

YWCA HISTORY PROJECT

Articles of Incorporation

May 1907

Article 111 Certificate of Incorporation of The Young Women's

Christian Association of Asheville, North Carolina, Incorporated:

The object for which this corporation is formed is to establish and maintain in Asheville, North Carolina, a boarding house or boarding houses for the exclusive use and benefit of local and transient self-supporting women of good character, and to promote the spiritual, mental, moral and physical well being of such women, and of the women of Asheville generally."

NEWSPAPER CHRONOLOGY - ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

1925

Phyllis Wheatly Branch, YWCA, presents local talent in Negro

Spirituals at the City Auditorium.

Ever Ready Club of the YWCA stages "The Burglar" comedy at Aycock

School.

Annual Meeting held at Vanderbilt Hotel - a dinner for over 200

people.

YWCA reports on activities including a basketball league, girls

grammar school clubs (including a world fellowship meeting on

France and Employment and Room Registry.

1927

Four phases of YWCA work include administrative activities at 13 Grove Street under the direction of Lorena Boyd Mason, a home at 36 Grove Street which houses 32 girls, Camp Kenjocketee - eight miles from Asheville near Candler with space for 45 girls and "Fine Work at the Negro 'Y'" [headline] at; 272 College Street Known as the Phyllis Wheatley Branch under the direction of Adela Ruffin

"Dream" of leadership: a home for 50 permanent and 50 transient Women

1928

Teas held to increase membership.

"Negro Concert Well Received" is headline for story on Phyllis Wheatley Branch's concert of negro spiritual.

UNCA observes "Sailing Week" to have women in all churches "set sail with them [YWCA] to discover what the YWCA can mean to Asheville.

1932

Girl Reserves have program on puppeting. Other classes include bridge and conversational English.

Mrs. Charles S. Bryant and Miss Virginia Williamson, members of the Board of Directors, represent the Asheville YWCA at the 25th anniversary of the founding of the national YWCA, a celebration at Carnegie Hall in New York.

"Jobless Girls to Receive Aid" headlines a story about the Girl Reserves program to help 200 unemployed girls in the city. Topics for programs include music, recreation, handiwork,

(1932 Continued)

remodeling of clothes and "the psychology of how to get a job and

how to keep it." Presentations and discussions include salesmanship, personality, customer's point of view and attitude.

Special programs feature homemaking and other domestic work, sewing, cooking, office work and clerking.

Business Girls' League meets at YWCA.

Classes and recreation for unemployed girls divided into three phases:

recreation, lectures and vocational instruction. Theme: "Learn while you do not earn."

The Girl Reserves operate a Christmas Toy Repair Shop to mend toys for "needy ones at Christmas"

1937

"Water Ball" classes held at YWCA pool. [Forerunner of still popular-water exercise program.]

Under "Social News," a display advertisement to the "Housewives'

Cooking School & Food Show" sponsored by the "Colored YWCA" on College Street and conducted by Ruth Sargent of Indianapolis, a "college graduate and cookery expert."

A toy matinee held for obtaining toys for distribution to "needy children at Christmas."

Headline: "New YWCA for Negroes to be Built Here" (.11-25-38), A new \$10,000 annex is added to the College Street Branch.

YWCA Business Club girls sponsor a Christmas program of reading and Carols. YMCA workers repair toys at the Toy Repair Shop where work is carried out in three departments by "WPA workers".

1939

Headline: "Dedication of New Negro YWCA to Take Place Today" (February 5, 1929). Rev. ~~John~~ B. McAfee was principal speaker and Marion Cuthbert, "national secretary of negro YWCA work" from New York, took part. The new secretary of the branch was Julia R. E. Spaulding of Newport News, a graduate of Hampton Institute in Virginia. "The new YWCA buildings include the renovated old YWCA house, known to be 100 years old, which will be used as the residence house, and the large gymnasium. The residence house has two club rooms, an assembly room, kitchen and dining room on the first floor, and the upstairs has been made into a dormitory which will, accommodate nine girls. The gymnasium is the only fully equipped negro gymnasium in the South."

Isobell Lawson, "national secretary for negro YUICA work," visits Phyllis Wheatley branch and "Stephens-Lee (negro) High School."

The national YWCA is honored by a special broadcast "over the Columbia Broadcasting system.

'Lum and Abner' feature the theme economic democracy.

Mrs. Herbert E. Hawkes of New York and a national YWCA Board Member speaks to the local association's annual meeting on "The Function of the National Board of the YWCA."

(1939 Continued')

The YWCA finance committee report income for 1938 from memberships,

residence, classes, etc., amounted to \$15,851.57, and contributions from the Community Chest were \$23,518.20. Total Girl Reserves attendance for 1938 was 2,736. Explanation of Girl Reserves: "The Girl Reserve program is planned each year by advisors and the girls. The activities are based on the interests and needs of the members of the clubs, developed and performed by them, for the purpose of building desirable attitudes both personal and social." Attendance at Business Girls activities numbered 2,365. Health recreation classes had an attendance of 5,547 and 451 medical examinations were given, The YWCA residence house served 35,801 meals, cared for 1,090 transient; guests, and 51 permanent guests.

1943

The YWCA Business Girls league held weekly parties for service men at the YWCA on Grove Street.

The YWCA Business Girls honor young women employed by the postal accounts division of the general accounting office here and nurses from Moore General Hospital.

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch held its annual meeting. The game room

was open for children from age 7-14 for ping pong, shuffle board and other games under the direction of the Girl Reserves. The branch sponsored neighborhood groups of girls and boys, held nutrition classes, home nursing and care of the sick classes, sewing classes for adults and a class in adult elementary education. The Branch held its annual President's Ball, and

(1943 Continued)

sponsored a class of 22 participants in minor electrical repairs. The Girl Reserves presented the dramatic production "Patriot's Dream" as part of a nation-wide project,

Headline: "Girls to Date Boys for Maroon Hangout Dance" (2-12-43),

"A dance to which no boy may be admitted without a girl and only girls may come as stags will be given by the Maroon Hangout council Friday, February 29, at the YWCA ...on Grove Street.."

Headline: "Wheatley Branch of YWCA is Doing Fine Work Among Negroes" (November 8, 1943).

The cut line under a photograph of black teenagers (girls and boys) reads, "Members of the Stephens-Lee negro high school girls basketball team hold two practice periods each week in the gymnasium of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA on College Street. This is said to be the only fully equipped gymnasium for a negro YWCA in the south. It is used for many activities by girls' and women's groups."

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA "had its beginning in a group which met and held programs on Sunday afternoons in 1913 and 1914.

They bought a building on Market Street which they turned over the government, during World War I for use by soldiers and was returned to them after the war with furnishings for which they paid. Later that building was sold and the first building was put up on the property on which the Phyllis Wheatley Branch now stands. The original group of women who held Sunday afternoon meetings, a girls' industrial club and the YMI auxiliary are said to be the groups from which the branch grew.. It is not a YWCA in itself but a branch of the YWCA on Grove

Street." The building was renovated in 1938 for \$10,000.

The Public Affairs Committees of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch and the Central YWCA hold discussions and meet with the religious education committees, "The race relations committee meets with them [Branch and Central YWCA] and whenever possible tries to foster better race relationships,

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch plans regular programs for negro servicemen in conjunction with the YMI. There were 10 groups of negro Girl Reserves, one or two in each negro school in the city. There were four permanent residents of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch.

1945

Headline: "Negro YWCA Stressing Building of Character" (10-5-45),

The program for youth is being given great emphasis at the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA, thus enabling negro children through character building activities to realize the value of good citizenship. This is the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA affirmative way to fight juvenile delinquency." Activities of this effort include day camp, handicrafts, hiking, outdoor games and instructions given by volunteers, "Religion, a wholesale recreational program, study and healthful athletic contests—the latter in the well equipped gymnasium—play a vital part in character building of the negro youth of the city." Miss M. Rose Rambo is executive director of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch and Miss Miriam Reid is director of younger girls' work,

The YWCA sponsors USO parties, volley ball classes, square dancing classes, bridge., day hikes and keep fit classes for housewives.

1948

A "Sunday Section" article ("Society page") features YWCA activities

~~under the~~ headline, "YWCA Offers Varied Program to Suit All Ages,

All tastes" (May 9, 2948) Programs include acquisition of skills, meals, healthy recreation, cooking, watermelon cutting, open fireplace, lace cooking & marshmallow roasting. Newcomers clubs are open for teens, business girls and young married women.

1951

The Business and Professional Club of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch hold their third annual dance at the YWCA gymnasium.

1956

Mrs. John E. Welborn, Jr., of Greenville, SC, a National YWCA Board member, speaks at the annual meeting of the Central YWCA about the worldwide council held the previous fall in England.

Mew administrative officers of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch are Mrs. L. A. Brown, chairman, Mrs. Ruby F. Young, vice chairman, and Mrs. W.B. Burton, finance chairman.

The YWCA Business Girls Club sponsors a lecture series on love and marriage entitled "Are You Fit to be Tied?"

1957

Headline; "YWCA's Moorhead House is 'Home Away From Home'" (4-21-57). [Moorhead House opened for guests on November 21, 1934. Mrs. Charles S. Bryant, then president of the YWCA, had interested her father, Samuel F. Moorhead of Mew York, in making a bequest to build such a residence. Located in downtown Asheville next door to the YWCA, the YWCA's Moorhead House residence is "convenient to... jobs or schools" and "offers them [residents.] a well-planned

(1957 Continued)

and complete program of entertainment, education and sports," At full occupancy, Moothouse House had 32 residents, 19 between the ages of 18 and 24; six in their late 20s; two in the early 30s; and five in the mid-30s.

Residents were accepted between 18 and 37 year's of age. The house included dormitory rooms (with three beds to a bath), & laundry, "pajama room" with sun deck,, large lounge with fireplace, library, card room, formal reception room, music room and outdoor patio. "When the residence was first built, it was primarily planned as a home for girls who were coming to the city to work to be sure that they had suitable but reasonably priced accommodations."

1962

January 14, 1962: Ground is broken for new Phyllis Wheatley Branch on South French Broad Avenue on property bounded by Timothy and Charles Streets [where the YWCA is now located] The basic structure cost was \$105,000 and projects for furnishings and equipment take the total cost to between \$160,000 and \$175,000. Donations and pledges at the groundbreaking were \$145,000. "The negro branch Y currently has a membership of just under 1,000." Mrs. H. Wilson James was chairman of the board of administration of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch and Mrs. Charles S. Bryant was chairman of the board of trustees of the YWCA.

1963

YWCA holds a series of integration workshops and issues a report

to the community. November- 12, 1963: "The report, released Thursday by Mrs. Charles Lloyd of the YW's public affairs committee, summarized the findings of four meetings and noted almost 20 suggestions brought out at the session." Asheville's mayor and City Council established the foundation for integration in Asheville, the report noted. "We as responsible citizens, must continue to build solidly on this foundation

with courage, understanding and wisdom. Some 250 people attended the meetings and many were increasingly aware that on the surface our city appears smooth, but there are many underneath feelings and situations which will erupt if continuing progress is not made," the report said. [At this time, the county board of education has just voted to draft a plan for integrating 34 schools, all but one of which was then segregated.] The report requested City Council appoint "a qualified negro" to the City School Board and requested county schools begin "integration now." Other- suggestions of the report included:

A survey of job possibilities and training for jobs with industries moving to Asheville; More adult education centers, "both negro and white";

-A clearing house for information on adult education and training for better jobs;

-A change in the procedure of observing "Race Relations Sunday, holding smaller, integrated services at several

(1963 Continued)

churches instead of one mass service at a single church"

Integration of all civic groups;

-Strengthening of the schools' guidance programs;

-A public forum once a month to continue "the work started by the YW workshop to explore areas still untouched;

-Establishing night schools for barbering, tailoring, shoe repair and institutional cooking to complement

"Asheville-Buncombe County Industrial Education Center";

-A short course on preparation "for taking aptitude tests, since these tests are unfamiliar to many persons not currently in school." [A copy of this report is attached]

1968

The federation of Negro Women's Clubs of Asheville present a \$1,000

check to the YWCA to reduce the debt on the South French Broad

YWCA in memory of the Federation's past presidents. Attending the

check presentation were Mrs. Ernest B. Caldwell, executive director of the YWCA, Mrs. Jesse Ray, chairman of the committee on administration, Mrs. Eugenia Jarrett, president of the Federation, Mrs. Frances M. Owens, treasurer, and Miss Mary A.

Shepherd, secretary of the Federation. "The history of this Federation records many of its members as having served as volunteers on the YUICA board of directors, committee on

administration, and other civic groups; as workers in campaigns, and as financial contributors to many individuals, groups and organizations.

1970

A news release sent to the Asheville Citizen-Times states:

"On July 27th, the Asheville Community Workshop of the South French Broad YWCA concluded its series of the 'Black White Dialogues. The last dialogue was entitled "Tell It Like It Is!"

At this time everyone had the opportunity to express themselves to utmost as to how the 'Black White Dialogues' affected him. The 'Black White Dialogues' were just the beginning to get people to open their eyes to see problems that confronts [sic] them. Now it's time for action! In order [sic] to continue such a series the Asheville Community Workshop will have in the near future, periodically, a re-evaluation entitled 'Another Look at Ourselves.' Next Monday, August 3, 1970, the Asheville Community Workshop will have another- series entitled 'Ecology.' Dr. Gordon G. Mahy, from Warren Wilson College, will be guest speaker, Everyone is cordially invited."

Miss Wilma H. Ray, director of the Community Service Division of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission speaks at the YWCA annual meeting. [Miss Ray is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jesse G. Ray, Sr., of Asheville and was a member of the YWCA board of directors.] "Racism is a dirty word, a controversial word, but more significantly, it is a virulent, active, infectious malaise of the spirit, Miss Wilma H. Ray...said here Monday night...Miss Ray expressed the hope that Asheville will not be a party to the 'Southern Strategy' of the national administration. 'I would hope that you would work actively to see that it does not. It is very clear that the Southern strategy is designed to forestall the

Prospects for the kind of institutional, behavioral and Attitudinal change which) will make equality of opportunity, a Reality. "

April 22, 1970 Headline: "Y Women Seek to Eliminate Racism" After

attending the 25th national YWCA convention in Houston, Mrs. Ernest B. Caldwell, Asheville YWCA executive director, said "the thrust of the Young Women's Christian Associations program of action for 1970-73 will be the elimination of racism where it exists and by any means necessary. . . .It will be the focus for a determined effort to eliminate poverty, to end war and build peace, to reshape the quality of the environment, to revolutionize society's expectations of women and their own self-perception, as well as to involve youth, intentionally, both at the local and national levels in the association's decision-making process." At the convention, delegates re-elected Mrs. Robert W. Clayton of Grand Rapids, Mich, as the national president, Mrs. Clayton is the first negro woman to serve in that capacity.

The YWCA sponsors a discussion for young people and adults on "Myths and Realities of the Drug Scene and the Youth Culture."

The YWCA sponsors a Latin-American dinner called "April Fools Delight' and provides music and dancing by Warren Wilson College students.

October 23, 1970: Headline: "Merger of YWCAs in Asheville Running

Into Stiff Opposition." The lead reads, "Making one YWCA out of two when the basic ingredients are black and white is proving about as easy in Asheville as mixing oil and water."

The YWCA

board voted to close the Grove Street YWCA for financial reasons.

(1970 Continued)

because the facility was 38 years older than the South French Broad YWCA. It was also decided to add a swimming pool to South French Broad at a cost of \$150,000. At this time, "the Asheville YWCA has been one association—on paper at least—since 1968. It was the first officially integrated YWCA in the South," Mrs. Bailey {Mrs. Robert Bailey,] YWCA president said. In practice, however, only one branch of the Asheville YWCA is used freely by both blacks and whites, and that is the building at South French Broad. Depending on the program, participation there can be all-white, all-black or varying mixtures of the two, Mrs. Bailey said. "It's not easy to take the first step. Most people are unreasonably afraid." Mrs. Bailey said there is no choice but to close Grove Street of the YWCA is to bring its finances back into the black, Letter to the Editor (10-23-70) from Mrs. Carolyn Winters said, In

part, "Let us not forget, too, the distance involved between the branch association on South French Broad Avenue and Central Asheville. There still remain many Y enthusiasts who are not privileged to own a motor vehicle. As we dig deeper into this spacious structure that has many, many years of use still existing within its hallowed walls, we can but think of those intrepid civic minded persons of the early 1900s who made possible this great association in Asheville. What of those good people?"

(1970 Continued)

October 24, 1970: Headline: "Criticism Clouding YWCA's Branch Consolidation Plan." "The action [closing the Grove Street Branch] taken by the recommendation of the board of trustees, was attributed to the rising costs of keeping the old building heated and in repair. Along with the recommendation of the board of trustees to consolidate the full program at the South French Broad branch was one to construct a year-round instruction enclosed pool at the newer [South French Broad] building... Both Mrs. Bailey [Mrs. Robert Bailey, YWCA President and Mrs., Robb [Mrs. Peter B, Robb, YWCA treasurer] expressed surprise at the depth of racial overtones which have been indicated in the protests. 'We were unprepared for this,' Mrs. Robb said.. The possibility of reversing the decision, Mrs. Bailey said, appears extremely remote simply because there isn't enough money."

The- YUCA sponsors Halloween trick-or-treating for UNICEF [the United Nations Children's Fund] and an international fellowship tea featuring tea tables from Greece, England, Japan and Scandinavia.

1971

The YWCA sponsors "Project Aware," a program designed to provide "an outlet *for* new and better relationships between blacks and whites in Asheville. The program receives a \$24,008 grant for the U.S, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The nine-month program involved the YWCA, Asheville-Buncombe Human Relations Council, Opportunity Corp. of Madison-Buncombe Counties, city and county school systems, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and city and county law enforcement authorities.

1972

Headline: "At YWCA: Continuing Education for Pregnant Girls:

Pregnant and parenting teens in grades 7 - 12 gather two evenings a week at the YWCA for two and one-half hours of school work provided by volunteer teachers. Sixteen of the 41 participants are married. [At this time, pregnant students were asked to leave school.]

Editorial in Asheville Citizen Times on February 12, 1973, with

headline: "The YWCA Deserves Assistance on its 'Teen Mother' Program." The newspaper is supporting the YWCA's program and its request for \$10,000 from the school board to continue the program.

Mrs. Mary Woods, the first black woman in the U.S. to be appointed

executive director of a YWCA [Pittsburgh, Pa..] spoke at the YWCA annual meeting. Her topic was explaining the national YWCA's thrust of collective power toward the elimination of racism. The program included a puppet demonstration by the YWCA's puppetry class instructor.

1973

the YWCA nursery is serving from 12 - 20 children in its "Drop-in Child Care Center."

Headline; "YWCA Day Care Program for Babies to Help Young Mothers

Stay in School." The Appalachian Regional Commission and Title 4A of the Social Services Act grant the YWCA \$60,000 for five family day care homes with five children in each.

The YWCA holds an open house entitled "Building Bridges Over Troubled

Waters Through Volunteer Action" to inform the public, on YWCA

(1973 Continued)

Sponsored social service programs including continuing education, day care homes, Moorhead House, and problems of loneliness, drugs, racism and "youthful pregnancy."

1974

The YWCA kicks off a capital campaign to raise \$425,000 for a new pool, activity room and club rooms. Mrs. Donald Bridenstine is president of the YWCA and Douglas Bolton is chairman for the fundraising campaign.

Headline: "YWCA Director Reminisces on Work in New Guinea." (5-11-75).

The article contains an interview with YWCA Executive Director Thelma Caldwell about her work for the International YWCA in New Guinea.

1976

Mrs. Ollie Reynolds is elected president of the YWCA and says, "We're open to all comers to serve them in any way we can—and we mean that," Mrs. Reynolds reports that YWCA membership has doubled the past six months. "I think one of the most important things the YWCA has done for the community is make the Y a Woman's Center," Mrs. Reynolds said.

1980

Barbara Orr takes over as executive director of the YWCA. "The new outlook [for the YWCA] is one of financial responsibility and community response, according to YWCA officials. Debts are being erased, credit ratings are returning and new programs are flourishing. The Asheville YWCA was in heavy financial trouble just last July [1980] but guidance of interim

director Elizabeth McCubbin, it has been given new life. By the end of this month [December, 1980], the agency should be carrying a debt of about \$4,000, a debt which at one point totaled \$26,000."