

SCRANTON, PA., MAY 14, 1896.

Young Womens Christian Association. MRS. L. M. GATES, Editor.

SCRANTON Y. W. C. A.

How It Was Started and How It Has Grown.

WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN

Secretaries and Others Talk About the Object of This Christian Association, and Its Very Practical Work and Its Wide Influence.

The desire for combined effort for special work for the young women of Scranton had been a growing one in the hearts of many in the city for years.

Pastors, physicians and city officials had seen the need.

THE IMPETUS FOR ORGANIZATION.

It was given by an address by Miss Nettie Dunn, the National Secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, at a meeting arranged through the kindness of Mr. T. T. Horney, in Y. W. C. A. hall, April 15, 1888.

The audience of earnest women, after listening to the heartfelt words of the speaker, unanimously voted to organize and appointed a committee to make arrangements for completing the organization.

This committee consisted of Mesdames Simpson, Saxton, Swan, Derman and Gates. Misses Wetzel, Gayford and Rippe. In May a public meeting was held, when pastors, leading business men and lawyers made strong addresses and friends pledged financial support.

A board of managers was elected, composed of the following ladies: Mesdames Rippe, Hunt, Scott, Green, Hand, Storrs, Lathrop, Steele, Manness, Everhart, Derman, Blair, Connell, Reynolds, Gates, Miss Kriebaum and others.

In June for a reading room for girls, and opened by religious exercises, which over 100 attended.

Classes were opened in the fall and were largely attended. A basement was fitted up to accommodate some of these and to use for gymnastic exercises.

Many social evenings were much enjoyed by the girls in their first small rooms; and the Sunday meetings will be remembered by many as marking a new era in their lives.

In May, 1889, a public anniversary was held and a crowded house greeted the new association in its first annual meeting. Dr. A. T. Pierson gave an able address, and Mrs. Gates, listened to with interest, many expressing surprise at what had been accomplished the first year.

THE FIRST SECRETARIES.

Miss Emma Reeder, of Iowa, was the first general secretary, coming in August, 1888. Her faithful services for over two years, her enthusiasm, good judgment and excellent spirit, did much to start the work right, and left its permanent impress on the association.

When Miss Reeder was called to the state secretaryship of New York, the board secured Miss Bertha Macurdy, of Waltham, Mass.

Both of these secretaries were obtained through the efforts of Miss Dunn, who had helped in the organization, and always felt great interest in the Scranton association. Miss Macurdy gave us over four years of devoted service and won a large place in the hearts of the girls of Scranton.

Obliged to leave on account of failing health, Miss Rachel E. Tolles, of New York, was called, a young woman of culture and of lovely character.

In 1891 new quarters were taken, opposite the court house square, in a more central location, with larger and more convenient rooms, being the second floor of a block.

PHYSICAL CULTURE INTRO-DUCED.

In the following year another floor was occupied, fitted up for a gymnasium. Miss Bertha Macurdy was the first instructor and entered upon the work with much enthusiasm. She continued in the position only one year, as she desired to enter upon an extended course of study.

Miss Lois Sharrow then became the physical director. She had just entered upon her second year of successful work, having won many girls to the association, through the benefits derived from the exercises, and also by her own personality, when a severe and protracted illness obliged her to give up the work.

Miss Juliet Yeakle kindly completed the year. Miss Janet Adams now has charge of the physical department, and has proved herself an efficient teacher and willing worker.

THE SOUTH SIDE BRANCH.

It was suggested by Miss Anna Stahlheber in the summer of 1891 that a room be opened on the South Side, near the Silk Mills, for the use of the hundreds of girls employed there. A suitable place was found and Miss Stahlheber was placed in charge of it.

In the fall it was thought best to have these rooms open evenings as well as noons, for classes and for recreation. Miss Stitt, of Pittsburg, and Miss Libbie Doersam assisted in this branch during the fall and winter. But as the work grew it became necessary to call a secretary who could give her whole time to the South Side work.

Miss Tomkinson, of Michigan, came in February, and the wonderful growth and influence of the South Side association is due largely to her consecrated life and earnest efforts. The call to a larger field in Pittsburg took her from us.

But a worthy successor was found in Miss Elizabeth Root, whose labors of love are appreciated by the South Side girls.

THE LUNCH ROOM.

The desire of many girls, employed in the city and living at a distance, for a quiet, pleasant lunch room, where wholesome food could be obtained at low prices, led the board of managers to open a lunch room in connection with the Christian Association. Since April, 1892, lunches have been served daily to hundreds of girls and women, who have enjoyed the home-cooked food, the pleasant outlook and friendly greetings. The first matron was Mrs. Barclay; the present one is Mrs. Knapp.

We are looking forward to the time when meals may be served at other hours as well as noon, and to permanent guests as well as transient visitors, in fact, when we can live in OUR OWN HOME,

where girls may find cosy, home-like rooms and good board at reasonable prices, with pleasant surroundings; where strangers, women coming to the city alone, may find shelter. This new Y. W. C. A. building will be a home for our secretaries and their helpers. It will be the headquarters for an enlarged work in all departments of practical instruction and help. To many girls now look forward hopefully to the time when they will be able to look back with thankfulness because of what it has been to their lives.

SOME PERSONAL WORDS.

What do our friends think of the Y. W. C. A.? Let some of those who know the work of this association and appreciate its privileges and advantages speak for themselves:

A lonely stranger, seeking for work: "With the opening of that door, good luck came and has followed."

A young girl, bringing her hard-earned dollar: "I am so glad I can be a member, and I want to join the classes."

A young English girl: "I was so lonely and grew reckless, but coming to Y. W. C. A. was made so welcome, I took fresh courage."

Another bright girl: "Before I knew of this place I was so lonesome; this is the only place in town where I am at home."

Some women walking along the street one day heard one girl say to another, "The happiest hour I spend during the day is at Y. W. C. A." Another woman was told, "I never spent any money I felt so well paid for as the gymnasium fee at the Y. W. C. A."

A young girl, the beauty of your association is that all classes of girls from all grades of society and from various parts of the city come with equal fervor and enjoyment."

One of our merchants told a member of the board: "When it was started I didn't have much faith in it; but hereafter count me in for its support. It is doing a grand work in much needed ways."

But best of all are the testimonies that many young women have at our recent formal not only friends, but the great friends, and the Christ has come into their lives giving them His peace and fitting them for useful service to others.

OUR PRESENT FORCE OF WORKERS.

The officers of the Young Women's Christian Association are: Mrs. E. H. Rippe, president; Mrs. L. M. Gates, vice-president; Mrs. Hannah Deacon, treasurer.

The other members of the board of directors are Mesdames Stelle, Everhart, Derman, Simpson, Hanley, Matthews, Brooks, Watts, Lansing, Matthews, Miss Kriebaum.

Miss Della Evans, our leader, brought much enthusiasm to the class. The first meeting of the association, held in the school room, all day, though much enthusiasm to the class. The first meeting of the association, held in the school room, all day, though much enthusiasm to the class.

The Sunday gospel meetings brought together many young women, not a few of whom here entered upon the better life. To these services, times came girls from the hills beyond the city to the south. That these more distant ones might enjoy such meetings often a prayer service was eagerly held in the home of an interested friend on the South Side. From this grew the present branch in that part of the city.

The long distance that separates us has not lessened the interest with which we have recorded the growth of both your local and state work. I pray under His leadership, each year shall increase the power and usefulness of the Young Women's Christian Association in your city and state.

Here up in this great West where in a single day young women have called at our headquarters in San Francisco from Los Angeles and Seattle, fifteen hundred miles apart, and where girls are constantly seeking change of climate to touch the unevangelized girls of our cities and lead them to a knowledge of the Christ-life, by the loving sympathy and helpfulness of a body of consecrated women.

When a spirit of patient, unselfish, Christ-like love that believes in the possibilities for good in every soul, that longs to bring the joy and strength of Jesus to those whose lives apart from Him are barrenness and waste, when such a spirit permeates an organization and impels to action, its influence is boundless, an everwidening circle touching the home, the social and the civil life of our cities.

Woman's influence is felt today in every avenue of business, life, and if it always be pure, true and ennobling it will be as the summer shower purifying the moral atmosphere.

The Christian woman, trained, intelligent, consecrated, with soul aflame with love of truth, and full of tenderest pity has under the blessing of God a mission in society which she has not yet realized. Indeed, she can make the world what she will.

Recognizing how much depends on the character of woman in the home, in society and in business, the Young Women's Christian Association seeks the co-operation of all women in thus "standing together for a common purpose, and that purpose is the realization of an ideal and that ideal is perfect womanhood."

When to woman is given a lofty purpose, courage to be true, and a right conception of righteousness, mother-like Rachel and Mary will be multiplied, and to the teachers and the business women will come truer conceptions of privilege and duty, and the aimless daughter of wealth will be aroused to sympathetic helpfulness.

The aim then, of the Scranton association is to do a spiritual work among young women. But it recognizes as well their intellectual, social and physical needs and furnishes the machinery whereby all these elements may develop. The prize toward which it reaches is a perfectly symmetrical womanhood in Christ Jesus.

Through the various departments it seeks to give to all women opportunities to use and develop the talent God has given them. The field is vast, stretching away at the feet of every Christian woman it gleams white for the harvest. Every woman who is to be saved, every soul to toll for others, from indifference to deep concern, from despair to joy, from sin and bondage to purity and liberty in Jesus Christ. Closely allied to the church and the kingdom of God, the evangelist, it seeks to co-operate with the church, looking to it for guidance and encouragement.

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mate and our best, there is an unlimited field for our work and endeavor.

SOUTH SIDE BRANCH Y. W. C. A.

Looking back over the past four years or more, to the time when this association was organized, I cannot but feel that the Divine Architect had singled out this field and centered His own divine skill upon it, and has been rearing a vast structure all jeweled and inlaid with gems, which are precious, glorious and eternal, realizing that no human hand or mind could fashion lives like these.

In a long, low cottage, with spacious porches, protected by lilac bushes and strong stone walls, this work began. It was a dark old place to the score of girls who floored it at the noon hour, when mills and factories were hushed for a spell.

Every moment must be improved. In one short half hour all would be weaving or reeling, with no time to rest weary brain or tired feet.

Here, girls found true, sympathizing friends. Gospel hymns floated out upon the breeze, reaching the most timid ones upon the wall. Here new thoughts and aspirations were awakened, and here many a girl found new life and new hope. But others came at other times, and the fire kindled and fused to be put out, and the light has penetrated to the remotest recesses of the South Side.

The good work has never been limited to membership alone, but the mingling of the true, earnest and deeply spiritual women and girls, who joined themselves to this organization with those about them, had an influence that can never be estimated. So well attended were the gospel meetings, social and educational classes, with Bible work, that it was soon found necessary to seek a larger home for the girls, and the present location was secured, it being a new house and arranged for the association work, giving new privileges; an assembly room, reading room and library, class rooms, offices, kitchen, china closet, halls and bath.

All these were greatly needed and appreciated. Since then faces have grown brighter, lives more noble and sterner by stone the Great Architect in polishing and placing these parts of the temple He rears for eternity. Even the Juniors have carried the sweetness of the Christ life into their homes, into the schools; yes, even into foreign lands.

Though apparently slow, a more marked and beautiful development of Christian character I have never seen than in the lives of many of the girls of this association, and my heart will always rebound with gratitude to Him who cast my lot in this field for three and one-half brief years.

And now may I speak of the needs of the South Side branch? It has never been self-supporting, and perhaps never can be, hence it needs an endowment; it needs to own its own building; it needs a well equipped gymnasium; it needs a great deal of thought and prayer, and a great amount of actual personal work.

Will not some of you who read this be glad to supply these to one of the most promising of fields, and thus be a blessing not only to yourself, but to hundreds of girls in your midst?

"Shed thy mighty influence abroad O soul, would thine Father's image bear; Make them as holy temples of their God, Whose dwells forever, calm, adoring prayer." FLORENCE TOMKINSON.

A MESSAGE FROM MISS TOLLES.

The request for a word of greeting upon the occasion of publishing the Woman's Paper is one to which I gladly respond. The eight months of my connection with the association, as secretary, have given me an interest in all its affairs which happily may continue in spite of the dissolution of that relationship. It is a pleasure to feel myself still a member, entitled to those privileges of membership over which distance can have no power.

The belief which forced itself upon me during those months of service, that God intends the Scranton Young Women's Christian Association to have a home of its own, adequate for its needs, and worthy of its character as an established institution, has by no means weakened. Rather, the conviction deepens in response to an earnest, systematic effort upon our part, God will in some way supply our need. My greeting, then, is the word of David to Solomon: "Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

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