

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF ATLANTA'S Y.W.C.A.

1902

Y.W.C.A. first opened in Atlanta at 6½ Whitehall Street.

1902 - 1912

Emphases of Atlanta Y.W.C.A. during first decade:

Gymnasium and basketball classes

Bible Classes

Boarding House

Classes and recreation groups for factory girls

First business girls' club formed by "Ladies of the Gym"

1913 - 1922

The Y.W.C.A. was one of the seven organizations, the only one composed entirely of women, working directly under the Government during World War I. "Soldiers Frolics" were given each Saturday evening and vesper services were held each Sunday afternoon. There were classes in Red Cross First Aid, semaphoring, French classes for nurses. Lodging was secured for soldiers' families, telephone calls were put through locating soldiers and letters were written to soldiers' families. The Patriotic Leagues which were formed in churches and schools to carry on this work later organized into regular "Y" clubs.

Camp Highland opened 1920

Phyllis Wheatley, Negro Branch of the Atlanta Y.W.C.A., established.

1923 - 32

Camp Highland developed into model camp and had many visitors from other Associations to observe the methods used.

The Lewis Beck Y.W.C.A. fund created. (This fund was established for the purpose of making loans to girls interested in getting commercial training to prepare them for jobs in the business world. Also, a portion of the fund was an outright gift for the construction of a bridge across the railroad cut at Camp Highland and for other capital expenditures.)

Employment service, which had been operated by the Y.W.C.A. since its organization, established as a separate agency of the Community Chest.

Y.W.C.A. moved into first building of its own at 37 Auburn Avenue.

1933 - 42

During the depression the Y.W.C.A., operating on a greatly restricted budget, had a bigger-then-ever job to do with so many girls facing unemployment:

Club programs were expanded to meet the needs of the times and to take care of the increased enrollment of girls seeking companionship, inspiration and recreation on their limited budgets.

Girls were helped in getting jobs, wherever possible.

A day school for unemployed girls was established at the request of the Community Chest. This developed into the "Leisure Time" program for young married women which was continued until the pressure of wartime duties terminated the need for this type of activity.

The "Y" assisted in securing volunteer leaders to keep playgrounds open.

With the outbreak of World War II the Atlanta Y.W.C.A. again turned to war work. Dances for service men were held at the "Y" and club girls visited the various army bases around Atlanta. First Aid and Nutrition classes were held.

Complete renovation and redecoration of Y.W.C.A. building in 1942-43 when it became apparent that plans to build a new building would have to be postponed.

1943 - 52

The program for service men and women was expanded until at its peak the Y.W.C.A. was conducting a seven-day-a-week open house program.

A recreation program was organized for split-shift workers to meet needs of girls who worked in places where they are free several hours in the afternoon, but work late in the evenings.

The "Y" undertook the supervision of a number of youth centers throughout the city. These projects were financed by various civic clubs.

The Y.W.C.A. initiated action which culminated in the passage of the Georgia Child Labor Bill. The Girl Reserve Committee became concerned over the increasing use of school-age children in hazardous and blind-alley jobs. The Y.W.C.A. Board asked the Atlanta Community Council to study the problem. A committee composed of two "Y" board members and representatives of other interested agencies was set up. The findings of this committee were very helpful in finally obtaining passage of the legislation.

"Teen Tavern", Saturday night dances for high school girls and boys were organized.

"Hobby Night" and "Homemakers' Holiday" programs were organized for business girls and for housewives. These extremely popular programs provide a varied group of classes in crafts, self-improvement and inspirational material.

BUILDING FUND RAISED AND NEW BUILDING OPENED - *Apr. 1952*

Activities of the Y.W.C.A. expanded to the capacity of the new building. Over 12,000 individuals were served in 1953, and over 1,000 people used the building each day.

Public Food Service offered by the Y for the first time - breakfast, luncheon and private dinners for community groups.

World Fellowship is seen in action with the development of the International Club which now has 106 permanent members. World Fellowship is emphasized greatly throughout the whole Y program. Y-Teens initiate an annual trip to Washington to the world-wide Y.W.C.A. World Fellowship Service and a visit to New York and the UN.

Swimming for handicapped children and adults begun each Friday evening.

New chapel open to the public for meditation at all times. Special services at religious holidays held.

New business girls' club begun for teenage career girls.

Classes added for co-eds and teenagers to the Homemakers and Hobby Night schedules which have increased in popularity to an enrollment of over 1,000 in one 10-week session.

Y.W.C.A. plans for 1955 Centennial Celebration of founding of the world movement in England in 1855.

Activities of the Y.W.C.A. change throughout the years as the Y strives to meet the needs of women and girls as they are ever-changing. It's activities are always guided by the purpose which is:

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.

In this endeavor we seek to understand Jesus, to share his love for all people, and to grow in the knowledge and love of God.