

## Negro Community Center

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The members of the first Board of Directors were: Mrs. L. C. Kurtz, Chmn.; Mrs. M. J. Scanlon, First Vice Chmn.; Mrs. F. E. Haley, Second Vice Chmn.; Mrs. Geo. W. Tones, Secretary; Mesdames R. H. Delmege, Anna McBride, Nate Kendall; Misses Stella McGuire, Alice Eaton; Messrs. C. B. Condon, John A. Cavanagh, Frank P. Flynn, and J. H. Cownie.

The South Side Community House is used constantly by groups of children, young people, and older ones as well, and strives to serve each adequately in the activities it provides. A community evening program with moving pictures is offered once a week during the winter. A station of the Public Library housed in the building serves patrons of all ages, while the Well Baby Clinic, maintained by the Public Health Nursing Association, serves parent and child alike. The Community House also has public shower bath facilities.

The South Side Community House has a surfaced indoor playground which is popular during the winter. In the summer staff members of the city playground nearby help the settlement children to carry on summer activities. Gymnasium and basketball teams, having a large membership, use the auditorium for practice and games. Troops of Boy and Girl Scouts also meet in the building. There are classes in handcraft, dramatic art, choral work, story telling, sewing, folk dancing, etc.

The members of the present Board of Directors are: Mrs. Louis C. Kurtz, President; Mesdames F. E. Haley, Geo. Tones, Walter L. Seeburger, Joseph Muelhaupt, Anna McBride; Miss Stella McGuire; Messrs. C. B. Condon, John H. Cownie; and Judge Thos. J. Guthrie.

The Executive Directors and their terms of office are: Anita Dapalonia 1919-1921; Gertrude Piefer 1921-1924; Alice May 1924-1927; Helen Dower Kavanagh 1927-1937; Helen Schmitz 1937—.

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#### NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTER

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A group of citizens organized the War Recreation Board of Des Moines in September, 1917. Six months later the name of this corporation was changed to War Camp Community Center, and still later to Community Service.

In addition to other activities, the War Camp Community Service organized a club for Negro officers and enlisted men in the old Lincoln School building at West Ninth and Mulberry Streets. The Community Chest allotted some money for the support of war time recreation activities and included in this the club in the Lincoln School building. When the War closed, this club continued under the name of Community Service and was given the use of Franklin School at Thirteenth and Crocker Streets, which was no longer used for school purposes.

In 1926 when the Franklin School building was removed to make way for changes in the street, Community Service again moved, this time only a few blocks, to a large house at 907 Fifteenth Street, once a private residence. In 1933 the name was changed to Negro Community Center.

A station of the Public Library and a Well Baby Clinic of the Public Health Nursing Association are housed in the Center. A number of Negro clubs, cooperative and fraternal groups, including Junior and Senior Federation of Colored Womens Clubs, church and patriotic organizations, use the House as a meeting place. In one year one hundred and twenty-five such groups held meetings there in addition to the activities carried on by the Center.

The activities carried on in the Center by the Director and a fine staff of volunteer workers, including recently the most welcome members of the Works Progress Administration, include: Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Bluebirds, handcraft, music, and recreational activities for children and young people. The Director and her family live in the Center and the Director, like all residents of Settlements and Centers, is on call every hour of the day. The building is in constant use afternoon and evenings by a large number of people and very greatly needs more room. The greatest need is for a large hall or auditorium.

For a number of years the Center has had an annual Art Exhibit in the Public Library of work produced by members.

The Board of Directors in the past has generally included both white and Negro persons. This is true of the present Board which is composed of: Rev. J. T. Mordy, Chairman;

Mesdames Walter Wilson, Sam Weinstock, Harvey Ingham, Sam M. Shloss; Messrs. Casper Schenck, Don McGregor, A. A. Alexander, Harry E. Wilson, John Normile, and H. J. Kroeger.

The Resident Directors and their terms of service have been as follows: Herbert Wright 1918-1924; Wilder Moore 1924-1926; Mrs. A. Lillian Edmunds 1926—.

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### NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTER BRANCH

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The largest group of Negroes in Des Moines live in the district in which the Negro Community Center is situated. Another group of considerable size lives on the East Side. Desiring a place where those living on the East Side might meet together, a group of Negro men and women secured a house at 1622 Walker Street, and in 1922 opened the East Side Community Center. The Center served mainly as a meeting place for clubs or groups already organized. Many mothers in the neighborhood, wishing their babies to have the services of a Well Baby Clinic, had taken their babies to the Negro Community Center on the West Side. These mothers, together with other women, asked the Public Health Nursing Association to open a clinic in the East Side Community Center, and thirty-five babies were enrolled on the opening day in 1933.

By means of the support of interested private individuals, the East Side Community Center served its community for five years as an independent institution. However, in the third and fourth years small grants from the Community Chest for coal and rent were required. In 1936 maintenance of the work was taken over by the Community Chest entirely; in the same year the name was changed to Negro Community Center Branch and new quarters were established at 1438 Buchanan Street. The Negro Community Center Board of Directors (see page 187) is responsible for the conduct of the Branch. Miss Roberta L. Maupin is now in charge of the Branch.

A station of the Public Library is located in the building.

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