Informally Educating the Community: St. Louis Phyllis Wheatley’s YWCA Committee on Administration Speaks on the Decline of the Organization Through Historical Narratives

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INFORMALLY EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY: ST. LOUIS PHYLLIS WHEATLEY’S YWCA COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION SPEAKS ON THE DECLINE OF THE ORGANIZATION THROUGH HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

by

CHERYL D. OSBY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School of the UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI- ST. LOUIS
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

May, 2014

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INFORMALLY EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY: ST. LOUIS PHYLLIS WHEATLEY’S YWCA COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION SPEAKS ON THE DECLINE OF THE ORGANIZATION THROUGH HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Matthew D. Davis, Ph.D.

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Claude Weathersby, Ph.D.
ABSTRACT

Immediately following the end of the Reconstruction period, Negro Americans were forced to live in the second wave of racial bondage resulting from the institutionalization of Jim Crow Laws. For Black females, this bondage carried a double-edged sword, as the weight of this oppression encompassed every aspect of their lives. Unfortunately, many viewed that there was no outlet from this misery.

Even before the official end of slavery, free Black women that rose to the middle-class economic status had begun club work and established clubs in their communities. These organizations not only provided a social outlet for these privileged women, but they also ameliorated the lives of the lower working class women club members.

From its humble beginnings in 1911, the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA (PW-Y) of St. Louis was destined to be a social icon. The Phyllis Wheatley Committee on Administration (PW-COA), the core management group, emphasized providing religious services and housing for lower classed Black females. As formal educational opportunities were relatively unavailable to poor Blacks, the PW-COA added informal educational programming for young girls to abate that void. By the 1950s, the PW-Y was an integral part of the African American community offering informal education classes, camping, housing, food service, and a facility that entertained as well as hosted meetings for proletarian groups fighting discriminatory practices. Nonetheless, the former core management group, the PW-COA, had no voice in the research literature. Therefore, this study is a historical narrative analysis that gave the present PW-COA members the medium to share the stories of their involvement in the PW-Y.
I humbly dedicate this work to the following:

To the most courageous person I know, my mother, Mrs. Georgia M. Osby. Your quiet courage and inner strength has allowed me to excel and taught me charter unknown waters. Thank you for your love and never ending support. Everything I am is because of you.

To my brothers Greg and Gary, thank you both for being what older brothers should be, loving, protective, and supportive. Greg, thank you for showing me that we could rise above the modest beginnings of our past and make our future what our minds could conceive. Gary, thank you for all those birthday cards and long talks. Your different perspective on life has helped me appreciate the journey all the more.

To Dr. Gregory Green, thank you for being an amazing support system and having unconditional belief in me. You have been there and back. I truly thank you for all you’ve done for me!

And to the memories of my Great Aunt Mary and Uncle Walter Wright, I have tried to follow your advice and it continues to live within me every day. Your lives have truly been a testimony for me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dissertation journey began for me as a young girl growing up in North St. Louis. We moved from North St. Louis to the West End, between Skinker and DeBaliviere when I was seven years old. I resided in that area for a staggering 26 years. During those years, I was able to experience varying types of urban renewal—gentrification, Negro removal, and capricious modifications to the area in addition to the major renovations of the apartment building in which I lived. The apartments on that block are now up-scaled condominiums, and the low-income apartments, in which I once dwelled, have all but disappeared.

Contrary to the never-ending changes in my neighborhood, the one constant I had was being able to think and dream positively about my future. I used my mind to think productively, which allowed me to excel in school. Thinking those productive thoughts assisted me in seeking out the highest level of academic excellence. Obtaining my doctorate degree, for me, marks the pinnacle of my educational journey.

There were many people whose lives have made this dissertation possible. Although, I have not mentioned you by name, you know who you are and your prayers, thoughts, kind words, and never ending support will always be remembered. I would first like to acknowledge my chair, Matthew D. Davis. I met you late in my dissertation journey, and I’m glad I did! I never would have made it without your support and guidance. You’ve done everything an advisor should do and then some. I hope many more students will be as lucky as I have been to have you lead my team. Dr. Lynn Beckwith, thank you for agreeing to be on my committee. Thank you for supporting my doctoral journey! I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Carl Hoagland. Thank you for
agreeing to be on my committee. I appreciate your time, consideration, and support of my studies. Dr. Claude Weathersby, thank you for being an inspiration and my dissertation coach. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and expertise. It has been invaluable! I’d also like to acknowledge the late Mrs. Madie Macklin. As my high school’s work-study teacher and an educator with St. Louis Public Schools for 40 years, she instilled in me the belief that a poor Black girl growing up in North St. Louis could be a teacher. And I did! Last and not least, I’d like to thank God. An unwavering belief in a higher power has kept me when nothing and no one else could.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWL</td>
<td>Colored Women’s League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COA</td>
<td>Committee on Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Committee on Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLS</td>
<td>Critical Legal Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>Critical Race Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Y</td>
<td>Metropolitan YWCA-St. Louis (or YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACW</td>
<td>National Association of Colored Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFAAW</td>
<td>National Federation of Afro-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWC</td>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWHC</td>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley Heritage Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW-COA</td>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley Committee on Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley Committee on Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW-Y</td>
<td>Phyllis Wheatley-Young Women’s Christian Association Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLFCWC</td>
<td>St. Louis Federation of Colored Women’s Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCHB</td>
<td>Women’s Christian Home Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association (National)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women’s Christian Association (National)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“T’was mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there’s a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
"Their colour is a diabolic die."
Remember, Christians, Negro's, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.

Excerpt from “On Being Brought from Africa to America”
Phillis Wheatley

CHAPTER ONE:
OVERVIEW

Introduction

As slavery officially ended in 1865, life for the Negro man seemed to take on a positive momentum.\(^1\) The Reconstruction Era proved politically fertile for some Negro men as a few built businesses, sought educational opportunities, and some secured voting rights through the passages of the 13\(^{th}\), 14\(^{th}\), and 15\(^{th}\) United States Constitutional Amendments. Negro women, by virtue of race and gender, were unable to reap the benefits of this newfound freedom. “Citizenship is more than an individual exchange of freedoms for rights; it is also membership in a body of politic, a nation, and a community.”\(^2\) A distinct socio-economic caste system emerged consisting of middle and


lower classes that further complicated the lives of Negro women. Middle-class Negro women obtained formal education and, thereby, held a higher position of Negro social status. In contrast, lower class Negro women were unable to acquire formal education and were bound to the lower class ranks that held them captive. For them, the ideal of full citizenship—being part of the political, nation and community—did not embody their humbled status. Unfortunately, the acquired freedoms of the Reconstruction Era were short-lived as Negro men and women found themselves in a new type of “slavery.” Separate but Equal, Jim Crow Laws, *de jure* segregation were all legal practices that hindered the full citizenship of Negroes during the early to mid 20th century. Life for the Negro was difficult; however, one area of Negro life that endured relentless disregard was the deprivation of formal education. Under this unjust and harsh system of living, persistent groups of middle-class, Negro women joined to formulate an early club

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3 Judith Weisenfeld, “The More Abundant Life”: The Harlem Branch of the New York City Young Women’s Christian Association, 1905-1945” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1992), 60. Collectively, Negro women held the lowest social ranking within White society. However, the internally perceived differences among Negro women fueled the class perception distinction. For example, Negro women who held positions as teachers would have been considered middle-class. On the other hand, Negro women who worked as maids fell into the lower class. Weisenfeld quotes Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin as she defines the differences between the classes of Negro women.


movement in an effort to improve their place in society.\textsuperscript{6} Arthelda Busch articulates the mission of Negro clubwomen:

Members combined their efforts to identify and address some of the welfare needs of the less fortunate within their race, and gave their time and resources, both financial and personal to that end. Their efforts often included a multifaceted approach to addressing unmet needs related to education, economics, health and political influences on African Americans.\textsuperscript{7}

The formulation of this club movement developed outside the official citizenship confinements the Negro woman held in society during the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

Negro women, in the American setting, have routinely been viewed as one of three types of women: Jezebel, Mammy, or Sapphire.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the stereotypes portrayed upon them by racism, Negro women fought to develop and carve out their own identities. Middle-class Negro women took the club movement as an opportunity to improve the lives of all Negro women using informal education. However, not all were fervent about Negro women moving outside the boundaries of their relegated status. A new mind-set

\textsuperscript{6} Arthelda M. Busch, “The Adult Educational Activities of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Incorporated, in St. Louis, Missouri” (EdD diss., University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2007). This secular club movement was the inspiration of educated middle-class Negro women committed to making improvements within their communities. These women pooled together their time, talent, and financial resources in an effort to improve the lives of Negro women in the lower class. As the club movement gained momentum, a national organization emerged. The National Association of Colored Women formed in an effort to ameliorate the lives of the Negro as the organization’s focus was on strengthening the family unit, which ultimately, would strengthen the race.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, 2.

\textsuperscript{8} Harris-Perry, \textit{Sister Citizen}. 
developed for the Negro woman as she gained confidence through club work participation. As a result of this mind-set change, White females began to generate opposition and indifference to their struggle.  

Problem Statement

Although there is work in the literature concerning Black females and their activities in early club work, little has been written into the historical narrative literature about the history of the Phyllis Wheatley’s African American Committee on Administration (PW-COA), and its role in the Phyllis Wheatley Young Women’s Christian Association (PW-Y). The available research allows historians the opportunity to probe deeper into this group’s humble beginnings, struggles, and transformation throughout the decades. These civic-minded African American women were marginalized and fundamentally erased from full citizenship by virtue of their invisible status in America.

Despite the PW-COA members’ second-class status by race, gender, and organizational status, they were a major force in the fight to end segregation and its aberrant practices. The landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education is being used as

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11 Ibid.

a time marker for this study as the period where *de jure* segregation was labeled unconstitutional and integration was legal among Blacks and Whites in all settings.\textsuperscript{13} Further, this study focuses on this time period as the era when African Americans gained legal victories in their fight for full citizenship. It is important to note that legally Blacks were awarded full citizenship through the U. S. Constitutional Amendments 13, 14, and 15, however; in reality, that full citizenship was hybrid in nature and lacked full equality with Whites.\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, the PW-COA’s role will be examined during this period, as well as how the PW-COA’s impact affected the lives of African American women in their community.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to provide a historical narrative analysis of the PW-COA’s role in the PW-Y. This historical narrative analysis answers the research question: What contextual role did the PW-COA foster in the support of African American female informal education? During this era, many of the PW-COA members were teaching in public schools and thus had a direct impact on formal African American female education due to the nature of their vocation. However, committee members that held other careers, by virtue of their public pedagogy, influenced the informal education of African American females through their support of the PW-COA Branch’s programs and classes. The PW-COA’s educational stance was significant because it provided working-class Black females an unprecedented route to acceptable self-help. As African American females sought to improve their roles and images in society, their quest for full


\textsuperscript{14} Harris-Perry, *Sister Citizen*. See also U.S. Const. amend XIII, U.S. Const. amend XIV, and U.S. amend XV.
inclusion also encompassed the circumstances of their social and citizenship status in America. The PW-COA ladies’ agency to working-class African American females was the catalyst that sparked a racial uplift movement that was obtainable only through improving the educational lot of working-class Black females, thereby supporting the national motto “Lifting As We Climb”\textsuperscript{15}

In addition to the major research question, which is to analyze the impact of the PW-COA’s support of African American female informal education, two secondary questions also guide the research. The first secondary question of this study is: What were the social and societal issues that caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y? This question allows further exploration of the relationship between the PW-COA and the PW-Y. The relationship between the Black Branches and the National Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) has been quite tumultuous in the literature, as White females considered Black women not capable of making competent decisions in running their Branches.\textsuperscript{16} The relationship between Black and White women in the operation of the Phyllis Wheatley Committee on Management (PW-COM) of the PW-Y was extremely contentious to the point that Southern White women convened at two separate YWCA conventions to determine policy for Black organization work.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{16} Nancy M. Robertson, "Deeper Even than Race"? White Women and the Politics of Christian Sisterhood in the Young Women's Christian Association, 1906-1946" (PhD diss., New York University, 1997).

\textsuperscript{17} Althea Webb, “The Limits of Interracial Sisterhood: The Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the Louisville Young Women's Christian Association” (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 2008).
The last secondary question of this research is to examine the PW-COA’s social justice stance through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT): What was the role the PW-COA took in the fight to end segregation? Outside forces such as operating in a racist society, the struggle with invisibility, the between war period, the Great Migration, and the dismantling of separate but equal practices played a profound part in how the PW-COA functioned within and up under the segregated, patriarchal directives of the YWCA and its affiliates.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical and conceptual framework upon which this study rests is fundamental. Therefore, the theoretical foundation for this study began with research that included perusing racially imbalanced power structures and analyzing the role of marginalized Negro women in their pursuit of challenging the status quo. In the final analysis, the foundational focus pointed toward a critical lens that would question the contextual conditions peculiar to these women’s place in society. Therefore, this study’s theoretical framework utilizes CRT.

CRT allows the researcher to explore the discourse of women and gender studies through the racialized lives of those that have been oppressed and displaced from White dominated studies. Trevino provides an explanation of CRT’s origins to modern discourse:

Scholars of race developed CRT as a critical response to the ‘problem of the color line,’ informing it with transformative politics, first in the area of legal

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studies and soon thereafter permeating and invigorating the margins of other fields including sociology, justice studies, and education.\textsuperscript{19}

CRT’s early introduction to discourse emanated from critical legal studies (CLS) as legal scholars responded to the inadequacies of the justice system’s failure to address race and racism in the American judicial system.\textsuperscript{20} Legal scholars used CRT to challenge the deliberately, painstakingly slow pace and implementation of changes in the laws that supported a White infrastructure of supremacy.\textsuperscript{21}

As CRT grew in academe, other tenets entered into the discourse that expanded critical thought. Legal scholar Derrick Bell addresses the permanence of racism through counter storytelling.\textsuperscript{22} Counter storytelling is a medium that tells the events through the eyes of the victimized while simultaneously providing the reader access to the lives and voices of those that have been muted based on gender, race, or societal status. Bell justifies the rationale for counter storytelling:

I again enlist the use of literary models as a more helpful vehicle than legal precedent in a continuing quest for new directions in our struggle for racial justice… The challenge throughout has been to tell what I view as the truth about

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Jessica T. DeCuir and Adrienne D. Dixson, "So When It Comes Out, They Aren't That Surprised That It Is There": Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism in Education,” \textit{Educational Researcher} 33, no. 5, Theme Issue: Disciplinary Knowledge and Quality Education (2004).
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Derrick A. Bell, \textit{Faces at the Bottom of the Well} (New York: Basic Books, 1992).
\end{itemize}
racism without causing disabling despair for some of us who bear the burdens of racial subordination; any truth—no matter how dire—is uplifting.23 Bell stipulates his methodology was utilized to challenge the struggles for justice. The struggle to share one’s truth is the heart of this study and the counter storytelling approach through CRT opens the avenues for that medium of expression. In addition to counter storytelling, Bell delves deeper into the facets of differentiating CRT from CLS as he discusses his theory of interest convergence covenants:

• First, blacks obtain relief even for acknowledged racial injustices only when that relief also serves, directly or indirectly, to further ends which policymakers perceive are in the best interests of the country.

• Second, blacks, as well as their white allies, are likely to focus with gratitude on the relief obtained, usually after a long struggle. Little attention is paid to the self-interest factors without which no relief might have been gained. Moreover, the relief is viewed as proof that society is indeed just, and that eventually all racial injustices will be recognized and remedied.

• Third, the remedy for blacks, appropriately viewed as a “good deal” by policy-making whites, often provides benefits for blacks that are more symbolic than

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23 Ibid., ix.
substantive. But whether substantive or not, they are often perceived by working-class whites as both an unearned gift and a betrayal.\(^{24}\)

PW-COA operated a segregated Branch that inadvertently supported an interest convergence covenant. White YWCA affiliates refused to admit Negro women, and yet, the opening of Black Branches allowed White YWCAs to benefit as those White affiliates held patriarchal control over the Black Branches.\(^{25}\)

Gloria Ladson-Billings’ research and influence is credited with introducing CRT into the field of education. Ladson-Billings’ "Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's it Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?" offers an inaugural view of CRT into educational studies.\(^{26}\) In this article, Ladson-Billings writes:

Critical race theory’s usefulness in understanding education inequity is in its infancy. It requires a critique of some of the civil rights era’s most cherished legal victories and educational reform movements, such as multiculturalism. [A] word[sic] of caution about the use of CRT in education, [caution must be given if CRT is used] without a more thorough analysis of the legal literature upon which it is based.\(^{27}\)

Although this is one of the first articles written utilizing CRT in education, the premise remains the same. Careful consideration of CRT, as a framework, is given as the study


\(^{25}\)Robertson, "Deeper Even than Race."


\(^{27}\)Ibid., 7.
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pertains to the participants’ involvement in the providing of informal educational opportunities to Negro women. During the period under study, educational institutions were segregated and the legal victories addressed in Ladson-Billings’ and Bell’s research had not yet come to fruition. This study focuses on how historical narratives, utilizing CRT, provides insight into the lives of the participants through the use of counterstories. DeCuir agrees, “the use of counterstories allows for the challenging of privileged discourses, the discourses of the majority, therefore, serving as a means for giving voice to marginalized groups.”

Background

St. Louis was a city segregated by custom and by law, operating under de jure segregation. In April of 1911, the St. Louis Federation of Colored Women’s Club (SLFCWC), a part of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), petitioned the YWCA to open a segregated Branch to address the needs of African American females in St. Louis. Eight months later, in December of 1911, the SLFCWC, opened the segregated Chapman YWCA Branch, named after a generous benefactor that donated the building that housed the first Branch location. On April 13, 1912, the [Chapman] Branch was renamed Phyllis Wheatley to honor, Phillis Wheatley, the former slave turned poet, in an effort to promote the Branch’s recognition of resilience and strength.

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28 DeCuir, “So When It Comes Out,” 27.


31 Ibid.
The PW-Y was located in the city of St. Louis at various locations throughout the central business district (CBD). This location allowed the PW-Y to function as a business even though PW-Y’s main objective was to provide religious and informal educational opportunities to working-class Black females. Tullia Hamilton offers specific geographical information as to the various locations of the PW-Y:

The Branch was located in the Millcreek Valley, an area bounded by Grand on the west 20th Street on the east, Olive on the north, and the railroad tracks on the south. This neighborhood was the largest residential area for Black people and the site of the Black community’s most important institutions, [such as] Berea Presbyterian Church, Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church, and later the Pine Street [Young Men’s Christian Association] (YMCA). Although the Branch moved [sic] several times during its history, it has always remained in the Millcreek Valley area.32

Each move from its temporary facility was a testament to the need and growth of the Phyllis Wheatley Center’s (PWC) expansion of services to the Black community. The decision was made that the PWC should have a facility of its own that would accommodate its continuously growing needs. The Women’s Christian Home Building (WCHB) on 2709 Locust Street was purchased to become the new home of the PW-Y. The St. Louis Association’s [PW-Y] efforts, with assistance from various community organizations, supported the remodeling, redecorating, and purchase of the building. Gertrude Randol details the new location:

32 Ibid., 10.
On September 1, 1941, the PW-Y Branch moved into its new location. This new home was equipped with a living room, 59 bedrooms for permanent guests, 14 rooms for transient guests, a dining room and its facilities, playrooms, library, club rooms, and [a] large backyard for outdoor entertainment and recreation.33

Progressive thinking during the initial purchase of the WCHB also included an adjacent lot. Through generous contributions solicited by St. Louis’ Black newspapers, the lot provided the perfect space upon which to build the new PW-Y gymnasium. The PWC now provided all of the residential, leadership, health, social, and recreational activities desired by Black women and the community.34

Changes in the Phyllis Wheatley Programming

Initially, the PW-Y sought to educate young women through Bible reading and Christian principles. Marion Cuthbert also writes about the YWCA’s initial mission:

[The purpose of most YWCAs was] to build a fellowship of women and girls devoted to the task of realizing in our common life those ideals of personal and social living to which we are committed by our faith as Christians.35

As the organization grew, changes in their programming and curriculum began to foster a public pedagogy that went far beyond Christian education.36 The changes in society led the PW-Y to sponsor education that supported female employment opportunities,


34 Ibid.

35 Marion Cuthbert, "Negro Youth and the Educational Program of the YWCA,” The Journal of Negro Education 9, no. 3 (1940): 363.

36 Jones, "Mary Church Terrell."
housing, and a meeting place for those seeking to mobilize forces in pursuit of social justice within the community.\(^{37}\) One hundred years later, the PW-Y is housed under the corporate umbrella of the Metropolitan YWCA-St. Louis (Metro Y). As a part of the YWCA conglomerate, PW-Y supports the outreach programs provided by the Metro Y. These programs are vital to the African American community. Providing classes to teenagers and young adults, offering transitional housing to single women, and acting as an agent against racial discrimination are the ways in which the PW-Y, in conjunction with Metro Y, continues to support the community.

In addition to the continuous moves to various locations before securing a permanent home, there were also transitions in the role of the PW-COA within the PW-Y. Initially, the PW-COA administered the PW-Y’s day-to-day operations.\(^{38}\) Presently, that role of the PW-COA is no longer their major function. Nonetheless, the PW-COA continues to play an instrumental role in the operation of the Metro Y serving as a significant fundraising connection in the organization.

A review of the research literature discusses prior voluntary women’s clubs and the origins of the YWCA.\(^{39}\) However, upon further study, gaps in the literature suggest that much is unknown about the PW-COA women and their objectives: personal and organizational. First, who were the individual women that assumed the leadership and

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\(^{38}\) Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”

supportive roles within the PW-COA? During the time of segregation, Black women’s gender and race relegated them to second-class citizenship while simultaneously muting their voices. Despite their second-class status, African American women were extremely active in voluntary organizations, but the research does not provide insight from their point of view. How did these Negro women develop the desire to attempt such a feat as opening a segregated PW-Y? How were these Negro women able to organize a program of such magnitude without any initial financial assistance from White organizations? Anne Scott provides a partial answer to this quandary:

Since only Blacks who were free were able to experiment with formal voluntary organizations before the Civil War, one must ask how it was that women who had grown up in slavery were able to move so quickly to organize themselves after Emancipation, but move they did.

Scott further discusses this phenomenon by explaining that Black women’s connections through the local church made it possible for former slaves to quickly and effectively organize women’s voluntary clubs.

Pondering the early stages of this organization, a question arose concerning what impact the PW-COA had to ensure this success. The final question that resulted from reviewing the literature is: What factors (inside and outside the organization) contributed to their centennial success? The recession of 2008 and the tumultuous period immediately following caused many businesses to shut their doors. The aftermath of the recession caused the researcher to think critically about the resilience of the PW-COA

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40 Judith Weisenfeld, "The More Abundant Life."

41 Scott, "Most Invisible of All,” 7.
and their business sense. These were middle-class African American women that were college educated, held the reigns of an organization that was able to not only survive, but also thrived through two world wars, a Depression era, and a myriad of financial obstacles. Yet through the decades and financial turbulence, the PW-COA was able to keep the PW-Y financially operational through various fundraising activities.42

Significance

African American women’s experiences have endured a long history of neglect as much of their early works were muted in the historical narrative research literature.43 Sharing the PW-COA’s individual histories in the form of narratives provides evidence about these African American women’s contributions to the PW-Y, and the informal education opportunities they assisted in providing to working-class Black females of the St. Louis community.

Thus, the significance of this study is to tell the participants’ common shared personal experiences utilizing narratives. As the PW-COA’s practice of social justice is examined through the lens of CRT, this study provides an in-depth view of the experiences of these marginalized women of color.

Delimitations

The first delimitation for this study includes a small sample size due to a limited number of living and viable participants. The participants represented women that have previously served as PW-COA members, and women that are presently serving that have knowledge about the PW-COA during the 1950s-1960s. The second delimitation

42 Randol, “Three-Score Years and Fifteen.”

included the number of interviews per person necessary to sufficiently gather data.
Lastly, the length of time to conduct the study needed minimal adjusting, as the needs of
the participants were minor for this study.

Assumptions

All researchers espouse biases as they conduct their studies.\textsuperscript{44} In an attempt to
acknowledge the bias, the following points contained the researcher’s assumptions:

• Due to the age of the participants, some recollection of experiences may be
  inconsistent.

• All participants in the study will answer interview questions honestly and to the
  best of their ability.

• Participants are able and willing to share their written interviews with the PW-Y
  and the YWCA Library archives.

The first and second points jointly reflect and acknowledge a respect for the age of the
participants. Although these women were not the original founding members, they are in
fact, “the story,” as their experiences are crucial for the revelation of unknown events,
and their recollections convey the integrity of the events as they actually occurred.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in an effort to clarify persons, theories, and
meanings found in the study. To ensure the specificity of the terminology, the terms are
separated into two categories: Contextual Terminology and Legal Terminology.

Contextual Terminology:

\textsuperscript{44} Merriam, \textit{Qualitative Research}. 
African American—are citizens or residents of the United States who have origins in any of the Black populations of Africa. In the United States, the terms are generally used for Americans with at least partial Sub-Saharan African ancestry (Merriam & Webster, 2012). *For the purposes of this research, the terms African, African American, Black, or Negro are used interchangeably.*

**Antebellum**—after the American Revolutionary War and before the Civil War includes the time period from 1781-1860, in which Congress prohibited the importation of African slaves, yet Black slavery continued the major economic base in Southern states.

**Black Space**—the physical area in which the community of associations has developed is defined as “black space,” by those both inside and outside the community. While local labels make distinctions that incorporate status, tenure, and locality, the racially segregated social life makes racial identity an integral part of community identity (Haynes 2001, 150).

**Border City**—a northern city with southern exposure located in a former slave holding state whose practice of racism was characterized by inconsistent patterns of segregation (Dowden-White 2011, 5)

**Central Business District**—an area of downtown St. Louis slated for urban renewal that contained businesses, but also contained blighted sections due to overcrowding, residential slums, and working-class families (Gordon 2008, 203)

**Central YWCA**—the White run affiliate YWCA that opened in 1905 (Name changed to Metro Y in 1936).
Committee on Administration—previously responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Branch and had a number of sub-committees that focused on the various operational aspects of the organization (Hamilton 2006, 11).

Committee on Management—the first name of the African American group of women responsible for managing the initial PW-Y (Presently the COA).

Critical Race Theory—an in-depth examination of culture that focuses on the intersection of race, law, and power.

Founding Mothers—after the initial petition from the St. Louis Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs to the National YWCA to establish a Black Branch, Arsania Williams, Victoria Clay Haley, Georgia Brown, Lavinia Carter, Josephine Stevens, and Fannie Williams composed the provisional Negro YWCA committee.

Historical Revisionism—It is the legitimate work of historical scholars to amass data, examine evidence, and construct theories to explain what they have uncovered. (Totten 2008, 186).

Metropolitan Y—the White YWCA organization that began as a housing and job training institution for rural White women that came to St. Louis to work at the 1904 World’s Fair. This organization became an official accredited YWCA affiliate in 1905 (Formerly the Central YWCA prior to 1936).

Outreach Program—programs that are designed to meet a perceived and/or existing deficit in an economically depraved (living below the poverty line) community.

People of Color—anyone that is a non-White American or of European ancestry (ex. Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander).
Phyllis Wheatley—opened in 1911, this segregated Black Branch was operated and managed by the COA. The defunct Branch has ceased to operate in its own building and is now housed jointly with the Metro Y.

Racial Contamination—Perpetuated stereotypes, generalizations, and assumptions about a race of people causing those affected to have negative experiences. (Alfred, 2013).

Racial Uplift—a belief that all Negro women should be raised up and viewed as productive, contributing citizens. Racial Uplift did not necessarily mean that every woman should rise to be a leader, but that Negro women should improve themselves in society by first taking care of their homes and families.

Race-Restrictive Deed Covenants—attached specific restrictions to the use and resale of property, typically incorporating most of the terms and trappings of conventional property zoning…racial occupancy was the focal point. These race-restrictive deed covenants were used to keep nuisance, foreign-born tenants, and Negroes from invading White living space. (Gordon 2008, 71)

Social Justice-- justice that follows the principle that all individuals and groups are entitled to fair and impartial treatment. Social justice attempts to prevent human rights abuses. Social justice is based on notions of equality and equal opportunity in society. It focuses on the full and equal participation of all citizens in economic, social, and political aspects of the nation.

Legal Terminology:

Amendment 13—Abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for those convicted of a crime.
Amendment 14-- All persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.

Amendment 15-- The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

de facto segregation--segregation that happens in fact, although not required by law.

de jure segregation—segregation that is imposed by law.

Jim Crow Laws--refers to the U.S. state and local laws enacted between 1876 and 1965 that mandated de jure racial segregation in all public facilities.

Racism (Racial Discrimination)-- is the belief that race accounts for differences in human character or ability and that a particular race is superior to others. (For the purposes of this research, the terms Racism or Racial Discrimination may be used interchangeably.)

Separate but Equal—The doctrine first enunciated by the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 16 S. Ct. 1138, 41 L. Ed. 256 (1896), to the effect that establishing different facilities for blacks and whites was valid under the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as long as they were equal. The theory of separate but equal was used to justify segregated public facilities for blacks and whites until in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 347 U.S. 483, 74 S. Ct. 686, 98 L. Ed. 873 (1954), the Supreme Court recognized that "separate but equal" schools were "inherently unequal. (West's Encyclopedia of American Law).

Shelley v. Kraemer (1948)— a landmark case in which the Missouri Supreme held that
the covenant was enforceable against the purchasers because the covenant was a purely private agreement between the original parties thereto, which "ran with the land" and was enforceable against subsequent owners; since the restriction purported to run in favor of an estate rather than merely a person, it could be enforced against third parties. The United States Supreme Court held "[That] racially-based restrictive covenants are not, on their face, invalid under the Fourteenth Amendment." However, private parties may voluntarily abide by the terms of a restrictive covenant but may not seek judicial enforcement of such a covenant because enforcement by the courts would constitute state action. Since such state action would necessarily be discriminatory, the enforcement of a racially-based restrictive covenant in a state court would violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. (West's Encyclopedia of American Law).

Organization of the Study

This chapter presents an introduction, a historical background on the St. Louis PW-Y, and purpose for the proposed study. The purpose of this study is to conduct a historical analysis of the contextual role of the PW-COA in the informal educating of working-class African American females in the St. Louis community. Secondary purposes include finding the connections between the PW-Y and the PW-COA, and seeking out the PW-COA’s stance on social justice issues through the lens of CRT. Acknowledging assumptions and delimitations allows the researcher to focus clearly on the participants and their shared experiences.
Chapter two focuses on CRT as a theory. The use of CRT sheds light on the stories and experiences of these marginalized women of color that served as members and/or officers of the PW-COA. This chapter also discusses the origins of informal educational opportunities provided for African American women. Other topics included in this section are brief overviews of the history of Black St. Louis and the contextual role the city played in the educating of Blacks. The last topic this chapter discusses is a brief analysis on the origins of early Negro women’s clubs and their influence on informal education. It is the researcher’s intent that the literature review strengthens the future data analysis.

Chapter three describes the principle designs of the study. This chapter defines the studied participants and CRT’s impact on the methodology.

Chapter four provides an overview of the PW-Y programming. Critical to the success of the organization, the PW-Y programming was the backbone that held it all together. Several major components of programming were discussed and how the impact of those programs provided informal educational opportunities for Black females.

Chapter five introduces and discusses the PW-COA. This chapter provides insight as to who these women were historically and to what they are presently. Data analysis results based upon the participants’ spoken thoughts provides the reader with insights about the lives and shared experiences of the participants.

Chapter six focuses on the disintegrating of this educational institution in front of the PW-COA members’ eyes. The loss of PW-COA’s PW-Y became the story within the story and an additional focal point as the participants spoke in great detail about their
previous work and how that work had become minimized due to the racial contamination of their Black space.

Chapter seven provides the summary, conclusion, and implications for future research on this group of marginalized African American women and their influence in providing informal educational opportunities to working class Black females. This last chapter also discusses the future of the PW-COA as their relationship with the Metro Y tumultuously continues.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

During the era of Reconstruction, Negro men and women began to make gains in education and social welfare reform. Public schools were formed to provide free formal education for White children; however, those formal educational opportunities were limited or non-existent for Black children.\(^ {45} \) Having long been denied the right to vote, some Negro men started to take their place in government, holding offices and expanding their roles in American society. Clarence Lang states, “Black political insiders had mastered the “manipulation of public culture and used it to assert their interests.”\(^ {46} \) The Reconstruction Era was an extraordinary time in the history of the American Negro that was short-lived. The American Negro was subjected to an additional bout with slavery; a slavery in which they were no longer held in chattel bondage, but bondage formed from racial disenfranchisement.\(^ {47} \) Despite this second wave of social enslavement, Negro women began to form social groups in an effort to raise the consciousness of society to their plight while servicing the needs within their own communities. Many of these social welfare reform groups began as underground initiatives that functioned under the


\(^{46}\) Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway*, 22.

\(^{47}\) Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*. 
cloak of chattel slavery yet continued and blossomed once slavery officially ended.\textsuperscript{48} These social groups also formed in an effort to uplift the masses of Negro women that were working-class, uneducated, and deemed social misfits for a changing world.\textsuperscript{49} The PW-COA was a major supporter of the uplift movement of Black females with little formal education by the group’s public pedagogy through informal education.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Importance of the Topic}

Research, in social welfare reform, has historically focused on work by White women and Black men.\textsuperscript{51} In an effort to add to the body of knowledge, this research study analyzes the historical narratives of African American women members of the PW-COA, as the literature on this topic is limited. Historical narratives offer a two-fold justification for the study. First, narratives give the women an opportunity to describe their shared experiences that have largely been ignored in the historical research literature.\textsuperscript{52} Second, the narratives affords the women a platform to share their “truths” as to what really happened during this time period in their lives, especially their roles in providing or partaking in informal educational opportunities. In the final analysis, the

\textsuperscript{48} Lerner, "Early Community Work."


\textsuperscript{50}Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”

\textsuperscript{51} Scott, "Most Invisible of All."

data collected during the interview process expressed, through the research participants’ eyes, narratives about their perceived outcomes related to this lived experience.\textsuperscript{53}

The St. Louis PW-Y began 100 years ago. Reaching this momentous pinnacle and continuing their involvement in the community for that length of time has not been an easy feat! While peering even further into this association’s phenomenal acquisition of endurance, longevity, and durability, it became even more remarkable that the leadership behind this successful group is women of color.

The present group of PW-COA women is continuing the work began a century before by their founding mothers.\textsuperscript{54} The PW-COA members and their central connection to the informal education of Black women is the focus of this study. The use of historical narratives breathes life into a subject that had little representation in this previously neglected scholarship.

Black Women’s Contributions Excluded

Historically, the PW-COA members’ committee work began long before, continued during, and gradually subsequently ended following the landmark decision of \textit{Brown}. Negro women’s contributions to the YWCA and other community club work were discussed, but their representation in the social welfare movement is vastly underreported.\textsuperscript{55} Jim Crow Laws kept Negroes “in their place” and excluded them from full citizenship. Exclusion from full citizenship and the disenfranchisement of Negro


\textsuperscript{54} Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”

women generated the researcher’s curiosity in understanding a possible answer to the following research question: What role did the PW-COA foster in the support of African American females’ informal education? In addition to the main question, further inquiries arose such as: What were the personal and societal issues that caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y? Moreover, what position did the PW-COA undertake to advance the fight to end racially segregated practices? The use of narratives offers a suitable approach to focus on the members of the PW-COA as the narratives provides a space for them to conceptualize their stories.

Informal Education of Negro Women

Antebellum Informal Education

In the late 19th century, the Negro church had a plethora of obligations and responsibilities to Negroes since the church was the most dominant and respected organization in the community. One of the Negro church’s major areas of concentration was the uplifting of the Negro masses as the newly freed Negro strove to assimilate into White American society. As the masses of former slaves moved into their new lives of being free, freedom did not come without apprehension or complications. After the passages of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution, former enslaved Africans in America were free and given the right to

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citizenship, to vote, and to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. The difficulty with this pursuit was that most ex-slaves were 95 percent categorically uneducated and illiterate.\textsuperscript{57}

The Freedman’s Bureau from the North and others began filtering into the South to set up schools for Negro children to combat the illiteracy problem. In addition to the Freedmen’s Bureau and Northern White philanthropists, the Negro church mobilized to form their own schools in which they sent children to be taught by teachers that looked like them.\textsuperscript{58} Although the early stages of formal schools for Negro children started to appear, the next section discusses the Negro’s initial access to informal education that paved the way for those formal schools.

During slavery and prior to the Civil War, enslaved Africans were denied access to any formal educational opportunities.\textsuperscript{59} Fearful slave owners predicted uprisings and revolts from educated slaves. Therefore, the penalties for teaching slaves to read were severe for those perpetrating this criminal act. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (W.E.B. Du Bois) further examines the point:

\begin{quote}
The mass of slaves could have no education. The laws on this point were explicit and severe. There was teaching, here and there by indulgent masters, or by clandestine Negro schools, but in the main, the laws were followed. All the slave
\end{quote}


states had such laws, after the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia; these laws were strengthened and more carefully enforced.  

Despite the looming consequences if one was caught teaching slaves to read and write, some slave owners felt it was necessary to teach their property literacy skills. Many slave owners benefitted from owning literate slaves. Literate slaves would have the knowledge to keep records and could also be hired out to work for others, thereby increasing their worth. Slave children vicariously learned to read and write through the act of “playing school” with the slave master’s children. Deliberate and random acts of acquiring literacy skills led to the initial stages of Negroes receiving informal education. Slaves that learned to read passed on their skills so that other slaves could learned to read and write, thereby creating the foundation upon which informal education was born.

Charles Glenn articulates, “Blacks were determined to be self-taught despite the absence of formal schooling opportunities.” Of significant importance are not only the adult slaves’ insatiable desire to become literate, but also the risks they took to improve literacy skills not only for themselves but also for their children. Regardless of the possible ramifications for being found to have provided education to slaves, those

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61 Glenn, *African-American/Afro-Canadian Schooling*.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., 49.
breaking the self-deprecating laws that imposed illiteracy unknowingly created the initial foundation for informal education.\textsuperscript{64}

Informal Educational Opportunities for Negro Women

Informal educational opportunities existed for enslaved African men and children. However, the Negro woman has thus been ambiguously unaccounted for in this scenario. The Negro female slave’s subservient role appears to have ostracized her from obtaining informal education. Therefore, several questions arose that address the Negro woman’s access to informal education. Did the slave woman have access to learn to read and write through informal education? If so, how was she able to keep her acquired knowledge a secret? Who taught slave women to read and write?\textsuperscript{65} The partial answer to this dilemma came from the Negro church. W.E.B. Du Bois exclaims, “The Negro churches were the birthplaces of Negro schools and of all agencies which seek to promote the intelligence of the masses.”\textsuperscript{66} If the Negro church espoused the belief that it was responsible for providing Negro schools to men and children, then Negro women must have been considered a part of the Negro church’s agency. A comprehensive discussion of the Negro church’s role and how it filled this void in the informal education of the Negro female is next.

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid.


Even before Negroes were freed from chattel slavery, informal education had taken place. Unfortunately, a supposition existed that enslaved Negro women, due to their subservient status, were unable access the obscure informal education that was accessible for Negro men and children. For many their initial literacy experiences occurred in the slave master’s house. In an effort to negate this line of thinking that informal education was inaccessible, an example would be to review the role of Negro female slaves in the slave master’s house. The Negro female slave serving in the slave master’s house held an incredible amount of responsibility. Although her roles required her to multi-task (e.g. cook, clean, rear the slave owner’s children, laundry, etc.), in order to continue in that role she must have learned to combat her illiteracy incidentally. An example of this type of incidental learning might have occurred by the Negro female acquiring the necessary literacy skills that would have enabled her to distinguish between the different types of newspapers their master’s might request. Although the amount comprised only a small number of Negro slave women (basically those that worked in the slave master’s house), the masses of Negro slave women still encountered the lack of access to informal education.

Pondering the plethora of informal as well as formal educational opportunities available today, a question emerges as to how formerly enslaved Negroes moved from realistically an almost zero literacy rate to African Americans pursuing higher education, trade or technical education, or just partaking in self-fulfilling improvement through informal education. An incredibly powerful catalyst must have bridged that gap, filled

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67 Parkhurst, "The Role of the Black Mammy."

68 Glenn, African-American/Afro-Canadian Schooling.
the abyss, and allowed enslaved Negro women the opportunity to secure the informal education to which Negro men and children were privy. The Negro church was the catalyst that filled the educational void for Negro women.69

During slavery, Negro churches began to hold clandestine sessions under the umbrellas of teaching the parishioners or churchgoers the art of reading the Bible so that they could become morally and spiritually conforming.70 Due to the nature of severe penalties being inflicted upon those teaching Negroes (free or slave) to read, seemingly innocent activities such as reading the Bible to save one’s soul to prevent them from becoming spiritually bankrupt, often hid the truth behind these secret classes.71 Glenn concurs, “Some free Black teachers managed to maintain clandestine schools, typically by pretending to be teaching sewing or other skills that were not forbidden.”72 For Negro females, these meetings provided the covert method upon which they could improve their literacy skills and expose themselves to informal education.

Even though some Negro females had access to informal education by nature of their positions (being free Negro women) or living in the master’s house, the masses of Negro females were quite illiterate.73 The urgency of this horrific condition became blatantly obvious once slavery had ended. Free illiterate Negroes proved a challenge to

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69 Scott, "Most Invisible of All."

70 Glenn, African-American/Afro-Canadian Schooling.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid., 32.

73 Parkhurst, "The Role of the Black Mammy."
the new system so the Negro church stepped in to improve literacy for Negro females, as well as all newly freed Negroes. Paris writes:

Since slaves had been denied formal education of any sort, universal illiteracy characterized the masses of Blacks as they greeted the Emancipation Act. The churches immediately sought to remedy that condition by founding schools and allying with both northern philanthropists and White churches to alter this severely crippling social condition.\(^\text{74}\)

Although there were White churches that aided in the fight to remove the stain of illiteracy, it was mainly the Negro church that took the reigns and led the Negro female on the journey to formal education.\(^\text{75}\)

After the Civil War, informal education opportunities for Negro females grew exponentially within the Negro church.\(^\text{76}\) From Sunday school to women’s clubs, Negro women increased their basic literacy skills and then pursued higher education in spite of the patriarchal roles held by men, the overt sexism thrust upon them in the White community, and the daily experienced racism that routinely held them in subservient roles.\(^\text{77}\) As the Negro woman’s access to informal education expanded, an ensuing pursuit of knowledge caused an infectious reaction among Negro women. The context of this dearth of learning outside the classroom, exemplified the struggle and persistence of

\(^{74}\) Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, 68.

\(^{75}\) Glenn, *African-American/Afro-Canadian Schooling*.

\(^{76}\) Weanett S. Powell, “The Black Church and Educational Outcomes for African Americans” (masters thesis, State University of New York Empire State College, 2008).

\(^{77}\) Ibid.
lower-class Negro women attempting to uplift themselves despite the former chains of bondage.  

Of course, the form of instruction meted out during the pre and post slavery era is vastly different from the best practices, research-based instruction, and the high stakes testing driven era that permeates the stringent formal schooling of the 21st century. Nonetheless, the risks that were taken by enslaved and free Negro women demonstrated the persistence of the downtrodden and oppressed to obtain an education.

Informal Education in the Jim Crow Era

As the remnants of the Civil War were slowly dissipating and Jim Crow Laws became the commonplace “new” oppression for freed Negro men and women, it is important to note that the insatiable and incredulous desire Negroes developed in the pursuit of informal educational opportunities did not diminish. The Negro’s relentless pursuit of informal education was necessary because for many working-class Negroes, formal education remained impossible to obtain. Therefore, Negroes’ hunger to learn was satisfied through informal educational opportunities provided by the Negro church.

In contrast, White children began to receive formal education through the public school systems opened in many states. Few Negro children were able to attend these public schools. Negro children that managed to receive formal education often obtained

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81 Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South.
their education through private schools financed by freed men and women. Paris further expounds:

The Black churches have believed that the task of racial uplift (educationally and morally) lay basically in the hands of Black themselves, and consequently their schools became the prime exemplars of that viewpoint. The schools, moreover, contained the ground of hope for Blacks, and each commencement exercise engendered in the people a feeling that things were getting better. 82

Many working-class Negro women were unable to partake in formal educational opportunities that slowly became available for Negro children. The Negro church laid the foundation for economically depraved Negro women to “learn” and grow informally. An educational mission emerged within the Negro church in that it contextualized learning outside of the normal boundaries of education. Negro females were not only able to improve literacy skills but to also develop and forge leadership skills that served them well as their confidence grew through this “outside of the classroom” setting. The leadership skills Negro females developed as an outcome of the Negro church’s informal educational opportunities led to the organization of women’s clubs, venues for social change, and Negro women developing a real presence in the discourse of racial uplift for all Negro women. 83

As Negro women grew in their pursuits of education, formal and informal, an apparent necessity concerning educating Negro women for employment began to have

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serious implications. Although formal education, such as Negro church sponsored colleges and universities grew, working-class and indigent Negro females were unable to partake in those opportunities. The types of employment for these working-class women was extremely limited and usually consisted of day work or house servant work. Anna Julia Cooper insisted that these girls be “educated” so that their craft could be counted as professional and their wages follow accordingly. Anna Julia Cooper further quantifies her perspective:

Our young girls must be protected from libertines and villains who lie in wait in gorgeous palaces to entrap the innocent. Not only must the girl be trained for the home but the home, too, must be selected and prepared for a new servant-a servant whose treatment shall be worthy [of] her training, a servant to his dignity and whose service suppleness shall justify the expenditure for such a course and our educational program.84

Cooper’s statement is a testament to the critical nature of Negroes’ needs and desires for education. In order to keep Negroes working, the thought began that the Negro female needed to improve domesticity skills so they could be treated like professionals. This improvement could only be obtained through continuing the Negro female’s education with formal training versus the informal training the Negro female received as house slaves or field slaves.

Informal to Formal Education for Negro Females

The previous section contextualizes the informal education of Negro females. As the informal opportunities ranged from the very rudimentary knowledge of basic reading

84 Cooper, The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper, 255.
Informally Educating the Community

Osby, Cheryl, 2014, UMSL, 38

skills, such as learning to read the Bible, to higher level education, such as attending historically Black colleges and universities, Negro women’s humble informal educational journeys chronicle a muted gender whose educational attainment went through numerous challenges and changes before Negro females were recognized as having an educational need to be fulfilled.\(^{85}\) Also included in the higher-level education was Black women gaining access to receiving training in trade schools (e.g. nursing, beautician, or domestic).

While this seemingly vast offering of latter education was inspired by the ex-slave women wanting to improve her existence and provide a better life for her family, the constant in these opportunities hinged on the Negro church. Had it not been for the Negro church and its willingness to train members for leadership, Negro women would not have risen from those pews and stepped into their destiny of uplift to inspire the race. Nonetheless, the road from sneaking and learning to read from an old speller\(^{86}\) to attending formal classes at Spelman Seminary\(^{87}\) were all made possible through the sponsorships of the Negro church and its beliefs and contributions to informal education.

The avenues that led to Negro women obtaining informal education were filled with many detours and roadblocks. Moreover, the Negro woman’s unrelenting continual pursuits, unbridled passion for learning, desire for an enhanced life, and commitment to racial uplift led to the Negro woman’s involvement in the Negro church and the women’s

\(^{85}\) Glenn, *African-American/Afro-Canadian Schooling.*

\(^{86}\) Ibid.

\(^{87}\) Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent.*
club movement, which became the second line of informal education providers. For the Negro female, informal education was not the end of a search for knowledge; rather, information education provided the foundation upon which the Negro woman could pursue higher levels of formal education. This research study intends to add to the literature on the informal education of Negro females by connecting the rudimentary beginnings of their education to the well planned out-reach programs of self-help offered by the PW-Y.

Intersectionality of Critical Race Theory

America has always been a nation that was extremely diverse and in contrast, remarkably homogeneous, pertaining to its citizens’ dreams, hopes, and desires of success. However, the color line of race has been and continues to be a problem, especially for White Americans. Race has been the catalyst that has divided the country. As Derrick A. Bell so eloquently states:

Tolerated in good times, despised when things go wrong, as a people we are scapegoated and sacrificed as distraction or catalyst for compromise to facilitate resolution of political differences or relieve economic adversity.

The PW-COA members felt the sting of racism when their segregated Branch was virtually unrecognized, categorically ignored, and routinely subjected to the indifference of their existence by the YWCA.

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89 Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*.

90 Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, 10.

91 Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”
Yet when venturing deeper, it appears these Black women have been historically silenced.\textsuperscript{92} Therefore, the argument for this research is to permit the women that have experienced the phenomenon of being muted to share their lived experiences so that others may learn from their agency, hardships, and successes. CRT serves as the framework that provides the space to tell their stories.

A major general underlying central component of CRT is the intersectionality of race, law and power.\textsuperscript{93} In addition to the central components, the following guiding assumptions by Villalpando complete the framework of CRT:

- Racism is endemic to American life and most often exists in educational institutions in subtle forms.
- Dominant claims that educational practices, policies, and outcomes are guided by ideals of meritocracy, objectivity, and color blindness are false.
- Analyses of racial inequality must account for the racially stratified, historical evolution of the U.S. educational system.
- The experiential knowledge and perspective of people of color and their communities of origins are central, analytical dimensions of analysis of racial inequality.
- Analyses of racial inequality must draw from multiple disciplines, epistemologies, and methodologies.

\textsuperscript{92} Lasch, “Black Neighbors.”

A central purpose for analyses of racial inequality is to dismantle racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression.\textsuperscript{94}

Derrick Bell, a founding father of CRT, saw first hand how the permanence of racism and its decimating effects crippled racial progress in American society.\textsuperscript{95} Ladson-Billings further suggests that Bell and other legal scholars’ frustrations with the legal system’s traditional approaches to end endemic racism catapulted CRT into public discourse.\textsuperscript{96}

Several works support the ideology that CRT’s birth in legal studies seeks to end covert racism that blends well within the American society.\textsuperscript{97} First, America supports embedded racism because racism is “normal, not aberrant, in American society” Delgado (as citied in Ladson-Billings).\textsuperscript{98} Therefore, if one is not cognizant that there is a race problem, then one never perceives a race problem to exist. As the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling on \textit{Brown} attempted to enact racial desegregation upon American citizens, the Court also recognized how this perceived loss of Whiteness as property might inherently


\textsuperscript{96} Ladson-Billings, "Just What is Critical Race Theory."


informally educating the community

Informally Educating the Community

informally educating the community

Cheryl, Cheryl, 2014, UMSL, 42

affect the integration of the races. 99 The White enclaves operated in de facto environments where pockets of resistance were stringent. Basically, the U.S. Supreme Court believed that separate but equal was morally and ethically infallible, but to demand change instantaneously would negate the property of Whites. 100 As Derrick Bell, Cheryl Harris, Richard Delgado, William Tate and other legal scholars grew weary, CRT provided a space in which they could voice their dissatisfaction with the pervasive racism demonstrated in the legal and educational systems.

The second component that CRT examines is law. Conceptions of citizenship and race interact, with the legal system (laws)—and the interpretation of law. 101 The United States Constitution’s 14th Amendment set the parameters for who is considered a legal citizen. Although African slaves represented a considerable amount of human space prior to the 14th Amendment, citizenship was not granted to them. As Northern abolitionists began to push for an end to slavery, Southerners that were pro-slavery battled to maintain the established labor force. 102 A Three-Fifths Compromise legislation was enacted, which proved beneficial to Southern slave owners. Yet, the Compromise further intensified Northern abolitionists’ principles against slavery and exacerbated


100 Ibid.


America’s internal struggle over forced servitude.\textsuperscript{103} This interest-convergence covenant was beneficial to America’s forefathers because the Compromise denied full citizenship to slaves, yet slave owners continued profiting off the disenfranchisement perpetuated by embedded racism practices.\textsuperscript{104}

White Americans continued denial of the admittance of Negroes to full citizenship through slavery and Jim Crow Laws continues to affect the lives of African Americans today, although coveted in nature.\textsuperscript{105} CRT implies that “Slavery linked the privilege of Whites to the subordination of Blacks through a legal regime that attempted the conversion of Blacks into objects of property.”\textsuperscript{106} The law provides for this philosophy and continues to exhibit itself daily, specifically in the area of citizenship. The media’s representation of young Black males as “outsiders,” purports that people of color are outside of the law.\textsuperscript{107} The continued subjective questioning of being an “outsider” is a direct assault on Blacks’ unquestionable rights pertaining to full citizenship. Therefore, as the first decade of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century has ended the question of full citizenship haunts African Americans. Who is a citizen? By developing a richer

\textsuperscript{103} U.S. Const. art. I, § 2, cl. 3.

\textsuperscript{104} Derrick A. Bell, \textit{Silent Covenants}.


\textsuperscript{106} Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 1721.

understanding of this question, we can view these women performing a myriad of citizenship activities.

The third component of CRT is the emphasis of power. Power can represent various ideals—money, status, political influence, or expression of thoughts and words. In this study, power means having a space in which to communicate shared experiences. Previously, the use of fear kept Negro women in their place and inhibited them from exhibiting power. Yet, collectively, Negro women have gained power through political activism in club work as they sought to obtain social welfare reform. CRT bridges the gap between these ladies’ individual and collective power by routinely employing storytelling to examine the falsehoods, presumptions, and perceived truths which contribute to everyday culture about race. Derrick A. Bell sums up the collective thought with the hope of sharing one’s story will impact the ultimate vision of CRT, which is “redemptive, not deconstructive.”

A Brief History of Black St. Louis

After the Reconstruction Era, Negroes in St. Louis were able to retain their voting rights due to the small Negro population. This coup for Negroes allowed them to place a foothold in a door that closed on other Negroes in Southern states. Despite the setbacks

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109 Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare."


111 Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway*. 
and the implementation of Jim Crow Laws, the politically minded elite and middle-class Negroes propelled themselves to the forefront. These middle-class Negroes felt their economic status gave them the advantage, thereby, making them eligible to represent the masses of working-class Blacks. Dowden-White expounds:

The newly emerging African American middle-class—namely, those who were formally educated—became increasingly involved in political organizing during the interwar period.¹¹²

A flourishing grassroots effort afforded Black St. Louis’ residents opportunities that were unheralded in other communities. From the creation of a Black “Archipelago,”¹¹³ to development of a full social welfare reform movement, Blacks in St. Louis were able to quickly join forces, mobilize, and push their agendas forward toward full citizenship in America.¹¹⁴ This section will focus on three phenomenal aspects of St. Louis history: the Inter-War period, the Great Migration, and the Social Welfare Reform Movement. Although each event holds its own merit and deserves to be written about in its own text, for the purposes of this research, an overview of each event will intertwine to provide the necessary background needed to support this study.


¹¹⁴ Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway.*
Inter War Period

The ending of World War I marked immense changes for the city of St. Louis. Before the war, St. Louis was a city steeped in commerce along its Mississippi River border as pulsating life teemed along the banks.\footnote{Dowden-White, \textit{Groping Toward Democracy}.} At this time St. Louis ranked as the fourth largest city in America, which was an impressive marker of prestige and power held by the city. In addition to being an industry leader in the production of beer, multiple major corporations called the city “home.”\footnote{Colin Gordon, \textit{Mapping Decline. St. Louis and the Fate of the American City} (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).} This energetic enclave also included African Americans that created their own “Black Archipelago.” Joseph Heathcott further explains that the:

> Black Archipelago” [was] islands of vibrant Black social life surrounded by seas of White racism and hostility, cities within cities that stretched in a chain across America from Harlem to Chicago’s South Side, and from East L.A. to St. Louis’s Mill Creek Valley.\footnote{Heathcott, ”Black Archipelago,” 707.}

Despite the continued racial segregation of Negroes in St. Louis, Negro citizens were able to develop their own culture that supported their needs as they faced the constant and increasing hostility of racism from the White community.\footnote{Ibid.} “The political mechanics of segregation, and the thousands of daily encounters and practices that enforced an apartheid city, were as invisible to White St. Louisans as they were palpable to
The dichotomy of embedded racism’s invisibility to Whites and visibility to Blacks, directed Negroes to develop a mind-set of self-reliance through community support of their race.

Soon after World War I ended, the economic and political situation for Negroes grew intolerable. The Great Depression caused the daily living for Negroes to become most unbearable, though seemingly oblivious to Whites living in the same city. Colin Gordon states, “The health of the local economy, and the relative position of St. Louis and its suburbs within the economy reflected economic suburbanization, deindustrialization, and increased capital intensity.” Coupling this was the changing dynamics of the City and a myriad of social problems and the continued oppression of Negroes stretched the seams of their community. Unemployment figures for Black males were at an all-time high. Even when job opportunities were available, the only types of positions Negro men were considered for were: digging street sewers, wiremen, brick masonry, carpenters, and porters. The Depression caused a substantial decrease in the number of available jobs for Negro women as well. The lack of employment created irreparable and devastating damage to an already fragile body of people.

Another devastating setback to Blacks residing in the City was the racial housing covenants that protected the City’s corridor landscape. White homeowner’s continual fears that Negroes would “invade” their neighborhoods and cause White property values to decline entered into these agreements to prevent Negroes from buying property on

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119 Ibid., 718.
120 Gordon, Mapping Decline, 15.
121 Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South.
White streets. Although these race-restricted covenants kept Negroes confined to certain sections of the City limits, eventually Whites moved to suburban areas to escape the potential integration of their schools and neighborhoods. The landmark case of Shelley v. Kraemer ended the racial housing covenants and forced the City’s dwindling White population away from the urban areas. The shift in Whites moving west marked the start of the suburban sprawl, as businesses that once provided the solid economic base for the City also followed suit. Consequently, the ramifications for St. Louis city included dwindling property values, crumbling domestic structures, and an increase of working-class Negroes, which all contributed to White flight.

In summary, immediately following the cessation of World War I the economic picture changed dramatically for St. Louis. Once a powerhouse of commerce, the city now teetered on the brink of economic disaster as businesses and White residents continued a steady trek into the suburbs. The Depression Era caused economic degradation to Negroes as they sought to insulate themselves from the surrounded hostility of Whites. Despite the cataclysmic circumstances, a new wave of change rose on the horizon. On the heels of this economic change, a great migration of Negroes from the South came to call St. Louis home.

123 Shelley v. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1; 68 (1948).
The Great Migration

Several factors were key to the population shifts of Negroes post World War I.\textsuperscript{125} First, St. Louis was a unique city because of its “border city” status. Being a border city meant St. Louis was an anomaly. The social position middle-class Negroes held in the city was unusual and filled with various proclivities. For example, the racist attitudes of Whites certainly mimicked Jim Crow Laws even if there were not large signs stating, “For Whites Only,” or “For Colored Only.” Joseph Heathcott implies that the rules of segregation were unevenly applied.\textsuperscript{126} In areas where segregation was the stringent customary practice, the application of Jim Crow Laws was adhered to strictly. However, areas such as the public library, streetcars, and lines at government offices did not hold the customary segregation principles in place. The lax of signs is not to state that there were not major problems with the inconsistency of applied racism. One might almost assume because segregation practices were inconsistently applied, Blacks and Whites lived harmoniously. The East St. Louis Race Riot of 1917 eliminates that myth.\textsuperscript{127} The situation in city of St. Louis was not any better. There were other incidents of violence and anger from Whites as the Negro population continued to increase due to the Great Migration. Monroe Billington states, “Negroes generally did not share equally in places


\textsuperscript{126} Heathcott, "Black Archipelago."

of public accommodation and recreational facilities.”

Billington goes on to explain that there was racial discord in the city as Negroes and Whites clashed over Negroes infiltrating White space. Nonetheless, such inconsistencies in the application of racial segregation laws afforded some middle-class Negro citizens opportunities that were unavailable to Negroes located in Southern states.

Second, as the massive influx of Negroes from the Deep South made their journey North, these migrating Negroes wanted to disassociate themselves from the oppressive racism and re-enslavement of Jim Crow Laws. Along with wanting to escape Jim Crow Laws, another reason Negroes were fleeing from the South was to distance themselves from the horrific memories of slavery. Unfortunately, those migrating Negroes did not find much refuge in St. Louis. Unemployment figures were astronomically elevated for Negroes, and the City held fast to racially restrictive living covenants that kept Negroes confined to certain areas in the city despite the ever-increasing population. As the Negro population increased from 1900 to 1940, the living space did not increase. This lack of living space exerted exceptional pressure on the City and its resources. Consequently, the increase in population led to the development of slums and overcrowding. Negroes were forced to continue living in

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129 Ibid.


substandard housing and prevented from moving to better living conditions even when they could afford the move. The living arrangements forced upon St. Louis’s increasing Negro population likened their existence to a racial apartheid in America.132

The third component of the Great Migration of Negroes moving from the rural to urban areas was inevitably a political catalyst that generated a grassroots movement to improve the lives of Negroes in St. Louis. This period’s climatic population rise exploded with the influx of Negroes fleeing southern oppression in search of new and better opportunities. Clarence Lang acquiesces:

That while African Americans were stripped of the franchise in the post-Reconstruction South, Black Missourians remained voting members of the polity throughout the period of segregation. Holding a status peculiar to other border state communities, Black St. Louisans belonged to the sort of patronage network typical of northern, big-city politics, despite their small numbers enjoyed an uncommon degree of formal electoral influence.133

This opportunity to retain the right to vote proved an oddity, yet beneficial to the Negroes in the City. Negroes became political pawns as they sought chances to gain political influence and address the urgent social needs of an entire community.134 The overwhelming collective needs in the working-class Negro community were enormous. The lack of in-door plumbing, medical facilities, and access to formal education, and

132 Heathcott, "Black Archipelago."
133 Lang, Grassroots at the Gateway, 11.
134 Benjamin Israel, “Putting Black in Blue: The Struggle to Put Uniformed African American Police Officers on the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department” (master’s thesis, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2008).
homes for the elderly were examples of public problems that consumed the Negro community. For working-class Negro women, informal education offered by the Negro church, provided some partial relief to the lack of access to formal educational opportunities. Still, the overwhelming social welfare challenges would demand a considerable amount of attention from the Negro elite and working-class Negroes.

Social Welfare Reform Movement

Working class Negroes lives were filled with great uncertainty and cruelty. In addition to the post war era and the Great Migration, numerous other oppressive circumstance arose for local Negroes. From a lack of viable employment, to unavailable or inadequate health care to continual and chronic housing discrimination, life for Negro St. Louisans was difficult. One of the greatest challenges Negroes faced was under employment to a lack of total employment. The lack of jobs created a welfare state, forcing many working-class Negroes to depend on relief efforts provided by the government. This government dependency was in direct opposition to the “Black Archipelago” developed during earlier years.

Other shared hardships caused detrimental problems to the Negro community. Affordable and adequate healthcare posed a significant problem among elite and working-class Negroes. Specifically, Negroes fought for their own hospital—Homer G. Phillips—that trained excellent doctors and nurses. “Black people in St. Louis carved out dense networks of civil and religious institutions, political alignments, and cultural practices.” All of these movements assisted Negroes in creating political power and

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135 Heathcott, "Black Archipelago."
136 Ibid., 719.
Informally Educating the Community

providing them a voice in a city that marginalized them. These consistent attempts to oppress Negroes forced the race to band together. St. Louis’ Negro elite and working-class began to flex their political muscle through demanding equality in all social areas of Negro life.

Riding the momentum of this newfound political power, Negroes began to demand equal employment opportunities. This was accomplished through various means. One case in particular was the development of the Colored Clerks Circle by David Grant.\textsuperscript{137} The Circle protested many businesses and the pressure of those protests opened employment opportunities for some in the Negro community. Another critical support for the voice for Blacks was the publishing of Black newspapers. The two leading newspapers, \textit{The St. Louis American} and \textit{The St. Louis Argus} continued to attack the racist practices of the White business elite. The newspapers and Black churches presented a united forum that was crucial for keeping the Negro community informed, as well as assisting the Negro community in developing a strong voting block of voters. Over time, the Negro voting block began to switch from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. This party switch was significant because the Republican Party made numerous campaign promises to secure the Negro vote prior to elections. However, once in office the elected official feigned amnesia and refused to honor prior arranged campaign promises.\textsuperscript{138}

Throughout this continued exclusion of Negroes by the implementation of Jim Crow Laws, the Citizens of Liberty organized in 1919 so that young Negro professionals

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{138} Israel, “Putting Black in Blue.”
could run for public office. A political mind-set developed among middle-class Negroes and working class Negroes as they began to compete for political recognition. “Educational background, rather than financial means, served largely to shape the social class distinctions present within this interwar Negro community.”

The reduced capacities of quality educational opportunities additionally influenced the movement. Segregation by race, continued to block educational opportunities for Negro children. Missouri’s slave laws barred Negroes slave or free from learning to read, which further prohibited the education of Negro children. In an attempt to circumvent this law, Rev. Meachum opened the floating school on the Mississippi River in an effort to educate Black children. Still, formal educational opportunities were virtually non-existent for adolescent Negroes. After successive attempts of the St. Louis Public School board to limit the educational opportunities for Negroes, a high school for Negro students was established. Charles Sumner High School became the oldest Black high school west of the Mississippi River.

In summary, this brief overview of the history of Black St. Louis provides the backdrop necessary for the support of the proposed study. The Interwar Period, the Great

139 Dowden-White, *Groping Toward Democracy*.

140 Ibid., 51.


143 Dowden-White, *Groping Toward Democracy*. 
Migration, and the Social Welfare Reform Movement are three catalysts that held profound effects on the history of Black St. Louis. As previously stated, these entities—The Interwar Period, the Great Migration, and the Social Welfare Reform Movement—have such significant impact that these events could have their own study. However, for the purposes of this research, these entities are highlighted due to their significant impact on the informal educational opportunities of Black females. Racism, structural changes to the St. Louis business community, and an influx of Negroes from the South plus the overt recognition of societal challenges proved that informal education was not only necessary, but also vital to the uplifting of Black women.

The following section focuses on an overview that discusses the history of the Negro women’s club movement. Included in this section is the initial rationale for the Negro women’s club, societal challenges that caused the clubs to flourish, as well as the stimulus that prompted the individual clubs to unite. As the Negro clubs first appeared prior to the Reconstruction Era, middle-class Negro women began to carve out a niche for themselves as they publicly stood to address problems in their communities. The influence of these Negro females, working through individual clubs, provided the fundamental positioning necessary to lay the groundwork needed in developing segregated YWCA Branches that would ultimately provide the informal educational opportunities sought by working-class Negro women.

Overview of the History of Negro Women’s Clubs

“By the end of the 19th century the comparative fluidity of race relations in the Reconstruction era dissipated into increasingly rigid discrimination—legally, physically,

144 Jones, “Mary Church Terrell.”
This end of the Reconstruction Era signaled that Negroes had taken steps backward in their fight for full citizenship status in America. The revival of enslavement, through the implementation of Jim Crow Laws, was an overwhelming catalyst to this dissention of Negro citizenship. Negro women experienced the backlash conspicuously as Negro women were seen as immoral beings. Logan (as cited in Jones) coined this era, “nadir of the Negro,” the lowest point of Black citizenship. Couple the low social status of Negro citizenship with the institutionalizing of Jim Crow Laws, Negroes’ upward momentum into American society abruptly deteriorated.

Despite the disenfranchisement of Negroes as whole, Negro women looked to self-help to ascertain societal improvement goals. “From sisterly organization and social clubs to reform-oriented women’s clubs, Black women looked to their own groups as vehicles for advancing the entire race.” These Negro women were determined to demonstrate their abilities outside the home. In addition to working outside the home, Negro women also began to function on the male-dominated political arena.

Before the PW-Y was founded, Negro women held their own individual clubs. There were several purposes for these clubs. Some clubs organized to teach Negro women about raising a family and taking care of the home. Other clubs began in effort to assist Negro women in “stress[ing] the need for the community itself [Black women] to

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145 Ibid., 20.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
148 Ibid., 21.
149 Dowden-White, Groping Toward Democracy.
define its needs and work out solutions to its problems, and for organizers not to attempt to “control” citizens but to encourage them to do for themselves.” This task of defining their needs and then finding solutions to these challenges launched the inception of many Negro women’s clubs.

Who are the organizers of this community work? Typically, elite, college-educated Negro women organized these clubs through their church memberships. These powerful women had the insight, belief, and self-determination to rise above their lowly social class status while empowering themselves through self-preservation.

Humble Beginnings

At the early part of the 20th century, the vestiges of slavery remained. Yet, Negro women’s club work was operational and Negro women en masse began to organize themselves into clubs.151 These clubs allowed Negro women to assemble, as White club membership was unavailable to them due to segregation. Despite the humble beginnings of Negro women’s club work, their voices were not heard and their work ignored.152 Church membership was the early avenue for the creation of women’s clubs. However, these educated Negro women forged bonds and took their unfulfilled energies a step further by creating groups that specifically benefitted their needs. Although Negro women did not have the power to make decisions without ministerial permission, the

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150 Ibid., 245.

151 Browder, “From Uplift to Agitation.” See also Tara Y. White, “A Shrine of Liberty for the Unborn Generations: African American Clubwomen and the Preservation of African American Historic Sites” (PhD diss., Middle Tennessee State University, 2010).

152 Lerner, "Early Community Work of Black Club Women."
initiating of [the clubs] allowed them to supplement their church activities and to deal with societal afflictions affecting young women.\textsuperscript{153}

Influence of Negro Women

“Contrary to widely held racist myths, Black communities have a continuous record of self-help, institution-building and strong organization to which Black women have made continuous contributions.”\textsuperscript{154} For example, Mary Church Terrell was one of the premiere women of the early 19th century that worked to improve the lot of the Negro female. Terrell was one of the founders and the first president of the NACW.\textsuperscript{155} Terrell’s passion for the uplifting the Negro female became her champion cause during her tenure as president of the NACW.\textsuperscript{156}

There were numerous individually run Negro women’s clubs dotted thickly across America, prior to the creation of the NACW. Initially, the clubs had no connectivity whatsoever; however, each club, basically, was doing the same types of things in the communities in which they serviced. These community services included offering day care services for working mothers, operating orphanages, and senior citizen facilities. As these individual entities joined forces, two major organizations emerged. The NACW was formed by the combining both—the National Federation of Afro-American (NFAAW) and the Colored Women’s League (CWL) organizations. These two organizations held the firm belief that improving the conditions of Negro women was a

\textsuperscript{153} Weisenfeld, “The Harlem YWCA.”

\textsuperscript{154} Lerner, "Early Community Work," 159.

\textsuperscript{155} Jones, "Mary Church Terrell."

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
top priority. Their programs focused on the cultural development of Negro women and children. They offered informal classes to improve literacy, foreign languages, and parenting skills. The important question is: Why did these two organizations choose to combine forces? The catalyst that caused this formation was a letter written by James W. Jack, president of the Missouri Press Association (as cited in Jones).\textsuperscript{157} This inflammatory letter relegated Negro women as over-sexed and immoral (prostitutes, thieves, and liars). Under this character and defamatory attack, the NACW emerged with Mary Church Terrell chosen as their first president.

Contrary to the defamatory remarks made against Negro women and the subsequent fervor that followed, “the NACW was conservative first of all, in that it was not feminist in the modern sense of the term.”\textsuperscript{158} The organization’s major concerns were not to elevate the social status of Negro women, but to ameliorate their current role in society. They were more concerned about making life better for the entire race, not just Negro women. Here were the tenets of the NACW:

- Nationalized the platform of Black women’s social reform efforts.
- Created a foundational network of communication among Black women in the U.S.
- The movement underscored an emphasis of the role of educated Black women and their drive for social reform.
- Radical movement nurtured leadership skills among women.\textsuperscript{159}

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 24.
  \item \textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 24.
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These tenets spoke to the organization’s fundamental role in the support of informal educational opportunities for working-class Negro females. This support also led to additional opportunities for Negro women to uplift the race.

Mary Church Terrell was truly innovative in her approach to operating the NACW. She created monthly newsletters to inform the network about programs and objectives of the organization. Next, she organized the conventions, usually in cities with high concentrations of Negro women. She also created a “cadre of elite women” to head local chapters. Despite her extreme conservative views, believing that only through improving the home would people improve overall, the NACW moved their platform outside of the home. “The NACW succeeded in shifting the interests of its leaders, who were middle-class status, outside of the home and settling them in the center of the national social spectrum.”

One of the major complaints the NACW faced was their unwillingness to tackle segregation and its inherent problems. Beverly Jones states, “The failure of the national organization to address directly the problem of segregation served to heighten its conservatism and its reluctance to deal with political issues.” Regardless of the NACW’s refusal to tackle the political issues of their time, the work that these women undertook was of grave importance. Their bravery was sanctioned due to chronic systemic issues that plagued the Negro community. Without these trailblazers stepping forward and taking the ultimate initiative, the masses of Negro women would have

160 Ibid.
161 Ibid., 26.
162 Ibid., 29.
continued to silently suffer the status of second-class citizen, due to their race and gender.\(^{163}\)

In summary, the research on the humble beginnings of the Negro women’s club work and the influence of Negro women on social welfare organizations is not all-inclusive. Due to lack of records, racial segregation from White club membership organizations, and the marginalization of Negro women’s club work, it is plausible to conclude that Black women had a much deeper involvement in social welfare reform that has not been documented. Gordon concurs: “The possibility of Black women’s professional involvement was strong, it has been suggested that Black women left fewer papers that substantiate their involvement.”\(^{164}\) Therefore, this study proposes to add to the lack of literature, with a specific contextual interest, in the informal education provided by the segregated PW-Y of St. Louis, and its prior oversight management agent, the PW-COA.

Summary, Implications, and Discussion

Summation of Major Points

As the information has been reviewed and disseminated, a few key concepts were evaluated that guided the later part of this study. First, CRT has a major impact on the study. The practicality of utilizing storytelling to gain and glean insight from the PW-COAs’ lived experiences is the appropriate medium to use for this study. Bell states that


“CRT’ ultimate vision is redemptive, not deconstructive.” Bell’s statement is effective because the storytelling forum creates a dialogue for the PW-COA members to share revelations about the past and denounces accusatory cries from White researchers that these African American women’s experiences are being told in an unreasonable, retaliatory, or critical style.

The history of Black St. Louis provides the backdrop to the social concerns occurring during the period that the participants were actively involved in the PW-COA. Heathcott, Lang, and others examine the important aspects of the African American struggle with their insights pertaining to the information on the social welfare reform during the highlighted time period. African American women are lauded and given credit for not only being part of the movement, but also demonstrating their leadership abilities as these women took on roles that were initially held by men.

The beginning of the PW-Y has its roots in Negro women’s club history. In the late 1890s and at the turn of the century, Negro women who came from middle-class and socially elite backgrounds were bound together by race and gender made the decision to do something that would ameliorate the horrific conditions in which the masses of working-class Negro women lived. Negro women organized club membership was the beginning of the social welfare reform movement. These Negro clubs, which began right after slavery ended, continued through the Reconstruction Era, and into modern

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166 Lerner, "Early Community Work."
times have serviced the Black communities’ needs, that often times, were largely ignored by local, state, and federal government agencies.\textsuperscript{167}

Implications of Literature’s Impact

Hence, there are several implications that can be generated from the review of the literature. First, the suggestion can be made that CRT’s utilization offers the missing platform these marginalized women need to have a space in which to share their lived experiences. Second, CRT allows the PW-COA members to feel redeemed as they are now being given the opportunity to discuss difficult issues—segregation, racism, and citizenship—issues that were stifled due to the nature of their gender during the time period under study. Third, the suggestion can also be made that the work of the PW-COA was vital to the St. Louis community, as these women’s fight for full citizenship, informal education, and the improvement of societal ailments were on the forefront of the social welfare reform movement. Fourth, the history of Black St. Louis has gaps in the areas of African American female involvement in the PW-COA. This study proposes to add to the literature and fill in some of those gaps.

Conclusion of Literature Review

In conclusion, an in-depth look at CRT has been taken, an overview of the history of St. Louis from 1900s-1960s, and the humble beginnings of Negro women’s club work. This journey through the literature has revealed the work of fellow historians and has provided immeasurable insight for this study. One area that continues to show scarcity was the area of historical narratives on the PW-COA.\textsuperscript{168} Historical narratives can provide a baseline understanding of past communal issues that linger and plague today’s

\textsuperscript{167} Scott, "Most Invisible of All."
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
society. For the purposes of this study, the use of historical narratives provides access to the informal education opportunities of working-class Black women provided by the PW-COA. Learning from the PW-COA members about their public pedagogy provides a bridge from the past to the present concerning their agency in the area of social welfare reform, while allowing them a safe Black space to share their experiences.
CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research question allows this study to explore the informal educational connection between the PW-COA and the African American female community. The PW-COA members, at that time, were central to the informal education of the working-class Black women they serviced, as the PW-COA chose a platform of “racial uplift”. Besides the main research question, other questions to consider are: What were the social and societal issues that caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y? One major factor considered was the racial climate of the City. The St. Louis community instituted the practice of segregated racial housing covenants between Black and White residents, and this discriminating practice was just one example of the societal and social unrest plaguing the city’s environment.\(^{169}\) Upon further reflection of the literature, a third question arose: What was the supportive role the PW-COA bore in advancing the fight to end segregation? The actual agency between the PW-Y, the PW-COA, and the Central YWCA was yet unclear, despite the PW-Y’s touted mantra of racial uplift being purported to benefit Negro women.\(^{170}\) Examining the PW-COA’s social justice stance through the lens of CRT purposes to find a part of the group’s raison de tere.

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\(^{169}\) Gordon, Mapping Decline.

\(^{170}\) Jones, "Mary Church Terrell."
Research Design

This research is a historical narrative analysis that gives the PW-COA an opportunity to share their involvement as members of the PW-Y. These individually spoken accounts, dotted with thick rich descriptions provided by the PW-COA helps to address the marginalization of these women’s efforts. The narratives also allow us to acknowledge their common, shared lived experiences.¹⁷¹

Rationale

The methodology chosen for conducting the research in this study is personal historical narratives. The personal historical narratives approach best fit the needs of this study because the narratives offer the participants the least restrictive platform in which to share the PW-COA stories. Open-ended, semi-structured questions direct the interviews, yet allow the participants the opportunity to freely discuss and dialogue, uninhibitedly, pertaining to the issues and questions being asked.¹⁷² There were advantages of utilizing narratives in qualitative research. Merriam further explains that narratives offer rich and divergent points-of-view that cannot be found with only utilizing empirical research, and narratives allow the participants the uninhibited space in which to share their stories.¹⁷³ Creswell also supports the use of narratives as the researcher


¹⁷³ Merriam, Qualitative Research.
collects descriptions of events or happenings.\textsuperscript{174} The events were then configured into a story using a plot line. Narratives, guided by a theoretical lens for example, show how the women’s voices were muted. Finally, personal narratives focus on specific contextual or personal remembrances and their cause/effect relationships to the individuals conveyed in the stories.

**CRT’s Influence on the Methodology**

Villalpando writes, “CRT relies on the use of “counterstories” as a central methodology.”\textsuperscript{175} The use of counterstories, by the marginalized participants, presents the PW-COA members an opportunity to tell stories that are different from the ones White scholars might normally hear. There are several ways in which these counterstories may be shared: through chronicles, dialogues or personal testimonies. In this study, the researcher chose the counter-stories methodology of personal testimonies as the central means of sharing the PW-COA members’ experiences.

**Counter Perspective**

Conversely, a debate continues to rage as to the authenticity or believability of personal historical narratives. Dhunpath further elucidates the point of the doubtfulness of authenticity by commenting: “Its status as a legitimate research methodology continues to be challenged by the positivist/empiricist tradition with its artificial dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative approaches to be research.”\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{174} Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*.

\textsuperscript{175} Villalpando, "Critical Race Theory," 236.

Although the dichotomy of qualitative vs. quantitative research approaches continues to be debated among researchers, this study utilizes personal historical narratives because this method offers rich and divergent points-of-view that cannot be found with only utilizing empirical research. Merriam validates these points: “stories have moved center stage as a source of understanding the meaning of human experience.”\(^{177}\) In addition to open-ended and semi-structured questions, this study includes a formal interview protocol. The purpose for using the interview protocol is to assist the participants who might have the need to view the questions before the interview sessions, but the protocol is also used to guide the sessions when participants get stuck or digress from the subject area. Smith agrees: “The simplicity of an open-ended request leaves the field open to narrators to explore the complexities and contradictions that characterize their lives.”\(^{178}\) Participants are also informed that they can end their association with the research at any time without punitive consequences.

**Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher, my role encompassed a variety of functions. Creswell states the researcher is the key instrument in this process.\(^ {179}\) As the key instrument, my responsibility was to provide the participants the highest quality experience as they depended upon me to accurately tell the PW-COA shared experiences. Providing a quality experience was done in several stages. First, the collecting of data through examining documents, observing participant behavior during the interviews, interviewing

\(^{177}\) Merriam, *Qualitative Research*, 32.

\(^{178}\) Joan Smith, "Agency and Female Teachers',” 9.

\(^{179}\) John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*. 
the participants (may use protocol), and not relying on instruments developed by others assisted the researcher in providing a quality experience for the participants. Second, the interviewing took place in a natural setting, which was an environment that allowed the participants to be most at ease. Offering a comfortable interview setting allowed the researcher to collect data in the field at the site where the participants were very relaxed, as opposed to an artificial location, such as a recording studio. In addition, no instruments were sent to the participants to complete, as face-to-face interactions best suited this study. Merriam also weighs in on the approach that is necessary for the qualitative researcher to conduct narrative analysis:

- Outside of the culture “etic” viewpoint
- Researcher’s position – (reflexivity) “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’”

The researcher was an outsider for this study. Having no prior knowledge of the PW-Y or PW-COA (other than thinking it was the female version of the YMCA) before conducting this research, the researcher easily identified with the etic viewpoint. Finally, the position of reflexivity was crucial to the objectivity of the study. By examining my own biases, dispositions, and assumptions in regards to the research assisted the researcher in providing a quality study.181

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181 Merriam, Qualitative Research.
Participants

The participants that were interviewed for this study were selected on the criterion of being former or current members of the PW-COA. These women were selected because they represented the some total population of participants that were central to the knowledge concerning the programming of informal education provided by the PW-Y. Each participant embodied the driving focus as the women offered insight into this rich information that had not been found in the literature. These women were the guiding principles that represented the foundation of the study, continuing the work began by the PW-COA founding mothers in 1911. Therefore, each participant was contacted by the previous PW-COA chair and asked to participate in the study. A verbal consent secured each potential candidate’s participation in the study. Presently, six women were included in this study’s sample size. However, in an effort to obtain interview saturation of information, the option was available to include other participants based upon recommendations from the current participants.182

Data Collection

The participants in this study were contacted by phone, in-person, and electronic mail to schedule individual interviews at convenient locations of their choice. The individual interviews themselves lasted approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Each participant was interviewed a minimum of one time with a follow-up interview conducted. The follow-up interviews provided opportunities for the researcher and the participants to review and to make corrections to the transcripts or add additional

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thoughts from the participants.

Interview Questions

Interview questions were written to generate a variety of information about the roles of the PW-COA members as they served on the committee, how PW-COA members’ servitude affected the lives of African American women, and how the programs provided by the PW-Y impacted the role of informal education. These sample questions were developed based upon principles outlined in qualitative research methodology.\textsuperscript{183} The interview questions were also written to evoke a response to racial strife suffered at that time, as well as the interviewees’ responses to the local movement against segregation practices. Open-ended questions were developed to allow the participants to talk as candidly and as generously about all aspects of their lives as PW-COA members.\textsuperscript{184} As the need arose, other interview questions or probes were generated based upon participant responses. The entire interview protocol for the individual interviews is found in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

For initial data analysis, a Grounded Theory approach was employed to develop codes during the transcription process. Using Grounded Theory allowed the researcher to create, define, and categorize codes, as data was being studied and continually

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{183} Uwe Flick, \textit{An Introduction to Qualitative Research}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2006).

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{184} Merriam, \textit{Qualitative Research}. 
collected.\textsuperscript{185} Once the transcription initial coding was completed using the Dedoose Internet web-based software system, then a color-coded system was created according to the three types of coding—open (orange), axial (yellow), and selective (green) using Microsoft Word. Micro analyzing of the interviews permitted the researcher to further listen to the data as well as keep the data organized.\textsuperscript{186} As concepts and categories developed, further color-coding was utilized to distinguish the resulting themes.

Transcription

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher for content analysis. Dedoose software was utilized to transcribe the interviews. This program allowed for the combining of audio and transcription files in one centralized location. Finally, all transcribed interviews were kept in a password-protected file on the principal researcher’s laptop to ensure continued anonymity of the participants.

Code Book

After each theme was developed, Microsoft Word was used to create a codebook. The codebook presented data from each of the interviews. Next, the data was organized into the various categories outlined under the codebook’s themes. Additionally, the data from each interview was reassembled chronologically according to emerging themes. Finally, each reassembled transcript was interwoven into the final narrative analysis with


discussion of conflicts and inconsistencies wherever they existed.  

Validity and Reliability

Creswell verbalizes, “Many perspectives exist regarding the importance of validation in qualitative research.”188 In this study, validity was addressed using artifacts and documents to cross check the data generated from the interviews. Those artifacts and documents included newspaper articles, meeting minutes, photographs, letters, or memorandums. The transcribed interviews were reviewed with the participants, as member checks, so that the participants could check for accurateness of thought or to expand on ideas that may have been missed during the individual interviews.189 Concurrently, reliability was addressed with an audit trail. The audit trail allowed the researcher to document the processes used to collect data. For this study, a running record style, which documents events, describes observations of participants during interviews, and details the researcher’s comments, was utilized to provide an analysis and interpretation of collected data.

Delimitations

This study includes a small number of participants who were current or former members of the PW-COA. The study focuses on those participants who had knowledge of the PW-COA’s agency before, during and subsequently after the Brown decision. Oral histories were collected as the full data for the study.


188 Creswell, Qualitative Inquiry, 202.

189 Merriam, Qualitative Research.
Limitations

This study is limited by the fact that the researcher had no in-depth knowledge concerning the PW-Y, nor the PW-COA. The lack of in-depth knowledge precipitated the need for the researcher to attend social gatherings such as the PW-COA’s 100 Year Gala celebration and racial workshops held by the Metro Y. The researcher’s attendance at these public gatherings made available opportunities to learn first hand about the PW-Y’s mission and purpose as an organization.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the above chapters and interwoven sections have laid a foundation for the need of this study. This study focuses on the PW-COA’s members agency to the African American community they serviced through the provision of informal educational opportunities. The PW-COA’s individual work had not been included in the research literature. Gaps in the historical research literature supported the nature of this study and the ensuing research has added to the literature base and body of knowledge concerning the African American influence in the PW-Y through its PW-COA.

Chapter one provided a background discussing the early components of the segregated PW-Y. Clearly the need for informal education was apparent after the slaves were emancipated. The tale of the incredulous rates of illiteracy were monumental hurdles that needed immediate attention if freed men and women were to be successful, contributing citizens in America. Further detailed in this chapter were the theoretical framework, problem statement, and significance of the study, limitations, and
assumptions. All of these components have defended to need pursue this study, as the literature has not addressed the importance of the work portrayed by the PW-COA women.

A review of the literature, Chapter two, provided insight concerning Negro women’s contributions to club work. Other critical elements of the literature review entailed Negro women’s introduction to informal education and how that introduction led to the creation of more formal educational opportunities. Also adding strength to the study is the background on the overview of the history of Black St. Louis, which further provides a brief perspective on the challenges that Black females faced in their pursuit of education. Finally, CRT is the crux and foundational piece of this study that gives voice to the muted and offers redemption to the lives of the PW-COA women marginalized by racism.

Chapter three entails the methodology that was utilized in carrying out the study. A rationale for the use of historical narratives allows the researcher to capture the untold stories locked inside of the participants. A final note about this section is that every effort was made to ensure the anonymity of the PW-COA members, as the participants have entrusted the sharing of their PW-Y experiences to this study.
CHAPTER FOUR:
THE RISE OF THE PHYLLIS WHEATLEY YWCA

Introduction

The PW-Y of St. Louis began as a place to provide religious services for young women and very quickly became an institution of social interaction for young colored women. Complementary to its sister organizations in major metropolitan cities such as Chicago, Houston, and New York, the PW-Y of St. Louis experienced exponential and unprecedented growth. This growth was unprecedented due to several unique factors. First, the PW-Y moved to several locations before resting at their last permanent address of 2709 Locus Street. Second, PW-COA minutes documented the growth of the PW-Y through yearly membership drives. A final piece of evidence that was indicative of the exponential growth experienced by the PW-Y was their dominance in the St. Louis Argus and the St. Louis American newspapers. These newspapers were extremely hospitable to


193 PW-COA Minutes 1950-1972, Series 9, Box 12, Folders 393-395. The PW-COA minutes were obtained from the YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis Collection 1905-1972 of The State Historical Society of Missouri Papers, St. Louis, Missouri.
PW-Y as the newspapers prominently ran numerous articles and offered support through weekly references to the organization’s various activities and programs.\textsuperscript{194}

Gradual Rise to Prominence in the Community

In the early days, the PW-Y was a small, yet important social agency for young Negro girls and women in St. Louis. Many of these youth had no social or recreational outlets in the Black communities. For a minimum fee, the PW-Y filled in the gap by offering vast entertainment, recreational, and informal educational opportunities for Black females that could not be found anywhere within the St. Louis City borders. PW-Y’s agency to the community was the catalyst that caused the center to stand out and catapult to a phenomenal rise among Black residents.

In addition to offering exceptional activities, the phenomenal rise of the St. Louis PW-Y led it to become a household name in the Black community due to the PW-Y’s mission of social justice activism through the practice of eliminating racism. Pamela F. Wille further expands on the depth of the Houston Y’s attempt, which mimicked the St. Louis PW-Y’s attempt, in executing their social justice involvement:

Growing support for the civil rights movement across the country, the social unrest of the decade, and Americans' "rediscovery" of poverty during the 1960s all had a profound impact on the YWCA at the national level. Attempts to come to terms with the changing fabric of U.S. society led the National Board to take the necessary steps to build upon its racial inclusive policy while at the same time actively supporting the social initiatives of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. As an outward sign of its move toward greater racial

inclusiveness, the National Board elected its first African-American president in 1967. In addition, it provided financial support for the 1963 March on Washington and, through directives to the local associations, pushed for a greater understanding of civil rights issues. It also stressed the importance of local associations bringing their operational policies in line with national goals.\textsuperscript{195} Thus, the PW-Y grew from its modest beginnings at the segregated Chapman House into a vibrant organization that serviced the social, emotional, and informal educational needs of the young Black women and girls in the St. Louis community.

**A Movement Toward Racial Integration**

The origins of the YWCA spoke of an organization that was filled with the racial exclusion of Blacks and other non-White females. Despite the continual acknowledgement from those initial organizers seeking to fill their Christian duty, White YWCAs refused to accept, acknowledge, or admit Black females into their YWCA facilities. This exclusionary practice prompted Black Branches to charter their own facilities within their communities.\textsuperscript{196} Not only were the YWCAs different due to the racial makeup of their members, the White YWCA affiliates and Black Branches were conversely different in programming. For instance, the initial programming for the White YWCA affiliates consisted of providing Bible study or vesper services and to meet the needs of middle-class White women. On the other hand, the Black Branches focused on meeting the needs of all Black women in the communities being serviced. Although religious programming was the main focal point of the YWCA—whether affiliates or

\textsuperscript{195}Wille, “More Than Swimming Classes,” 133.

\textsuperscript{196} Jones, “Mary Church Terrell.”
Branches—transference from that design emanated as the interests and needs of the Black community’s demands quickly outpaced prior Bible classes.

The late Mrs. Buella Brooks told one example of how the PW-Y’s programming changed from strictly religious programming and focused on the Black female’s plight during segregation. In Doug Moore’s article “History Captured at the YWCA,” Mrs. Brooks spoke about her experiences with PW-Y programming during her youth.\(^{197}\) The PW-Y that Mrs. Buella Brooks walked to after classes at Sumner High School was inside a church where she and other Black girls could meet socially. It was the 1930s, and segregation was a basic part of her life. So was the PW-Y.\(^{198}\) Mrs. Brooks, a former COA chair, states, "It was a mainstay for Black girls. That was really the only organization of support that we had." She also spoke of the physical and social activities, which included: roller-skating, playing basketball and taking etiquette classes\(^{199}\).

Phyllis Wheatley’s Social Justice Stance

The PW-Y has received numerous recognitions and financial support for the organization’s laudatory efforts in support of Black women.\(^{200}\) However, one area that appears to be overlooked is the PW-Y’s stance on social justice. As a crusader for the elimination of racism, the PW-Y grew from a place to mentor young girls and women to


\(^{198}\) Ibid.

\(^{199}\) Ibid.

\(^{200}\) *St. Louis Argus*, March 24, 1939. See also *St. Louis American*, December 22, 1966 and *St. Louis Argus*, December 23, 1966.
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Osby, Cheryl, 2014, UMSL, 80

the meeting place for grassroots operations. Many organizations and individuals utilized the PW-Y’s facilities as the groups gathered and met to forge alliances that would plan strategic attacks on racist practices and corporations within the city of St. Louis. For all practical purposes, the PW-Y’s mission presented a progressive organization that outwardly focused on the fight to eradicate racism. In fact, the present motto is: “YWCA Metro St. Louis is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.” Historically, the internal struggle to implement racial harmony was far from coming to fruition. In her research, Wille discusses the challenges the Houston Y had with race based relations and the difficulties that ensued despite attempts of the National Board of the YWCA to implement practices of racial harmony among Branches and affiliates:

During the 1940s and 1950s, the Houston YWCA turned its focus to issues of race as the association began sponsoring workshops on race relations, served as a resource for other local associations grappling with racial issues, conducted surveys, and facilitated seminars. Much of the impetus for race awareness programs originated with the National Board of the YWCA in New York. These attempts at race relations were indicative of many other segregated Black Branches

201 Lang, Grassroots at the Gateway. See also Dowden-White, Groping Toward Democracy.


204 Wille, “More Than Swimming Classes,” 6. See also PW-COA Minutes, June 7, 1961, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.
across the country. The St. Louis PW-Y and the Central YWCA also held numerous events, joint sessions, and conducted special meetings all in an attempt to join the two, Central YWCA and PW-Y. Those joint service efforts, just as those efforts experienced in other segregated Black Branch locations, were unsuccessful in uniting White YWCA run affiliates with Black run Branches. In the final analysis, the PW-Y and Metro Y eventually became an organization of two parts equaling one whole because the Metro Y sold their building and moved the Metro Y’s programming into the PW-Y. With this move, the PW-Y ceased to exist on its own, as the PW-Y was now housed inside of the Metro Y.

During the height of the PW-Y’s popularity, three main purposes emerged from the organization’s existence. First, the PW-Y was a social and informal educational lifeline to a group of underprivileged Black women and girls who had little presence, muted voices, and insufficient opportunities for elite social interaction in St. Louis. Second, the PW-Y, through the housing program, provided a safe environment for young Black women migrating from the South to escape racial persecution. Third, the PW-Y was the place that young Black women and girls residing in the City could go to access assistance in improving their daily lives.

There were several areas of the organization’s programming that had a major impact on the success of the Branch. Board minutes and newspaper clippings report that the PW-Y was instrumental and influential in the Black community during its peak, but

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205 Wille, “More Than Swimming Classes.”
207 Busch, “The Adult Educational Activities.”
what made this organization just so exceptional? There were numerous reasons the PW-Y Branch was truly outstanding, from its excellent programing of informal education to the most palatable food served anywhere from its food service program. The rise and subsequent thriving of the PW-Y reached the pinnacle and epitome of success because middle-class Black women club members of the PW-COA managed the organization. In the end, the hallmark of the PW-Y’s success was the outstanding programming of activities for its members.

Programming Activities

Arsania Williams, one of the founding mothers of the PW-Y, was extremely instrumental in assisting the delivery of informal instructional programming as well as Branch leadership after the inaugural opening of the PW-Y. This snippet of a response letter, sent to Ms. Williams from the First Vice President of the Central YWCA, demonstrated her passion and commitment to the PW-COM as she requested to have an Executive Secretary for the Branch while she lead the PW-COM:

At the Board meeting this morning, it was voted that the period of re-organization be extended until January. It was also voted that your Committee of Management be requested to send for the approval of our Board, the names of several women, whom you would suggest as Executive Secretary temporarily. Please state the qualifications of each, and the preference of your Committee.

We feel encouraged over our conference with you this morning, and believe that we have come to a much better understanding of your problems, and we hope that

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you on your side more fully understand what we meant by re-organization, and that we have neither the desire, nor the intention to be in any way arbitrary or drastic.\textsuperscript{209}

During the time of this correspondence, PW-Y was experiencing growth and needed personnel to assist with the continuation of Branch operations. Despite being required to obtain permission and approval from the Central YWCA, the PW-COA’s resolve never waned and the women continued to move forward with their goals and aspirations for the Branch.\textsuperscript{210}

One of Merriam-Webster’s definitions for program is a plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal.\textsuperscript{211} The programming of the PW-Y became all encompassing as the PW-COA tried to attract and recruit paying members that aided in keeping the doors open. In a sense, the programming was the distinguishable key that unlocked the doors that paved a way to a better life for thousands of economically disenfranchised African American women and young girls.\textsuperscript{212} A perusing of the PW-COA board minutes allowed the researcher to develop a thorough understanding of how

\textsuperscript{209}YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis Collection, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 5.

\textsuperscript{210}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{211}Merriam-Webster Online, \url{http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/program}

\textsuperscript{212}Moore, “History Captured at the YWCA.” This article interviews one previous PW-COA member and one of the PW-COA Executive Directors. These ladies both explained how being involved in the PW-Y had impacted their lives.
the PW-Y program activities positively impacted the lives of the young women it serviced.\textsuperscript{213}

Through the years, the PW-Y’s programming offered many different opportunities for members. Religious services provided the initial courses as churchwomen felt unfulfilled in their roles. Weisenfeld speaks specifically about these women’s involvement in the Negro church and their level of discontent purported these middle-class women to pursue a calling to assist their lower classed sisters:

The venue of the YWCA allows to explore Black women’s religious experiences at the perimeter of the “the Black church”—the group of institutions generally placed at the center of discussions of African American religious life. In studies that pose “the Black church” and its male leadership as the exclusive arena for understanding Black religiosity, those of us interested in women’s lives are too often forced to remain satisfied with examining the background or the supporting roles played by Black women.\textsuperscript{214}

These women decided that through club work they could best service those in need and fulfill their godly call. The theme of ‘lifting as we climb’ become the mantra as these Negro women sought to aide those in indigence in improving family and daily life\textsuperscript{215}. For working class Black women, the societal tribulations predicated an urgency that caused middle-class Black women to assemble together to form their own segregated Branch that focused specifically on the essential needs of Black females.

\textsuperscript{213} YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis Collection, Series 9, Box 12, Folders 393-395.

\textsuperscript{214} Weisenfeld, \textit{African American Women}, 4.

\textsuperscript{215} Jones, "Mary Church Terrell."
The PW-Y’s programming expanded based upon the many desires and requirements of those holding memberships. Historically, the offered classes boasted a variety of enjoyable and educational activities. Appendix D displays examples of PW-Y fliers that showcased informal education classes taught to teens and adults at the PW-Y during the 1960s. Before the PW-Y, recreational activities were extremely restricted for younger Negro females. The Y Teens program filled in the gap by presenting classes and activities for these youth. Informal education became the new foundation of the PW-Y’s raison de tere and an infallible reason for its incredible success.\(^{216}\)

Many young Black women came to the PW-Y to learn new skills that would make them marketable as well as knowledgeable in improving their daily lives. Unfortunately despite Black women gaining new skills, the lack of employment opportunities due to a segregated society’s perceived ineptness of the Black female continued to hinder their progress.\(^{217}\) Tara Yosso sums up how institutionalized racism has historically affected the African American female, “Racism overtly shaped US social institutions at the beginning of the twentieth century and continues, although more subtly, to impact US institutions of socialization in the beginning of the twenty-first century.”\(^{218}\) Nonetheless, Black women continued their involvement within the organization. Some of these women went to take on leadership roles at PW-Y and in other institutions.\(^{219}\)

\(^{216}\) YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis Collection, Series 15, Box 33, Folder 1171.


\(^{218}\) Ibid., 70.

After data collection and during the initial analysis, the researcher pondered how the PW-COA managed to operate a facility offering an overabundance of educational opportunities with such magnitude and laser-like focus. According to PW-COA minutes, the backbone of the programming was held together through the support from volunteerism:

The backbone of this Branch lies in the volunteer leadership. The direction in which we move is determined greatly by their interest, performance, and responsibilities. Here is a resume of the function of each Branch standing committee.

Each committee decides how often it should meet determining the job to be done. Some meet every month, some every other month, etc.²²⁰

These minutes further denote the importance of programming as there were eleven subcommittees organized to carry out the work necessary to provide quality activities and informal educational opportunities to Black women and youth. The following figure lists the committees and their respective responsibilities.²²¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Really the life blood of the Branch. Its purpose is to set up channels for renewing and securing new members, and planning and execution of the membership Enrollment Campaign held each Spring. Special programs are designed throughout the year for membership interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Maintenance</td>
<td>To maintain an attractive clean building taking inventory (for budget purposes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²²⁰ PW-COA Minutes, January 6, 1960, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.

²²¹ Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Counseling</td>
<td>Designed to assist in making housing facilities and policies attractive especially to young women who are concerned about safe, economical living while they seek to make a way for themselves in the work-world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service</td>
<td>Designed to have low cost attractive meals for residents and members daily, and to offer catering service to Special Y.W. and community groups. It reviews menus every three months and the cost of food related to meals being served. It checks every three months on equipment, facilities, etc. to maintain an “A” rating by the City Health Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y-Teen</td>
<td>Designed to plan programs for the younger members of the Branch related to the Y-Teen purpose. This includes club programs, special events, and one or two regularly scheduled mass activities. This committee also helps to secure Program Volunteers so that this program may expand. During the year there two or three inter-Branch projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>Designed to “set-up” classes, clubs, Book Reviews, Travelogues, and special events. Recruiting and publicizing the program are the two major responsibilities. The club program is for girls from 18-35 and primarily for working girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Recreation</td>
<td>Needs a real push to stimulate the Health and recreation program which is very limited, at this moment. The purpose of this committee is to build an attractive program for wholesome fun through classes, play days, games such as movies and other sports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp</td>
<td>Designed to offer wholesome outdoor living to the younger members of the Branch. The major purpose is to set up an attractive camping program in keeping with the American Camping Standards, and recruit campers. Periodically events are held throughout the year to maintain the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informally Educating the Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuity of Interest in Camping</th>
<th>Continuity of interest in camping and the interest of individual campers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Designed to keep before the membership social and political issues which will improve our community and to urge the members to accept more responsibility in the “good things” of the community. To expose the members through Forums both sides of issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Fellowship</td>
<td>Designed to work so that the members are aware that the Y.W.C.A. is a World Wide Movement. In addition to securing Branch quota to support the YWCA World Fellowship Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Projects</td>
<td>Designed for a specific purpose usually for a money-raising for Camp and Camp Scholarships, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

Facilitation of Phyllis Wheatley Activities

After the PW-Y opened its door in 1911, it soon became a dynamic and viable organization. The PW-Y’s Articles of Incorporation provided the formal document that connected ideals of fidelity to fruition for women of color moving from church work to a formal formation of club work. From the implementation of the PW-Y’s organizational chart, careful thought and planning of how to deliver the activities began.

In summary, from their inceptions, segregated Branches were initially thought to be replicas of YWCA affiliate offices run by White middle-class females, located within their respective cities.\(^222\) Weisenfeld further explores this perspective,

Neither college educated nor radical feminists, these women, socialized into the ideology of separate spheres, firmly believed in the potential of a woman's organization to assist in the religious development of women. In this work, they

\(^{222}\) Weisenfeld, “The More Abundant Life.” See also Lasch, “Black Neighbors.”
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had male advisors…

The PW-Y was considered to be no exception; and therefore, to follow suit of its YWCA affiliate patriarchal predecessors. However, the Black Branch instituted a different propaganda that suited the needs of their communities. For example, White run YWCA’s focused more on the aesthetics and individual needs of the White middle-class women of leisure, where as Black Branches focused on the critical needs of lower class Black females. Those critical needs of lower socio-economically entrenched Black females usually included some type of housing, job training or placement, and home improvement courses.

The following three sections focus on historic PW-Y major programming activities that had obtained the most membership participation. Programs featured in this section include: Camp Derricotte, Girl Reserve (now YW-Teens), and Adult Transitional Housing. The final section of the chapter discusses the PW-Y’s support of those activists that fought to advance the plight of Blacks plagued by overwhelming community adversities.

Camp Derricotte

Legalized segregation in St. Louis not only socially crippled Black adults, but also unequivocally victimized Black children by exposing them to the devastating harmful effects of the grip *de jure* and then *de facto* segregation held upon the city. Specifically, the children of Pruitt-Igoe were caught in the middle of this racially inflicted hatred chronically experienced by St. Louis’ adult Black citizens. Prior to the building of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex, the PW-Y’s constituency base mainly served the adults and

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223 Ibid., 16.

224 PW-COA Minutes, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.
children of the Mill Creek Valley area. In a half-hearted disguised effort to fight the war on the overcrowding due, in part, to the Great Migration of Negroes from the South and, specifically, to improve the CBD epicenter of the City, St. Louis’ city planners (Civic Progress) developed a plan of urban renewal that would move lower socio-economically entrenched Blacks into modern high-rise housing complexes. The juxtaposition of these two problems became some of the rationale for the slum clearance movement. Additionally and moreover, the main reason for the urban renewal project was that the city of St. Louis continued to lose thousands of manufacturing jobs and White residents to St. Louis County through White flight. As the White business elite attempted to save their economic base, the Civic Progress believed that businesses could be revitalized if this slum ridden core section of the city was replaced with industrial plants and new businesses. Heathcott and Murphy explicitly expounds on the ideal of “urban renewal:”

Tucker and Farris began to build broad local and national support for inner-city reindustrialization policies to complement slum clearance efforts—indeed, to replace slums of the city with an industrial plan.

Moreover, in their own estimations, the city’s existing industrial plan was woefully inadequate, undercapitalized, and underserved by new developments in transportation. But by creating new industrial zones within the city limits—and in the process clearing some of the city’s poorest neighborhoods—St. Louis leaders

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226 Ibid.
hoped to free up valuable inner-core land for expansion and to lower the cost of inner-city industrial development.\textsuperscript{227}

For Blacks, urban renewal was nicknamed, “Negro renewal” as Black St. Louisans quickly understood they would not be beneficiaries of any of the so-called economic improvements the Civic Progress slated for the city. Moreover, the building and subsequent decline of the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex became the national poster-child that cited the inadequacies and colossal failures of public housing.\textsuperscript{228}

Despite the negative connotations attached to Pruitt-Igoe, the children had one beacon of hope as they lived in an eventually undesirable environment.\textsuperscript{229} The PW-Y provided a positive social outlet for Black female children that served as a small, yet powerful cushion similar to the “Black Archipelago” adults created as a refuge against the hostile racial climate of the city.\textsuperscript{230} One inexplicably potent buffer that offered informal educational opportunities for Black girls was Camp Derricotte.

Juliette Derricotte was a former YWCA secretary of the National Student Council and the Dean of Women at Fisk University. During her tenure as a YWCA secretary, Derricotte spoke at numerous segregated college campuses in the South, as well as around the world, about the dehumanizing experiences Negroes faced in America.\textsuperscript{231} As a Black woman of mixed races (her mother White and her father Black) Derricotte’s

\textsuperscript{227} Heathcott, “Corridors of Flight,” 157.

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{229} Chad Freidrichs, \textit{The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: An Urban History}, documentary, 2011.

\textsuperscript{230} Heathcott, “Black Archipelago”

\textsuperscript{231} Cuthbert, \textit{Juliette Derricotte}. 
gentle nature enabled her to break through the color barrier along predominantly White college campuses. Through her lectures and interactions, White female students at these colleges experienced a racial awakening as they began the journey of self-actualization and recognition of their racist attitudes toward Blacks. Despite her campaign to end racial isolation at predominantly White colleges, Derricotte’s life was tragically cut short due to the medical racial discrimination she endured after being critically injured in a car accident. In her honor, former PW-Y Executive Director Mrs. Anna L. Scott named and opened a camp for city girls.

Camp Derricotte officially opened in 1939 as a segregated camp to service city Black female youth, but later became fully integrated as living testament of the Metro Y’s eliminating racism mission. The actual location of the camp was a hotbed of racial unrest, nonetheless, the opening and subsequent success of the camp smoothed race relations in the community as the camp’s reputation for excellence generated a financial gain for the area of Troy, MO. The St. Louis Argus newspaper validates the success of the camp.

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233 Cuthbert, Juliette Derricotte.

234 St. Louis Argus, November 13, 1931.


236 YWCA PW-COA Minutes, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.

237 St. Louis Argus, July 1, 1966.
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After numerous awards and accolades, Camp Derricotte, which was birthed under the leadership of the segregated PW-Y, saw its control taken over by Metro Y in 1975. Residential camping at Camp Derricotte ceased in 1980 as other camping facilities developed by the YMCA, Girl Scouts, etc. began to gain popularity.

The Girl Reserves

At the beginning of the 20th century, the educational outlook for Black teens was dismal. Many of these young girls were stigmatized as being oversexed, wild, and uncontrollable. Without a formal education, the future for these young women and young girls seemed bleak. The prospects of employment relegated them to the most menial of chores. The origins of the Black women’s club movement came into being to provide a direct impact on the quality of life these lower classed young women faced, especially in the area of informal education.

Due to the injurious effects of de jure segregation, young Black females in St. Louis did not have anywhere to socialize or develop. If these young women were not being ignored, considered total outcasts or just plain invisible in society, they were then often victimized and criminalized as promiscuously immoral. However, the founding

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238 Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”

239 Ibid.

240 Anderson, Education of Blacks in the South.

241 Lerner, “Early Community Work.”

middle-class women that petitioned the National YWCA to initiate the PW-Y club sought to help rectify this racially perceived problem.\textsuperscript{243}

PW-Y’s modest early period functioned as a way to ameliorate the widespread notion of Black female promiscuity; but there also was a need to help younger girls avoid living a life on the streets. Thus, a club for Black girls was founded as a preventative intervention to assist in keeping these young females from being working girls.\textsuperscript{244} The Girls Reserves began in 1918 and serviced females between the ages of 10 through 18. Each member’s belief in the program as well as their commitment to themselves was documented and shared through the Girl Reserves Pledge.\textsuperscript{245} At the heart of this pledge was the girl’s dedication to community service as well as the opportunity to engage in the arts and other culture filled activities.\textsuperscript{246} Hence, Camp Derricotte, coupled with the Girl Reserves offered an array of activities that promoted the health, social, and informal academic development of these lower socio economically laden young girls. Girl Reserves continued until the 1950s when the name was changed to Y-Teens (then later on to YW-Teens) in an effort to keep up with the modern times.

Y-Teens

The PW-Y offered an environment of informal educational opportunities that were unprecedented during segregated times. As the name changed from the Girl

\textsuperscript{243} Harris-Perry, \textit{Sister Citizen}.

\textsuperscript{244} Jones, “Mary Church Terrell.”

\textsuperscript{245} YWCA Metropolitan St. Louis Collection, \textit{The Girl Reserves Pledge}, Series 15 Box 33, Folder 1171. See also http://vintagekidstuff.com/girlreserve/girlreserve.html.

\textsuperscript{246} Hamilton, “A History of Phyllis Wheatley.”
Reserves to the Y-Teens, so did the informal educational programming. The Y-Teens were introduced to classes that focused on self-improvement. These classes consisted of and specialized in manners, grooming, music, and dances. One important opportunity for teens was to attend the national teen conferences.\textsuperscript{247} The teen conferences were held in cities across the United States and provided opportunities for educational and leadership development. Another important aspect of Y-Teens was its inclusion of males. This transformation in programming granted greater possibilities for PW-Y to embrace and acknowledge their place within the entire community without limiting its work to only servicing females.

One group of teens, in particular, was in need of the mentoring provided by the PW-Y. The Pruitt-Igoe housing projects along with the St. Louis Public Schools were two entities that were extremely concerned about the welfare and social development of its teenagers. St. Louis Public Schools sought out the PW-Y and asked for assistance in helping to mold and shape these young people, as well as providing a nonthreatening place for them to have an acceptable social outlet.\textsuperscript{248} The Girls Reserves (later on Y-Teens) was already in full swing at Sumner High School, despite harboring exclusionary and elitist undertones that were eventually eliminated through the opening of a Girl Reserves at Vashon and Beaumont High Schools.\textsuperscript{249} In summary, the PW-Y’s

\textsuperscript{247} \textit{YWCA Newsletter}, 15 no 2, June 1966, Series 19 Microfilm.

\textsuperscript{248} Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”

\textsuperscript{249} PW-COA Minutes, Tentative Wheatley Branch Programs 1962, Series 9, Box 12, Folders 393-395. See also Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”
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programming for teens, during the time period in this study, was innovative in its quality and set the precedence for future clubs to follow.

Phyllis Wheatley Transitional Housing

During the Great Migration period, the deficiency of quality jobs was a significant problem, as well as available adequate housing. The institutionalized practice of racial covenants and the continual influx of Negroes from Southern states caused considerable economic, physical, and emotional strain in the Negro community.250 Urban renewal efforts to remove the “Negro problem” were covert efforts of White power and greed that inflicted a debilitating shame on a densely populated people living in squalor and with limited resources.251

The PW-Y’s housing program for Negro females was a necessary division in the organization. For the program serviced women who had no other residence or were refused admittance to the city’s hotels. Massive overcrowding Negro females transitioning from the hostile segregated South were migrating out of desperation to escape their harsh lives. The housing program for women alleviated some of this enormous strain as it provided a safe and monitored environment for these single women.252

Aforementioned was the challenges relocating to the North held for Southern Negro migrants. Coming from mainly sharecropping and farming communities, these migrant workers lacked the necessary employment skills needed for successfully adapting

\[250\] Heathcott, “Black Archipelago.”

\[251\] Gordon, *Mapping Decline.*

\[252\] Hamilton, “A History of Phyllis Wheatley.”
to city living. Therefore, seeking and obtaining employment proved challenging as finding and securing jobs was nearly impossible without adequate skills. Further, those that managed to gain the necessary training or skills soon found the acquisition of employment was not forthcoming due to the overt racism inflicted upon Negroes in the city.

One approach the PW-Y pursued to improve the employment skills for Black women was by providing courses in secretarial and bookkeeping. Once women won the right to vote, the PW-Y along with the League of Women Voters increased the women’s knowledge of social services, which included voter education instruction. All of these informal training sessions were the beginning transitioning stages of lower working class women into the professional workforce.

The PW-Y lent itself to become a full service provider of informal education for young Black women and girls in St. Louis. Employment preparation and classes in literature, foreign languages, sewing, cooking, were just a sampling of the many opportunities available for PW-Y members. All things considered, the PW-Y constructed a program of informal education that intended to create well-rounded Black women and girls who would uplift of their race and become contributing society members.

Phyllis Wheatley Opposes Societal Ills

Another area that the PW-Y has limited recognition for was the organization’s venue being used as a headquarters for proletarian associations to propagate assaults on racial discrimination to improve the problems in Black society. The quality of Black life

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253 Dowden-White, *Groping Toward Democracy*.

254 Ibid.
was greatly reduced due to serious discrepancies with the separate but equal doctrine’s implementation of public works in the city of St. Louis. Although the PW-Y’s quiet stance against social problems has been insufficiently acknowledged, the organization’s agency to resolve those problems has been a major endeavor and the subject of the final section of this chapter.\(^{255}\)

As previously discussed in the literature review, Blacks in St. Louis suffered a great deal of racism and racial discrimination in every aspect of their lives. The nonexistence of employment opportunities along with inadequate housing, limited educational opportunities, and deplorably inadequate health care facilities were insufferable atrocities that Blacks endured. As political factions grew and Blacks became more aware of their political power, the PW-Y became the meeting place where Blacks gathered and strategized their actions in an effort to thrust themselves onto the scene as viable political agents of change.\(^{256}\) Lang offers specific examples of how this newfound power supported Black females:

This Black Power became the catalyst for events affecting women. First, Black females waged the first public housing rent strike. Second, the movement placed the agenda of male breadwinners gaining better jobs to the forefront. Finally, Black Power appealed to a large span of social classes—from the welfare mother to politicians, and to small businessmen. Under the “New Right,” a group of Blacks rejected the social democratic welfare (state aid, Medicaid, and the like) in

\(^{255}\) Dowden-White, *Groping Toward Democracy.*

\(^{256}\) Israel, “Putting the Black in Blue.”
favor of self-employment and White-collar opportunities. They became a new regime of Black professionals.\textsuperscript{257}

This gathering of politically motivated Blacks at the PW-Y led a movement that changed the course of life for Black St. Louisans at all economic levels. The PW-Y was at the center of this activity due to its agency and credibility within the Black community as the place where activists met to determine their next course of action in pursuit of equal and full citizenship.\textsuperscript{258}

**Summary**

Life for young Negro females in early 20\textsuperscript{th} century St. Louis rendered them into a state of being marginalized, ignored, sexually demonized and chronically laden into second-class citizenry. The PW-Y managed by the PW-COA was a champion of those Negro females held captive in their economically lower classed status by providing various informal educational opportunities through the arena of outstanding programming.

Each program offered by the PW-Y met specific needs, goals, and aspirations of those members that attended them. Camp Derricotte was truly innovative in that young Black city females were given the experience of communing with nature. Had it not been for this camp experience, many of these young girls would never have left the confines of brick and mortar to blend with the harmonies of outdoors and nature. The Girl Reserves laid the foundation for providing charm, manners and other debutante like classes to teach and refine young ladies that would be taking their roles as adults in the upper

\textsuperscript{257}Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway*, 5.

\textsuperscript{258}Ibid.
echelons of Black society. YW-Teens is the modern-day version of the Girl Reserves. Today’s programming focuses on 21st century needs such as race relations, sexual abuse education, suicide prevention, and a speaker’s bureau covering a wide range of topics relevant to today’s youth. These topics are just a sampling of a few opportunities in which they could partake. Finally, the transitional housing program is available, though limited from past programming, but nonetheless, very much a part of what the Metro Y, with assistance from the PW-COA provides to help those seeking assistance into permanent housing and full time employment.

The PW-Y’s facility also served as a forum where the Black working class could convene and create strategies to systematize the labor that needed to be done to get systems turned around in their favor. As a champion of those socially and economically oppressed, the PW-COA bridged the have and the have-nots, all the while operating within the confines of a hostile racial climate.

As phenomenal as the PW-Y was, there remained a critical element absent from explanation on how this organization managed to implement such grandiose programming. The PW-COA members are the missing component that would shed powerful first-hand knowledge concerning the implementation and changes of PW-Y’s historic programming. As these women carried on the work of their predecessors, the PW-COA women divulge how that programming has changed due to significant upheaval, internal turmoil, and never ending struggles for freedom within the organization.
CHAPTER FIVE:
WHAT IS THE PW-COA?

Introduction

The PW-Y of St. Louis has the only active PW-COA in the state. Many of these internal bodies disappeared as restructuring occurred within the YWCA. The origins of the PW-COA go back to when the group was first named the PW-COM. The PW-COA’s unique function inside the PW-Y and their personal accounts have never been shared until now. This chapter offers detailed information about the origins of the segregated PW-Y Branch in the YWCA. Also discussed was the rationale for the PW-COA, the functions of the PW-COA, and the present duties of the PW-COA. Other areas for discussion include: the PW-COA’s historical and present connection to the Metro Y, the PW-COA’s the influence on informal educational opportunities for Black females, and the PW-COA’s sponsorship of social justice issues in society. Finally, CRT is the theoretical framework utilized to support the participants’ storytelling.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study intends to provide a historical narrative analysis that examines the contextual role the PW-COA fosters in the support of African American informal education. This connection between the PW-COA and the Black female community remains the constant in guiding the nature of the study. PW-COA members were central to the informal education of the working-class Black women they serviced. As the PW-COA supported a platform of “racial uplift” that predicated itself on

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improving the lives of lower class Black women, determining the PW-COA’s role is vital to the study. Besides the main research question, other questions considered are: What were the social and societal issues that caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y? Finally, an area the researcher unexpectedly discovered is the PW-COA’s decline inside of the YWCA organization.

How did the PW-Y Begin?

In order to comprehend the development of the PW-COA, one must first explore the YWCA's origins. YWCA, the oldest and largest women’s organization in the world, was first founded in England in 1855 as a social response to the plight of women during the Industrial Revolution. The organization that became YWCA Metro St. Louis, which began in 1904 as an effort to provide housing and job training for rural women who had come to St. Louis to work at the World’s Fair. In 1905, this organization officially became a YWCA.260

Next, one must explore the general policies regarding work with African-American women and explore the origins and subsequent changes of the national policy of the YWCA relating to issues of race. Although the YWCA offered programs for women as early as 1866, it was not until 1892 did the national YWCA begin providing programs for African-American women and girls.261 After these programs for Blacks were instituted, Blacks operated segregated YWCAs that were called “Branches.” This designation was bestowed upon them due to White YWCA affiliates reluctance to have

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Blacks join them nor to render Blacks as having an equal status of Southern White women.\textsuperscript{262}

Lastly, one must explore the origins of the PW-Y of St. Louis and how the national policy of the YWCA affected the PW-Y. A piece of this history, as shared and reflected upon by the PW-COA members, is an underlying basis for this study that focuses on the informal education provided by the PW-COA. CRT provided the theoretical lens that unlocked decades of closed doors and gave voice to these muted and marginalized women. The PW-COA members have chosen to share their perceptions, past and present hopes, frustrations, successes, and failures. Circumventing the repeated patterns of historical revisionism’s often self-purported truths, this study bolsters these women and their neglected endeavors in a positive light, despite a history of continued disfigurement through ugly “truths” inflicted upon Black women.\textsuperscript{263}

In Chapter 8 of her book \textit{Disfigured Images: The Historical Assault on Afro-American Women}; Patricia Morton begins with an overview of how the Black female has been portrayed in American historiography.\textsuperscript{264} Going from total obscurity as the dark-skinned, obese, and asexual Aunt Jemima to a scapegoated dogma of being the Black male’s problem, this study argues to render an optimistic representation that negates the

\textsuperscript{262} White, “A Shrine of Liberty.” See Browder, “From Uplift to Agitation” and Hamilton, “A History of the Phyllis Wheatley.”


\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
common threads of historical revisionism that some scholarship currently acquiesces is representative of the Black female.\(^{265}\)

**History of the PW-COA in the YWCA**

The birth of any new organization does not come into existence without there being questions of accountability. From whose responsibility is it to get the work done to who will be in charge is always a necessary consideration when incorporating a business or a non-profit organization. The PW-COM was written into the PW-Y’s Constitution. Originally the guiding committee, the PW-COM was held responsible for keeping the organization operating smoothly. Below, the timeline consists of this study’s participants entering and exiting the PW-COA. Information in this timeline was pertinent to the study as the participants’ roles indicated positions of leadership within the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Phyllis Wheatley—COA Members’ Demographics</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Harris****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Anderson****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Smith****</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fontima Lewis****</td>
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\(^{265}\) Ibid.
As previously referenced, the participants held volunteer positions at the PW-Y. However, the continued growth in programming and membership became a challenge that made the PW-COA recognize the need of moving from relying solely upon volunteers to the acquisition of paid staff. The Executive Director position was a paid position and that female reported to the PW-COA. As was the practice at the Metro Y, the PW-Y also secured individuals that would serve as the director of their Branch. The remainder of the chapter offers a detailed analysis of the participants’ documented interview data.

Analysis and Discussion

This study provides a historical analysis of themes based upon contextual data obtained through PW-Y participant interviewees. In an effort to analyze and discuss the data collected from the participants, the researcher initially utilized a Grounded Theory approach. The codes were developed using the relative data created from participant interview transcripts. Dedoose, a web-based analytical software program provides the database in which the coding system was generated. Convenience sampling is used as

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266 Charmaz, “Constructing Grounded Theory.” See also Strauss & Corbin, “Grounded Theory Methodology.”
the women were recruited from a former PW-COA chair. The six women chosen met the requirements of being either present or past PW-COA members and had knowledge of the PW-COA during the years prior to the Brown landmark decision through the middle to late 1960s. It is important to state that the researcher’s viewpoint was one of an outsider, as the researcher had no prior knowledge about the inner workings of the YWCA organization or the PW-COA, and therefore attempted to report the study from an unbiased point of view. Participants in the study appeared eager to share their thoughts during the interview process, and the researcher felt it was of the utmost importance to provide a space for their previously muted voices.

Bell states that CRT provides redemption for those marginalized. This redemptive nature of CRT does not erase the wrongs inflicted upon its victims; however, CRT affords them a safe space in which they are able to offer clarification and insight about their experiences. Ladson-Billings proposes that the strength of these voices further illuminates CRT by giving credibility to these women’s shared struggles while concurrently helping others to comprehend their plight.

In addition to the transcripts of shared experiences, some of the participants chose to share examples of PW-Y memorabilia, which validated events they referenced during their retellings. Christine Wall’s research offers a rationale for how workplace mementoes aid in prompting the reminiscence of participants:

267 Merriam, *Qualitative Research.*

268 Bell, "Who's Afraid of Critical Race Theory?"

269 Ladson-Billings, “Just What is Critical Race?”
Workplace memorabilia, regard [sic] as artifacts and mementoes kept from workplaces and stored in homes, is varied, including: tools of a trade, ephemeral leaflets and pamphlets, union mementoes, uniforms and badges, long service awards, gifts from colleagues, and photographs both formal and informal. These objects can symbolize many years of work-life history.\textsuperscript{270}

Comparatively speaking, the PW-COA member’s work mementoes are strikingly similar to the above-named items referenced in Wall’s research. Although these women did not receive payment for services rendered, their volunteer work was no less valued or nor insignificant when comparing them to individuals who received payment. The six women were digitally audiotaped and interviewed for approximately one hour. Second interviews were conducted to clarify discrepancies and to enhance thematic coding and analysis.\textsuperscript{271}

According to Johnny Saldana, “Qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meanings of human experience.”\textsuperscript{272} After carefully reviewing the interview transcripts, which encompassed over 100 pages, several explicitly powerful themes emerged from the data. These themes provided the beginning foundational support that contained answers to the research questions. In addition to the major themes, numerous minor themes appeared that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{270} Christine Wall, “Something to Show for It: The Place of Mementoes in Women’s Oral Histories of Work” (lecture, ILPC 2009), 1.
\item \textsuperscript{271} Gwendolyn D. Packnett, “In Their Voices – Retaining African American Students At a Predominantly White University: An Examination of Theoretical Implications and Student Centered Practices” (PhD diss., University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2010).
\item \textsuperscript{272} Johnny Saldana, The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers (SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA, 2009), 10.
\end{itemize}
produced the necessary fragments upon which to build the background story of these phenomenal women.

The major themes revealed from the interviews and utilized for analysis included: the education process, careers, YWCA, community, family and religion, racism, and marginalization. Participants’ secondary themes consisted of comments that focused on sorority life, employment or lack of employment opportunities, and fundraising for their programs. A contextual analysis of this data suggested that the participants had seemingly similar experiences not only in their involvement at the PW-Y, but with other societal, sociological, and psychological phenomena during the time period under study. Sherwood and Freshwater states that Baiba Bela describes a constructivist approach to oral history, contending that “reality is always socially constructed” and notes that “the understanding of the meanings attributed to facts is just as important as reaching for the knowledge of the ‘facts’ themselves.” The participants’ constructed knowledge of their experiences governed the pace of the study as the researcher sought to construct an understanding of them and comprehend their integral role as policy actors within the PW-Y.

In summary, the data analysis steps consisted of first collecting participant interview data via audiotaped recordings. Next, a grounded theory approached was utilized using a constant comparison method to develop categories with open and axial coding. The transcripts were read and re-read to help identify the overarching dominant

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274 Ibid.
codes and sub-codes. Codes were then grouped together through selective coding to generate the major themes that spoke from the interview data. Finally, an audit trail of analytical memos, as well as narrative observation forms, were kept to assist the researcher in comprehending different facets of ideals that were shared through the data and to help in keeping the researcher focused on the research questions, see Appendix A. The remainder of the chapter discusses the major themes heard throughout the participants’ interview data. The researcher chose an interwoven approach as an effective way to ensure the thoughts, words, actions, and deeds were stated with fairness and integrity. In an effort to keep each participant’s name anonymous, a pseudonym was assigned. The researcher’s reflections appear in italics when the researcher felt the need to interject or clarify personal reactions to the participants’ answers and comments.

Initial PW-COA Membership

Out of the six participants, only five were actual PW-COA members. The sixth participant was the executive director of the Branch that the PW-COA managed. However, this executive director had first hand knowledge of how these women became members of the PW-COA. Thus, a question arose concerning how the participants even became affiliated with the PW-Y. This question was answered by several of the participants. One point that was duly noted was most of these women already knew one another from early on in their lives or through mutual acquaintances. Nevertheless, a few shared exactly how they became PW-COA members:

So [Janice Harris] called me. The first thing she said was, ‘You’re a member of the COA.’ Now I hadn’t turned anything in. She said, ‘and you’re membership chairman.’ How could I be membership chairman, I’m not even a member of the
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committee yet?  She said, ‘Oh yeah, you’re a member and you’re membership chairman.’ So that was my introduction to the COA.

BS—Lines 33-38.

Clearly Mrs. Harris, the executive director, had a very vibrant and engaging personality. This snippet shares Mrs. Barbara Smith’s introduction into the group. Also noted was the fact that Mrs. Smith was not only accepted but also given a leadership role (membership chairman) despite her reluctance and possible lacking of how to implement this position.

Mrs. Madie Jones enthusiastically tells of her initial involvement:

And after Buella Brooks asked me to join I became very active. I had to follow in her footsteps. She always brought in, maybe, the second highest amount of money. And I bring in the highest amount now. But I really feel deeply for the people in the transitional housing program.

MJ (Part 2)—Lines 75-78.

Ms. Alice Anderson was already on the board, as the minutes concur, but she gives insight to the rotational nature of board servitude. The PW-COA minutes attest to the timeline of board service, which was a three-year cycle (This meant that when a member was elected to the board, another member had to come off the board. This quote also speaks to the importance of fundraising, which was discussed later in the chapter.):

I was just on the board, Mrs. Albert Gantt, was chairman. I was chairman after she was and that’s when we bought the piano. We had to pay $25. So everybody on the board had to pay $25. The next thing that she did was the fashion show.

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275 PW-COA Minutes, February 7, 1962, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.
That’s other thing that she did. She came off the board and I came on the board.

I mean I was a part of the COA already but then I was the chairman.

AA (Part 2)—Lines 39-43.

A Formal Education to an Informal Education?

All of the participants, with the exception of one, were highly formally educated women. The avenues that each woman took to become college graduates took many different twists and turns. One of the women speaks with pride about how she was able to attend college despite the confines of segregation:

Leaving Sumner 3rd ranking in my class that I attended Stowe Teacher’s College.

And as you know, Stowe Teacher’s College was for Blacks only cause they had Harris Teachers College.

MJ (Part 1)—Lines 57-59.

Mrs. Jones, who was very soft-spoken, became very animated when she reminisced about her educational background. Education was extremely important to her as she revealed a competitive edge, especially when she talked about her academic performance and how she wanted to outdo and perform better on each opportunity to demonstrate mastered knowledge. Several women spoke with pride about not only obtaining their initial degree, but also their pursuits of advanced college degrees. Mrs. Fontima Lewis briefly recalls her educational credentials:

I have a master’s degree plus 30 [hours]. We call it, in education an Educational Administration.

Even during these segregated times, Mrs. Lewis managed to obtain not only a Masters, but also the additional 30 credit hours. That was a major feat to be accomplished in a city that was racially segregated. Mrs. Beulah Kennerly discusses her college educational background:

My educational background…I have a Masters. Well, I have an undergrad from Stowe, the old Stowe. I went to SLU [St. Louis University] and wasted all those hours in grad school. (*There are two entries here from BK. It was not really clear why she felt that she wasted hours in grad school unless she meant that she changed her grad major and the hours didn’t apply toward the plus 30. Her meaning wasn’t quite clear and she did not elaborate at the second interview. Nevertheless, she was very well educated despite racial segregation practice during that time period.*)

BK—Lines 96-98

She further explains:

I went on ahead and got my Masters from Wash U in Reading. I took a few hours… I never did get my plus 30. I took some hours after that.

BK—Lines 100-101.

The above-italicized entry was taken from the audit trail. A later reflection on Mrs. Kennerly’s belief that she wasted those hours in grad school may have come from the lack of employment opportunities for Blacks in St. Louis. Next, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones both speak about their education:

I have a B.A. from Stowe Teacher’s College, a M.A. from St. Louis University, a plus 30 from Webster University, St. Louis University and Harris-Stowe.
BS—Lines 12-14.

I left there went to University of Illinois in Champaign received my degree in Education. Then my 30+ hours at Webster University, the Forest Park Community Colleges and so forth.

MJ (Part 1)—Lines 88-90

Ms. Anderson discusses her educational background. She was the only participant to attend a Black college out of state:

Therefore, I transferred to Lane College in Jackson, TN and that’s where I graduated from. I got my A.B. degree; I was so proud about it.

AA (Part 1)—Lines 89-90. (This participant actually attended a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and transferred out of state to another HBCU. This transfer to another Black college was interesting. The pastor of her church initiated the transfer process. Her father was approached and asked if he would send his daughter to this college.)

Although each one of these women had a high level of education and sometimes from the same institution, their lived experiences added to and enriched this research due to their own individual perceptions about how their education added value to the roles they played in providing informal educational opportunities for lower socio economic Black females of the PW-Y.

Only one of the participants did not attend school post high school. Mrs. Sadie Tucker simply describes her educational background:

I graduated in 1947 from Vashon High School. (While it seems that her educational background was insignificant, that would be quite the contrary. As
she discussed the events of her life, there was little room for her to pursue formal education beyond this level. Nevertheless, her work experiences provided her with informal educational opportunities that many of the college graduates did not experience.)

ST (Part 4)—Lines 61.

The educational experiences these women share had been carved out for them by the very nature of growing up in a segregated society. Educational opportunities were extremely limited for Black females, especially for those on the lower socio-economic levels. These women might have been considered part of the talented tenth, as their educational levels were unparalleled to the masses of Black working class females during the Jim Crow era. W.E.B. Du Bois crafts out the meaning of this tenth:

“The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional [wo]men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.”

Unfortunately for many Black females, the receipt of gaining any education was not possible. As researcher June C. Christian asserts:

Education or the lack thereof, reciprocally influences racism. Education as a microcosm of the broader society, serves as a cultural vehicle for dehumanization. Schooling, as a function of education, models and sustains the dehumanization of all students—particularly Black students who are among the bottom caste of the

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United States’ racial hierarchy. As a tool of dehumanization, schooling bears scrutiny situated among historical events, societal behaviors, and social realities.277

For these poor and virtually invisible women, society had placed a huge burden and label of not being worthy to educate. However, the PW-Y’s vision of racial uplift allowed these women and girls to seize the moment and to obtain informal education through the vast array of programs provided by the PW-Y. Mrs. Harris, a former Y-Teens Director and later on Branch executive director talks about the informal opportunities during her tenure:

That was a teaching…that was a teacher. I just wasn’t hired by the Board of Education [St. Louis Public Schools] and I wasn’t getting a teacher’s salary. I taught the girls how to do their hair. I take them out to dinner. Teach them how to order the food from a menu. *(These seemingly small, yet important informal trainings laid a foundation for these girls that would last well into their adult lives).*

JH (Part 2)—Lines 75-78.

Mrs. Harris further explains the nature of the girls’ informal educational experiences:

Our cooks would have raised the money to pay for it so that they could get it (*an understanding of how to dine in a restaurant*) and develop their relationships with the waitresses. You supposed to give them a couple of pennies for a tip for doing what they did do. So it was a total education, a social education for them.

JH (Part 2)—78-81.

These informal educational experiences prearranged for the girls afforded them

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opportunities to learn about the social aspects of life. Ordering from a menu, leaving tips (as well as how much to tip), and how to conduct one’s self in public venues are social skills not necessary taught in the formal educational setting. Further, these middle-class values were being instilled in these lower socio-economically trapped girls as a way to show them how to have a positive experience and decide what type of society in which they would like to live. The informal educational experiences also served to help the girls understand about work and its relationship to society, to accept their creativeness and seek expressions of these gifts and to stress the important of mental and physical health.  

Life Experiences, Careers, and Leadership

In addition to PW-Y providing informal educational opportunities for its members, the PW-COA participants also discussed how their involvement helped them to acquire skills that were transferrable to other organizations and employment settings. Mrs. Lewis passionately recalls how she gained skills from several positions she held as a PW-COA member:

I was the treasurer, the secretary… It has nothing to do with you, but it has to do with the informal education…I learned from those two entities—the COA and the sorority—how to balance the books, how to take minutes, how to, once again, get along with other folk. I learned parliamentary procedures…all of those things were important, and I felt, made me a well-rounded and knowledgeable human being…

FL—Lines 95-100.

Even the most reserved and shy members of the PW-COA spoke of their experiences and how they grew as leaders. It was indicative of the executive director to ask for and

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278 Cuthbert, “Negro Youth.”
demand total participation from each member. Mrs. Smith recounts:

You know you are in charge of something. Cause if you don’t volunteer they’ll
draft you.

BS—Lines 384-385.

During the interview session in her home, Mrs. Jones, a former PW-COA chair, discusses
her experiences and how she personally developed when she was in her teens:

The Girl Reserves was basically that *(a social activity time for girls)* except that
we had these workshops where people would come in and guide us. We had
training in poise, good etiquette, and charm classes. We had speech and we had
to interact with plays, drama, and so forth. But it did teach me how to…I used to
be very shy. I wouldn’t speak up. Teachers would have to force me to speak up.
I know I knew the answer, but after being in the Girl Reserves it brought me out.
I began to feel better about myself. I was… I didn’t have much confidence in
myself, but they brought that out. I think that was an educational experience. I
had to get up and speak… and present yourself… and represent the group.

MJ (Part 2)—Lines 87-95.

Mrs. Smith fondly remembers musical lessons she took at PW-Y:

I remember taking piano lessons at the Y for free, dancing lessons for free. We
had the coming out party, for free back in my day. *(Her emphasizes on the
lessons being free was important as she further explained,)* ‘Nowadays you have
to pay for everything!’

BS—Lines 165-166.

These life experiences obtained through the PW-Y had profound effects on the PW-COA
members themselves and their involvement in sorority life. Hernandez and Arnold speak
to the importance of Black female sorority life and its historical connection to the recruitment of Black teachers. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Smith briefly discuss their involvement in their sororities, respectively:

While in high school and in Harris Stowe with the sorority, we met at PW. So, we did lots of activities there…


Mrs. Smith’s revelation was significant to the study as she simply stated her role as a sorority member. Her leadership role was cultivated and developed through her involvement in the PW-COA:

I was president of my sorority.

BS—Lines 32-33.

Mrs. Jones also divulges information concerning the leadership role she took on as a member of the 2nd oldest Black female sorority:

Delta Sigma Theta sorority…I pledge that. I became a member and became very active in the sorority.

MJ (Part 1)—Lines 114-115.

A final aspect of the informal educational advantages one PW-COA member spoke of was her ability to attend conventions, sometimes with Y-Teens, but most often with the Branch director:

Every conference, we were sitting up in there. We’d save our little money and we’d go. They’d say, ‘Who’s going to the meeting? Ms. [Harris], she has to go. She’s the CEO. So, she has to go. And I’d say, Well, I’ll go with her.’


Ibid.
We were buddies’ buddies. See, I was the chairman of the CEO while she was the chairman of the board PW-Y; she was over PW-Y. And then when it was time, there were meetings to go to; she drug me to them.

Everywhere they were having a meeting, we were ready. We got our little suitcases and were gone.

The double entries from Mrs. Anderson indicate just how important training was to those members of the PW-COA. These entries also show how completely bonded these women were to the cause as well as to one another. Life-long friendships were forged through their involvement with PW-Y. Next, the former Branch director also weighs in her experiences concerning the conventions and traveling with Mrs. Anderson. The following entry is her passionate response to probes about her position at the PW-Y:

Oh, yes. To New York…we also went to Maine. We went to world conventions. They were in other countries. We went to all of those things.

One of the most important life experiences the girls of the PW-Y obtained was camping. Camp Derricotte offered exposure to life unseen by city residents, especially those that lived in the infamous Pruitt-Igoe housing projects. Mrs. Harris sometimes struggled to articulate her relationship with the children of this housing project (Mrs. Harris had suffered a medical setback, however; she tried to remember as much as she
These were all Pruitt-Igoe kids. Whoever heard of a Pruitt-Igoe at a camp?
(laughter). They went (inaudible) and some of those houses were nice and clean,
you could eat off the floor. Others you couldn’t. Some of them were nice and
clean, like I said you could eat off the floor. They were just that clean. But they
didn’t get that credit from the community.

JH—Lines 81-85.

The reputation of the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects was mythological in the sense that the
public was only made privy to the negative connotations of the location. On the contrary,
Mrs. Harris further exclaims about the residential camping for city children, who in her
opinion, were well-mannered and polite:

So they all got a chance to the camping experiences. That was were they saw
their first trees and grass and flowers and stuff like that. Stuff they had never seen
before, but they were introduced to all of that.

JH—Lines 25-29.

Pruitt-Igoe proved very controversial for the PW Y-Teens director. The housing project
had an undesirable aura surrounding its name, but Mrs. Harris felt the need was severe
enough to forgo a directive and service the girls anyway:

My boss told me she didn’t want me to go down to Pruitt-Igoe. The head of my
volunteer committee said she didn’t want me to go. The Board of Education said
that it needed help with the girls from that area. So my boss said, “I don’t want
you to go.” And I said, “I’m going!”

JH—Lines 123-126.
Another PW-COA member, who later became a social worker also felt the calling to service the Pruitt-Igoe residents:

See when I got a job for the State (of Missouri). See we were… I was in the Pruitt-Igoe.

AA (Part 1)—Lines 477.

As Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Harris were buddies due to their involvement with PW-Y, it was conceivable that Mrs. Anderson, as a social worker, would also take interest in servicing the girls in Pruitt-Igoe.

Long before the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects, a few of the PW-COA members also attended Camp Derricotte as children. The following two excerpts are memories they shared from their experiences camping:

So, anyway I went to camp Derricotte when I was 11. I didn’t really learn to swim. I am so sorry I didn’t, but every time I looked at the swimming pool it was full of little bugs called walking sticks. I could tolerate the cabins, but I wasn’t getting in that water.

BK—Lines 296-299.

Another recalls:

We had crafts. We had hikes, cook outs. We did all kinds of things. By doing villages, every village had a night to do something. It was a 2-week program. They taught tennis and a whole lot of things. They taught all kinds of things that the kids probably never would have gotten at home, which I know I didn’t get.

BS—Lines 216-219.

More than 50 years have passed since Mrs. Kennerly and Mrs. Smith attended Camp
Derricotte. The impact of this camping experience has stuck in their minds for more than a half a century! These ladies’ recollections have offered a powerful testimony to the effectiveness of the informal education that was previously available at the PW-Y.

**Historical Functioning of the PW-COA**

The PW-COA was the governing body of the PW-Y. This group of women ran the day-to-day operations of the Branch. The executive director of the Branch led them, but their collective voice was included in all decision making. Although this study focused on the PW-COA as a group during the ending tenure of executive director, Mrs. Anna Lee Scott and the promotion of Mrs. Janice Harris to executive director, the following two tables pay homage to the trailblazers that initiated and pursued the dream of racial uplift of all Black women in the St. Louis area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phyllis Wheatley Branch Directors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Arsania Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mae Belcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Dorothy Guinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Amanda Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Mattie Dover Young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Ermalene Vaughn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Anna Lee Scott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Janice Harris**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alias**

Figure 3
**Phyllis Wheatley COA Chairs Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years as Chair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miss Arsania Williams</td>
<td>1911-1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Herman Ambrose</td>
<td>1913-1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Victoria C. Haley</td>
<td>1921-1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lavania Carter</td>
<td>1924-1926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Georgia A. Brown</td>
<td>1926-1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. George E. Stevens</td>
<td>1928-1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Myrtle McKinney Moffett</td>
<td>1932-1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Annie K. Garner</td>
<td>1938-1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Josephine Banks</td>
<td>1939-1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. S. E. Garner</td>
<td>1940-1941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Everett. H. Colbert</td>
<td>1941-1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lillian Mosee</td>
<td>1947-1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Wilrene Woods</td>
<td>1953-1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Beulah O. Jordan</td>
<td>1957-1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gerdielee Younge</td>
<td>1959-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Betty W. Pollard</td>
<td>1960-1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Helen Flowers</td>
<td>1963-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lillian Houston</td>
<td>1966-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gertrude Randol</td>
<td>1969-1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Alberta Gantt</td>
<td>1971-1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gertrude Randol</td>
<td>1975-1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Alice Anderson**</td>
<td>1979-1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Helene Thomas</td>
<td>1982-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Buella Brooks</td>
<td>1985-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Marion Mitchell</td>
<td>1992-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Christine Bruce</td>
<td>1995-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Harriett Sinclair</td>
<td>1997-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Fontima Lewis**</td>
<td>2001-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Sadie Tucker**</td>
<td>2006-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Madie Jones**</td>
<td>2011-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Patricia Penelton</td>
<td>2013-present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant Aliases**

Figure 4

Always an active and viable part of the PW-Y’s organization, the PW-COA’s role was somewhat complex due to changes within the infrastructure of the YWCA organization.
Through the lens of CRT, this section discusses the changes and complexities associated with this vital group within the YWCA organization.

In 1966, Mrs. Janice Harris became the executive Branch director for the PW-Y, due to the promotion of Mrs. Anna Lee Scott to the Metro Y as the executive director. (Fig.14). Mrs. Harris became the youngest Branch director in the United States.\textsuperscript{281} This changing of the guards, if you will, ushered in a new era for the PW-Y. In Mrs. Harris’ own words:

Oh, was a part of that? I was the boss of that! I was the boss of the COA and they told me what to do, when, where and how to do it. And anything I needed, anything I needed they get for me.


During the late 1940s through the early 1960s, the PW-Y was the social beacon of the Black community.\textsuperscript{282} All events of prominence were held within the walls of the organization’s facility. From sorority meetings to social grassroots activism, the PW-Y was the central point location from which these activities radiated. One member recalls how the PW-Y was a social place for U. S. soldiers:

I’ll tell you something…When WWII…now I was too young. But the girls that were going to whatever that school was (now I forgot) they used to have dances on the roof over there. I knew about it because when they girls come back to church telling about what they were doing. They would be talking to each other I
would be listening to what they were talking about. They used to dance up there on the roof.

AA (Part 1)—Lines 394-399.

Mrs. Anderson’s remembrance of this social interaction was symbolic of the kinds of activities conducted by PW-Y. This type of community support was critical since PW-Y was the only social place where Blacks could go for entertainment. Jim Crow Laws were stringent and kept Blacks out of all recreational areas opened to Whites, but the PW-Y provided the respite of activities needed to soothe the sting of the exclusionary practices of the city.

Keeping the Doors Opened

Even with the camping and leadership activities, keeping the doors opened at the PW-Y proved more than challenging. PW-COA member, Mrs. Barbara Smith, recalls various fundraising that was necessary to fund the PW-Y’s mission all the while keeping the doors opened:

At one time the COA did a fish and chicken dinner, which was really great!

BS—Lines 59.

The Locust Street location was home to the PW-Y for more than 50 years. This established Black space in the community was a fixture that represented a constructive binding tie to an African American community that faced a crumbling infrastructure. In order to keep the PW-Y monument open, raising money became a mission within the PW-Y’s mission. In general, fundraising was and continues to be a critical aspect of non-

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profit organizations. Moreover, PW-Y had their share of challenges raising funds as well:

Yeah, but it was a big drive. I want to keep saying Pruitt-Igoe, but it was not Pruitt-Igoe. A big thing…White folks as well as Black folks donated big money. I can’t recall the name of it. They gave big money…in Troy, MO. The money they gave us was paying part of my salary, Papa Jack’s salary…a whole lot of us. Anyway, it was a good program that helped out a lot of Black kids.

JH—Lines 347-351.

Mrs. Harris’ momentary recollections of how money was donated to PW-Y verified the necessity of fundraising for the organization. Another member, Mrs. Kennerly, continues the confirmation on the need for fundraising:

The fashion show is what, 44 or 45 (years old) in February. We used to have chicken dinners and chitterling dinners and all that kind of stuff.

BK—Lines 314-315.

Not only were the PW-COA members fundraisers and providers of informal educational opportunities, they were also policy actors as their mission and actions affected the very fiber of the Black community. One long-time member professes how she viewed their presence in the community:

In the community, the PW-Y was held in a very high esteem because I’m sure [Janice] told you that during the days of segregation… We, everybody in the Black community at one time or another met at the YWCA on Locust for many events.

FL—Lines 62-65.
Mrs. Lewis’ viewpoints on the PW-Y were corroborated in variety of research-based references. The former Branch director also discusses her views on how their policy affected others:

So, yeah, everybody was willing to help. Also, they had a very strong committee of volunteers, women who, for the most part, were professionals. So they raised the money to keep Camp Derricott going and they did! So, it was hard but it wasn’t that hard because everybody wanted to support the cause, and they did. It was quite a challenge, but not that hard.

JH—Lines 37-41.

As the participants shared their stories, the PW-COA’s purpose and position had begun to evolve into a clear historical connection between themselves as PW-COA members and the PW-Y. At this juncture, the focus now segues into how the PW-COA’s disconnection to the PW-Y’s programming of informal education began to decline.

Initially, the PW-COA was the governing body of the organization. They ran the daily operations, and they developed the informal education programming for socially and economically disenfranchised African American women. Chapter 4 detailed, specifically, the major programs that were offered by PW-Y during the time period studied. From camping to residential housing, those individuals that held memberships to the PW-Y always had an array of classes being offered to enrich themselves personally, aesthetically, and socially.

Some of the earlier PW-COA members taught classes such as sewing, charm, and etiquette in an effort to raise the social standing of lower classed Black girls and women.

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284 Lang, Grassroots at the Gateway. See also Dowden-White, Groping Toward Democracy.
The residential housing for Black females was the first of its kind in the area. It provided housing for celebrities such as Butterfly McQueen\textsuperscript{285} and others, who were unable to stay at hotels in the city due to racial discrimination. Those opportunities catapulted the PW-Y’s membership and secured its prominence with the community.

Even as the leadership of the PW-Y continued to change, due to its constitutional regulations (i.e., PW-COA chaired for 3 years), other changes had begun to slowly take affect. The most significant change was Mrs. Scott’s departure to the Metro Y, which at first, seemed like a dream come true. Ms. Anderson’s comment on the group’s initial reaction to the loss of Mrs. Scott to the Metro Y:

> We thought it was great to want to get Ms. Scott to go up. The thing of it is the PW-Y, we were outstanding in the community and the White folks knew that.

> And they knew that they needed somebody…cause see they was closing all their Ys.

AA (Part 2)—Lines 63-65.

However, all was not great with the Metro Y. As stated earlier, the Metro Y’s portion of the organization was in trouble. The Metro Y bore the responsibility for the closing of several Black Branch locations. As Mrs. Smith remembers:

> They had to drop a lot of the Branches. The children…Kinloch doesn’t have that many people anymore. The population is really going down. (The minutes indicated that the Black county Branch were some of the first to be closed. The

\textsuperscript{285}Lisa M. Anderson, “Thelma (Butterfly) McQueen,” in Notable American Women. A Biographical Dictionary Completing the Twentieth Century, ed. Susan Ware (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 437. Butterfly McQueen was a singer, dancer, and actress in the 1930s whose most notable role was Prissy in Gone with the Wind.
continued closing of Black Branches violated Black space and exposed the racial contamination perpetrated by the White YWCA).\textsuperscript{286}

BS—Lines 437-439.

A shift in the population, White flight, and an exponential growth in West St. Louis County caused irreparable damage to the Metro Y and its standing in the community.\textsuperscript{287} Sexism, as well as racism, also played a role in the visibility of the organization as many people just assumed the Metro Y, PW-Y, and the YMCA were all the same organization:

\begin{quote}
I think in some instances we kind of melted in with the boys’ Y.
\end{quote}

AA (Part 2)—Lines 264.

Comments such as the one by Ms. Anderson along with the closing of Black Branches perpetuated feelings of trepidation about the growing instability concerning the PW-Y’s image in the community. Further, these undercurrents signaled systemic issues in how the Metro Y was inadvertently marking the gradual decline of the PW-COA.

Summary

In the beginning was there was a need from the working class women in the Negro community. A need to be understood, heard, and recognized as worthy and socially accepted human beings. When that need remained unmet, middle-class Negro women outwardly responded to the call by forming a club of their own to meet the needs of women who were desperate, exhausted, and filled with indignation on how Negro women were perceived in White space.


\textsuperscript{287} Gordon, Mapping Decline.
The PW-COA members were volunteers who sought to make a change in the lives of those in their communities. The PW-COA’s purpose was to serve the working-class Black women and young females by offering informal educational opportunities through outstanding programs.

The participants in this study have shared their knowledge and experiences on the origins of the PW-COA, the past programming offered by their Branch, and how their lives were changed because of their participation either as a child or as an adult. These women have also shared how their work within the organization has benefitted them as recipients and providers of informal educational opportunities.

This chapter discusses who were the PW-COA and their connection to the PW-Y. Also discussed was the purpose of the PW-COA and how their role impacted the organization. In the past, the PW-COA’s role was crucial to the PW-Y as they provided the day-to-day management of the organization. It is also important to note that all Black Branches of the YWCA had COAs, but this particular PW-Y is the only viable COA in the area today.

As a volunteer organization, the PW-Y was inclusive in that those living within the boundaries of the building were welcomed to participate for a nominal fee. A few exclusionary practices did exist, but this was mostly with the programming centered about the Girl Reserves at Sumner High School. Nonetheless, the PW-Y serviced a lower socio-economically classed Black community with limited funding that was offset through various fundraising ventures. From selling dinners to cookie drives, everyone pitched in to assist in keeping the doors opened.

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Historically, the PW-Y was an entity that fought to eradicate the pervasive racism that cloaked the city. Serving as the command post for numerous grassroots operations, the PW-Y was the safe-haven for those individuals and groups that professed to eradicate hatred based on skin color. Unfortunately, the racism within the organization was caustic enough to negate most of the virtuous deeds achieved throughout the years.
CHAPTER SIX:
THE DECLINE OF AN ICON

Introduction

In the divulging of their stories for this study, the PW-COA conveyed many emotions during the interview sessions. There were moments of euphoric highs that were consistent with written accounts found in the various documents contained in the YWCA records the researcher reviewed. At first, the interviewees all appeared to have the same ideals and a consensus that everything experienced at the PW-Y was great. The women all spoke the same language and some even referenced each other in their sessions with statements such as: “Oh, you should talk to so-and-so. She knows all about that!” Or, “Barbara has been in the longest. She could tell you everything.” Yet, the reports were too good to be true; something seemed amiss and hidden from their revelations.

However, upon further analysis of the initial interview data and then deeper probing during the second interviews, the façade began to unravel that unleashed the true story. The researcher’s initial purpose of conducting the study was to analyze the impact of the PW-COA’s support of the informal educational opportunities offered to lower classed Black females at the PW-Y. In addition to this pursued information, the researcher also sought to understand the PW-Y’s social justice stance as well as the connection between PW-Y and the PW-COA, and finally, the researcher questioned what societal issues caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the early shared experiences of the PW-COA members appeared harmonious and exciting. From camping experiences to world
travel, the ladies enjoyed all the perks that operating their own Branch entailed. A united front was upheld with these women as they basked in the memories of what was, what they accomplished in their Black space, and how their reign was received and perceived among the African American residents in the community.

In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the participants’ narratives that garnered themes that were markedly different from the previous chapter. The stories of this chapter’s shared experiences are consistent among the women, but the prior euphoric mood of the participants became somber with an air of uncertainty. The story of the decline of the PW-COA and the deterioration of their forefront involvement in the PW-Y was an unexpected result, and therefore, not calculated in the researcher’s initial questions. However due to the emphasis placed upon this facet of their contributions and its significance, the story of the decline of the PW-COA became the unexpected tale that created closure to the muted voices of these women. In short, the analysis of the PW-Y’s participants continued as they imparted their views concerning the waning of the center.

One matter to keep in mind was the structural changes that occurred within the organization. In 1946, the National YWCA adopted an Interracial Charter policy of non-discrimination within the organization. As an organization, the YWCA developed policies that forbid the individual Branch and affiliate YWCAs from practicing racial exclusion. The problem with this new directive was that White females in the Southern YWCAs were adamant against sharing power with Black females.289 This outright refusal to accept Blacks as full members within the YWCA caused a major strain on the

289 Webb, “The Limits of Interracial Sisterhood.”
organization. Southern White women wanted to follow the status quo, which required any Black Branch to abide by the rules forced upon them by White YWCA affiliates. On the other hand, Black Branches sought to carve out a niche that would service the needs in their communities.

To Merge or Not to Merge?

In the early days of existence, the PW-Y shared no exception to being managed by White females from the Central YWCA despite PW-Y’s growth and immense popularity within the Black community. However, at some juncture, the PW-Y began to take on a more independent-like role, especially during the tenure of Mrs. Anna Lee Scott. Mrs. Scott’s vision and leadership led to the establishing of the first camp for Blacks girls in Troy, MO, Camp Derricotte. Mrs. Scott was the Branch director for the PW-Y for 33 years. During her tenure, the PW-Y experienced exponential growth in offering informal educational programing and in membership growth due to the leadership of Mrs. Scott. The PW-COA board minutes in Appendix D served as a testament to the breadth of opportunities available during her leadership. Mrs. Scott then left PW-Y to become the first Black female executive director of the Metro Y.

Throughout the years, there had been talk of merging PW-Y and Central YWCA. Central YWCA and PW-COA Board minutes discussed, in detail, studies on how the two YWCAs might merge, as many of their functions were the same. This potential merger

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290 Ibid.

291 Ibid.


293 PW-COA Minutes, January 4, 1961, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.
would have been a historic symbol in the ending of racial exclusionary practices if an affiliate and segregated Branch had integrated. Racial segregation was still legal in St. Louis so the joining of these two YWCAs would have been a major upset aiding in dismantling the separation of races. On the other hand, this coup would have meant the end of an era for those who were instrumental in managing the day-to-day operations of the PW-Y, namely the PW-COA. The following excerpts speak to the PW-COA member’s feelings concerning the exclusionary practices they’ve experienced from the Metro Y (financial and management), marginalization, lost citizenship (due to that potential merger), as well as accountability issues relative to their relationship with the Metro Y.

Central YWCA Policy and Initial Merger Attempts

Initially, the policy and agency that was pivotal for even considering the merger between Central YWCA and PW-Y must be examined. There were several mitigating factors that caused the Central YWCA to consider merging with the PW-Y. One factor was the institutionalized racism of Jim Crow Laws that served as an impediment to positive racial relations. These racially exclusive laws necessitated the need for segregated Branches. Another factor was the differences in the services each YWCA affiliate and Branch provided. PW-Y serviced the Black community with a full range of informal educational opportunities and outreach programs, where as the Central YWCA concentrated on programs that were basically recreational in nature. One PW-COA member recalls the differences between the two entities:

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294 Central-Wheatley COA, Minutes, May 23, 1957, Series 10, Box 20, Folder 760.
It was a big difference. At PW, most of us was the same color. We did our own programs and most of the things (Metro) did were for babies. Their (Metro) biggest program was swimming for little babies. They had baby classes. That’s one of the reasons some people got off (the board) because they stopped doing it, some of our members, some nice people—they said, ‘They’re not going to have it. So then it (Metro) just folded. They didn’t do the kind of programs that we did. They didn’t do programs from children and all that. They did…I don’t know…because at PW we had all kinds of dancing, skating…whatever you wanted to do you could come because we had a place to do it.

BS—Lines 348-356

The starkly different approaches to YWCA programming were evidenced by Mrs. Smith’s recollections. As the separate but equal policies and agency of both YWCA affiliates and Black Branches continued, other members also spoke of the differences between the Black Branches and the White affiliates YWCA:

We had our own procedures, but we had the Metro’s. There were things that we had to have in our procedures that the Metro had.

AA (2nd)—Lines 132-133.

Ms. Anderson’s comment speaks to the paternalistic element that was a noted force in the Metro Y’s governance; since Black Branches were always governed by White YWCA affiliates. Webb further explains the paternalism model that White YWCA affiliates historically utilized to keep Black Branches in their place: Paternalism is generally understood to be concern for the well being of others, derived from a father’s concern for
his children. Other members also revealed the constraints that the Metro Y had on PW-Y to ensure accountability to the main YWCA:

They had a certain reputation they were going to keep. And you joined them so you fall up under their rules and regulations.

ST (Part 6)—Lines 37-38.

Mrs. Tucker’s comments add strength to the study because she was one of the last participants to join the PW-COA during major structural changes within the organization. Further, she was not associated with the PW-Y as a child, unlike some of the other participants, so her views of the organization’s internal workings were less likely based on nostalgic euphoric recall.

Well now you know we have the Metro YWCA, that’s the head. And Metro is over all the other little components. We are under the auspices of Metro, so everything that we do has to be approved through the Metro.

MJ—Lines 121-123.

Mrs. Jones’s affirmation reiterates that the paternalistic mandates continue to control the PW-COA even to this day. This last excerpt really addresses the policy and agency that was mandated to PW-Y because the essence of the ability of this group to direct themselves was exposed, despite being overseen by the tightly run ship of the Metro Y:


296Jack Dougherty, “From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History,” The Journal of American History, 86, no. 2 (1999): 712-723. In this issue Dougherty uses the phrase, “euphoric recall,” which was coined by Robin D. G. Kelley in Race, Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class (New York, 1994). The phrase originates in her oral interview methodology that takes steps to limit the bias of “euphoric recall,” the tendency for interviewees to recall the “good times” of previous years with nostalgic fondness, especially when times were less than good.
Well, I wouldn’t say friction as such, but there were things we wanted to do but couldn’t do without their ok. Sometimes, you want to do it on your own. There’s nothing you can do…everything is handled by them.

BS—Lines 409 – 411.

The above review of the policy and agency of the Metro Y clearly demonstrated the reasons for the initial downward spiraling of the PW-Y and of its management team, the PW-COA. Excessive accountability to Metro Y, the threat of an inevitable merger, and the loss of a seasoned executive director subsequently set the stage for the demise of the PW-Y. This constant patriarchal management style caused significant degradation to the thriving Black Branch. The need for Metro Y to avoid absorption by its own agency, the PW-Y, and a slowness to change led to a feeble attempt at self-preservation through the promotion of the PW-Y’s director, Mrs. Scott. This last ditch effort to save the Metro Y began a series of meetings that led to the ultimate closing of, not only many other declining Black Branches, but a stalemate of who should inevitably close, Metro Y or PW-Y?297

Metro Y’s Actions that Disintegrated Phyllis Wheatley

What Happened to Our Programs?

One criterion that sets organizations apart that offers similar social services is the nature of how those services are delivered. PW-Y gained the reputation as a lifeline to lower socio-economic Black females, as well as the Black community as a whole through the deliverance of services they could not receive anywhere else do to racism. The crux of this organization was to provide informal educational opportunities for those that

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would otherwise not be able to afford formal training and to offer low cost housing for women in transition. Conversely, a slow evolution of change occurred. Once the foundational piece of dismantling programs and activities was removed from the PW-Y, a dilemma persisted for the PW-COA members to solve. The lost of citizenship and the marginalization inflicted upon the PW-COA members was almost unconscionable as their power structure significantly changed.

Having spent years in control of the daily operations of the PW-Y, one of the most noted changes came when the Metro Y made decisions without any consult to the PW-COA:

When they changed…they closed that (PW-Y) altogether.

BS—Lines 70.

Mrs. Smith’s exasperation showed noticeably on her face, as she clearly was frustrated with the Metro Y’s decision. She further expounds with a look of bewilderment on the decision:

All of a sudden…yeah. They said, “We’re closing PW and we’re moving to the building at St. Louis University (SLU).” It was a house for nuns or something like that. So we all moved over there. But we had no idea they were going to move.

BS—Lines 643 – 645.

The above vignette of Mrs. Smith’s discussion about how the PW-Y building was closed really adds to the lack of information available on the PW-COA or the decline of the PW-Y. This closed building was the facility where PW-Y had been since 1941 and where all of the programming was held (i.e., dances, skating, classes, etc.). All of the ladies in this
study, with the exception of Mrs. Tucker, spent in more than half their lives at 2709 Locust Street. An indescribably look of pain covered the members’ faces when they spoke of this particular loss.

Another aspect of that move dealt with the loss of the name ‘Phyllis Wheatley.’ The move was predicated on offering a new space for the Metro Y, but to appease the still active PW-COA, the name ‘Phyllis Wheatley’ was erected and placed on the outside of the building. In addition, there were others that spoke out against the closure of the PW-Y that was located on Locust Street. In particular, Ms. Anderson’s rendition of the attempted closure of the transitional housing offers a comical view, but nonetheless recounts the efforts the PW-COA members took to save their legacy:

We really fought for it. (The keeping of the apartment building.) The folks that’s over us, they wanted to get rid of it and … Oooh, that’s a story! (laughter)

AA (Part 1)—Lines 419 - 420

Throughout the interviews and validated in PW-COA board minutes, the researcher learned that the major project of the PW-COA was the housing component. This was the PW-COA’s first call to duty and historically, their fundraising efforts often indirectly supported the informal education of these women that lived in the transitional housing units. As a long time member of the PW-Y, Mrs. Smith recalls the differences between the housing program and the transitional housing program:

…before that, housing for young women. You could stay as long as…like the transition housing. When they had transition housing, this was just housing and you could stay as long as you want to. When they closed that building, some
women had been there for 20 something years and they had to find a place to move.

BS—Lines 94 - 97

This small statement reflected enormous changes dictated by the Metro Y. The housing program started by PW-Y provided shelter for women prior to, during and after the Great Migration. Removing these women from their “home” and changing the facility to a transitional housing program relegated the PW-COA to a diminished status as this act of dominance forcibly demonstrated what entity was in charge of decision-making; thus virtually leaving the PW-COA without a voice in the matter.

As power struggles ensued, Mrs. Lewis, a former PW-COA chair, speaks of the challenges she endured during this tumultuous time:

I was the chairperson for a long time cause didn’t nobody want to do that job. So I was the one who had to fight every now and then and they’d do things. I would go to the chairperson of the Metro board, who happened to be a Black lady and we have had several chairs, who were Black women. I’d say, “I don’t know what’s going on, but I don’t like what so and so is doing down here. I want you to take care of it.”

FL—Lines 283 – 289.

The subsequent move from 2709 Locust Street to the White space on the St. Louis University campus eliminated all the informal educational programming for Black women. From the latest report to the community, programming at the Metro Y of St. Louis consists of Economic Empowerment, Sexual Assault Center, Racial Justice, Head
Informally Educating the Community

Start, School-Age Care, and YW-Teens. The PWHC ceased operations in early 2013. For the PW-COA, the main focus and the only initiative left for them was the transitional housing program. Mrs. Kennerly expresses disbelief in how the Metro Y continues to make changes with their project:

That’s where the people live in the transitional housing, but that’s all changing. It is all changing. It’s not going to be like we used to…


This last comment from Mrs. Smith, inevitably, sums up the experiences felt by the PW-COA members concerning their programs of the past:

See, they don’t have any programs at the…on the SLU campus…

BS—Lines 181.

Show Me the Money

In addition to the programmatic changes implemented by Metro, there were other exclusionary policies inflicted upon the PW-COA that continued to further marginalize the group. Financial support for this group of women had become the most tumultuous problem and continues to this day. In the prime of the PW-COA, the PW-Y received monies from corporate sponsorship, the Community Chests (now the United Way), through private contributions and donations, and through membership drives. Internal and structural management changes that began with the blending of the Metro Y and the

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299 Ibid.

300 PW-COA Minutes, December 6, 1961, Series 9, Box 12, Folder 394.
PW-Y now determine how monies are allocated for each entity. The only way the PW-COA women can attempt to offset the financial exclusion they are experiencing is through fundraising:

We had a lot of schools that bought chicken and chittlin’ dinners. The public schools ordered. We really did a good job down there…when it was down at 2709 Locust.

BS—Lines 60-62.

The practice of cooking food to raise money is a long-standing philanthropic practice in various communities, but in particular the Black community. Nonetheless, the PW-COA was used to receiving funds from corporate sponsorship. However, changes in philanthropic giving and Metro Y policies have negated that avenue of obtaining monies for the PW-COA. The following snippets of comments spoke volumes to the exclusion the PW-COA members have felt when it comes to receiving funding for corporations:

You can’t do anything with the corporate sponsors.

BS—Lines 562.

The first comment from Mrs. Smith is short and to the point. During her interview session, she repeatedly mentions that the PW-COA could not in anyway attempt to secure money from corporate sponsorship. She made it quite clear that corporate money belonged to the Metro Y. Mrs. Kennerly tries to suggest an avenue around corporations:

Our problem is we need an underwriter.

BK—Lines 424

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Although in theory this suggestion might sound viable, being underwritten requires corporate sponsorship. Ms. Anderson begins to list the entire corporate sponsors that currently give to the Metro Y:

They get from all the folks around…the light (Ameren UE) folks; they get money out of them. The gas…

AA (Part 2)—Lines

Most damaging was the interview information obtained from Mrs. Sadie Tucker. A former PW-COA president, Mrs. Tucker took presidency during a time when the PW-COA members were lacking in finances, leadership, membership, and hope. Of all the women, she was the most open about how the group functioned and the group’s true relationship with the Metro Y. She began her recollections talking about how the money from the PW-COA sponsored fashion show was confiscated by the Metro Y:

Twice I said to them when we had the fashion show, all of this effort, energy we’re putting into this for $2,000? Oh come on! Where is it going?

ST (Part 6)—Lines 73-74.

Next, Mrs. Smith divulges her attempts to question why all of the money was being given to the Metro Y and that no money was being allocated to the PW-Y:

And see I tried at one time…I tried to tell them, the White Monsanto, they get all kinds of money. And then these women that belong to the Metro board husbands, worked at these big corporations. So I wanna know how come they can’t give us any money? Now they give it to Monsanto. I’m always asking about, “That’s so and so’s husband. How come he can’t give us some money?”

BS—Lines 570-574.
She continues on stating:

> Um hm. They got it all...just name it. They’ve got money for days.

BS—Lines 578.

This comment was in reference to the YMCA. Historically, the *St. Louis Argus* was quite supportive of the PW-Y as they were also just as supportive of the YMCA. Various newspaper clippings document that the YMCA was the recipient of numerous philanthropic endeavors.³⁰²

We didn’t have any money!

ST (Part 6)—Lines 314.

An exasperated Mrs. Tucker exclaims that during her tenure as PW-COA president, the PW-COA was low on funds. The point was made that they did not have money to even buy snacks for their meetings.

We’re Fighting Ourselves!

As the Metro Y took over the PW-Y by closing the facility, moving their Branch to another location without so much as a consult, and through policy and agency changes, these actions led to conflicts among the PW-COA members. Leadership within the group took on a negative aura as the members fought to understand the “why” of all that happened to them:

Well, I don’t know of any it, but I would have...that’s after Ms. Scott died. See then we had problems. Long as we had Ms. Scott...

AA (Part 2)—Lines 205-206.

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³⁰² *St. Louis Argus*, January 28, 1916.
Mrs. Anderson’s words spoke loudly about the group’s existence before and after the death of Mrs. Scott. The promotion of Mrs. Scott to Executive Director of the Metro Y did in fact mark the beginning of the end for the PW-COA, despite their protests and accolades that her promotion was a good move for all of them. Although a few years had passed after Mrs. Scott’s death, the following comments from Mrs. Tucker discusses how the low morale affected the group’s ability to recruit members and even keeping the members they already had on board:

Two things this organization has to do—recruit and change the time. We finally got it going and I was pleased. That pleased me. Whatever else you all wanna do I don’t give a hoot. We’ve got the group still going; that’s what important.

ST (Part 5)—Lines 376-378.

The fight was not only over a loss of citizenship within their own organization, but actually a fight to keep the group intact. This in fighting was referenced in the next several remarks:

So, you know me, “If they think they don’t need us, then forget it.”

BK—Lines 36-37.

Mrs. Kennerly’s statement was directed more at the Metro Y than it was the actual PW-COA members. She felt that all of the changes were an acknowledgement that the Metro Y was trying to squeeze out the PW-COA and she made sure her indignation was known.

You know there is always in fighting in every organization.

ST (Part 6)—Lines 490.

When Mrs. Tucker was the PW-COA president, she stated that she experienced a very difficult time as a leader. The next several statements were taken from her transcripts
because they provide a powerful monologue of a woman who fought the PW-COA and an effort to keep the group functioning:

‘No you can’t fight this…you have to know how to word this to get this going the way that is should go.

ST (Part 6)—Lines 56-58.

In this clip, Mrs. Tucker reflects on how the prior PW-COA chair mishandled interactions with the Metro Y. The previous chair was forceful in her interactions with the Metro Y executive director. This abrasive attitude caused the growing rift to widen between the Metro Y and PW-COA. As a part of the PW-COA chair’s responsibilities, they were to attend all Metro Y board meetings as a Member-At-Large. Then they were to report back to the PW-COA members any information that was pertinent to them.

According to Mrs. Tucker, the chair prior to her neglected this small, yet important part of the PW-COA chair’s duties. During the beginning of Mrs. Tucker’s tenure, the prior PW-COA chair’s hostile attitude was responsible for dwindling membership. Another point of contention within the PW-COA was the meeting times:

So you had to have meetings. Metro Y met at 5:30 when people were off from work and they had a snack here for them. Their meetings would last two hours sometimes 5:30 to 6:30 or 7:30. Occasionally, they would tip out after being here an hour. Most of the time they would stay. They would serve their time and their time was 3 years. They would serve that; they were attracting women that were not retired. See what I mean, they were young women that had children. But they would make that sacrifice. They were trying to get ahead.

ST (Part 5)—Lines 356-362
Metro Y had meetings and the consistency of those meetings produced results. On the other hand, the PW-COA’s meetings were not consistent and therefore, problems arose as to finding a meeting time that was conducive for all members:

Any organization exists because people show up for the meetings. If you don’t have anybody showing interest, the organization is going to shut down.

ST (Part 5)—Lines 391-393.

Participant interview transcripts point out that meetings for the PW-COA became so problematic that the group contemplated having two meetings. One meeting would be for the PW-COA members who were retired and could meet earlier in the afternoon. The second meeting would be later in the evening for those who worked or had small children. As chair, Mrs. Tucker convinced the group to maintain one meeting time. The group meets in the evenings once a month.

Taking a moment to reflect on these unexpected revelations, the researcher thought Mrs. Tucker’s final comment on the overall outlook of the PW-COA during the beginning of her tenure of leading the PW-COA was quite poignant:

We were going down the tubes!

ST (Part 5)—Lines 389.

The above sound bites referenced moments Mrs. Tucker and others experienced dealing with the confusion and direction upon which the PW-COA was headed when she became president. They had just experienced several great losses, including the loss of their facility on Locust Street. Feelings of anguish coupled with the public ostracism of the PW-Y were invariably more than the women could handle. Membership suffered and the group almost ceased to exist.
In contrast, during its peak the PW-Y was a Black mecca of social and informal educational opportunities. Unforeseeable changes in leadership due to the civil rights movement caused an uninterruptible stimulus of ups and downs and vicissitudes that led to a diminished status within the community. The following final statements gave the researcher in-sight rich descriptions of what these ladies believed and the dissolution they felt as the unfathomable happened:

First, they closed the building. We thought they were going to condemn it.

BS—Lines 71.

The change that Mrs. Smith refers to was the change of moving from Locust Street, a known Black space, to the St. Louis University campus, an unknown White space. It was also unknown because the PW-COA members had no idea how or if they would continue to be a part of the Metro Y. Lastly, the change of closing the PW-Y housing was a devastating shock to the PW-COA because it was their “baby” described Mrs. Smith. Ms. Anderson gives her interpretations of how the “good White man,” as she called him, helped to save the Wheatley Housing:

…It’s a White guy, I forgot what company he was from, but he had… They had money. I sat by him. He asked me, ‘What do you think ought to be done with the building?’ I said, “I said it could be made into apartments for women and/or men.” We’ve got men over there. So when it come up, he spoke up. He thought that was a good idea.

AA (Part 1)—Lines 426 – 430.
One of the final probes posed to Mrs. Tucker was a clarification question. As she talked, she told of how the PW-COA had gained their “freedom.” Unsure of her meaning, she offers me this quip:

It is their choice to stay separate. Whether it would be better or benefitting, they would lose the credibility of being PW-Y. It would fade out.

ST (Part 6)—Lines 356 -357.

Freedom has many different meanings. Paraphrasing Mrs. Tucker’s explanation of freedom, this was how she explains freedom’s meaning for the PW-COA members:

1. The COA can have their own bank account.
2. The COA can make their own decisions, but they still must go through the Metro office.
3. The COA can do their own advertising.

Regardless of this major coup in obtaining the above-referenced freedoms, the overall ability to operate without parameters and accountability to the Metro Y had disintegrated in front of the PW-COA’s eyes. Even in the midst of this seemingly successful battle, the PW-COA members continued to lose the war.

**Summary**

This chapter was another segment that was crucial to comprehending the decline of the PW-Y and its management extraordinaire, the PW-COA. The devastating loss described by the present PW-COA members, at times, seemed unbelievably and indescribable from an organization whose history was based on making life better for women and young girls and who present motto is the elimination of racism.
The decline of the PW-Y began long before the promotion of Mrs. Anna L. Scott. She was the token catalyst that induced the process. In 1946, the Interracial Charter was the first significant sign that paved the way for more radical changes to come. Other signs that loomed of impending demise was the previously referred to following statement by Ms. Anderson:

I think in some instances we kind of melted in with the boys’ Y.

AA (Part 2)—Lines 264.

It almost seems incomprehensible that an organization of this size would be relegated to invisible status that such a statement could be made by one of its own long-standing members.

In hindsight, this thought was more profound than Ms. Anderson probably discerned. According to the transcripts and YWCA Executive Minutes, leadership at the Metro Y had intentions of taking complete control over the thriving PW-Y. The PW-Y was iconic in that the organization that continued to grow and excelled despite numerous instances of teetering on the brink of financial adversity managed to keep itself afloat with the dedication and determination of an invaluable volunteer constituency. The PW-Y was truly the one place, in a segregated society, that Blacks could call their place. Although there was a façade of imagined independence and the Metro Y envied their success, those negative factors never deterred the PW-COA members from completing the task of working toward improving the lives of Black citizens.

The final part of this chapter proved to be the most disheartening, but actually helped to strengthen the study the most. After attending the PW-Y’s 100-year gala, the closing of the PWHC was unbelievable! The researcher had witnessed a community
effort of Metro Y members, community leaders, the media, past and former Girl Reserves members and a host of family and friends gathered in that historic meeting place to celebrate a century of service. The “Persistence of Spirit” Exhibit showcased past PW-COA leaders and paid homage to the role the Branch played in the African American community. However, due to lack of maintenance and costly repairs, the PWHC has been indefinitely closed. With that closure, the public neither has access to view the scholarly exhibit nor to learn about the contributions PW-Y has made in the past. In conclusion, the magnitude of this fundamental loss was evident in the voices of the PW-COA members, and this study provided a safe platform for them to speak their thoughts on the matter. The final chapter of this study looks at the future of the PW-COA members, the implications of this research, recommendations for future study, and lastly, overall impressions of the study.

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CHAPTER SEVEN:
CONTINUING IN A NEW MILLENNIUM

As the Metro Y St. Louis continues to proceed in the 21st century, the following mission and vision are the guiding principals that advance their operations:

Our Vision:
Empowered women and youth in a racially just society.

Our Mission:
YWCA Metro St. Louis is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.304

Introduction

In this study, six African American women from the PW-Y shared their similar experiences as members of the PW-COA. Included in this chapter are an expanded summary of the findings that emphasized the fundamental conclusions, research implications, and recommendations for future research on the PW-COA topic. The information discussed in this chapter directly echoes the data analysis presented in Chapters four and five.305 The shared familiarities expressed by these women is only indicative of their own personal viewpoints and cannot by generalized to all others

having volunteered and/or participated in programming offered by the PW-Y, Metro Y, or any other volunteer club organizations associated under the YWCA conglomerate.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Problem

Previous research has verified that Black women in America have been actively involved in club work prior to the end of slavery. Women’s studies, in particular, and works relating to feminism have documented research annuals for the past 30 years. The records of the Metro Y of St. Louis are vast and extensive. Yet, the researcher found little to no data that recognizes the PW-COA members as informal education policy actors, nor as individual women having a voice to chronicle their daily activities. Many societal issues plagued Negro women during the Jim Crow era, which was subsequently before the Brown decision. The marginalization of these women coupled with their invisibility in the research literature led the researcher to examine this population of Black women and their contributions to PW-Y and the African American community of St. Louis.

Not having participated in the PW-Y as a child, the researcher chose to conduct this study for several reasons. First, after attending the 100-year celebration of the PW-Y, the researcher was extremely curious to learn how a segregated organization ran by Black women could have continued to operate for that many years. Second, the researcher deemed the present time was appropriate to add their historical narratives to the body of knowledge as the work of the PW-COA was omitted from the research.

306Lerner, “Early Community Work.”

literature. Finally, the researcher considered the impact to the body of knowledge as opportunities to obtain the PW-COA’s historical narratives continue to expire. As the members succumb to age and debilitating illnesses, impending demise captures and silences the PW-COA personal accounts forever. Therefore, the researcher chose to uplift the ladies’ lives through the medium of historical analytical personal narratives.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to provide an expanded analysis to that documented oral interviews of the participants. There was one main research question: What contextual role did the PW-COA foster in the support of African American female informal education? The researcher recorded the voices of these women as they spoke about their responsibilities, experiences, and duties they performed and currently perform as members of the PW-COA. This study also examines two minor research questions: What were the social and societal issues that caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y? The last question: What was the supportive role the PW-COA took to advance the fight to end segregation? The voices of the PW-COA members in this study offers a mixture of differing views on the prescribed questions and for this reason, add to the body of literature on the PW-COA.

Review of Methodology

This study records the oral histories of six African American females that were current members of the PW-COA. The method chosen to answer the research questions is personal narratives. Personal narratives allows each participant an opportunity to give spoken accounts enveloped in rich, thick descriptions about their common experiences.308

308 Parker, “What’s Race Go to Do With It?”
Interviews conducted with open-ended, semi-structured questions allowed them freedom to discuss all pertinent information pertaining to the research questions. CRT is used as the theoretical framework for the study. Focusing through the CRT lens, the intersectionality of race, law, and power provided a foundation upon which to build the argument this research needed to support the study of this marginalized population of Black women. The sharing of personal stories helps to redeem the muted and ameliorated the loss of citizenship experienced by these women.

As the researcher took the “etic” or outsider point of view, several tools were necessary conduct the study. Data collection occurred in several phases. One main interview was conducted with a second interview utilized to clarify discrepancies and/or to add additional information. Transcripts generated data through a Grounded Theory approach with final themes resulting after three levels of coding and then the data was subsequently entered into a thematic codebook. Validity and reliability were addressed through second interviews, the researcher’s audit trail, and through artifacts and documents supplied by the participants.

Research Findings

The purpose of the research study is to understand the role that the PW-COA played in the providing of informal educational opportunities to young Black females in the city of St. Louis. Other aspects of the study looked at were the societal issues that

309 Smith, “Agency and Female.”
310 Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins.”
311 Ladson-Billings, “Just What is Critical Race Theory?” See also Bell, “Whose Afraid of Critical Race Theory?”
312 Merriam, Qualitative Research.
caused the PW-COA to support the PW-Y, as well as the PW-Y’s stance on racial justice issues.

For the main research question, the findings demonstrated several recurring themes that defined who were and what these PW-COA members contemplated during the interview sessions. These themes, though not inclusive, also delineated the activities of the PW-COA members’ past, present, and future purposes. The following list of recurrent themes that appeared through the data analysis was: education, careers, family, religion, and racism. The theme of Education was significant in that the majority of the members were college graduates and had advanced degrees or certifications. The PW-COA’s success in education was certainly a stimulus and a catalyst for each participant wanting to reach back and help those who were unable to obtain that level of formal education. The informal educational opportunities their member and volunteer work supported had overarching and endless effects on the working class women and children that were serviced by the PW-Y. Many of the participants spoke of not being directly involved with children, as their work focused more on the transitional housing. However, those residents in the transitional housing program indirectly were beneficiaries of the work and the fundraising efforts the PW-COA women provided to the PW-Y. The PW-Y records also indicated, historically, that PW-COA members were responsible for heading different committees within the organization and therefore, their work resulted in directly providing informal educational opportunities for the working class Black female.

As the YWCA’s initial programming was delivering religious services to women, the PW-COA ladies of this study all stated a belief in a higher power. Many of the participants discussed taking on prominent roles in their respective churches, and how the
participants’ interaction with the PW-Y organization prepared the PW-COA ladies in developing leadership skills that were transferable not only to the church office, but other volunteer organizations. Many of the participants acknowledged that they were sorority members and those affiliations were joined because of participants’ involvement in the PW-Y programs as children and teenagers.

The second research question involved understanding the problems that caused the PW-COA to support PW-Y. These ladies were teenagers and young adults during the time of racial segregation in St. Louis. Therefore, the participants’ lives were impacted and governed by the Jim Crow doctrine of separate but equal. The literature review spoke to the living conditions Negroes were subjected to and the opportunities for entertainment were non-existent. PW-Y filled in that gap and afforded the Black community a place to grow socially, to gain employable skills, and to fellowship with others guided by Christian principles.

The third research question examined the PW-COA’s social justice stance in helping to end segregation. As the PW-Y was the chief meeting place in town for Blacks, regardless of the event, the PW-COA indirectly supported a social justice stance to end segregation. Despite the participants living in a hostile racial climate, these PW-COA women worked tirelessly to raise funds that kept the building opened. As the surrounding Mill Creek Valley area was under an urban renewal attack, and subsequently demolished, the PW-Y maintained a constant presence and offered a forum for sororities, fraternities, and other race conscious affiliations needing space to plan their next assault on racially discriminating businesses.
Unexpected Findings

The present study has explored the informal educational opportunities supported by the PW-COA at the PW-Y. However, as the researcher transcribed the data from the participant interviews, an unexpected and unique finding became the major secondary focus of the study. The unforeseen finding was given its own chapter. That finding was the participants’ discussion of the loss of their citizenship in the PW-Y. Chapter six dealt exclusively with the PW-COA members’ thoughts, raw emotions, and confusion concerning the closing of the 2709 Locust Street location. The researcher was also unprepared for the frank dialogue that ensued and nor was she ready for the emotional angst that radiated from the transcribed interview data.

It has been almost 20 years since the Metro Y closed the PW-Y Locust Street location and moved the joint venture to the St. Louis University Campus. Nevertheless, the PW-COA women have not forgotten they were completely ignored and not given a voice concerning the move. However, when the potential closing of the PW-Y Transitional Housing Program occurred, the PW-COA women spoke out against the impending closure. Fighting a hard won battle, the women were able to save the Transitional Housing Program (now housed at the Metro Y building), but they were ultimately turned into apartments for men and women. The PW-COA women also were not given a voice at the closing of the PWHC last year. The closure of the PWHC was due to poor maintenance, costly repairs, and a lack of financial income as a rented space. For these participants, the final blow in the closing of the PWHC represented a painful end to an otherwise remarkable historical chapter in the lives of the PW-COA.

313 *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, September 21, 2011, Metro Section.
The final unexpected result of the research study was the participants’ view of the PW-COA’s place within the Metro Y. Many of the ladies expressed thoughts of the Metro Y wanting them out. Some PW-COA members said the closing of the buildings signaled to them Metro Y’s scheme to eliminate their presence. The two following quotes from PW-COA members addressed this foreboding thought:

Well, I think we’re the last one. They want to get rid of us.

BK—Lines 28

Another member said in response to the probe, ‘Do you feel like they are trying to squish you out?’:

No, we asked about that. I don’t think so now. We are the only one. They need us, but don’t want us to have so much mouth. You know they want you, but they want to you to be quiet. They want you to work and bring the money, but they want you to shut up.

BS—Lines 522-528

Delimitations

The researcher addressed the delimitations in this study by interviewing a small number of participants as the number of viable participants to produce the study was reduced due to various reasons (chiefly illnesses). The oral histories provided were used as the full of the data in addition to the researcher reviewing Metro Y and PW-COA board minutes from the time period under study. Participants were given aliases to protect them from the potentially sensitive and political ramifications that were possible from such a study that was conducted on sitting members of an active board. No time adjustments were necessary to conduct the study.
Research Implications

Below are the implications for this study concerning the PW-COA and the informal education opportunities they supported through their involvement with the PW-Y. These implications are suggestive of the present day functioning of the group and predictive of the group’s future association within the Metro Y organization.

Present Day Functioning of the PW-COA

Throughout the years, the key PW-COA policy actors have changed as often as the seasons of the year change. Once the official governing entity within the PW-Y, the PW-COA is a small yet somewhat powerful force whose light is extinguishing. The present day functioning of the PW-COA is little more than glorified fundraisers. They PW-COA members are housed in the Metro Y’s building, with the name “Phyllis Wheatley YWCA” written on the outside of the building. Many of the PW-COA members recognized that placing the name ‘Phyllis Wheatley’ on the outside of the building was little more than a pacifistic move on the part of the Metro Y. Placing the ‘Phyllis Wheatley’ name on the building also kept the PW-Y from disappearing into oblivion, as the Metro Y controls the day-to-day operations.

In addition to giving the PW-COA a “space” in the Metro Y’s building, the Metro Y also hosts the PW-COA’s major project, the transitional housing program. The historically essential transitional housing program that once hosted Black royalty has now become a shell of its former glory. Due to monetary constraints, limited space, and restrictions placed on the program by the Metro Y, the housing program has been diminished and the prerequisites for entry into the program are more stringent than previous requirements.
Initially, the PW-Y Housing Program was once a place of shelter for Negro females lacking safety and housing during the Great Migration. As structural and organizational changes occurred throughout the YWCA, the PW-Y housing program became transitional housing. Once the name changed from housing to transitional housing, the female residents had to meet certain requirements and were only allowed to live in the facility for a specified amount of time. Currently, new programming changes include: stringent resident entrance requirements, shortage of available bed space, and stricter time limitations on how long residents are allowed to live in the facility. The length of time spent in the facility is based upon the resident’s readiness to successfully exit the program. The Metro Y instituted all of these changes without consulting or including the PW-COA for input. The implications of these changes leave an uncertain future for the PW-COA.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Transitioning from direct leadership to the participant’s current status of being subordinates has been a long and hard fought struggle for the PW-COA members. The lost of citizenship coupled with a very public marginalization might have sounded the death knoll for some groups within an organization. However, this resilient group of PW-COA women has shown the same perseverance and dedication their founding mothers showed when they first petitioned to open their segregated Branch.

The PW-COA of today has two main objectives. Their first goal is to continue to provide transitional housing for homeless women. As the PW-COA women continue to seek funding for this endeavor, the opportunity to service those in need continues to be a large part of the ladies’ mission. The PW-COA’s second goal is ultimately to continue to
function within the Metro Y space. Gone are the days of overt segregation and when the PW-COA was able to operate their programs with almost complete autonomy. However the group manages to remain active with a steady in-take of members during membership drives. In the final analysis, the PW-COA’s longevity will consist of their ability to raise the capital needed to keep them viable within the Metro Y’s organization.

Research Recommendations

This research had a strict focus on the PW-COA and their role in providing informal educational opportunities to young Black females from the lower socio-economic classes. The role in which many of these participants played sparked a movement and a wave of learning that has continued to service the ladies and the St. Louis community for a solid century. Many areas of study remain untouched through this project. Therefore, the researcher recommends an in-depth study of the organization, specifically focusing on the blending of the PW-Y and the Metro Y. The fact that these two entities never entirely merged, but that the PW-Y somehow ceased to operate in their own facility and become absorbed into the Metro Y continues to necessitate further investigation. A strong research emphasis on how that forced blending continues to affect the PW-COA.

It is also recommended that research be conducted in the area of PW-COA finances. This vital, yet financially excluded part of the PW-Y has, historically, been known to generate monies that were utilized to fund the mission of servicing homeless young women. A detailed study might illuminate the successes and challenges these ladies faced and continue to face as their access to corporate sponsorship has been unequivocally denied by and through their patriarchal relationship with the Metro Y.
From the early years of serving chittlin’ dinners to their now well respected fashion show, the PW-COA ladies have been expert fund raisers. This knowledge of fund raising should be explored as this knowledge may provide lasting and prudent information to struggling and successful nonprofit organizations.

A final recommendation for future research is to study, in-depth, the social justice role of the PW-Y. This study briefly viewed how the role of informal education factored in to the PW-Y’s influence on race relations. However, numerous studies have mentioned the PW-Y as a place that hosted meetings and provided support for grassroots organizations. A deeper look may provide more details on how instrumental this organization was during those tumultuous and excessive racially charged times.

Conclusion

In the years that have followed the closing and subsequent moving of the PW-Y from 2709 Locus to the St. Louis University Campus, much has changed in the City, yet many things have remained the same. The city of St. Louis has gone through a mini renaissance with the opening of lofts, the building of a new baseball park, and the expansion of several major universities. However, despite this newfound growth and improvement in some arenas, the PW-COA has succumbed to the oblivion of anonymity.

Once a pillar of strength and dominance in the Black community, the PW-Y now sits housed on a predominately White university campus that makes it relatively inaccessible to the public it once serviced. The building’s architecture is grand; yet, the facility is oddly wedged on the campus in a location that is difficult for one to find unless one knew exactly where it was located. The PW-Y’s new location represents a third
wave of marginalization and loss of power, as one would not expect to find a former segregated institution housed on a predominantly White college campus.

Nonetheless, the PW-COA continues to support its program of transitional housing. These dedicated women have demonstrated Christian love and values through the selfless giving of time and finances. This final quote from Mrs. Fontima Lewis best sums up the mission of today’s PW-COA members:

I guess I believe that if you’re not serving somebody other than yourself, you’re not really living a good life.

FL—Lines 80-81.
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Appendix A

Narrative Observation Form

Participant’s Name:

Observation Date:

Time:

Observation Context (Description of Environment):

Observing for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives</th>
<th>Interpretations</th>
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<tbody>
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Appendix B

Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-5944
Fax: 314-516-5942
E-mail: cdo46a@umsl.edu

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Personal Narratives of YWCA—Committee On Administration Members

Participant __________________ HSC Approval Number ___367753-1________

Principal Investigator:  Cheryl D. Osby   PI’s Phone Number:  314.973.1653 or 314.355.5247

1. You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Cheryl D. Osby, doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and Dr. Matthew Davis, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This qualitative study will focus on personal narrative accounts provided by former schoolteachers that taught prior to, during, and after the Brown v. Board of Education landmark decision. Specifically, as a retired educator you will answer questions about your role as a teacher, you will also answer questions about your role as a leader and/or member of the Committee on Administration of the segregated YWCA—Phyllis Wheatley Branch, and you will answer questions about your leadership role in providing community service. Finally, you will answer questions about how your role supported the educating of black female children and how your role influenced the black community through your involvement in the YWCA. In addition to the research on being educators before, during, and after the Brown v. Board of Education decision, the purpose of this study is to provide you an opportunity to share your life experiences during this tumultuous period in the educating of African American female children. As this study is qualitative in nature and based upon personal narratives, no hypothesis is required.

2. a) Your participation will involve:

- The researcher will contact you to arrange a convenient time and place to conduct the interviews.
- Being interviewed a total of one times by the researcher individual interviews lasting from 45-60 minutes. Additional interviews maybe conducted for clarification purposes.
- The researcher digitally audio recording and transcribing your interviews
- You being asked to submit Phyllis Wheatley-YWCA: newspaper clippings, photographs, letters, memorandums, and meeting minutes. These documents will be returned to you during the last individual interview.
- The researcher will provide you with copies of both transcripts and preliminary interpretations of your interviews for your review, comments, and corrections.
Approximately six participants may be involved in this study.

3. There are no risks or discomforts associated with this research. However, should your participation possibly cause negative or bad feelings, counseling will be available to you from Community Psychological Service, a non-profit organization located on the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about the personal and professional lives of educational leaders during this time period and may help society combat the continued practices of racial discrimination in public education.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study. All data, (including digital audio recordings, consent forms, and transcribed interviews) will be stored in password-protected secured files on the researcher’s laptop. Artifacts and documents will be stored in a locked floor safe in the primary investigator’s basement. The audio files will be destroyed once transcripts have been produced and reviewed. In rare instances, a researcher’s study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. Finally, other documents and artifacts (newspaper clippings, photographs, letters, memorandums, meeting minutes, and transcribed interviews) will be shared with the Phyllis Wheatley—YWCA Branch.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this pilot study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Principal Investigator, Cheryl Osby (314.973.1653) or the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Matthew Davis (314.516.5953). You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 314-516-5897.
I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature

Date

Participant’s Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Investigator/Designee Printed Name
Appendix C

YWCA Interview Protocol
(Sample)
Individual Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. Please include your name, birthdate, city of birth, and all pertinent demographic information.

2. Please discuss your educational background.

3. Describe your first professional position.

4. How long did you continue in this position?

5. Did you hold any other positions (higher level) inside or outside of education?

6. How did you become involved with the Phyllis Wheatley--YWCA?

7. When and why did you become a COA member?

8. What was the significance of becoming a COA member?

9. How did the COA impact your education?

10. What else would you like to share about your involvement with the COA?
Appendix D

List of Documents

1. Vesper Service Notice from *St. Louis Argus*
2. Teen Club Brochure
3. Adult Activities Brochure
4. St. Louis Argus Newspaper Clipping of Camp Derricotte’s 28th Season 1966
5. Juliette Derricotte’s Burial Notice
6. The Girl Reserves Pledge
7. YWCA Newsletter Article on Y Teen Conference June, 1966
8. Mrs. Scott Executive Director Notice
9. PW COA Minutes, January 4, 1961
10. Executive Committee Minutes—PW and Central, May 23, 1957
11. Nancy Garrett’s Chit Chat Column
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Y. W. C. A. NOTES

VESPERS

The Phyllis Wheatley Branch will have its principal speaker for Vespers, Sunday, November 13th. Rev. J. E. East, Secretary Foreign Mission Board, National Baptist Association, Inc. A most attractive feature will be several musical numbers by "Fullman Quartette." Everyone given cordial welcome. This vesper is a special Membership Rally Service. 100 came out to hear Dr. East.

SKATING

Don't forget Saturday at the Y.W.C.A., November 17, 1928. Skating every Saturday, from 3:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Y. W. C. A. NOTES

Do you know that we are going to have a wonderful Y.W.C.A. Institute at the Phyllis Wheatley Branch Nov. 10th?

We are inviting and persuading all workers who are interested in the welfare of Girls and who would like to be better informed on the Y.W.C.A. program. Policy and plan to attend this Institute Saturday without fail, isn't you coming? Institute lunch at 12 a.m. to 1 p.m., Institute Leader, Miss Grace Channell, Gen'l. Sec. Central Ass'n. Y.W.C.A., other speakers will be Miss Una Holly, Ex Sec. Industrial Dept. St. Louis, "Y.W.C.A." Rev. John R. Isions, Pastor St. James A.M.E. Church, Recreation Leader, Miss Edna Williams, St. Louis High School. Come and attend this most inspiring meeting.

Y. W. C. A. NOTES

VESPERS

The Phyllis Wheatley Y.W.C.A. announces for its regular Vesper Service a special Thanksgiving Musical, at which time several artists of note will be featured. As usual, Mrs. E. Bailey Gordon will conduct Community Sing. The Hour: 4:45 to 6:00 P. M. Sunday December 3, 1928—70th Ave. Everyone cordially invited.
TEENS

The Y-Teen Department has programs designed especially for teenagers. A full schedule of after-school and Saturday events will be featured. Dancing, crafts, games, drama and discussion groups for specific youth programs are some of the many activities.

Y-Teen Clubs — set up for girls between ages of 12-17, give opportunities for educational, recreational, cultural growth and development. Clubs are governed by their members with the help of an adult advisor. Groups meet weekly Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m., September through June. A $2 YWCA membership is all that is required for participation.

PLAN TO JOIN A Y-TEEN CLUB
BRING YOUR FRIENDS — FORM YOUR OWN CLUB!

CLASSES

Cooking  Fridays  4 – 6 p.m.
September 20 thru October 11

Sewing  Fridays  4 – 6 p.m.
September 20 thru October 25

Dancing  Modern and Interpretive
Fridays  4 – 6 p.m.
September 20 thru November 1
(Bring shorts or gym suits)

Swimming
Classes for beginners and intermediates.
Red Cross certified Instructors.
Tuesdays 3:45 to 5:00 p.m.
September 20 thru December 20
Fee: 25¢ per week

Typing
(Refresher) For ages 14 and over
Fridays  4 to 6 p.m.
September 20 thru November 1
### ADULT ACTIVITIES

Phyllis Wheatley Branch YWCA offers a wide variety of activities to serve the needs of the entire community. Our primary aim is to foster those ideals and practices which will give maximum benefit to participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSES</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sewing</strong></td>
<td>Beginners – Mondays beginning October 7, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $10.00 – Instructor: To be announced.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced – Wednesdays beginning October 2, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $15.00 – Instructor: Mrs. Virgie Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Photography</strong></td>
<td>Learn how to take successful photos. Tips and guidelines on the techniques for using simple and complex cameras. Classes will be announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ceramics</strong></td>
<td>Tuesdays beginning October 8, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $10.00 – Instructor: To be announced.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Millinery</strong></td>
<td>Learn to make your own hats. Create your own design. Mondays beginning October 7, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $15.00 – Instructor: Mrs. M. Pat Thurmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bridge</strong></td>
<td>Beginners – Thursdays beginning October 3, 7—8 p.m. Fee: $10.00. Advanced – Thursdays beginning October 3, 8:15—9:15 p.m. Fee: $10.00 – Instructor: Mrs. Melweda Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gourmet Cooking</strong></td>
<td>Preparing holiday meals can be fun! Why not add the gourmet touch to your meals? Learn how to cook delicious, decorative and nutritious meals. Thursdays beginning October 24, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $10.00 – Instructor: Mrs. Beatrice Denmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Holiday Decorating</strong></td>
<td>Tips and guidelines on how to use your imagination to create and design decorations for the Holiday Season. Wednesdays beginning November 6, 7:30—9:30 p.m. for 4 sessions. Fee: $10.00 (includes materials) – Instructors: Mrs. Ibbie Eliget and Mrs. Norma Ross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spanish</strong></td>
<td>Excellent preparation for travel in Spanish speaking countries. Tuesdays beginning October 8, 7:30—9:30 p.m. Fee: $10.00 – Instructor: Mr. Marino Garcia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Driving</strong></td>
<td>Prepare for skilled driving and to pass the Missouri State driving test. Nine persons must enroll for class to begin. Course provides classroom instructions two hours per week for six weeks plus driving time which will be arranged at the convenience of the students. Starts Saturday, October 5, 9—11 a.m. Fee: $35.00 – Instructors: AA Auto Driving School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Derricotte To Open 28th Season

Camp Derricotte the Y.W.C.A. camp for Girls will open its 28th consecutive season in Cuivre River State Park, Troy, Missouri, July 11th.

This Camp is a member of the American Camping Association and has an excellent staff. The purpose of camping is not only for girls to have fun in a beautiful setting but also to help them grow physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. The girls live in villages according to ages. Registration is now open at all Y.W.C.A. Branches for girls 8-16.
Fisk Dean Of Women, Who Died In Wreck Is Buried

MISS JOLLIETTE DERRICOTTE

ATHENS, Ga., Nov. 12.—Funeral services were held here Wednesday for Miss Jolliette Derricotte, dean of women of Fisk University, and Miss Nina Mae Johnson, senior at Fisk, who lost their lives in a tragic automobile wreck 25 miles south of Chattanooga, Tenn., last Friday while enroute to visit relatives here. Hundreds of messages of condolence from all over the United States and several foreign countries were received by the bereaved families. Thousands of persons viewed the remains as they lay in state amidst huge embankments of flowers.

Two Fisk students were also injured in the automobile wreck. Miss Minnie Price of Atlanta suffered a dislocated shoulder, and Edward of Atlanta, driver of the automobile, a fractured shoulder. The pair were given aid at Dalton, Ga., then removed to Walhalla Hospital in Chattanooga.

Hospital—Refused Admission

The fatal accident was said to have occurred when the automobile in which the Fisk people were riding was crowded off the road by a passing machine and went into a ditch. They were carried to Dalton by passing motorists, but were refused admission at the local white hospital. First aid was given the injured at the home of Mrs. Alice Chambers.

Miss Derricotte was born April 1, 1897. She was educated at Talladega College. She entered Y. W. C. A. work and rose to be a member of the national executive board after doing notable work in which trips to England and India were made.

She became the first colored dean of women at Fisk in 1925. She was a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

Miss Johnson was business manager of the Fisk Herald and a member of the Delta Theta Sorority.
AS A GIRL RESERVE
I will try to be

Gracious in manner
Impartial in judgment
Ready for service
Loyal to friends

Reaching toward the best
Earnest in purpose
Seeing the beautiful
Eager for knowledge
Reverent to God
Victorious over self
Ever dependable
Sincere at all times
Y-Teen Conference Planned

Twelve Y-Teens from the St. Louis area have been selected as delegates to the 1966 Y-Teen Summer Conference, at Bradley University, Peoria, Ill. — June 26 to July 1.

All delegates are teenage members of the YWCA from the 10th to the 12th grades. Those selected, on leadership as a Y-Teen and on participation in YWCA teenager programs and activities are: Mary Ann Acree, Linda Erby, Linda Konradi, Carol Maufas, Arlene Sanders, Nancy Schmitt, Madge Stewart, Juanita Watson, Mary Weidner, Ann Willmann, Jane Winham and Laura Wohlbert.

Miss Sharon Kuntzman, Y-Teen Advisor and Miss Bylle Snyder, Teenage Program Director, Carondelet Branch YWCA will serve as adult leaders.

Delegates are responsible for representing the ideas and opinions of the St. Louis Y-Teens and for a report upon their return.

Car wash activities of the Y-Teen Clubs resulted in the raising of $60.00 to help defray expenses to the conference.
Informally Educating the Community

Osby, Cheryl, 2014, UMSL, 195

Name Mrs. Scott
Exec. Director
Of Downtown 'Y'

The Board of Directors of the YWCA of Metropolitan St. Louis at the monthly board meeting this week announced the appointment of Mrs. Anna Lee Scott, 4342 Cook Ave., to the position of Executive Director made vacant by the resignation of Miss Frances H. Moser.

Mrs. Scott will assume her duties on September 1. She has been Branch Executive of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA Branch since 1937 and prior to coming to the St. Louis YWCA she had experience in the Harrisburg, Pa., and Orange, N.J., YWCA's.

She is a graduate of Howard University in Washington, D.C., and she had done graduate work at Columbia University in New York City. Her husband is Mr. James A. Scott, Assistant Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools.

Miss Moser has been appointed Correlator of the Central Region of the National Board YWCA with offices in Chicago, Illinois.
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, of St. Louis, Missouri

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION
WHEATLEY BRANCH Y.W.C.A.

January 4, 1961

PRESENT:
Mrs. Luther Pollard, Jr., Mrs. William Rhoda, Mrs. Wm. Lee, Mrs. Audia H. Roberts, Mrs. Everett Colbert, Miss Bernice Belar, Miss Lillian Houston, Mrs. H. B. Morrison, Miss Nancy L. Garrett, Miss Jeanette Mathews, Mrs. Ruth F. Flowers, Mrs. James Bell, Staff; Mrs. James A. Scott, Mrs. Jesse Haybon.

MINUTES

OPENING

The Wheatley Branch Y.W.C.A. Committee on Administration met on the above date with the chairman, Mrs. Luther Pollard, Jr., presiding. The very beautiful meditation was given by Mrs. William Rhoda.

A letter was read from Mrs. Shepard, Metropolitan Financial Director and Mrs. Lolita Anderson Metropolitan Business Executive. Statements from the letter as follows:

This year the amount we can expect from the United Fund, plus the amount we can receive from budgeted income will still leave a large gap of many needs for which there is no provision. These needs could not be met even if we revised our budget downward to the 1960 figure of the actual cost of operations. Additional funds are necessary to maintain the present line of operations.

1961 Suggestions - each Branch was asked:

1. To study 1960 income to date to see if this indicates any increase in income budgeted for 1961.

2. To check whether any program plans have been added such as trips, which were not included in 1961 budget, and whether income should be budgeted to provide for this activity.

3. To review membership income budgets to see whether they reflect realistic expectations from present campaign plans and from ongoing work on renewal memberships.

4. To review the income budget to see if there is any income not previously included.

EXPENSE: What expenses included in the 1961 budget would you eliminate?

PERSONNEL: What needs for reinstatement or additional staff, full or part-time which were requested previously would you now withdraw?

REORGANIZATION: Realizing that no anticipated increase in income or decrease in expense can prevent a deficit, on the present plan of operation, what re-organization would you propose to decrease the subsidy of your branch?

NEW SUPPORT: Are there any programs provided for in your 1961 budget which you believe could be set up on a project basis and the need for which could be presented so compellingly as to secure the support of a Foundation?
DINNER MEETING
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES
PHYLLIS WHEATLEY & CENTRAL BRANCHES
May 23, 1957

Present: Phyllis Wheatley—Houston, Jordan, Scott, Sutton, Woods
Central—Rondorfer, Disarems, Hoffman, Loefel, Meyers

Miss Rondorfer gave a resume of a meeting among four members about a month ago to discuss a cooperative plan between the Wheatley and Central Branch.

Mrs. Meyers asked: what would be a sound way to get a member of Phyllis Wheatley Branch on the Central Branch C/A? Could members rotate from Phyllis Wheatley C/A to Central C/A, and vice versa? Is the solution to realize that membership means one is a member of the Association with registration in a specific branch? Is there some way the two branches could have cooperative by-laws?

Phyllis Wheatley officers announced that a man from the St. Louis Housing Authority will speak at their June 4 C/A Meeting about conditions in the community. The Hill Creek Valley project will mean a change in Wheatley Branch. Many homes between Olive and Market Streets will be torn down. Some buildings, such as Churches, will remain. Emphasis will be north of Branch.

Miss Rondorfer expressed the opinion that any action to unite the two branches would have to be drastic. Programs should be planned together and not duplicate classes. Could we start in the fall with classes — those offered at Wheatley not offered at Central and those offered at Central not offered at Wheatley.

Suggestion was made that Wheatley and Central might pro rata their budgets.

Mrs. Meyers suggested that the group in the meeting ask the Young Adult Committees to meet and explore this thing — that we write a memo and ask them to plan a meeting for that purpose.

The Y-Teen Committee was suggested as a starting point because Central has no Y-Teen group and Wheatley has an excellent Y-Teen program.

Mrs. Scott feels the whole DCA must change its pattern. It must take the program out to where the people live. For instance, the DCA established a center on Sarah Street and the YCA members are supporting it because of its convenient location. YCA is not meeting needs of women today as it did at the beginning. We must cease to worry about the YCA.

Someone asked: Is either branch willing to sacrifice its building for the sake of integration progress?

It was suggested that there be a joint meeting of C/A’s twice a year. And that we ask the program committees to meet jointly and let them work out plans in their own sessions. It was decided that the point to start is to have the joint committees meet sometime between September and January to work with the Inter-racial Consultant.

Mona Hoffman suggested that Central Branch Executive Committee report to its own C/A and decide whether or not to take the issue to our own committees.

Meeting adjourned.

Ethel Disarems
Secretary
Informally Educating the Community  
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ST. LOUIS TRIBUNE, FRIDAY FEB. 3, 1937

NANCY GARRETT'S CHIT CHAT
FO. 7-1614

"Someone asked what I was going to talk about tonight. I said I would talk about what is happening to all of us. I think it is important to remember that what goes on in the world affects us all."

The setting was a small community hall where the speaker, Nancy Garrett, shared her thoughts on the current events. She emphasized the importance of being informed and actively engaged in our society.

She mentioned the ongoing strike by black workers in the city's factories, highlighting the inequalities and the fight for workers' rights. Garrett spoke about the need for solidarity and the power of unity in the face of adversity.

The audience was attentive, with many exchanging glances and sharing their reactions to the speaker's words. The hall was filled with a sense of purpose and determination.

Garrett concluded her talk by encouraging the listeners to stay informed, tokeep engaged, and to support each other in the struggle for a better future.

The evening ended with a round of applause, signifying the resounding support for Garrett's message. The community hall echoed with the promise of a collective voice in the fight for justice and equality.