility for informing black church groups; Daisy Lampkin, the Lucy Stone League; other black women's clubs, Frances Stewart, Anna Miller, Wilhelmina Brown, and Mrs. Bayless; Jeanne Walls, college women's groups and the City-County Federation of Colored Women's Clubs; Grace Lowndes the various Urban League Units; and Mrs. Miller to assist in Homewood.³¹ During the 1930s, there were approximately

³⁰*Minutes of the Housewives Cooperative League, October 23, 1937*, p. 1.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

40 black women's clubs and more than 150 black churches in the city and their cooperation in the boycott along with other facets of the black community was sure to cause a substantial monetary loss to the dairy company.

With the boycott of Meadow Gold Milk Company and the black community instructed to purchase Reick's Milk, the PHL experienced a taste of success for themselves and local black consumers.³² A representative of Meadow Gold Milk Company contacted the League and stated, "it could not hire any Negroes at present, but if it could in the future, he would call."³³ The evidence does not suggest, however, that Meadow Gold hired any blacks or advertised in the *Courier*, but it does tell us that the boycott had an apparent impact on its business. Moreover, this protest demonstrated that black purchasing power could, in fact, be mobilized.

The PHL continued its protest activities by targeting three of the city's baking companies: Haller, Homestead, and Royal as a result of the research committee's survey. Using the same approach, members of the Housewives League requested information concerning black employment from each company. While Homestead Baking Company reportedly employed only one [Negro] bread truck driver, and Royal Baking Powder Company, six colored demonstrators, Haller employed two "colored" oven attendants,

³²*Minutes Housewives Cooperative League, October 22, 1937*, p. 2. AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Box 7 FF 321, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA. The Pittsburgh Housewives League sanctioned the purchase of Reick's Milk, because, it advertised in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, employed several "colored" help and placed exhibits in the *Courier's* Cooking School. The exhibits were probably related to the significance of dairy products for cooking use and better health.

³³*Minutes of the Housewives Cooperative League, October 23, 1937*, p. 1.

several colored helpers in their garage, and were pleased with [Negro] help.³⁴

Unlike two of the three dairy companies scrutinized by the Housewives League, all three baking companies, had at least one black employee and it encouraged them to hire more blacks, because of the enormous amount of bread purchased by Pittsburgh blacks. Haller Baking Company, in a possible attempt to avoid a boycott of its business, developed a relationship with the PHL. For example, it volunteered to provide cooking demonstrations by one of its hostesses. On one occasion, it successfully arranged a demonstration which also included “talking show pictures” and furnished cake for 35 people.³⁵ Haller also advertised in the *Pittsburgh Courier*. There is no evidence that black employment increased, but perhaps this gesture indicated that Haller Baking Company at least recognized that blacks largely supported its business.

Civil Rights

The movement for civil rights among blacks was not confined to southern blacks alone, who fought against segregationist forces in education, public transportation, and disfranchisement. In northern urban communities, blacks were also victims of racial discrimination and prejudice brought on by the Great Migration. For example, as northern industrial cities swelled with large numbers of southern migrants, blacks competing for jobs

³⁴*Minutes Housewives Cooperative League*, October 23, 1937, p. 1. AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League Papers of Pittsburgh, Box 7, FF 321, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

³⁵*Minutes of the Pittsburgh Housewives Cooperative League, October 23, 1937*, pp. 1-2.

threatened the employment stability of whites. In response to this threat, northern whites attempted to tighten the color bar not only in employment, but in schools, housing, and public accommodations. Scholars of the Civil Rights Movement have not hesitated to point out that “southern racist practices became northern racist practices” as blacks in the North began to experience the wrath of white society.

Between 1914-1945, Pittsburgh blacks were discriminated against in every aspect of their existence even though there were no written segregation laws. For example, they were refused admission to public places including restaurants and local swimming pools. Black Pittsburghers were excluded from employment opportunities in the Pittsburgh Public Schools, downtown department stores, and other places of business. The city’s black leadership was no longer willing to tolerate racism and segregationist practices and organized, used the courts, and political connections through Pennsylvania State Representative Homer S. Brown, a race man.

Education

During the early 20th century, the controversial issue of black teachers and mixed schools for the education of black children was a debatable issue among Pittsburgh blacks, because there were two schools of thought. One school favored separate schools for Negroes with an all Negro faculty and the other, mixed schools and mixed faculties.³⁶ For example, race leader and minister, Dr. J.C. Austin, though not speaking for all of Pittsburgh’s black

³⁶James H. Brewer, *Robert Lee Vann and The Pittsburgh Courier*, Master’s Thesis, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School, Pittsburgh, PA 1941, p. 61.

ministers, wrote:

We do not plead nor pray for any form of separation aside from sin and uncleanness. We want to see the white and colored child sit in the same classroom, study the same textbook, solve the same problem, contend for the same high school honors and come forth in the world thoroughly convinced that the other is nothing more nor less than a man. We are anxious to see mixed faculty, so that money spent by this Great Commonwealth (sic) in training our young men and women for such positions will not be spent in vain.”³⁷

Robert L. Vann, felt that the hiring of black teachers would benefit black children more than white teachers, because sympathy, patience, interest, and love for his race were qualities innate and natural and did not have to be acquired.³⁸ He also pointed out that black teachers were especially important during the “plastic period,” i.e., kindergarten and elementary levels when they were most vulnerable. Black teachers, he thought, could instill values in, and mold black children into productive race people. Other Pittsburgh blacks were content with the Pittsburgh Public Schools, but verbally objected to its lily-white faculty and refusal to hire qualified black teachers. In addition, a fear among some blacks that the “prejudice of many white teachers (toward black students) would undermine a normal school-student relationship.”³⁹

It was ironic that the Pittsburgh Board of Education refused to hire black educators when the qualifications were easily met. William McCoy’s *History of the Pittsburgh Public*

³⁷Reverend J.C. Austin, “*Who Said, Separate Schools?*” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 24, 1923, p. 8.

³⁸Brewer, p. 62.

³⁹Herbert Aptheker, ed. *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, (New York: The Citadel Press, 1969) p. 401.

Schools: 1811-1942, carefully documented the board's teacher qualifications. During the earliest years, preparation for teaching was almost unheard of; the teacher qualifications depended on the school's management; and without any established or generally recognized educational standards of preparation. The ability to discipline students was greater than the ability to instruct and a brief formal education combined with some general reading was enough to convince authorities that an applicant was sufficiently trained to perform duties as a teacher.⁴⁰ It was not until 1845, when the Pittsburgh Public schools implemented an oral and written examination which were conducted until 1868, marking the establishment of the School District of Pittsburgh.

From this point until 1911, the superintendent of the Public Schools conducted examinations for applicants to teach in city schools. He also points out that the results of the teacher examinations were not always the deciding factor, because there were instances where white applicants failed, but were given jobs. A college degree, regardless of the type of training, was acceptable for employment.

Prior to 1937, at least two campaigns for black teachers in Pittsburgh were launched, the first by *The Pittsburgh Courier* in 1914, and the Pittsburgh Urban League in 1929. Robert L. Vann, owner of the *Courier*, argued that Pittsburgh blacks "furnished a definite percentage of attendance and paid a substantial percentage of taxation in districts where the black population was thickest."⁴¹ The Urban League formed the Committee on Placement

⁴⁰McCoy, p. 134.

⁴¹Andrew Buni, *Robert L. Vann and the Editorial Page of the Pittsburgh Courier*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1960), p. 56. Other organizations were also involved in the fight for colored teachers in the Pittsburgh Public schools such as the Lucy Stone

Effort for Colored Teachers on April 5, 1929, which advocated the hiring of colored teachers in the school system, suggested they be placed where colored students predominated, and placed restrictions on any shift or transfer of students from one school to another to prevent them from becoming segregated.⁴²

However, it was not until 1935, that the campaign for colored teachers in Pittsburgh produced positive results. Black civil rights activists, Robert L. Vann, Daisy Lampkin, Thomas Harrison, and Homer S. Brown, met with S.E. Weber, Associate Superintendent of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, regarding the employment of black teachers. Weber conceded that school officials needed assurance that black citizens wanted black teachers and that there were in fact, such qualified teachers available. In 1937, 35 black teachers applied for employment as educators in the Pittsburgh Public School system, but only nine of these applicants qualified to take the teacher examination.

In September 1935, Paul Lawrence Peeler, a musician and graduate of Carnegie School of Technology, was appointed as Pittsburgh's first black teacher and placed in a predominantly black school, although he was only part-time.⁴³ While the hiring of one black

⁴²*Minutes Employment of Colored Teachers*, April 5, 1929, AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Box 3, FF145, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA; *Letter to Mrs. William Lampkin from Alonzo C. Thayer*, April 17, 1929, AIS, MSS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Box 3, FF 145, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁴³Ralph Proctor's Ph.D. dissertation, *Racial Discrimination Against Black Teachers and Black Professionals by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, 1834-1973*, University of Pittsburgh, (1979) points out that Peeler posed no threat to white teachers, because he was only a music teacher. Music, Proctor implies was an acceptable occupation for blacks, according to many white teachers and whites, in general. This was perhaps based on the stereotype that blacks were musically inclined. He also says that Peeler took the Teacher Eligibility Test three

teacher in the Pittsburgh school system may have been an indication that the Board of Education had taken its first step to eliminate discriminatory hiring practices, black civil rights activists were not satisfied. For example, Pennsylvania State Representative, Homer S. Brown, in 1937, successfully introduced legislation calling for an inquiry into the alleged racial discrimination in the selection of teachers for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. As a result, all members of the Board of Education were subpoenaed to appear before the five-member legislative committee.⁴⁴

Members of Pittsburgh's Board of Education and school superintendents have been personally aware, but officially ignorant for the past 25 years of the non-existence of colored teachers in the public schools. Dr. Ben Graham, school superintendent, insisted that no discrimination existed in the hiring of "colored" teachers. Attorney Richard F. Jones and Joseph Givens, proponents of the Assembly resolution calling for the current probe into the racist hiring practices of the Board of Education, produced an array of witnesses to testify about this unfortunate and racist atrocity.

Represented by black Pittsburgh attorney Richard F. Jones, a native of Lynchburg, Virginia and 1923 graduate of the University of Pittsburgh Law School, were seven [Negro]

times before his name appeared on the eligibility list, but does not indicate if this was because Paul Lawrence Peeler failed the test. Peeler taught at Minersville, Rose, Watt Street and Conroy Schools.

⁴⁴The Pittsburgh Board of Education was established in 1911. The members of its Board of Directors, all white males, were Marcus Aaron, a member of the Board since its inception, N.R. Criss, A.L. Lewin, Frank L. Freese, Robert Beckley, and Thomas Doyle who were referred to by *The Pittsburgh Courier* staff as the "six old men."



Figure. 53. Paul Lawrence Peeler

girls who qualified for teaching positions in the city's schools between 1915-1922.⁴⁵ Five of these women provided testimony concerning their experience to attain jobs as teachers in Pittsburgh. For example, Georgine Pierce Brown testified: "I was graduated in 1920 for kindergarten teachers at the old Pittsburg (sic) Training School. I was the only colored member of the kindergarten group. All my class members were given teaching positions in the school, but I was not."⁴⁶ Ms. Miller testified that "she and Mary Wood completed the elementary course in 1922;" and Robinson and Pollard finished the elementary course in 1919, with credit, but none of them were employed by the Board of Education. Some of them further testified that William Davidson, the deceased former school superintendent, told them, "they would not be admitted to the Pittsburgh Public School system and urged them

⁴⁵Richard F. Jones graduated in the top of his law school class and was the first Negro inducted into the Order of the Coif, a national honorary legal fraternity. He was once an assistant District Attorney in Pittsburgh and was a member of the Colored YMCA and board member of the Metropolitan YMCA; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; Chadwick Civic League; the Elks, Masons, and Pythians. A religious man, Richard Jones was an active member of the Holy Cross Church. Georgine Pierce Brown, Vivian Pollard Robinson, Helen Pollard, Helen Miller, and Mary Wood represented five of seven black women refused employment in the Pittsburgh Public Schools and who testified at the inquiry. The data does not provide the names of the other two women.

⁴⁶"*City Fights for School Teachers: Victims of Color Barrier Testify*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 1, 1937, p. 1, 4. The Pittsburgh Training School for Teachers also known as the Henry Clay Frick Training School, was organized in September 1912. Maintained by the Pittsburgh Board of Education, the establishment of this school was based on the premise that "in order to teach well, teachers must first be taught how to teach." The Pittsburgh Training School trained kindergarten and elementary teachers. While a one year course was offered to graduates of Fifth Avenue Normal School and students of the Kindergarten College, graduates of other high schools were required to take a two year course, pass physical, psychological, and scholastic tests. This school was first located in Colfax Elementary School on Beechwood Boulevard.

to go South."⁴⁷

School board members were enraged by the testimony and charges of discrimination by these black women and questioned the motives of the legislative inquiry committee. N.R. Criss, solicitor of the Board of Education, remarked "he never heard of them." School Board president, Marcus Aaron claimed, "Davidson never presented the names" of the black women to the Board of Education for employment while at the same time, condemned the investigation: "Might I say in kindness, you are harming the cause which you are championing and that for every friend you are making on the outside, you are making a dozen enemies. You are creating a public issue where none exists." He also implied that the hearing had political overtones, but was scolded and quickly reminded of the reason for the inquiry by State Representative, Al Tronzo, a member of the legislative committee:

The purpose of this committee is to bring to light in full view of all the people in an official session of the committee any pertinent facts bearing on the question submitted to the committees by the House of Representatives, a question which is, and of right, ought to be a matter of public concern to all citizens enjoying the protection of the Constitution.⁴⁸

Following the testimony, the legislative committee concluded that Pittsburgh's "buck- passing" local school board was guilty of flagrant discrimination. The Board of Education, of course, denied all charges, but shortly, after the inquiry, two black teachers were hired. In September 1945, one black male and six black females were hired

⁴⁷ **"Quiz School Board Head Charges Politics Caused Probe,"** *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 3, 1937, pp. 1, 4. Many of Pittsburgh's colored teachers, in fact, did relocate to the South for an opportunity to teach school.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

permanently, as teachers in the Pittsburgh school system bringing the total to eleven. Still, the number of black teachers was minute compared to the enrollment of black children and the 3,000 white teachers employed by the Board of Education, but the efforts of black leaders to integrate the Pittsburgh Public Schools with a substantial number of black educators persisted .

Integration of Public Places

On June 29, 1935, the Equal Rights Bill was passed in the Pennsylvania Legislature which granted all persons, regardless of creed, color, equal privileges in all public places. For all cases of racial discrimination, the bill mandated "fines from \$50-\$100 or imprisonment for thirty days or both for any person refusing to furnish such rights." The first reported violation of the Equal Rights Bill occurred in January, 1936, when a restaurant owner, John Psaras, told two city snow shovelers, (white) Terry McManus and (black) Walter Wilson, that "we do not serve colored people in here" and subsequently, refused them two cups of coffee.⁴⁹ In 1938, the East End restaurant owner was found guilty by a jury of twelve white men under Pennsylvania's Equal Rights Law, setting a precedent for Pennsylvania restaurants, hotels, theaters, and dance halls. However, the Equal Rights Law did not apply to equal employment opportunities for blacks.

⁴⁹"*Race: Two Cups off Coffee and the Equal Rights Law*, *The Bulletin Index*, June 4, 1936, (no page) Vertical File, Pittsburgh Negroes, Discrimination, 1935-1937, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA. Wilson ordered the coffee, but when Psaras refused to serve him, McManus would not accept a cup of coffee. McManus accompanied Wilson, who filed suit under the Pennsylvania Equal Rights Law against Psaras, to court and testified as a witness to the incident.

Employment

In 1941, the Pittsburgh Railways Company (PRC), one of the city's largest utilities, refused to hire blacks as motormen while experiencing a severe manpower shortage during the World War II era, which also attributed to poor transportation service as thousands of Pittsburgh men had enlisted in the military. It fostered a rigid policy of discrimination against blacks. An excerpt from a PRC advertisement in Pittsburgh newspapers read: "For permanent work with PRC applicants should be 25-40 years old; 5'8" or over and experienced in driving motor vehicles."⁵⁰ When blacks responded to the advertisement, they were rebuffed and after months of advertising for streetcar operators, a PRC spokesperson informed *Pittsburgh Courier* officials that, "these jobs were not open to blacks. It has not been the policy of this company to hire blacks as operators and we do not contemplate a change in that policy."⁵¹ But, it is interesting to note that PRC was willing to hire white women to fill the positions vacated as a result of the war.

Appalled by such discriminatory behavior, the Citizens Coordinating Committee and *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1945 organized a meeting with other interested groups to devise a means by which to break down the PRC's Jim Crow barriers. On February 10th, approximately 60 organizations gathered at the Kay Boy's Club for that purpose. The CCC and *Pittsburgh Courier* led the campaign against PRC by completing applications for employment with the company and using the press to publicize its discriminatory hiring

⁵⁰"*Local Transit System Bars Negro Operators: Not Our Policy Company Informs Pittsburgh Courier Reporter*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 8, 1941, p. 1.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 1.

practices. They argued two points: that blacks were capable of operating streetcars as demonstrated in local transportation systems of Cleveland, Detroit, and New York; and that blacks spend thousands of dollars each year on public transportation, but were only hired by PRC as custodians.

In this four year struggle for the employment of black motormen, PRC refused to change its hiring policy. Even with the help of State Senator Elmer Holland who had recently, introduced a Bill in the Pennsylvania Legislature to investigate the financial practices of the Pittsburgh Railways Company, joining in the fight for the fair employment of blacks as streetcar operators, all efforts failed. The CCC, *Pittsburgh Courier*, the Urban League, and the Interracial Action Committee, and representatives from the Hotel and Restaurant Worker's Union were, however, successful in meeting with Charles D. Palmer, PRC's commercial manager, to discuss the employment of black motormen, but to no avail.⁵² But, the protests by these organizations were an aggressive attempt to eliminate discriminatory hiring practices and as the *Pittsburgh Courier* pointed out, "it was strictly an issue of color, and rather than employ blacks in Pittsburgh's streetcar company, labor unions were prepared to let the public suffer."⁵³

⁵²During this meeting, Palmer, explained to those in attendance that white motormen had threatened to quit if the Pittsburgh Railway Company hired any Negroes. He also stated that even if they did quit, he could not guarantee the hiring of Negro motormen to replace them. Negroes pointed out that the PRC Company could at least hire Negro motormen on routes where Negroes mainly traveled including those in the Hill District and East End.

⁵³"*State Senator May Probe Ban Against Negro Operators: Pittsburgh Railways Company Sticks to Rigid Policy of Not Hiring Negro Operators on Street Cars Here,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 20, 1945, pp. 1,4. Editorial, "*Color Not Need,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 22, 1941, p. 2.

Black leaders everywhere were confronted with discriminatory hiring practices in the North, particularly, during the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They were especially disgruntled by the lack of employment opportunities for blacks in the nation's defense plants and federal government agencies. With the threat of a March on Washington by labor leader and member of the Socialist Party, A. Philip Randolph, FDR and his cohorts were at least willing to listen to the demands of black leaders and black members of his cabinet, known as the his "black brains trust."

This protest by black leaders led to a memo to FDR which spelled out civil rights leadership demands for executive orders to bid on government contracts being awarded to firms not hiring blacks; to end racial bias in all departments and federal government agencies; to end discrimination and segregation in the armed forces; and requested Congress to deny benefits of the National Labor Relations Act to unions excluding blacks.⁵⁴ If these demands were not met black leaders would forego their plans to march in Washington, D.C. Rather than face this damaging possibility, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 which stipulated that all employers, unions, government agencies concerned with vocational training programs must provide for full and equitable training programs must provide full and equitable participation, because of race, creed, color, or national origin. Executive Order 8802 created the Committee on Fair Employment Practices designed to "receive and investigate complaints, redress grievances, recommend to the government further measures

⁵⁴Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue, Volume I: The Depression Decade*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 321.

if necessary."

In Pittsburgh, blacks were not only denied employment opportunities in the city's defense plants, but in other places of businesses as well. In protest, black leaders sought to eliminate racism and discrimination in the work place. Executive Order 8802 was implemented on the federal level and some states, like New York, introduced and passed similar legislation to deal with discriminatory hiring practices on the state level of government. State Representative Homer S. Brown of Pittsburgh championed the fight of black Pittsburghers for equal opportunities by introducing FEPC legislation in the Pennsylvania Legislature.

In 1945, Homer S. Brown introduced his Fair Employment Practices bill in the Pennsylvania State Legislature to defend the rights of blacks. This bill set forth the following demands: to seek and secure employment for blacks; win promotions; and provide protection against discriminatory practices (for the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant communities) and safeguard the rights, opportunities of all qualified persons to seek, obtain and hold gainful employment without discrimination. It also covered a wide range of punishments for FEPC offenders. For first or second offenses, fines not exceeding \$100 were imposed and for third offenses, the party was guilty of a misdemeanor, fined \$500-\$1000 or imprisoned for one year. It also included provisions for educational programs for schools, colleges, universities against discrimination on account of race, creed, color, national origin, and ancestry.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ "*Clark Interprets Full Meaning of FEPC*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 10, 1945, p. 2. John L. Clark engaged most controversial and political issues involving Pittsburgh's

Pittsburghers rallied behind Brown and the FEPC legislation, House Bill #354, with a grassroots movement. For example, people from various backgrounds supported the bill and a delegation of approximately 100 were expected to attend the Harrisburg hearing March 27, 1945. Bill #354 was supported by local politicians, prominent individuals, community organizations, and labor unions. Pittsburgh's Mayor Scully stated, "I am all for Homer S. Brown's FEPC Bill and willing to encourage its passage in any way I can." Individuals supporters of the bill were: W.T. Poole, Mrs. J.L. Reizenstein, Dr. Willard Hotchkiss, and Robert Lieberman. Organizations responding favorably to the bill were: the Crispus Attucks American Legion Post, the Achievement Clubs of Pittsburgh, the Citizens' Coordinating Committee, and the Western Pennsylvania District Sunday School Convention which sent Reverend Bert Logan, as its representative and a resolution supporting the FEPC legislation.⁵⁶

The Pennsylvania Industrial Council, an affiliate of the CIO sent a directive to the legislative committee throughout the state urging "urging House bill 354, FEP Bill is the Bill to support passage by the CIO. Do not make any commitments to any other FEPC Bill." A letter from the Pennsylvania CIO read: "Write at once or talk to each house member in you legislative district and urge that they use their influence with members of the House Labor

black community. His opinion, in most cases, was widely respected in Pittsburgh. Clark, a world War I veteran and *Pittsburgh Courier* reporter, often brought important issues affecting the black community to light and, more often than not, made his position on the issues clear.

⁵⁶ "*Pittsburghers To Attend Hearing in Harrisburg*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 17, 1945, p. 4. Bert Logan was a *Pittsburgh Courier* reporter and active member of Pittsburgh's Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church, East End.

committee to have House Bill 354 reported out of that committee without delay for a public hearing and place it on its way to final passage.⁵⁷ Representative Brown's legislation was also supported by the United Electrical Worker's Union which comprised an estimated 22,000 members.

Even with the overwhelming support of black and white Pittsburghers, opposition to the Pennsylvania FEPC Bill became a concern when State Representative Samuel W. Sales of Philadelphia introduced another FEPC bill which was sort of a diluted version of Brown's bill. This resulted in a "split" among the ranks in the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives. An enraged Homer S. Brown, retaliated by organizing a meeting of his supporters in Pittsburgh and urging them to send telegrams and letters to the State Legislature. During this meeting, he stated: "There is a definite plot developing to kill the bill in favor of Sales' legislation. There are some people trying to put a wrench in the FEPC machine. I have tried to present a fool-proof Bill, because I covered everything in it. However, some people are fighting it and I can see a split in the general FEPC ranks."⁵⁸ He also pointed out that the opposition was coming from the eastern part of the state, especially, Philadelphia.

Governor Edward Martin led the campaign against House Bill #354 with the

⁵⁷ John L. Clark, "***PA CIO Backs Brown's FEPC Bill: Industrial Council Rallies to Push Brown's Proposal***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 3, 1945, p. 1. Clark was a columnist for the Pittsburgh Courier and one of his regular columns was "Down Wylie Avenue" and during election time, "Political Watch." He also provided extensive and opinionated coverage of the Steel City Banking Company's difficulties and developed a reputation for often criticizing the city's black leadership.

⁵⁸ "***Bill Introduced By Sales Perils Brown's FEPC Legislation***," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 24, 1945, p. 1.

Republicans having developed a political bloc against the measure. He stated, "You can't make equality by legislation. You can, by education and other means create a better feeling among the different races, religions, and nationality groups. To my mind that's the way it will be done eventually, but you can't force it."⁵⁹ Martin also denounced New York's FEPC Bill and replicas of it. In addition, he felt the bill would be too expensive for the State and that education, and not legislation, was necessary to correct unfair job practices.

Conclusion

With the exception of the Pittsburgh Division of Garvey's U.N.I.A., the numerous protests of black Pittsburghers drew the attention of the city's whites and enabled them to make surmountable progress to end racism and discrimination in Pittsburgh. Garvey's movement, though considered, by many Garvey scholars, as the largest mass movement among blacks in the history of the United States, did little to combat racism and discrimination against Pittsburgh blacks. While he may have been successful at building race pride among his 2,000 followers in the city, the U.N.I.A.'s presence seemed to only ruffle the feather of the F.B.I., anti-Garveyites, and the city police. Nonetheless, the protest of black Pittsburghers managed to solve many of their problems relative to the struggle for black civil rights.

⁵⁹ "*Caravan of Pittsburghers Ready for FEPC Hearings: Support for Bill Growing,*" *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 25, 1945, p. 1. Black Pittsburghers were at last beginning to mobilize in large numbers for issues affecting their quality of life. The leadership and success of Homer S. Brown was undoubtedly a factor in this change of attitude that once reflected an apathetic people.

Short of violence, the protests of the Pittsburgh Housewives League, Hill District Citizens Committee, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, and other efforts by blacks in their struggle for equality made some gains in this direction. While each of the above had different strategies as to obtaining black equality none of their efforts were in vain. The Pittsburgh Housewives League mobilized black women in local communities for a series of boycotts against white Pittsburgh businesses, taught women the benefit of shopping economically, increasing the number of black-owned businesses, and patronizing those businesses which employed blacks. This viable organization also impacted the community in terms of the importance of showing its strength in numbers and utilization of all the black community's resources.

The Hill District's Citizens Committee Coordinating Committee and Homer S. Brown fought the a battle for equal rights in local and state courts using legislation. The black protests for black civil rights involved the employment of black educators in the city's public schools, public transportation, and the right to frequent public places from which black were currently barred, because of segregation. In their struggle to eliminate the second class citizenship of Pittsburgh blacks, the leadership managed to attract much of the city's black population to the protest for black civil rights to the point where they attended community meetings and even traveled as far as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to for hearings on the Fair Employment Practices Bill. For black Pittsburgh, racial solidarity and protest using different strategies, was to follow the failure of Garveyism.

Chapter 8

Black Pittsburgh's Claim To Fame, Negro Baseball: An Institution

“...it was black athletes who truly captured the heart of African America. Poor disheartened black men and women identified with the victories of the era's great black athletes, in a personal way. When a black athlete outperformed a white competitor, the average black person felt a thrill of vicarious triumph.”¹

As the previous chapters have shown racism and discrimination against blacks, in general, often dictated the events and activities in their communities. Segregated sports were a part of this dictation and extremely significant to the black community. Historian Douglas Henry Daniels' significant urban study on black San Francisco makes several important points. For example, sporting activities provided an outlet for blacks; blacks, who were winners in sports, were kings among people denied opportunities in business and politics; and that physical competition enabled blacks to stand out, win money, and attract adulators.² Daniels' points are well taken and, also indicative of black participation in sports, especially, baseball.

Black athletes were the real pioneers of black baseball who sparkled the diamonds of Pittsburgh from the late 1920s.³ This chapter shows that Pittsburgh's black baseball players transformed the game into one of their own, eventually, becoming Pittsburgh's claim

¹Darlene Clark Hine, *Path to Equality From the Scottsboro Case To Breaking the Color Barrier of Baseball*, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1995), p. 73.

²Douglas Henry Daniels, *Pioneer Urbanites: A Social and Cultural History of Black San Francisco*, (California: University of California Press, 1990), p. 140.

³Jimmy Dunn, “*He Realized a Dream By Playing for the Grays*,” *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 20, 1997, Section E, p. 12.

to fame by acquiring national and international reputations. Focusing on the Homestead Grays and Pittsburgh Crawfords, it traces the history of both teams as independent baseball clubs, and later, Negro League affiliated clubs. Also important are the individuals who led Pittsburgh's black baseball teams and the players whose special talents created championship teams attracting spectators by the thousands. Despite the many clashes among black baseball's leadership, the Crawfords and Grays remained two of the most popular and talented teams in the history of Negro baseball.

History of Baseball

In the history of America, the first few centuries produced relatively few organized sports.⁴ However, the game of baseball rapidly spread in army camps, military prisons in the North and South during the Civil War, and was soon considered the national pastime of the United States by Americans.⁵ Although the game of baseball is credited to Abner Doubleday, who was said to have invented it in 1839, in Cooperstown, New York, many historians argue that baseball had its origins in England. The rules were adopted by Alexander Cartwright and a group of New York baseball players established the modern game. Cartwright, a surveyor and member of the New York Knickerbockers Club,

⁴Michael Novak, *The Joy of Sports: End Zones, Bases, Baskets and Balls, and the Consecration of American Spirit*, (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 63.

⁵Robert Peterson, *Only the Ball Was White*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 17. This is an excellent source of information on Negro League baseball players. In addition to writing the story of Negro League Baseball, Peterson provides a list of Negro Leagues player's names, teams for which they played, years of participation in the League, and field position (s) they played.

established the baseball diamond and its geometrical make up while Henry Chadwick created a precise mathematical system for game statistics.

From the mid 1800s, baseball permeated American life. For example, schools, towns, clubs and charitable organization established baseball teams across the nation. Amateur and professional teams were even organized after the Civil War. Baseball historian A.S. Young tells us that the New York Knickerbockers was America's first amateur baseball team, founded in 1845, and baseball its oldest team sport. By the turn of the century, baseball was a substantial business operation. Almost every town and urban neighborhood, both black and white, had its own baseball team providing recreation for players and spectators alike.

Origins of Black Baseball

The early participation of blacks in baseball can be traced from enslaved blacks on southern plantations who played baseball during time off from work to scattered black amateur baseball players in the Northeast prior to the Civil War.⁶ Sports historians have

⁶A.S. Doc Young, *Negro Firsts in Sports*, (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1963), p. 16; Walter Schlichter, ed., *Sol White's Official Baseball Guide*, (Columbia, South Carolina: Reprint of Camden House Library of Baseball Classics, 1984), p. 1. This book is a valuable source of information, because it is a first hand account of Negro baseball and written by Sol White, a Negro baseball player. White, born June 12, 1868, was a native of Bellaire, Ohio, and one of the first professional Negro baseball players. He first played professional baseball with the Pittsburg Keystones (1887), a member of the earlier Colored [Baseball] League, as a left fielder. Upon the collapse of the Colored League, White played baseball in the white Ohio League for Wheeling, West Virginia, where he placed second in batting with a .381 average. Sol White's baseball career in the Ohio League ended when team owners decided to ban Negroes from playing in this league. He continued to play baseball with independent teams including the Gorhams of New York (1889) and Pennsylvania's York Monarchs (1890). Sol White played for at least six other teams; organized the Philadelphia Giants in 1902; and managed the Brooklyn Royal Giants, Lincoln Giants, Boston Giants, and Cleveland Browns

revealed that baseball games had been played in Brooklyn, New York between the Colored Union Club and the Unknown Club in 1860. Baseball was also popular among black military troops such as the 25th Infantry which defeated every opponent in the Philippines.

After the Civil War, black baseball existed on the professional level and four of the earliest teams were: the Philadelphia Orions, New York Gothams, and Brooklyn Uniques. The Cuban Giants was the first Negro professional baseball team organized in 1885, by Frank Thompson, headwaiter of New York's Argyle Hotel. Comprised of bellhops, waiters, and other hotel personnel, they displayed their athletic prowess against white semi-professional baseball teams in New York. Other teams included the Philadelphia Mutuals, the Atlantics of Baltimore, the P.B.S. Pinchbacks of New Orleans, and Black Stockings of St. Louis.

Black athletes could also be found on college and university baseball teams. Blacks attending white colleges and universities played on their respective school teams. J. Francis Gregory played college baseball for Amherst and Yale, and Merton P. Robinson, Oberlin.⁷ Black baseball players also comprised teams at black colleges including Howard and Atlanta Baptist Seminary, during the 1860s and 1890s.

Moreover, blacks played baseball on organized white baseball teams. During the 1890s, three blacks played with white baseball teams: John "Bud" Fowler, Moses Fleetwood

between 1910-1924. Sol White was also an educated Negro having attended Wilberforce College four years.

⁷Mabel M. Smythe, ed., *The Black American Reference Book*, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 930.

Walker, and George Stovey.⁸ Fowler played with fifteen white teams, in six leagues, and five different positions on the baseball field. Walker, the son of a physician and once a student at Oberlin College, was a catcher whose baseball career spanned from 1883-1899, with five clubs, six leagues, he also made contributions as baseball manager and club officer. George Stovey began his career as a pitcher with Jersey City in 1886, playing for five teams in two different baseball leagues. All three of these black athletes were exceptional baseball players whose names would not have otherwise appeared on white rosters.

But, blacks on white baseball teams soon became persona non grata as the managers of all-white baseball teams refused to play teams with black players. Adrian C. Anson, manager of the Chicago White Stockings, a National League team, refused to field his team if George Stovey, a black pitcher who won 35 baseball games in one season, played in the Newark v. White Stockings game. Anson was deemed responsible for creating the color line in baseball barring blacks from participation with whites. As a result, the additional presence of black baseball players on white teams ended though Fowler, Walker, and Stovey remained with white teams. In other words, no more contracts were awarded to black players in white baseball leagues. After 1898, white [baseball teams] refused to compete against all-black teams and white baseball leagues such as the International and National Association of Base Ball Players passed resolutions against black players, a serious indictment of racism in

⁸Bud Fowler, born in Fort Plain New York, March 16, 1858, was the son of a Cooperstown barber. In 1872, he became the first black baseball player salaried by a white New Castle, Pennsylvania, baseball team. A versatile athlete, Fowler's baseball prowess enabled him to play any position on the field. Walker, a Mt. Pleasant, Ohio native, was born October 7, 1859. Though he attended Oberlin College, where he took courses in math, engineering, and chemistry, Fowler did not graduate choosing a career in professional baseball. His first debut as a professional baseball player was in the Northwestern League with Toledo.

baseball.⁹ As William Brashler points out, “Negro baseball was a product of segregation and simple prejudice brought its first color line.” By 1900, blacks played with whites only on opposing teams and in exhibition games.¹⁰

Establishment of Baseball Leagues

Given baseball’s racial climate, both white and black baseball owners established leagues during the late 19th and second decade of the 20th century respectively, to solidify organized baseball. The first of these leagues the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players for amateurs was organized (1871), the American League, (1876) which comprised teams other than those affiliated with the National League, and the National Association of Base Ball Players (1878) which barred Negro baseball clubs from membership. Each of these leagues began to thrive amidst the color bar. There were also at least ten other white baseball leagues established in the 20th century.¹¹

While white teams attempted to establish themselves in organized baseball during the mid-19th century, black players were not idle. The first Negro League, although short-lived,

⁹Steven A. Reiss and Donn Rogosin, “*Blacks in Baseball*,” in *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, eds. Jack Saltzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West, Vol. I, (New York: Simon and Schuster and Prentice-Hall International, 1996), p. 271; Young, p. 6. White baseball teams also refused to play all-black teams, because of their failure to defeat them. This often caused anger and embarrassment among white baseball players for having lost to what many teams considered an inferior people.

¹⁰“*Soul of the Game Debuting on HBO*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 26, 1996, Section, B, p. 5.

¹¹They included the Virginia, Connecticut, Ohio and Pennsylvania, Tri-State, Ohio Interstate, cotton States, Texas, Oklahoma, New York, and Blue Grass Leagues. For more information, see *The Pittsburgh Courier*, “*Leagues Forced to Disband*,” August 4, 1912, p. 8.

was the League of Colored Baseball Club comprised of eight teams only lasted one week of 1887. In the first decade of the 20th century, was the National Negro Baseball League founded by Frank Leland, owner of the Chicago Union Giants, which did not last long enough to play a single game.¹² The semi-pro Negro Texas League was later formed in 1919.

However, it was not until the 1920s that the Negro Baseball League was formally organized by Andrew “Rube” Foster, born September 17, 1878 in Calvert, Texas.¹³ The son of a Methodist Episcopal minister and eighth grade drop-out, Foster migrated to Chicago as a pitcher for baseball for Frank Leland’s Chicago Union Giants. He later, became the owner of the first independent black baseball team in the Mid-west, with two leagues: the Mid-West and Eastern Leagues. C.I. Taylor, owner of the Indianapolis ABCs explained the slow development of the Negro Leagues:

“...a lack of organization. We have the goods, but lack of organization to deliver them. I had written many times to men in all parts of the country active in the game urging them to get together to organize. Only a deaf ear was turned to my pleading. But, after years on the right track, but wrong direction, the big men of colored baseball brought face to face wit the same alternative which in time eventually face a every big Negro enterprise of the country---organization.”¹⁴

¹²Reiss and Rogosin, p. 272.

¹³Foster’s baseball career began as a pitching coach with the New York Black Giants and continued as a pitcher for the Philadelphia Athletics. Sports historian A.S. Doc Young, recognizes Foster as one of the early black Negro baseball stars. Two of Foster’s numerous baseball accomplishments included the organization of the Leland Giants and founder of the National Negro Baseball League.

¹⁴Ira F. Lewis, “*National Baseball League Formed*,” *The Competitor*, Volume 1, 1921, pp. 66-67; C.I. Taylor, “*The Future of Colored Baseball*,” *The Competitor*, Volume 1, 1921, p. 76.

Taylor and Foster concluded it was necessary to “take steps, make sacrifices for the perpetuity of the game, conservation of their own business interests, and enterprise.” The organization of Negro Leagues would similarly, allow black players to “compete and excel within their own ranks.”

Patterned after the big leagues, the Negro Leagues were to provide an avenue for black organized baseball.¹⁵ More importantly, the purpose of the Negro League was to control economic power and leadership over black baseball from white booking agents who often took most of the profits, underpaid players, managers, and owners.¹⁶ Just as white baseball leagues sought to maintain control over its leagues, blacks had a similar idea which dealt more with economics than race. For example, while there were no black teams in any of the white baseball leagues, two white teams were members of the Eastern Colored League which was comprised of six teams, four black and two white ones.

In addition to Negro League baseball becoming an economic enterprise, it was also to provide entertainment to black communities. Baseball’s black leadership attempted to attract teams from all cities with large populations of blacks in both the North and South to the Negro Leagues and most cities had teams affiliated with the league except Pittsburgh and Cleveland. Baltimore, New York, Kansas City, Detroit, St. Louis, Birmingham, Nashville, and Philadelphia all had teams affiliated with the Negro Leagues. Obtaining a Negro baseball team in Pittsburgh to play in the leagues was of special interest to Foster and Taylor

¹⁵Peterson, p. 82. The proposed Mid-West League was to be comprised of Negro teams from Chicago, Cincinnati, Detroit, St. Louis, and Kansas City and the Eastern League, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland.

¹⁶Reiss and Rogosin, p. 273.

to facilitate other teams traveling through the city en route to challenge Negro League teams in the East.

Baseball in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh baseball began with the Pittsburgh Alleghenies, April 15, 1876, when it brought professional baseball to the city.¹⁷ The first game was played in Union Park and the next year, the team affiliated with the short-lived minor league's International Association. In 1882, the Alleghenies joined the National League when president William A. Nimmick applied for membership. By April 30, 1887, the Alleghenies won the league championship against the Chicago White Stockings. The team's name was later changed to the Pittsburgh Pirates, because the owner stole players from other teams. The Pirates had their own baseball field, Recreation Park, where they played from April 30, 1887 to September 1890.¹⁸

Although a professional baseball team, the Pittsburgh Pirates were not the only baseball team in Pittsburgh attracting attention and providing recreation for the local community. The first Negro team in Pittsburgh was organized during the 19th century, the Pittsburgh Keystones. Not much is known about the Keystones except they existed well into the second decade of the 20th century, they stole players from other Negro teams, as did most other teams, and eventually, became rivals of the Blue Ribbon Nine. The Blue Ribbon Nine

¹⁷“*History of the Pittsburgh Pirates*,” Vertical File, *Pittsburgh Sports, Baseball, Pirate History*, The Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA, p. 1.

¹⁸Two other baseball parks later became the home of the Pittsburgh Pirates: Exposition Park, April 22, 1891-June 29, 1909, and, subsequently, Forbes Field.

was organized in 1900, as a sandlot team by Negro Steelworkers mainly from Homestead, the place noted for the historic Steel Strike of 1892, the most serious labor conflict in Pittsburgh's history.¹⁹ By 1910, they were called the Murdock Grays, an amateur team, which played on weekends against the same in Pittsburgh and surrounding areas. Two years later, the team name was again changed to the Homestead Grays, probably, for logistical reasons. It was in 1912, that the legacy of the Homestead Grays began.

The Homestead Grays

Blacks in Pittsburgh had a major influence on America's favorite sport. Although Jerome Veney organized the Grays in 1908, it was Cumberland Posey who led to team to national fame. Cumberland Posey, Jr., an outfielder for both the Murdock and Homestead Grays, was born in Homestead to a well-to-do family, June 20, 1890.²⁰ He was also a star basketball player for both Penn State and Duquesne Universities, but never graduated from either institution perhaps to pursue his interest on the baseball diamond. Posey, was highly respected by both blacks and whites in Homestead, as a political activist, school board

¹⁹William Serrin, *Homestead: The Tragedy of an American Steeltown*, (New York: Random House, 1992), p. 21; Frank C. Harper, *Pittsburgh Forge of the Universe*, (New York: Comet Press Books, 1957), p. 177. Page Smith in *The Rise of Industrial America: A People's History of the Post- Reconstruction Era* (1984), tells us that Homestead was founded by Andrew Carnegie as a model community to house the workers of the Carnegie Steel Company. The Homestead Strike was precipitated by decreased wages to Carnegie Steel Company employees when the price for steel declined, an expired union contract, and the decision by company officials to destroy the union. Strikers attacked 300 private guards brought into the plant to protect strikebreakers where twenty men were wounded and seven guards killed, during the melee. See Smith, pp. 469-481.

²⁰Mark Galloway, "A Look Back at Negro Baseball," *Tribune-Review*, August 29, 1993, Section D, p. 8; Posey's father, Captain Cumberland Posey, Sr., owned a fleet of ships, and had a lucrative shipping business, and became one of Pittsburgh's wealthiest black entrepreneurs.

member, and Homestead's leading black sports entrepreneur, but not as a black man. Homestead whites often reminded him of the color of his skin. For example, Posey could buy drinks for white patron's at Straka's Bar & Restaurant, but could not drink at the bar and had to come and go using the side door.²¹

Despite the racial attitudes of Posey's fellow Homesteaders, he did not allow them to interfere with his baseball. By 1916, Posey was manager of the Homestead Grays and he developed one of the most renowned Negro baseball teams and became one of the Negro League's early "movers and shakers." The Grays were an independent baseball team which played numerous teams in Pittsburgh and surrounding areas including Scottdale and West Newton. For example, in 1923, they played the Beaver Falls Elks for the first time in two years and were defeated in a nation-wide elimination series. While playing as independents, the Grays always drew enormous crowds. More than 4,000 people watched the Grays play Bellevue and just as many when they shut-out the J.J. Deans 6-0. The Homestead Grays had even established a reputation for shutting out teams. In 1923, they had eleven shut-out victories which was more than usually comes in two seasons.²²

Though Negro baseball was slow to develop, independent baseball did have a few enforceable rules which oftentimes encouraged players to react in an unsportsmanlike manner. The Grays as independents sometimes behaved that way on the field as did other players. For example, Captain Jap Washington, who played in the Negro Leagues from 1922-1937, was ejected from a game after he attempted to hit referee Cal Bolster, following a

²¹Serrin, p. 21.

²²"*Grays Notes*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 11, 1923, p. 6.

decision on second base which subsequently, placed the Grays in the lead. Another player was ejected from a game for sliding into first base and fined five dollars. He refused to pay and was banned from the game until the fine was paid.

Cumberland Posey, Jr.'s Homestead Grays remained an independent Negro baseball team until 1929, when he organized the East-West Baseball League comprised of six Negro teams: the Baltimore Black Sox, Cleveland Stars, Cuban Stars, Hilldale, Newark Browns, and Detroit Wolves. Like many other organized Negro Leagues including the League of Colored Baseball and Southern Negro League, the East-West League was short-lived folding in 1932. After organizing the East-West League, Posey also founded the Greater Pittsburgh Colored Baseball League consisting of the Gimbels Browns, Northside Elks, Garfield ABCs, Duquesne Lights, and Woodmen semi-pro teams. The purpose of this league was to move toward a closer cooperation among sandlots and help elevate the game to a higher level.²³

It is difficult to ascertain if the Grays affiliated with another Negro baseball league, but they continued to play and defeat their opponents. Many Negro teams, perhaps intimidated, and spectators thought the Grays were invincible. During the 1930 baseball season, the Homestead Grays after defeating Youngstown 10-1, meant twenty consecutive victories for the record and attendance at this particular game, was larger than any other game played last season.²⁴ The Grays, during the week of May 17th hit a record 87 hits.

²³“*Posey To Head Up Loop*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 10, 1930, Section 2, p. 5. The Gimbels Browns and Duquesne Lights represented black employees of Gimbels Brothers Department Stores and Duquesne Light Company, one of two Pittsburgh utility companies; and the Northside Elks, a black fraternal lodge.

²⁴“*Grays Win in Opening Tilt Here: Big Crowd Sees Ohio Massacre*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, May 17, 1930, Section 2, p. 2; “*Grays Notes*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Section 2, p. 2.

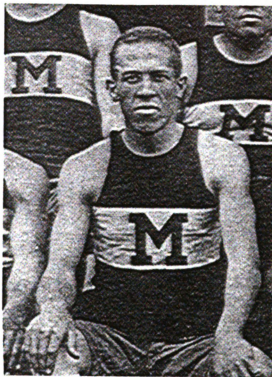
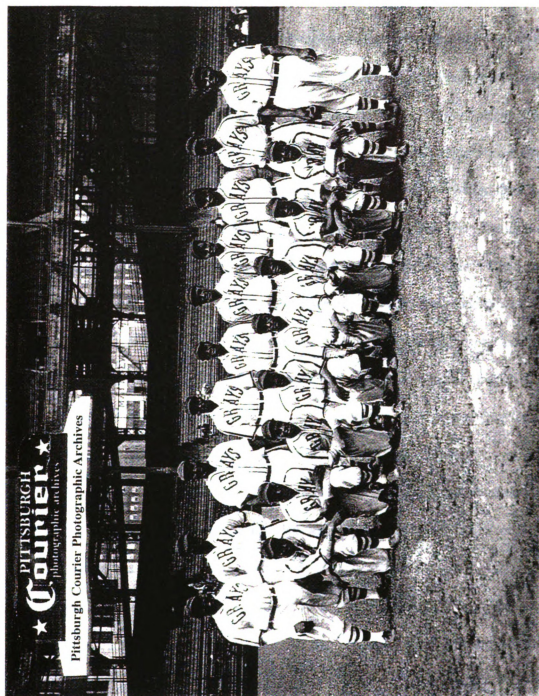


Figure. 54. Cumberland Posey, Jr.

However, the Grays were far from invincible when they suffered several defeats from the Homewood Club, whose pitcher, Joe Semler was considered “poison” by the Homestead Grays. In a three game series, Homewood beat the Grays 8-1; the second game he limited them to only five hits; and the third game, three hits. Semler’s performance was not always superb, as the Grays in another game, sent him to the dug-out in the seventh inning after successfully hitting an excessive number of his pitches, defeating Homewood 11-0. The Grays continued their winning streak by demolishing Zanesville, Ohio, 14-4 and Memphis in a four game series.

Given the number of victories credited the Grays, an arrogant and confident Cumberland Posey created innovative ways in which to draw publicity to Negro baseball. He publicly challenged New York’s Lincoln Giants, considered the best Negro team on the seaboard and colored baseball. In a letter published in *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 9, 1930, Posey was certain this game would pay-off financially, and, of course, thought the Grays were the better team. He made the following proposition: “The Grays would play for 45 percent of the gross admission of fifty cents in New York or Pittsburgh; each team would play on the basis of 50-50 after advertising, baseballs, umpires, park fee, park expenses were deducted; eleven consecutive games were to be played on consecutive days; and Posey would deposit \$500 that would be forfeited if he used another man not listed on the roster with New York under the same terms.” The data do not reveal the outcome of the game or if it even took place.



Source: The Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 55. The Homestead Grays

The Grays: Centered in Controversy

Under Cum Posey's leadership, the Homestead Grays were frequently, subjected to negative criticism, because of his attitude, but mainly his decisions regarding the players and those made by the National Negro League. The Grays like many Negro League teams had to deal with the loss of players and sometimes fruitless attempts to retrieve them. For example, Jesse Brooks, a third baseman for the Homestead Grays, stopped at the Litchfield Hotel in Columbus at the expense of the Grays. The Cleveland Red Sox, simultaneously, stopped in Columbus offering Brooks a larger salary than the Grays and he "went South with them." Although the Negro League Commissioner ruled Brooks the property of the Homestead Grays, he was ignored and incapable of enforcing the regulations as Cleveland refused to release Brooks, in as much, as Brooks refused to return to the Grays.

Posey's problems became even more acute when he and the Homestead Grays were expelled from the National Negro Association League in 1933, for "violating its constitution" which included a series of infractions. Posey, during the regular season, secured bookings of his own choice; decided James "Jimmy" Binder, third baseman for the Detroit Stars, and Williams should be transferred to his roster without consulting Jim "Candy" Taylor, a player and manager, since the onset of organized Negro baseball; and engaged negotiations with Vic Harris and Leroy Morney before he was reinstated.²⁵ When questioned about his unethical

²⁵"*Posey Refuses to Return Two Detroit Players*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 1, 1933, Section 2, p. 4. Jimmy Binder played Negro League Baseball from 1930-1936 as a second and third baseman. In addition to the Detroit Stars, Binder played with four other teams during his baseball career: the Memphis Red Sox; Indianapolis ABCs; Homestead Grays; and Washington Giants. Jim "Candy" Taylor, also a second and third baseman, was affiliated with at least 17 teams within the Negro Leagues including the Homestead Grays. Vic Harris, a native of Pensacola, Florida was born in 1905. Harris, whose baseball career began in 1923, played for

behavior, he canceled a series of games with the Chicago American Giants in Pittsburgh. The Grays were suspended for the remainder of the 1933 baseball season evidenced by the absence of the Grays from the East-West Game, an All-Star Game, where not one of the Grays names appeared on the ballot they previously dominated.

Though Posey was suspended from the league for the reasons previously mentioned, he led the public to believe that the Grays withdrew from the National Negro League on its own volition as the following quote reveals:

After due consideration, the Homestead Grays withdrew from membership in the NNA. This step was taken mainly to assure men associated with me, including players and who have confidence in my judgement, that every effort being made to uphold the caliber of the Grays Club and to insure financial returns which would permit the Grays to keep standing as the recognized leader of the colored clubs, especially, in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia.²⁶

Nor did Posey acknowledge the reasons for the suspension. According to Posey, the Grays were not benefitting financially, and as a result, withdrew from the league. The Grays were playing for 35 per cent of the gross with five percent going back to the league and [before affiliating with the Negro National League], the Grays never played any games for less than

several teams as well, including Cleveland's Tate Stars; the Homestead Grays; and Pittsburgh Crawfords. He eventually, changed roles and became a Negro League manager and coach. From 1932-1944, Morney played shortstop, second and third base for the Crawfords, Columbus Giants, Elite Giants, and New York Black Yankees. For more information on Harris see Vic Harris' and John Holway's "*Baseball Old Timers, Vic Harris Managed Homestead Grays*," *Dawn Magazine*, March 8, 1975, pp. 12, 19.

²⁶"*Independent Ball Only Hope for Survival*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 8, 1933, Section 2, p. 4.

games weekly at Greenlee Field, and the benefits from the games were insufficient to pay salaries as well as incidental expenses. Nonetheless, the Posey's Grays were forced to play independent baseball until the suspension was lifted.

In 1934, the problems experienced by Posey and the Grays continued coupled by his behavior which angered many National Negro Association League owners. On January 13, 1934, Eastern Club owners met in Philadelphia. Cum Posey, who violated league rules the previous baseball season, was not invited, but attended the meeting anyway and participated in the discussion. Second, Posey wanted to be reinstated into the Association without compensating the Chicago American Giants and the losses incurred by R.A. Cole, who became the team's owner after Rube Foster's death.²⁸ These owners perhaps felt Posey had a blatant disregard for the league and its regulations, but not for long, as the first National Negro League Commissioner, Rollo Wilson, took Posey to task.²⁹

Wilson, dismissed Posey's claims to Vic Harris, Homestead Grays pitcher, Leroy Morney, who played shortstop, second and third base, thus giving them to the Crawfords. He based his decision on the following grounds: No receipts were signed by the players or canceled checks submitted by Posey to support his claims that salary matters had been settled; and from July 1933-March 10, 1934, the Grays were suspended from the league for

²⁸"*Clark Answers Posey's Charges: League Secretary Scores Posey for Tactics*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 2, 1934, Section 2, p. 7.

²⁹Rollo W. Wilson, prior to becoming National Negro Baseball League Commissioner, was a highly respected newspaperman, former reporter for the *Pittsburgh American*, and Deputy Athletic Director of Pennsylvania.

tampering with players on member clubs.³⁰ Posey responded to Wilson's decision in Cum Posey's "*Pointed Paragraphs*," his regular column in *The Pittsburgh Courier*. He contended that the "whole affair was not fair and the decision giving Harris and Morney to the Crawfords would cause the public to lose interest in baseball."

The problem, however, seemed to have been a little more complicated than it appeared. Ironically, both players in question received loans from Gus Greenlee, owner of the Pittsburgh Crawfords during the winter. But, Greenlee explained "he had no claim on either player except the sum of money loaned them and would relinquish the claim if the loans were repaid." At the same time, Morney was offered a contract for \$60 more and Harris \$25 by Gus Greenlee to play for the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Most baseball players took advantage of larger salaries offered by team owners which often created a great deal of tension within the league relative to the loss of players and disruption in the line-up.

The Grays and Homestead Fans

Club owners and Homestead blacks often showed their appreciation for the Homestead Grays aside from showing a conspicuous attendance at the baseball games. In honor of the Grays and their 1926 winning record of 102 games of 114, and 43 consecutive victories, Charles Walker, the Grays co-owner who played in the NNL from 1930-1934, gave the team a banquet at their Wylie Avenue Clubhouse. On April 10, 1933, Homestead fans led by Jew McPherson gave a reception and dance in honor of the 1933 Homestead Grays

³⁰"*Commissioner Wilson Awards Harris and Morney to Crawfords*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, March 31, 1934, Section 2, p. 5.

held at the Manhattan Hall.³¹

Individual honors were also given Gray players. Smokey Joe Williams, who played for eight teams between 1908-1932 as a pitcher and manager; the “grand old man of baseball;” and one of the players who helped make the Homestead Grays famous, was also honored for his years as a Homestead Gray. Deemed as one of the “most popular and masterful moundsmen ever to play baseball in the Pittsburgh District,” Smokey Joe.³² At the age of 52, Williams pitched a no-hitter against Akron which made him extraordinary to baseball fans. He became a member of the Grays in 1925, and ended his baseball career with the same in 1932. In August 1934, Williams returned to Pittsburgh from New York to pitch for an NAACP benefit game against the Fort Wayne Berghoffs of Fort Wayne, Indiana.³³ On game Sunday, the city of Pittsburgh gave Williams a standing ovation to show its appreciation for his outstanding baseball career spanning 24 years.

Origins of the Pittsburgh Crawfords

The Pittsburgh Crawfords, in 1926, was a sandlot team representing the Crawford

³¹“*Boosters To Honor Grays At Big Fete*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 8, 1933, Section 2, p. 4.

³²Smokey Joe Williams a native of Texas, was a pitcher in Negro League baseball. He played for five teams prior to becoming a Homestead Gray which included the San Antonio Bronchos, Leland Giants, Chicago Giants, Lincoln Giants, and Brooklyn Royal Giants. His baseball career with the Grays began when Cum Posey through Buck Leonard, heard about Smokey Joe Williams. Posey, subsequently, paid Williams’ transportation to Wheeling, West Virginia where they Grays were in Spring training for the 1934 baseball season. For more information about Williams’ record see Peterson, p. 396.

³³The Berghoff team, sponsored by Bergoff Brewing Company, was comprised of black and white players. The white players symbolized the light colored beer and the colored players typifying the darker brews.

Bath House in the Hill District. Formed by Harold “Hooks” Tinker, a Birmingham, Alabama native and former center fielder for the Pittsburgh Monarchs and Edgar Thompson Steel Works in Braddock, was comprised of “five players from the Homestead Grays who played baseball together all their lives to establish the Crawfords.”³⁴ In one year, the Crawfords defeated all challengers. Bill Harris, born in Calhoun, Alabama, who also played for the Crawfords, entered the team in the Pittsburgh’s Recreation League Tournament in 1926, and shortly thereafter, became a semi-professional team when its current competition proved weak.

In 1931, William “Gus” Greenlee became owner of the Crawford Giants, renaming them the Pittsburgh Crawfords after one of his business establishments. He was born in Marion County, North Carolina in 1897. Like many Pittsburgh blacks, he was a migrant, moving to Pittsburgh in 1916, where he worked a variety of jobs prior to owning the Crawfords. For example, Greenlee was employed as a bootblack, construction laborer, fireman, and taxi driver. He was also a World War I veteran serving in the 367th Infantry.

After the war, Gus Greenlee returned to Pittsburgh and became the owner of several businesses, all of which were not legitimate, such as, his speakeasies and illegal numbers business. However, Greenlee owned the Workingmen’s Pool Hall, Sunset Café, and Crawford Grill which were, in fact, legitimate businesses, even if the possibility existed that they were established with proceeds from his numbers business. His broad and lucrative economic base allowed him to play a vital part in the development of black Pittsburgh and

³⁴Barbara Solow, “*Taking Note of Baseball Greatness*,” Vertical File, *Pittsburgh Sports, Baseball, Homestead Grays*, Carnegie Institute of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Department, Pittsburgh, PA.



Source: Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 56. William A. Gus' Greenlee

they were established with proceeds from his numbers business. His broad and lucrative economic base allowed him to play a vital part in the development of black Pittsburgh and its sporting life.³⁵ Rob Ruck, who has written extensively on the Negro Leagues, wrote that Greenlee financed the Crawfords with his profits from his numbers business. If this is true, does this imply that none of his legitimate business ventures were profitable?

In 1931, Greenlee's Crawfords became a professional baseball team and he subsequently, told his players to quit their full-time jobs for baseball as a career. However, not all of the Crawfords were willing to relinquish their job security, even though most of them were domestic workers. Harold Tinker, for example, refused to quit his full-time job, because he had five children and a wife to support which was the basis of his decision. It was bad enough that an injury on the baseball field could threaten his employment and family's stability, not to mention a variety of other possible problems impacting the Negro Leagues or baseball, in general. Other players on the team with fewer obligations adhered to Greenlee's demand.

The Pittsburgh Crawfords professional baseball team prior to Greenlee's ownership, often scrounged for rides to and from games. According to "Buck" Leonard, rides on rickety buses purchased a twenty-two seat bus to transport his players so, the Crawfords were no longer forced to ride uncomfortably in overcrowded cars.³⁶ In 1932, Greenlee built a

³⁵Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Black Sport in Pittsburgh*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990), p. 149.

³⁶Buck Leonard was a noted Negro League player during the 1930s and 1940s. A native of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Leonard was born September 7, 1907. At an early age, he worked as a bootblack and later, employed in railroad shops. He first played semi-professional baseball with teams in Virginia and Maryland, the Portsmouth Firefighters and Baltimore Stars.

baseball stadium for the Crawfords for an estimated \$75,000 on Bedford Avenue with seating for approximately 7,000 baseball fans and 10,000 for boxing.³⁷ It was said by many observers that Greenlee Field was “a state of the art facility.”

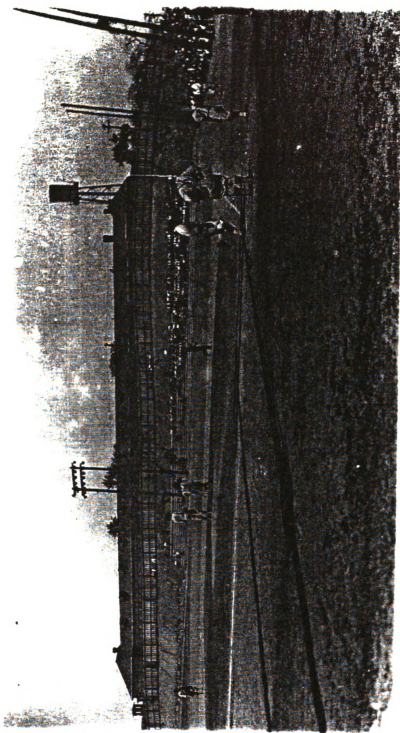
With this stadium, Greenlee attracted and bought some of the best talent to play in it including James “Cool Papa” Bell, Daltie Cooper, and Bertrum Hunter. Bell, a Starksville, Mississippi native born May 17, 1903, played for the Crawfords as its leading pitcher. He was considered by many players and fans as the speed demon of baseball, because he was so fast that he once stole two bases on the same pitch.³⁸ During the 1933 baseball season, Bell stole 175 bases in 200 games. Bertrum, a pitcher, played in the Negro Leagues from 1931-1935 with the St. Louis Stars, Detroit Wolves, and later, the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Hunter was also a pitcher who played for nine teams during his career in the Negro Leagues.

Unlike other Negro League teams which rented white baseball fields, the Crawfords, now had a field of their own. According to Peterson, other Negro clubs were at “the mercy of white club owners and could only use white parks when the white teams were on the

At twenty-five years old, Buck Leonard became a professional Negro League Baseball player as the Homestead Grays’ first baseman. He also played for the Brooklyn Royal Giants.

³⁷Andrew Buni, *Robert L. Vann and the Editorial Page of the Pittsburgh Courier*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 160, p. 249; Galloway, p. 8. Greenlee Stadium, the first stadium built by a Negro Baseball League owner, opened April 29, 1932, to a capacity crowd in Pittsburgh’s Hill District community..

³⁸Kram, p. 66. Harry Salmon who played Negro League baseball for the Birmingham Black Barons, Pittsburgh Crawfords, and Homestead Grays also provided a testimony to Bell’s speed by having witnessed his stealing of two bases on the same pitch. Baseball historian John Holway in *Voices from the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (1975), wrote that “everyone who saw Bell agreed that he was probably the fastest man ever to play baseball.” Cool Papa Bell’s speed was also witnessed by baseball fans when he played for the St. Louis Stars; Kansas City Monarchs; Detroit Senators; Chicago American Giants; Homestead Grays; and those in the Dominican Republic and Mexico.



Source: Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 57. Greenlee Field

road.” Other factors, however, also interfered with the use of white stadiums. Effa Manley, whom along with her husband, owned the Newark Eagles stated, “the Eagles were ousted from Newark’s Ruppert Stadium to make way for the Rocky Graziano-Tony Zale fight.”³⁹ Also, white baseball clubs found renting to black teams quite profitable. For example, a Negro team leased the Cincinnati Reds Ball Park for \$4,000 per season and extracted 20 per cent of the gate receipts until the full amount was paid.⁴⁰ Greenlee, however, also realized the profitability of owning a stadium which was part of the earlier Negro League discussions between Foster and Taylor, relative to Negro baseball as an economic venture.

Greenlee’s Influence on the Negro Leagues

W.A. “Gus Greenlee” played an influential role in the Negro Leagues as not only a club owner, but as the leader of the reorganization and further development of the Negro Leagues. In 1930, the National Negro League folded, as a result of the Depression, but was reorganized by Greenlee three years later. He was appointed temporary chairman of the NNL by Negro League owners and under his leadership, the league began to thrive, so club owners unanimously elect him president of the National Negro League in 1933. One of his

³⁹John Holway, *Voices From the Great Black Baseball Leagues*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1975), p. 317. During Holway’s interview with Manley, she pointed out that the Eagles played their games wherever they could which also attributed to “erratic scheduling.”

⁴⁰Peterson, p. 87. The fact that Negro League teams did not own stadiums often impacted the scheduling of their baseball games. Negro League owners were sometimes forced to schedule their games around those of white major league teams for this reason. In addition to the problem of leasing white stadiums, other issues of finances existed for Negro League team owners. They were responsible for hotel bills when they could acquire accommodations, meals, and other on the road expenses. Baseball was indeed an expensive enterprise.

accomplishments was to hire a baseball commissioner independent of club owners in an attempt to add structure to the league. Rollo W. Wilson, whose experience as Deputy Athletic Director of Pennsylvania and the fact that he had no ties to the NNL, qualified him for baseball commissioner. During this same year, a new league was established when the National Association of Negro Baseball Clubs met in Pittsburgh which also elected Greenlee as chairman.⁴¹

At the onset of the Negro Leagues, scheduling created a great deal of commotion and always in disarray. Greenlee's organizational skills enabled league teams to have a full schedule of baseball games which was an accomplished task.

The National Negro Association finished the first half and arranged a schedule for the second half and that is progress over what happened last season when the Ewes loop lasted less than a month. Much of the credit for organizing...to overcome the major handicaps which it faced must go to Gus Greenlee of Pittsburgh. Gus has spent plenty of time and money in trying to make the Association go and has surrounded himself with a group of men who have become enthused about the possibilities.⁴²

Many league-affiliated team owners were of the opinion that current problems experienced by the Negro Leagues such as regulations governing the leagues, the enforcement of the same, salaries, game schedules, and the "snatching of players" could, in fact, be easily resolved.

On January 13, 1934, the first meeting of the National Negro League met in

⁴¹"*Greenlee Named New League Head*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 18, 1933, Section 1, p. 1; "*Officers Elected Big Issues Debated*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 25, 1933, Section 2, p. 4. The other officers were James "Candy" Taylor, Indianapolis, vice chairman; Robert Cole, Chicago, treasurer; and Dizzy Dismukes, Pittsburgh, secretary.

⁴²"*The League Moves Forward*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 8, 1933, Section 2, p. 4.

Pittsburgh to deal with its problems.⁴³ At the same time, Greenlee worked to establish a solid plan for the Negro Leagues. He wanted to induce all groups to cooperate on certain and definite principles relative to player problems, salaries, and booking arrangements. It appeared that Negro League teams were beginning to coalesce to meet a common goal—an organized Negro baseball league that would attract more players, spectators, large revenues, and most of all, respect.

To bolster Negro League baseball, Greenlee created the East-West competition in 1933, which was an all-star game comprised of players from seven NNL teams and the Kansas City Monarchs, to be selected by baseball fans. They were elected by a popular vote conducted through weekly and daily newspapers; and ballots could also be mailed directly to league headquarters. Once the ballots were tallied, the roster for the East was dominated by the Crawfords.⁴⁴ Greenlee was responsible for the promotion along with two other club owners, R.A. Cole and Thomas Wilson, with all operations directed from the league's Pittsburgh headquarters. Sports writers of 55 weeklies and 90 daily newspapers were notified and invited to comment and criticize.⁴⁵ However, there is no record of newspaper reporters who actually accepted the invitation.

⁴³*"To Probe Baseball Status, Meet Here, Opens Saturday," The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 6, 1934, Section 2, p. 4. The meeting was held in the Crawford Grill's second floor dining room. The teams represented at the meeting were the Philadelphia Stars, New York Black Yankees, Newark, Atlantic City, Cleveland, Chicago, and Cincinnati.

⁴⁴Seven Crawfords were selected to the East team: pitchers, Streeter, 28,989 votes; Page 23,089; Hunter, 22,965; Josh Gibson 35,376, catcher; first base, Oscar Charleston, 43,793; second base, Russell 29,846; outfielders, Cool Papa Bell, 27,984 votes. The team was coached by John Lloyd.

⁴⁵John L. Clark, *"Game to Inspire Players, Plan To Aid League, The Pittsburgh Courier*, June 29, 1934, Section 2, p. 4.



Source: Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 58. The Pittsburgh Crawfords

The East-West Game was the biggest event in black baseball with the first being played in Chicago's Comiskey Park in 1933, which attracted a mixed crowd between 30,000-40,000 baseball fans. Comiskey Park was chosen for the East-West game, because Charles Comiskey, owner of the Major League's Chicago White Stockings, "commented favorably on the caliber of the Negro ball player and expressed hope that [one day not far when] black players would bring back some of the much needed color to the national past-time." He undoubtedly realized that he could make tremendous profits. The costs for park rental and percentage of the gate were not revealed, but the idea and positive response of fans and owners, this particular game was another credit to Greenlee's leadership and creativity.

League rules and regulations were created under Greenlee. For example, rules were established to protect the umpire. Any umpire who does not report an episode when a player shoves or strikes him shall be immediately fired by the league and players who continuously hold up the game by wrangling with the umpire shall be put out of the game and fined.⁴⁶ The league finances were also influenced by Greenlee. The 1938 NNL Report read that the league's finances were found to be in good order than at any other time since the league formed.

Gus Greenlee, often called "the Baron of Wylie Avenue and greatest builder of baseball," was also the catalyst behind Sunday afternoon baseball games which had been prohibited by the National Negro League in the past. Saturday and Sunday league baseball games were played as independent bookings. It was thought by league owners that "Sunday

⁴⁶"*Protect Players Is Plea At Pow Wow*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 4, 1939, p. 17.

All East Selection

East-West Game (1933)

Pitchers	Votes
Street, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	28,989
Britt, Homestead Grays.....	26,716
Paige, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	23,089
Hunter, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	22,965
Catchers	
Mackey, Philadelphia Stars.....	37,883
Gibson, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	35,376
First Base	
Charleston, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	43,793
Second Base	
Russell, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	29,846
Third Base	
Wilson, Philadelphia Stars.....	37,832
Shortstop	
Lundy, Philadelphia Stars.....	39,832
Outfielders	
V. Harris, Homestead Grays.....	28,385
“Cool Papa” Bell, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	25,984
Dixon, Philadelphia Stars.....	25,715
Page, Pittsburgh Crawfords.....	23,847
Jenkins, New York Black Yankees.....	23,260

Source: *The Pittsburgh Courier*, September 9, 1933, p. 5.

baseball was legitimate ball on the Sabbath afternoons, because it would furnish some place for fans to go and certainly speed up the whirling of the turnstiles.”⁴⁷ Given the number of games already played by league teams, one wonders how avid Negro League baseball fans were able to afford back-to-back admission fees. And, surely other types of social activities were sponsored on Sunday afternoons by the city’s numerous black social and fraternal organizations.

Having demonstrated an aggressive and respected leadership in the NNL, Gus Greenlee resigned as chairman of the advisory board in February 1939, to pursue his boxing interests. The Crawfords remained in the league, but without Greenlee. Six years later, Greenlee attempted to return to the NNL with the Crawfords when his prize fighter light heavy-weight, John Henry Lewis’ eyesight began to fail, but to no avail. Greenlee was denied membership by the National Association and National Negro Leagues to which he made significant contributions. There is no record explaining his rejection though the competitiveness of his team was perhaps the reason. However, Greenlee established the United States Baseball League in 1945 with six independent Negro teams.

Impact of Crawfords and Grays on Black Community

Negro baseball league teams were the centerpieces of the black community in every city they represented, provided entertaining baseball, and became symbols of black pride and

⁴⁷Sez Ches, “*Negro Baseball Meeting*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 13, 1934, Section 2, p. 5.

eventually woven into the black community's social fabric.⁴⁸ The notorious Crawfords and Grays impacted every facet of the black community. For example, men were not the only spectators of the Negro Leagues. Black team owners acknowledged black women with a regular "Ladies Night" at Greenlee Field which was designated for Monday nights. A reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier* described one of these evenings "as being celebrated in gala fashion with more than 2,000 of the fairer sex rallying enthusiastically to the matchless thrill of the nocturnal type of diamond game." This game between R.A. Cole's Chicago Giants and the Crawfords attracted close to 5,000 spectators and almost half were women. The Homestead Grays hosted the Black Sox in a three game series, Saturday, Sunday, with Monday as "Ladies Night" at Greenlee Field. It is difficult to ascertain if women were given a discount admission price or free admission as well as their regular attendance without "Ladies Night." Nonetheless, they seemed to take advantage of this very special evening.

Ladies were not the only facet of the community the Pittsburgh's Negro baseball teams hoped to attract. Negro baseball players, played the game, because they loved it, they traveled, and could make money. Sometimes there were contractual disputes about money, but Negro baseball players did not always play for themselves or their fans. In Pittsburgh, the Crawfords often played benefit games for the city's inadequately funded black institutions which consistently needed funds to provide sufficient social services. In other words, a percentage from the gate was given to the benefactors.

Oftentimes, benefit games boosted attendance, but more importantly, they provided

⁴⁸Rosalyn Story, "A Museum of Their Own," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, July 10, 1997, Section C, p. 1; "Fifty Years of Blacks in Baseball," *Ebony*, June 1995, p. 39.

an “opportunity for every Pittsburgh fan to demonstrate charity in either a small or large way.” On July 26, 1930, the independent Crawford Giants played a benefit game against Stowe for the Coleman Home with the proceeds to send the children to summer camp for a month. This game attracted an enormous crowd, because the Crawfords had not been defeated on their “home lot” since the onset of the season after playing 25 games. Livingstone Memorial Hospital also reaped some of the benefits from other Crawford games. The Grays also played benefit games for charity.

Even though the color line had long been drawn in baseball, the Crawfords and Grays attracted white spectators to their baseball games. “Buck” Leonard says, “the thing about Pittsburgh was that they came from all around, black and white.” In 1938, the Crawfords played and defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates in Forbes Field which generated a mixed crowd of baseball fans. Both the talented Grays and Crawfords attracted white audiences wherever they played. From the beginning, Negro League baseball had distinguished itself from the Major Leagues with a more daring, exciting, and aggressive style of game that utilized speed, something most fans could appreciate. During one game, Cool Papa Bell stole two bases on one pitch, an action daring enough to excite any crowd.

One of the most exciting and memorable games for Pittsburgh’s Negro baseball fans was the Crawford Grays 25th birthday celebration in August 1938, when the old-timers returned to Pittsburgh for the occasion. From out of the fog and haze of the past, diamond greats of yesterday played and defeated a team of white players who had also been benched

by “Father Time.”⁴⁹ Observers found Smokey Joe Williams was not so Smokey, as “his fast ball was just a zip and his curve ball just a wrinkle.” Chester Washington, sports writer for the *Courier*, wrote that “Father time had taken its toll on the legs and arms which were once strong and speedy and had lost their useful pep, but stalwart hearts were still full of fight and courage.” Honey Pangburn, once the fastest outfielder of the Grays, “was in and out of the dugout during the game and could not play, because he tipped the scales at 250 pounds;” and they could not find a uniform to fit him. This old-timers game drew an estimated 5,000 excited fans and considered an affair colorful baseball show worth repeating. The younger Grays followed the old-timers game with a league game giving them two victories on their 25th anniversary.

Negro Baseball: 1st Class Citizenship and Economic Development

An even greater impact on the black community was that baseball advanced the black quest for first-class citizenship and black economic development. Gerald Early, an African-American Studies scholar, wrote:

For blacks always approached professional baseball from the time they were denied an opportunity to play it alongside whites in the 1880s as a vehicle for assimilation, black cultural, and commercial venture. Black baseball demonstrated black independence as much as it showed whites that blacks were able and very competitive and desired much to play baseball with them.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Wendell Smith, “*Smitty’s Sport Spurts*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 13, 1938, p. 16.

⁵⁰Gerald Early, “*American Integration, Black Heroism, and the Meaning of Jackie Robinson*,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 23, 1997, p. B-4.

This denial by whites to integrate baseball did nothing to diminish the hopes of Negro baseball players or Negro team owners by continuing to “express their desire for freedom, respect, and esteem through entrepreneurship and enterprise.” Black baseball owners and managers demonstrated their business acumen and organizational skills and, for the most part, rejected all offers of wealthy whites to infringe upon and manipulate an enterprise of their own making.

From an economic standpoint, Negro League baseball and entrepreneurship also created markets for Negro umpires, managers, and coaches. Fans were afforded an opportunity to “bet” on their favorite teams. Black business owners were also able to capitalize on Negro baseball before and after games as fans often patronized black restaurants, drinking establishments, dance clubs, and possibly places of vice. Some blacks attending Negro League games traveled from nearby cities, but not close enough to return home afterward, stayed in Negro hotels. In Pittsburgh, the most popular of such establishments was Hotel Sutton.⁵¹ As Gerald Early points out, black business owners had a virtual monopoly of their own relative to the enterprise created by Negro League baseball.

Furthermore, Greenlee’s ownership of the only Negro League baseball stadium certainly represented first-class citizenship and entrepreneurship. As a result, blacks were

⁵¹Hotel Sutton, owned by Frank Sutton, was located on Wylie Avenue between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, Hill District. It is reputed as Pittsburgh’s first Negro hotel, a rendezvous for sportsmen, politicians, and prominent blacks including Booker T. Washington, and Jack Johnson, Heavyweight Champion of the World. Theatrical troupes and musicians also frequented Sutton’s when performing in Pittsburgh. It became a place of rest for Pullman Porters as well. The hotel had a national reputation among blacks for its decor and hospitality. Sutton has been described as “an outstanding figure of Wylie Avenue, an aristocrat in manner and dress who spoke polished English.”



Source: Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 59. Negro League Umpires, John Craig and Moe Harris

employed to operate concession stands and ticket booths; work as ticket takers at the stadium gate; score keepers; parking attendants; and maintenance workers. Although this employment was seasonal, Greenlee provided jobs and many of Pittsburgh' Negroes, were probably satisfied to eventually work for one of "their own." Because of Greenlee's success and that of Negro League players, a quest for first-class citizenship emerged along with economic development whereas the proceeds from Negro League baseball games remained in the black community. This helped to create a sense of race pride among not only Pittsburgh blacks, but those almost everywhere.

The Crawfords, Grays, and Discrimination

Aside from being relegated to a separate baseball league for blacks, Negro baseball players often felt the brunt of discrimination, especially while on the road. Bus travel was tough and living conditions often horrid.⁵² Some of these experiences have been described by both players of the Grays and Crawfords. Monte Irvin who played for the Newark Eagles, the Crawfords and Grays; and against all-time great white players, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig stated:

⁵²Ron Cook, "*Greatness Touched by Negro Leagues*," *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, September 9, 1988, Section D, pp. 1, 6. It is important to note that the conditions on which Negro baseball players traveled were explained by Effa Manley who managed the Newark Eagles. She contends that road accommodations were bad because of Jim Crow, and not that Negro League owners refused to spend the necessary funds for the comfort of their team. See Gerald Early's *American Integration, Black Heroism, and the Meaning of Jackie Robinson* in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 23, 1997, p. B-4.

“In Zanesville, Ohio, we weren’t allowed to use the regular clubhouse [so we] dressed in the YMCA or what-have-you. There was a little hotel on Route 40 and a lady heated water for us in the bathtub. After the ball game we had one tub of water half full and the whole ball club took a bath in one tub. We had to get the grime off, because we had to ride from there to Columbus [Ohio]. This was the kind of life we had to live.”⁵³

Because of segregation, racism and discrimination, the Crawfords were often forced to sleep on the bus or in parks when white hotels refused them accommodations. In cases where black baseball clubs were given rooms in Negro hotels, they were often bug-infested flea bags. In some towns, no black motel would accommodate them.⁵⁴ The reason for this is unclear, but if motel owners were afraid of not receiving the room fees, perhaps they should have requested payment in advance. Given the reputation of Negro baseball teams, perhaps it should have been an honor to provide lodging for them and a way of drawing attention to their business establishment, unless they were not legitimate.

Negro Leagues were also discriminated against by the white press and media. In Pittsburgh, KDKA, the world’s first commercial radio station in the city, licensed October 27, 1920, faithfully broadcasted the Pirates’ games.⁵⁵ The Pittsburgh Crawfords and

⁵³Ted Page and John Holway, “*Playback: The Homestead Grays and Other Highlights of Baseball’s Dark Ages*,” *Pittsburgh Renaissance*, April 1974, p. 22. The Newark Eagles were owned by Abe and Effa Manley. Abe Manley, like Gus Greenlee, acquired his fortune from the numbers business and purchased the Newark Eagles in 1935.

⁵⁴“*Black Baseball Pioneers Honored*,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, November 30, 1988, Section A, p. 13. Baseball historians agree that the denial of accommodations and meals in restaurants to Negro League players were often contingent upon where they were traveling. Peterson, for example, contends that the mid-west was a little more tolerant on the segregation issue than the South during this period and did not add to the already existing traveling difficulties they experienced.

⁵⁵Vince Gagetta, *Pittsburgh Fulfilling its Destiny*, (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1986), p. 131.

Homestead Grays, despite their great athletic abilities, national reputations, and baseball records, they were ignored by KDKA and the city's white newspapers. The East-West All-Star game and the National Negro League World Series were equally important as the National and American League World Series, because they both readily attracted large crowds. However, Pittsburgh's National League team also had a wide listening audience through KDKA, but the Crawfords and Grays were not totally without the public's eye.

Reporters for *The Pittsburgh Courier* covered the Crawfords and Grays games extensively and sent a representative to National Negro League and National Negro Association meetings to report their activities and those of their players. Robert L. Vann had three sports reporters on staff: Wendell Smith, an advocate of integrated baseball and who despised blacks who attended Major League games; Chester Washington, a native Pittsburgher and graduate of Virginia Union College where he studied journalism; William Nunn; a postal employee who relinquished his job stability to write for *The Courier*; and Cum Posey, Jr., who had a regular column on the *Courier's* sports page. In any given week, *The Pittsburgh Courier* published at least four pages of sports news relative to the Crawfords, Grays, and the Negro Leagues in general. The July 28, 1923 issue of the *Courier* sports page had eleven articles on Negro baseball. Black Pittsburghers who were urged by Vann to pass their *Courier's* on to another reader, were sure to be abreast of their local team's activities.

For example, they published baseball scores, schedules, and photographs of Negro League baseball players in almost every issue of the *Courier* during the life of the Negro leagues. Even disputes within the leagues and clashes between the "movers and shakers"

were published. So, the Pittsburgh Pirates had KDKA and several local white newspapers and the Negro Leagues had *The Pittsburgh Courier* which did not discriminate. As early as 1911, the *Courier* printed stories about white teams and the American Association of baseball including, "Slide to First is Barred" and "Zinn Proves Clever," and "Scheckerd Helps the Cubs." It also published a column called, "Baseball News and Notes, Up to Date Gossip."⁵⁶ There did not appear to be a record of the Pittsburgh Keystones in the *Courier* during the second decade which may have been the result of their game schedules and scores not being reported.

Though the black press did not discriminate, some of Negro baseball's leadership thought it did not cover the leagues to its utmost ability, especially, in the Mid-West where the Negro leagues originated. Ira F. Lewis, sports reporter for *The Pittsburgh Courier and The Competitor*, stated that the heaviest handicap under which the teams, in particular, and league, in general, has labored, has been unsportsman-like, unbusiness-like, and weak-kneed support given the organization by the colored newspapers of the Middle-West.⁵⁷ Scores, batting statistics, and Negro League standings rarely appeared in Negro publications.

Attempts were also made to take advantage of Negro League players by team owners. Cool "Papa" Bell explained, "One team told me to pay my expenses from St. Louis to Memphis, they'd give it back to me they said. I get there and they say no. The owner of the

⁵⁶For more information see, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 5, 1911, p. 2. This particular article was about the White Sox, and several white baseball players including Jimmy Doyle, Christy Mathewson, Jimmy Johnson, and Babe Adams.

⁵⁷Ira F. Lewis, *Athletics: Big League Making Progress*, *The Competitor*, 1921, Volume 1, p. .

club was a dentist. I say to 'em I didn't come down here 'cause I got a toothache, so I went back home."⁵⁸ To Bell, the owner's race made no difference which suggests that their only interest was winning games at little or no expense. Perhaps the refusal of the dentist to reimburse Bell's expenses was with hopes that he was financially unable to return to St. Louis and forced to play for him for a minimal salary.

Despite the negative of experiences of the Grays and Crawfords, they maintained positive attitudes which is evidenced by LeRoy Satchel Paige who asserted, "the Crawfords played and won like we invented the game."⁵⁹ White players accustomed to segregated games emphasizing the long ball over speed and cunning, were run ragged by black teams.⁶⁰ Walter "Buck" Leonard, first baseman for the Grays, reaffirmed Paige's attitude. He stated, "segregation of black and white players was a part of black life back then. We didn't even think about them. We had our league, like another world, and we played like no other league existed."⁶¹

Oftentimes, white big league clubs considered obtaining black players, but were hindered by segregationist thought. One major league club owner stated, "There is a catcher

⁵⁸Mark Kram, "*No Place In the Shade*," *Sports Illustrated*, June 20, 1994, p. 66.

⁵⁹Leroy Satchel Paige, was born July 7, 1907 in Mobile, Alabama, to John Paige, a gardener, and Lulu, a washerwoman. A pitcher, Paige began playing in the Negro Leagues in the 1920s with the Birmingham Black Barons. During his career, he pitched as many as 55 no-hitters. Paige was not only notorious for his pitching, but for the frequency with which he switched teams. His behavior often annoyed his teammates, Negro League owners, and fans.

⁶⁰Alan Robinson, "*60 Years Ago, Pittsburgh Crawfords Ruled Baseball*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 8, 1994, Section A, p. 10.

⁶¹Diana Nelson Jones, "*Homestead Grays Superstar, Member of Baseball Hall of Fame*," *The Pittsburgh Press*, November 29, 1997, p. 3.

any big league club would like to buy for \$200,000, named Josh Gibson. He can do everything. He hits the ball a mile. And, he catches so easy he might as well be sitting in a rocking chair. He throws like a rifle. Too bad this Gibson is a colored fellow.”⁶² Many major league club owners maintained this attitude, but they knew that many Negro League players were far more talented than white professional baseball players. C.I. Taylor of the Negro Leagues asserted, “We produce splendid players, men of brilliant talents many of whom could play rings around organized players in white leagues if given the opportunity.”

Pearson, of the NNL was given a major league tryout by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the Spring of 1923, but did not make the team.⁶³ More than a decade later, no other blacks were given such an opportunity. Ford Frick, 1939 National League president, made the following statement in a *Pittsburgh Courier* interview relative to blacks in the major leagues:

⁶²Josh Gibson was born December 21, 1911, in Buena Vista, Georgia and the eldest of Mark Gibson and Nancy Woodlock’s three children. His father, a former sharecropper, migrated to Pittsburgh in 1924, where he obtained employment in the Homestead Steelworks. Josh, who became disillusioned with school by the time he reached the ninth grade, dropped out and opted for an apprenticeship at an airbrake company. At sixteen, he played baseball for Gimbels Brothers baseball team and began what was to become an outstanding baseball career with the Crawford Colored Giants in 1929. In 1930, he played for the Grays and two years later joined the Pittsburgh Crawfords for a lucrative \$1200 salary. Most Negro League salaries did not exceed \$500.

⁶³The writer is uncertain of Pearson’s first name. Robert Peterson lists Jimmy Pearson (New York Cubans) and Lenny Pearson (New York Eagles and Baltimore Elite Giants) in the appendix of *Only The Ball Was White*. However, the former did not play in the Negro Leagues until 1949 and the latter from 1937-1950. So, it is doubtful that the Pearson mentioned above is either of these Negro baseball players.



Source: Pittsburgh Courier Photographic Archives
Figure. 60. Josh Gibson

Major League baseball is willing to accept Negro players today. But, fans are of the opinion that major league baseball does not want Negro players, but that is not true. We have always been interested in Negro players, but have not used them, because we feel that the general public has not been educated to the point where they will accept them on the same standard as they do white players. Also a ball club spends six weeks in the deep South and half the season on the road and there are many places where we could not take a Negro player, because of social problems. I am sure any if major league managers would use colored players if they thought fans in their particular cities would stand for it. There was a time when Jewish players were not wanted.⁶⁴

Nonetheless, black baseball players remained outside the major leagues.

Clashes Between the Powers That Be

W.A. "Gus" Greenlee and Cum Posey, Jr., often had differences of opinion which subsequently, led to clashes on and off the baseball diamond. This was, in part, because their teams, the Pittsburgh Crawfords and Homestead Grays were rivals and had been since the Crawfords were a sandlot team. The following quote clearly indicates this rivalry:

Rivalry between the Pittsburgh Crawfords and Grays while the Crawfords were still a sandlot team and the Grays were professional. They described the Crawfords as a snappy bunch of young players who can hit and run, but were planning to give the Grays a real run for the honors of the game. The Grays were confident that they could take the youngsters into camp. The battle would be one of age and experience pitted against youth and daring. Sometimes youth must be served.⁶⁵

⁶⁴"*General Public Must Be Changed*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 25, 1939, p. 1. For more information on Jewish baseball players see, Peter Levine's *Baseball History: An Annal of Original Baseball Research*, 1989.

⁶⁵"*Sandlot 9 Primes to Trip Vets*," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, August 23, 1930, Section 2, p. 4.

Posey's animosity showed "when the Crawfords agreed to join his East-West League by imposing stipulations on them to resist competition with the Crawfords."⁶⁶ Although the specific stipulations were not revealed, perhaps Posey limited the number of games the Crawfords could play; scheduled no games between the two teams for fear of losing; or undermine Greenlee's leadership and respect given him by other Negro League owners and players. Further speculation involves Posey's desire to become one of the power brokers which may explain the earlier formation of his own Negro baseball league. This rivalry, however, was to continue throughout the 1940s when Greenlee was rejected from the NAL and NNL.

Posey, at times, seemed to feel overshadowed by Gus Greenlee's reputation almost to the point of envy. Because of the many humanitarian gestures by Greenlee to blacks who had "fallen on hard times," especially, during the Depression when it appeared the only he had money, many people thought Gus could have whatever he wanted. Posey, in his *Pointed Paragraphs*, was quick to point out that, "it would be well to get the idea out of people's heads that Greenlee can get any player he goes after for his club." Despite Posey's feelings, there may have been some truth to that statement. In the Negro Leagues, players consistently switched baseball teams for those teams paying the highest salaries. Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson, for example, frequently, switched from the Crawfords to the Grays and back to the Crawfords, because of higher salaries.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons*, p. 155.

⁶⁷See John Holway's "Josh Gibson" in the *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, eds. Rayford W. Logan and Michael Winston, New York, W.W. Norton, 1982, pp. 259-261. Both players were valuable, because of their exceptional talents as baseball players. For

Origins of the Negro Welfare Interplant Baseball League

Organized baseball in Pittsburgh went beyond the sandlots into the city's industrial plants even before the Crawfords became the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays affiliated with the Negro Leagues. The Negro Welfare Interplant League was organized by John T. Clark, executive director of the Pittsburgh Urban League, with the help of Negro Welfare Workers.⁶⁸ They were considered by the National Urban League as "the key figures in industrial companies, who were responsible for leisure time activities of black industrial workers."⁶⁹ Negro Welfare Workers such as Cyrus T. Greene, were often the managers of Interplant baseball teams.

This league was not limited to the participation of black southern migrants working in Industrial plants in Pittsburgh, but surrounding areas including Homestead, Duquesne, Clairton, McKees Rocks, and Braddock. Based on the principles of the Pittsburgh Urban League, the purpose of the Interplant Baseball League was to encourage good sportsmanship among amateur baseball players, the development of "esprit de corps" among different groups working in industry in and around Pittsburgh, and for industrial plants to provide

example, Gibson hit as many as 67 homeruns in one season and won at least four batting championships between 1933-1936. See Holway's *Voices of the Great Black Baseball Leagues* (1975). Paige won 2,000 of 2,500 games he pitched. To obtain Gibson, Posey offered and Gibson accepted \$2500 to return to the Grays.

⁶⁸See Nancy J. Weiss' *The National Urban League*, 1974. She points out that the idea of establishing recreation for Negro migrants in industrial plants was at the suggestion of the National Urban League, because the Negro migrant "needed wholesome amusements" and this was one of the ways it could be achieved. Urban League affiliates were therefore, encouraged to create organized baseball and basketball teams. The PUL was one of the affiliates that successfully organized an industrial baseball league.

⁶⁹Peter Gottlieb, *Making Their Own Way: Southern Blacks' Migration to Pittsburgh 1916-1930*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), p. 130.

athletic and recreational programs for employees.⁷⁰ For industrial plant owners, the reasons justifying the organization of these teams and those of the Pittsburgh Urban League differed significantly. Industrial plant employers recognized high turnovers among black male employees, oftentimes, due to the reckless social lives many of them led. Indulgence in various types of vice including crap games and excessive drinking which sometimes resulted in tardiness and absenteeism, many employers realized the necessity of dealing with the problem, because for the most part, blacks were productive workers.

Plant owners found it necessary to formally organize the leisure time of black industrial workers as a means of “detaching young black men working in the mills from informal social lives, boardinghouses and street corners.” Many of the largest steel producing plants in Pittsburgh created networks of company-sponsored social and recreational groups such as band, glee clubs, and more importantly, athletic teams which were established between 1917-1921.⁷¹ Athletic teams sponsored by the city’s industrial plants, therefore, “served the employer perhaps more than their employees participating in the league.” In other words, employers who provided extra-curricular activities, lessened the time black employees had to frequent places of ill-repute and engage activities that would otherwise interfere with their work performance.

⁷⁰*Negro Industrial League Guide, Roster, and Schedule* (undated), Archives of Industrial Society, MSS 81:11, Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, Box 7, FF 332, Hillman Library, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁷¹Gottlieb, p. 130. Also see Nancy J. Weiss’ *The National Urban League*, 1974, pp. 116-117. She discusses the importance of wholesome recreation for Negro migrants and the National Urban League’s efforts to establish recreational programs for the same. The Detroit Urban League, for example, established numerous programs for its southern migrants including regular dances and activities for their children.

Contrary to historian Rob Ruck, who contends the Negro Industrial League began between 1922-1923, other evidence reveals the league actually started in 1921. Several industrial companies had already established colored baseball teams including Carnegie Steel Plant which had three teams represented Lockhart Iron and Steel, Jones & Laughlin Steel Company, and Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company.⁷² These teams comprised the Negro Interplant League of 1921, and were hard at work preparing for the opening game of the Negro Industrial League of the Pittsburgh District, the 1st Sunday in May.⁷³ The following quote further substantiates the beginning of the Interplant League: “We shall be pleased to publish the schedule of the sporting columns of this paper for write-ups of games and standings of clubs during the season.”⁷⁴

John T. Clark initially planned for at least eight teams in the Negro Industrial League, but as of May 1921, only six teams were registered. However, he continued to solicit two additional teams by writing letters to industrial employers. In a letter to Standard Sanitary

⁷²Jones & Laughlin was founded in 1853, by B.F. Jones and James Laughlin; Carnegie Steel Plant, 1856 by Andrew Carnegie; and Lockhart Iron & Steel by Charles Lockhart in 1905. For more information, see *The Story of Pittsburgh and Vicinity*, (Pittsburgh: The Gazette Times, 1908); James McBride's *History of the Carnegie Steel Company*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991). Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company was founded in 1886 by George Westinghouse in East Pittsburgh. The first Negro was hired as a janitor one year after the company was organized.

⁷³*List of Industrial League Teams*, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11 Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 331. A *Proposed Base Ball Schedule of the Negro Welfare Interplant League of the Pittsburgh District of 1921 Season* lists eight teams in the Negro Interplant League: Donora, Braddock, Clairton, Duquesne, Homestead, McKees Rocks, Woodlawn, and WEMCO with games beginning April 16, 1921 through September 4, 1921.

⁷⁴*Letter to Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company (WEMCO) from William G. Nunn, May 6, 1921*. Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11, Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 332.

Roster of Players

Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company (WEMCO) Interplant Baseball League

Manager: Finley T. Davis #6 Morrow Street, E.E. Pittsburgh, PA

Grounds: Homewood Playground, Lang Avenue and the railroad, St. car #76 (sic)

Players: Finley T. Davis
Walter France
Ralph Melix
C. Griffith
Frank Bloomer
John Bush
W.R. Gordon
Elsie Robinson
Chauncey Foster
Herman Grooms
John Thompson
Maryland Perry
Charlie Wilson
H. Tinker
Edmonds
Trice
Matlock
Newman

Source: *Urban League Papers Pittsburgh*, MSS 81:11 Box 7, FF 333. It is unclear if the names of the last four players also began with an "H." This roster is written as is from the original document.

Manufacturing Company, Clark wrote:

I understand there has been a Base Ball (sic) Team organized among colored employees of the plant. I am wondering if such a team is being planned again this season. Several of the colored teams from Industrial Plants in this district are forming a league to begin the 1st of May. There are places for two teams and I am wondering if this letter could be referred to management of this colored team and if he would be urged to get in touch with us concerning the matter.⁷⁵

Clark subsequently, sent a similar letter to the colored employees of the Braddock works inviting them to join the Negro Interplant Base Ball (sic) League.

Clark received negative replies from two industrial companies: Standard Sanitary Manufacturing and Presses Steel Car. A representative from Standard replied: "Beg to state that owing to the fact we now support one base ball team, we feel it rather impossible for us to do anything further in this matter." The response from Pressed Steel Car read: "Replying to your letter dated May 5th up to this writing, the boys have not formed a base ball team mostly due to the fact that our plant has not been in operation during the past six months. Therefore, do not figure on a team for your schedule from this particular plant."⁷⁶ Although unsuccessful in securing Negro baseball teams from these plants, Clark still managed to attract teams from Fort Pitt Malleable Iron, Duquesne

⁷⁵*Letter to Theodore Taffel from John T. Clark, April 11, 1921.* Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11 Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 331.

⁷⁶*Letter to the Pittsburgh Urban League from J. Rannsbrusher, May 8, 1922,* Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh, Hillman Library Special Collections, MSS 81:11 Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 333.

Steel Foundry, and two athletic clubs: Duquesne and Belvon.⁷⁷

Organizational Structure of the Negro Interplant League

Rules and regulations governed the Interplant League which were enforced by its officers, John T. Clark, president; Cyrus T. Greene, secretary; and William P. Young, treasurer; and the captains of each team comprised the Protest Committee which met when called by the president to schedule and hear the circumstances surrounding a written complaint.⁷⁸ Each team was required to send a list of all players to the Urban League office by June 15th not to exceed eighteen players; a player not on the roster must file his name in the president's office one week before he was eligible to play; pay a \$15 joining fee payable by July 1, 1921; furnish the umpire at each game; send the scores to the Urban League office for publication no later than 8:00 Saturday evening; be responsible for its own transportation to and from the grounds of the opponents; pay five dollars to be used to purchase a trophy

⁷⁷Fort Pitt Malleable Iron Company in McKees Rocks and situated on eleven acres of land, was led by Frank J. Lanahan, president; Otto F. Felix, vice-president; William Heyl, secretary; and R.J. Davidson, treasurer. Fort Duquesne Steel Foundry was established October 1899, by prominent white Pittsburgh businessmen to manufacture steel castings of various kinds, such as cast steel-rolled car wheels. The officers of this company were: W.A. Herron, president; T.H. Bakewell, vice-president and treasurer; and L.W. Frank, secretary. The name Duquesne was selected in honor of Canada's governor whose French troops defeated the English at the fork of the Ohio River (1754). The English were in the process of building a fort before being captured, and French troops subsequently, completed and named the fort. Streets, towns, hotels, and banks also bore Duquesne's name.

⁷⁸Cyrus T. Green, an employee of the PUL, was the welfare director for colored employees of Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, baseball coach of the company's Interplant team, and secretary of the Negro Industrial League. W.P. Young, a graduate of Lincoln University, was employed as a welfare worker for the Pittsburgh Urban League. His first PUL assignment was with Lockhart Iron and Steel Company. A former college quarterback, Homestead Gray, and member of the Loendi Basketball team, Young's athletic experience led him to become baseball coach of Lockhart's Negro Interplant team.

for the team winning the series, runner-up, and a small trophy for the players of the winning team.⁷⁹

The Interplant League was not as complex and controversial as the East-West, and later, National Negro League. For example, players of the Interplant League were only allowed to represent the industrial plants of their respective employers which meant they could not switch teams or play for the highest bidder. Nor were they paid additional monies for participating in their company's athletic programs. Because the players in the a Negro Interplant League were full-time employees and amateurs, barnstorming and international travel were not part of their repertoire. Fatigue from traveling and absence from the home were uncommon among players in the Industrial League, but often commonplace for the Pittsburgh Crawfords and Homestead Grays.

Problems within the Interplant Base Ball (sic) League were minimal, especially teams, were more popular teams, compared to those of the Negro Leagues which were plagued by the "stealing" of players from competing teams and leagues; bickering among team owners; dismissals of teams from the Negro Leagues due to various types of infractions; and quarreling between players and owners relative to contract negotiations and personality clashes. The Interplant League experienced nothing of this magnitude. However, its officers received several written complaints regarding game schedules, player eligibility, and discrepancies concerning questionable calls made by game umpires.

In 1922, Henry Freeman of the Woodlawn Greys filed a complaint with John T.

⁷⁹*Statements of the Interplant Baseball League*, Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 332.

Clark about the Negro Interplant Base Ball Schedule who responded:

You are under the impression there are less games scheduled for you at your home grounds than for any other team in the league. This is not true. Each team has eight games on their home grounds and eight games away. We could not arrange the schedule so that the games could be played every other Saturday. There is absolutely no difference between your schedule and make an effort to have some representative present whenever there is a [league] call meeting.⁵⁸

During July of this same year, two letters protesting Interplant games filed by the Alpha Club of Carnegie against Woodlawn and Lockhart Iron and Steel Company were received by Clark. The first letter read: "After learning that the second game with Woodlawn played July 4th was not an independent game as was arranged, it is with regret that we are protesting it on ruling that all players were not eligible. The score was 13-0."

The second letter of protest involved Carnegie Alpha Club which led the charge against Lockhart, during its July 15th game. The "game was not played according to 1922 National League rules. The base umpire called him [the runner] safe and the chief umpire called him out."⁵⁹ No record exists regarding the outcome of these game protests, but in the second instance, the evidence points out that the issue was argued on the field among managers and umpires, but not to the satisfaction of Randolph Frits, manager of the Carnegie

⁵⁸*Letter to Henry Freeman from John T. Clark, June 7, 1922.* Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11 Pittsburgh Urban League Papers, Box 7, FF 332.

⁵⁹*Letter to the Urban League from Randolph Frits, July 15, 1922.* Archives of Industrial Society, University of Pittsburgh Special Collections, MSS 81:11 Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers, Box 7 FF 333.

GREATER PITTSBURGH BASEBALL COMMISSION

OFFICIAL CONTRACT

I, the undersigned, agree to devote my entire services as a Baseball Player to the

Club.....*Barnes A. L.*.....

of the*M. L. L.*..... League

for the season of *1923*.....to conform to all rules and regulations appertaining to my services now adopted or which may hereafter be adopted by the Club, not to render any services as a Baseball Player during the term of this contract to any other Club without the written consent of my Manager and Captain; to faithfully abide by the rules and regulations of the league in affiliation with the Greater Pittsburgh Baseball Commission.

L. A. Bowman.....*Geo. Deese*.....
Manager. Player.

Figure. 61. Greater Pittsburgh Baseball Commission Official Contract
Players in the Interplant Baseball League were required to sign a contract as it further developed to dissuade players from switching teams during the baseball season.

Alpha Club.

It is unclear as to the impact of the league on Pittsburgh's black community or the industrial companies participating. However, several other points are clear. It is without question that the Grays and Crawfords overshadowed the Industrial Negro Baseball teams by far, as spectators flocked to their games in the thousands to cheer their exceptional players. During the regular baseball season, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, extensively covered the activities of the Grays and Crawfords, Pittsburgh's claim to athletic fame.

Though William Nunn, sports writer for the *Pittsburgh Courier* agreed to publish the scores of the Negro Industrial teams provided they supply the information, there was no evidence of such reports, especially, during the 1921 baseball season. Copies of the *Courier* were inaccessible. The players of the Industrial League were also amateurs whereas those of the Grays and Crawfords were professional and semi-professional players. Industrial League teams though not as popular among Pittsburgh's premiere teams, were more popular among mill families and communities which was, in part, the reason for its inception.

In other words, the league was an attempt to unite mill workers, families, and communities. One way in which this was accomplished was social events such as picnics sponsored by the Negro Industrial League. For example, a picnic was held August 31, 1922, for players and their families with eight teams participating in the event. John T. Clark wrote letters to all company presidents with Industrial League teams requesting that Negro employees be excused to attend the picnic. Seven of the companies granted Clark's request with Lockhart Iron and Steel relenting. A letter from T.J. Gillespie read:

Replying to your inquiry of 10th inst. (Sic) we certainly object to our Negro employees attending a picnic on Thursday, August 31st. The picnic should be arranged for either a Saturday afternoon or a regular holiday. Would suggest that as the first Monday of September is Labor Day it would be a good time to hold such a picnic without any interference with our work.

According to the League's financial statement, each team contributed five dollars for the picnic and approximately 615 tickets were subsequently, sold to the public. The total expenses for the picnic were \$297.05. The records also show that the picnic was held at Homestead Park and provisions were made to obtain a dance hall, music, and haul athletic equipment.⁶⁰ The Negro Interplant Baseball Team was not only a contribution to Pittsburgh's Negro baseball legacy, but another attempt by the Pittsburgh Urban League to build two bridges: one between black migrant workers and Pittsburgh's black community; black migrant workers and the Pittsburgh Urban League; and the Pittsburgh Urban League and industrial employers.

⁶⁰The records of the Interplant Baseball League also lists the athletic events to be held during the picnic. They included the following: the 50 yard dash, a potato race, tug of war, sack race, a ball throwing competition, and a pillow fight. These athletic events were designated for boys and girls eight to twelve years old; married and single women; and men. The baseball game among Interplant teams was to start at 4:00 p.m. Prizes were also awarded to each winner.

Roster of Players

Lockhart Iron and Steel Interplant Baseball League

Manager: Willie George, 14, Lockhart Street, McKees Rocks, PA

Grounds: Grayber Field

Players: Willie George
Henderson Fay
Walter Eason
Joe Sanders
Ralph Simion
R. Goldsmith
Jason Jones
M.O. Fields
Willis Hightower
Sam Ramey
Henry Rice
James Mills
C. Luther
Carl McKee
James Leghorn
Bill Stewart
Bill Chatman
Bill McArthur

Source: *Urban League of Pittsburgh Papers*, Box 7, FF 333.

Conclusion

The Pittsburgh Crawfords and Homestead Grays once independent teams and later, affiliated with the Negro Leagues, left a legacy of Negro baseball in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Crawfords remained dominant in the National Negro League with most of its best players until 1937, when Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson led the exodus to Santo Domingo, largely because of contract disputes with Greenlee, and Satchel, of course, had been barred from the Negro Leagues. At the same time, the salaries paid by the Cubans far exceeded those of the Negro Leagues. After six successful and colorful years, Gus Greenlee, subsequently, dissolved the team, because of financial difficulties and transition from baseball to boxing, but not without leaving a trail of unique Negro baseball memories.

Cum Posey's Homestead Grays were a marvel in the history of Negro of America's national past time. Preceded by the Pittsburgh Keystones, the Grays were city's second oldest Negro team which started on the city's sandlots like the Crawfords, and ended with national and international prominence. Negro baseball records reveal that the Homestead Grays were the Negro League champions from 1937-1945. At least three factors contributed to the demise of the Grays, Cum Posey's death, the difficulties experienced by his wife who subsequently, owned the team, and National League owner, Branch Rickey's eventual drafting of Jackie Robinson to the Major League's New York Yankees, impacting the entire Negro League and its players. Despite the lifting of the color bar in baseball, the Grays also left more memories to their fans than could be counted.

Pittsburghers and baseball fans from surrounding areas, both black and white, male and female attended the games of the Crawfords and Grays by the thousands where they

cheered and made wagers for and against their favorite team. During the 1933 and 1936 baseball seasons, Rob Ruck estimated 200,000 fans attended the Crawfords games. Just as many probably attended the Grays games. They watched Negro baseball these teams whose rosters were filled with brilliant, colorful, dazzling players who knew and appreciated the game. Negro League baseball in Pittsburgh became an economic venture by which black business owners were able to capitalize. The flare of the notorious Pittsburgh Crawfords and Homestead Grays both had an impact on the Hill District community, because it gave it national identity and self-respect decades before the integration of baseball.

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