THE COLUMBUS URBAN LEAGUE:
A HISTORY, 1917-1967

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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* * * * * *

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I express thanks to many people.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td></td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>GENERAL BACKGROUND: CONDITIONS AND EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE SOUTHERN NEGRO MIGRATION; COLUMBUS, OHIO, PRIOR TO AND DURING THE MIGRATION</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>THE FEDERATED SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WELFARE MOVEMENT AND THE COLUMBUS URBAN LEAGUE: THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1917-1921</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>THE POST-WORLD WAR I DECADE, 1921-1931</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>THE DEPRESSION DECADE AND THE NEW EPOCH, 1931-1954</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>THE 1954 SUPREME COURT DECISION AND THE END OF AN ERA; RETIREMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MR. NIMROD B. ALLEN</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>THE LATE FIFTIES; THE GATHERING STORM</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII.</td>
<td>THE TURBULENT SIXTIES; A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND INNOVATION</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS—CONTINUED

## APPENDIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Per Cent of Negroes from 1840 to 1920 (Columbus, Ohio)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Occupations of Persons Eighteen Years of Age or Over: Migrants and Non-Migrants (the Champion Avenue District, Columbus, Ohio)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vote in Gubernatorial Elections in Predominantly Negro Wards in Columbus, Ohio, 1932, 1936 and 1938</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vote in Presidential Elections in Columbus, Ohio's Predominantly Negro Ward in 1936</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The &quot;New Epoch&quot; of the Columbus Urban League</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

During the first quarter of the twentieth century there was a growing interest on the part of socially minded men and women in New York City on the living and working conditions of Negroes. Through the efforts of William H. Baldwin, Jr., Colonel William J. Schieffelin, Frances A. Kellor, and others in 1905, two organizations were formed in New York City; one called the Committee for Improving Industrial Conditions of Negroes in New York, the other the National League for the Protection of Colored Women. Both of these bodies had representatives of the white and Negro races on their boards. The idea of cooperation between the two races in working out the problems they attempted to solve was definitely present in both.

George E. Haynes, a graduate student at Columbia University and with the School of Philanthropy in New York, made a special study of conditions of Negro life in New York City, and became acquainted with the personnel of both organizations. He found the first devoted to increasing employment opportunities for Negroes and giving them trade training. The second devoted itself to giving care, supervision, and direction by hired Traveler's Aid agents to the large number of Negro girls coming from the South for domestic employment in New York.

Haynes reported his findings to both committees and it was decided that a third committee be formed to act as a coordinating agency and round out a larger program of community life for Negroes in New York.
With members from the three committees and friends, Haynes was able to combine the three organizations under the title of the National Urban League on Conditions Among Negroes. The League's transition period (1916-1921) is the period in which this study of the Columbus Urban League begins.

In 1918 a newly created Negro Welfare Movement was formed for the purpose of aiding black migrants to the city of Columbus. This organization sent a representative to a conference of the National Urban League in Detroit, Michigan to report back to the Welfare Movement the nature and scope of the National Urban League's activities. The representative's report to the Movement was favorable. The Movement's board of directors decided that the Columbus Welfare Movement should become an affiliate of the National Urban League since the nature and scope of the two groups work was similar.

The fifty-year history of the Columbus Urban League falls into four major periods: the years of World War I, the years of the depression, the years of World War II, and the years since the Supreme Court decision of 1954. During the first three periods the League's activities were directed by Nimrod B. Allen (1921-1954); the fourth period by Andrew G. Freeman (1954-1961), Chester H. Jones (1962-1965), and Robert D. Brown (1966-present).

During the first period the League sought to meet the problems created in the city as a result of the massive black exodus from the rural deep South during and after World War I. It attempted to meet migrants' needs by means of direct service. The League's work fell into three divisions: adjustment, employment, and housing. Its objective was to welcome the newcomers to homes, schools and churches; to assist them in securing employment, to become industrially efficient, and to aid them in securing homes with sanitary surroundings.
During the depression the League met the challenge by cooperating with federal and state government agencies in sponsoring community gardens, emergency nursery schools, health clinics, canning kitchens, sewing units and establishing playgrounds for children.

World War II brought new problems. Structural changes were announced in an organizational chart in 1943, labeled "The New Epoch of the Columbus Urban League." This was an attempt by the League to curtail some of its many activities which came about as a result of the depression. Four departments were established: (1) Industrial, (2) Youth, (3) Public Relations, and (4) Community and Neighborhood. The Industrial Department's concern was to develop a long-range program for workers' education and to encourage Negroes in the efficient use of their skills. The Youth Department dealt with wholesome leadership and coordinating recreation. Public Relations featured general research activities. The Community and Neighborhood Department organized "block units" in various neighborhoods and was in charge of health and recreation activities.

After the Supreme Court's ruling in the case Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, 1954, education was given an increasingly important role in Urban League's local planning. In the sixties the Negro question assumed a new urgency for the Columbus Urban League. The League was called upon to explain the Negro's new attitude and to suggest possible solutions.

No general history has been written of the Columbus Urban League so this work is an attempt to depict the highlights of each of the periods during which the League never lost sight of its purpose of strengthening service in the black community and meeting the challenges produced by the stress of the times.
CHAPTER I

General Background: Conditions and Events That Led to the Southern Negro Migration; Columbus, Ohio Prior to and During the Migration

The Columbus Urban League, organized in 1918, was the product of the massive black exodus from the deep, rural South during and after World War I. The causes of the migration were numerous and complicated. The migrants came largely from Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Arkansas and Mississippi. Professor Carter G. Woodson, in speaking for the migrants, states that:

What the migrants themselves think about it, goes to the very heart of the trouble. Some say that they left the South on account of injustice in the courts, unrest, lack of privileges, denial of the right to vote, bad treatment, oppression, segregation or lynching. Others say they left to find employment, to secure better wages, better school facilities, and better opportunities to till upward.¹

Professor William O. Scroggs of Louisiana State University considered as the causes of the exodus:

The relatively low wages paid labor, an unsatisfactory tenant or crop-sharing system, the boll-weevil, the crop failure of 1916, lynching, disfranchisement, segregation, poor schools, the monotony, isolation and drudgery of farm life.²

Other writers treating the migration seem to follow generally the views of Woodson and Scroggs. They argued that an unusual series of circumstances both provoked and made possible the large-scale migration from the South. The causes were numerous and complicated, but the fundamental and immediate causes of the exodus were economic. The sudden exodus of migrants had its origin in the great labor shortage in the North growing out of the European War. War had cut off the large and accustomed immigration stream from Europe. Further, thousands of foreign-born residents who were needed in the service of their respective native lands had returned home. Northern employers who had been dependent on them for their labor soon faced a serious shortage of labor while their contracts with European concerns for war supplies increased tremendously. Being hard pressed for labor, these industrialists, as a last resort, turned to the South and began to solicit Negro labor in order to meet their needs.

The migrants from the South were to a large extent both drawn and driven to break the ties which bound them to their respective localities. Dr. Scroggs states that:

The causes may be grouped as beckoning and driving causes; the first group arising from conditions in the North and the second from conditions in the South; the beckoning causes were high wages, employment, a shorter working day than on the farm, less political and social discrimination than in the South, better educational facilities and the lure of the city.\(^3\)

\(^3\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 1040-1041.}\)
On the other hand were the driving causes: general dissatisfaction with conditions in the South, ravages of the boll-weevil and floods, change of crop system, low wages, poor houses on plantations, inadequate school facilities, unsatisfactory crop settlements, rough treatment, cruelty of the law officers, unfairness in courts, lynching, the desire for travel, the propaganda of labor agents sent South by northern industrialists to recruit Negro workers, encouragement to migration offered by the widely-read newspaper the Chicago Defender, letters from friends in the North, and finally advice of white friends in the South.4

It may be useful to look specifically at conditions in three of the states which were foremost in contributing to the movement; namely, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. In Alabama, the causes of the migration were mainly economic ones. The opportunities afforded Negroes to earn their subsistence from cotton plantations were greatly curtailed by the boll-weevil which swept over the state a few years earlier. In the black belt counties, cotton had been the sole crop for several generations, and money to finance its cultivation had come wholly from the landowner or overseer. At the same time, the Negro farmers and laborers were never taught or encouraged to raise any crop other than cotton. When the boll-weevil came and made the raising of cotton an impossibility, it became necessary to shift from the cotton crop to another which was not liable to be troubled by the boll-weevil. While the transition was being made, farm income fell considerably. The outcome was that Negroes suffered much more than whites in their struggle to maintain themselves.

In 1916, floods in Alabama caused extensive crop damage. During the spring and summer of that year, the rivers overflowed and the water from the rivers destroyed the crops throughout a large portion of the state. This made it necessary for both farmers and tenants in the affected areas to seek other means of livelihood. The customary advances in money and provisions to the Negro tenants were cut off, and in many cases the owners of large plantations advised their Negro laborers to move away.\(^5\) In other cases, Negroes were so deeply in debt for rent and for provisions furnished them during the past winter that they were forced to forfeit their mules and other property. These conditions brought on so much suffering among the Negroes that some nearly starved and had to be given food by the Federal Government, through the Department of Agriculture, and also by the Red Cross Organization.\(^6\)

Another potent influence leading to migration was the persuasion of friends and relatives already in the North. In 1917, when a study of the movement was made, it was found that this was a principal influence operating to move Negroes to the North. Former residents of some of the rural districts of the South who had established themselves in the North wrote letters back to their friends and relatives telling them of their success in the new environment. The wages which the former residents spoke of seemed fabulous sums when compared with those received in the South. They


\(^6\) Ibid., p. 61.
also told of their pleasant surroundings and of numerous advantages and opportunities which they were enjoying, but which had been impossible for them to enjoy while in the South. Negro men, moreover, frequently sent large sums of money to transport their families to the North, and frequently sons in the North sent sums back to their parents in the South for the same purpose. The letters from fathers and sons contained glowing reports concerning northern conditions, and the large remittances to relatives and friends played no small part in inducing thousands to move to try their fortunes in the new environment.

In Georgia, the migration was due to a complex of economic and social causes in the form of low wages, poor conditions of labor, lynching, minor injustices in the courts, and dissatisfaction with educational facilities. At the time of the migration, wages in the state were extremely low. In 1916, farm labor was paid ten to fifteen dollars a month. It should be added, however, that these wages were in most cases supplemented by free housing and sometimes food.

Low wages were not the only grievances of Georgia Negroes. There was utter neglect on the part of some planters to look after the single men. For example, in many cases no provision was made to have their food properly cooked, their clothes mended, to keep them supplied with fresh meat, to repair the houses in which they lived, and to furnish them with gardens. On the other hand, it was noted

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that those planters who carefully looked after these details had no difficulty holding their laborers.

In regard to lynching as a cause of migration from Georgia, it is not easy to state exactly its effects on the movement because the lynchings which occurred immediately before and during the migration were in the boll-weevil section where economic conditions were also worse. Nevertheless, several planters whose premises were crossed by lynching parties held that their labor losses increased on account of the terrorization of their tenants. In two cases occurring in 1915 and 1916, in the boll-weevil section of the state, lynching parties killed indiscriminately. In one county, after apprehending a wanted Negro criminal, the mob beat and terrorized many Negroes and went across the county and killed his mother and one of his relatives. These lynchings had the effect of developing terror in Negroes and thus causing them to seek the North as a place of refuge. 8

Another reason why Negroes left Georgia was their resentment over the injustices done them in the courts. In Georgia, and a number of other states as well, there prevailed a system whereby the county and police officials were paid so much a head for every man they arrested. Under this system, police officials were overzealous in rounding up Negroes for gambling, drinking, and other petty infractions of the law. As punishment for these small violations of the law, Negroes were usually sentenced to work on the county roads for certain

8 Ibid., p. 89.
periods of time. In the rural districts where recreation facilities were wretchedly poor, Negroes felt themselves justified in gambling and drinking as a means of amusement; therefore, when they were arbitrarily arrested and severely punished, they felt that gross injustice had been done them.

Furthermore, the poor educational facilities in Georgia were a source of dissatisfaction which caused many Negroes to leave the state. A report on educational conditions in the state showed that the per capita expenditure for public school teachers' salaries for each white child between six and fourteen years of age was about six times the per capita expenditure for each Negro child. Moreover, the Negro teachers were poorly trained and their salaries were unusually small.

The causes for Negro migration from Mississippi were similar to those in Georgia. In the first place, there was in southwest and east Mississippi a lack of capital for carrying labor through the fall and early winter until time to start a new crop. This lack of capital was brought about by a succession of short crops, the advent of the boll-weevil, and the destructive storm the summer of 1916. In the second place, the short crops, boll-weevil, and the destructive storm caused landowners in the southwest and eastern section of Mississippi to undertake agriculture reorganization. Cotton crops were reduced, more foodstuff was produced, and other crops were planted which required a smaller labor force. Thirdly, starvation wages led some

\[9\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 86-89.}\]
to leave Mississippi. The wages ranged from seventy-five cents a
day on farms in the southwest to one dollar and a quarter a day
in northern counties.\textsuperscript{10} Other causes for the migrants leaving
Mississippi were the same as they were in Georgia.

Although the Negro press in general did not promote migration,
remaining for the most part silent or non-committal concerning the
exodus, one northern Negro paper, the \textit{Chicago Defender}, was outspoken
in urging Negroes to leave the South. In some sections of the South
the Defender's work in stimulating the migration movement may have
had more effect than that of all the labor agents put together. The
Defender pursued the policy of summing up the troubles and grievances
of southern Negroes. It constantly kept their sordid conditions in
the forefront and pointed out ways to escape from their unpleasant
state of affairs. The Defender continually emphasized in the most
convincing ways the great advantages and opportunities which were
awaiting Negroes who would go North, and consistently omitted mention
of any possible disadvantages that might be encountered in the new
environment.\textsuperscript{11}

Labor agents were sent South by northern industries to
recruit Negro labor to fill the void left by foreign laborers who
left their job in America to return to their country at the outbreak
of World War I. These agents would furnish southern Negroes with
enough money to make the trip North to their destination. Once they


\textsuperscript{11}The Chicago Commission on Race Relations, \textit{The Negro in
Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot} (Chicago, 1922),
were on the job, most of their first pay check was used to repay the agents. Although labor agents were hated by most southern whites, most northern Industrialists considered them to be a blessing.\textsuperscript{12}

Beginning in 1917, hundreds of migrants streamed into Columbus. Every train brought its load of newcomers from southern rural districts, many of them unskilled and untutored; many knew an aunt or uncle or friend who lived here and thought they could locate them merely by asking for them at the Union Station. Others were sent to Columbus by labor agents representing such Columbus firms as the Columbus Malleable Iron Works and the Ohio Malleable Iron Works.\textsuperscript{13} The city was faced with the problem of taking care of this large influx of people who had come without preparation, advance notice, or any definite place to go. In 1910, the city's Negro population was 12,739; by 1920, it had increased to 22,181, a 74.1 per cent increase in the Negro population in ten years.\textsuperscript{14}

With the single exception of Indianapolis, Columbus, before the post-World War I migration, had a distinctly higher proportion

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Richard C. Minor, "The Negro in Columbus, Ohio," Doctoral dissertation (Ohio State University, 1936), p. 42.

\textsuperscript{14}Mary Louis Mark, \textit{Negroes in Columbus} (Columbus, Ohio, 1928), p. 8.
\end{footnotesize}
of Negroes in its population than any other large northern city.

J. B. Malone, a graduate student at Ohio State University in 1904, states:

The strategic location of Columbus in the Negro world accounts for the composite character of her colored population. Being on one of the old Underground Railway lines, it is traditionally a point of distribution for Negro migration. It draws along natural lines from all portions of the South, but particularly ... the border states.15

Franklin U. Quillin in his Color Line in Ohio published in 1913, in speaking of the Negro in Columbus prior to the migration of 1917, states:

Columbus, the capital of Ohio, has a feeling toward Negroes all its own. In all my travels in the state, I found nothing just like it. It is not so much a rabid feeling of prejudice against the Negroes simply because their skin is black as it is a bitter hatred for them because they are what they are in character and habits. The Negroes are almost completely outside the pale of the white people's sympathy in this city, but the latter justify themselves, and in fact many of the better class of Negroes agree with them on the grounds that so many of the Negroes are proving themselves by their attitude and conduct unworthy of the respect of decent people. This condition of affairs has been growing by leaps and bounds during the last five years. Most of the colored people say that it is only since the coming of a large number of disreputable southern Negroes that affairs have grown worse. The white people seem to think that late comers are prone to assert their rights a little too freely. Whatever the cause may be, this much is evident—the feeling against the Negroes is bitter in the extreme.16

A comparison of Columbus with other cities of 100,000 and over showed that in the composition of its population Columbus somewhat

15 ibid., p. 10.

resembled southern cities. There was the same large proportion of native whites and the same proportion of immigrants, while the proportion of Negroes, although much lower than in southern cities, was high considering the city's geographic location.17

Columbus had always had a considerable proportion of Negroes in its population. The census figures, which were available for the city for nine decades, are as follows.

TABLE I.--Per Cent of Negroes from 1840 to 1920: U.S. Census of Population18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>237,031</td>
<td>22,181</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>181,511</td>
<td>12,739</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>125,560</td>
<td>8,201</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>88,150</td>
<td>5,547</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>51,647</td>
<td>3,010</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>31,274</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>5.9</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>18,554</td>
<td>997</td>
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<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>17,882</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>6,048</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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</table>

As the table reveals, the most rapid growth occurred between the censuses of 1910 and 1920. The Negro population almost tripled between 1900 and 1920. The average annual increase in the decade 1900-1910 was about 450 persons; in the decade 1910-1920 the average had risen to nearly 950. This increase in absolute numbers was very noticeable on the streets and in public places and gave rise to wild

17Mark, Negroes in Columbus, p. 7.
estimates at the close of the war, some citizens asserting that one of every four inhabitants of the city was Negro.\textsuperscript{19}

According to an article in the \textit{Columbus Dispatch} in 1919:

Many Negroes come to the city from the South. Fifty per cent of Columbus' increase in eight years is due to them. They come to Columbus wholly ignorant of the conditions they must face and equip with an education which costs an average of $1.60 per man during his lifetime.

Typical family from Georgia . . . four people, possessions in a basket, two old telescopes and a quilt; clothing is unfit for northern climate; attracted by report of jobs ranging from six to seven dollars a day.\textsuperscript{20}

Although the growth of the Negro population was more rapid than the growth of the white, it was not sufficiently marked to occasion much interracial friction. There was no evidence of the Intolerance shown in some other Ohio communities such as Lima, Cleveland and Youngstown. A lynching was attempted in Lima in the summer of 1916. On August 30, Sheriff Sherman Eley arrested Charles Daniels, a Negro transient from Mississippi, for having allegedly attacked Vivian Baber (white), the wife of a Shawnee Township farmer, in her home. Daniels was arrested but fearing trouble, the sheriff took the prisoner to Ottawa, a town eighteen miles away. A mob formed about the Lima jail and then broke into the jail in search of Daniels. After failing to find him there, the mob broke into the courthouse and into the sheriff's home. The mob went so far as to string a rope from a telephone pole, place a noose around the

\textsuperscript{19}Mark, \textit{Negroes in Columbus}, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{Columbus Dispatch}, May 11, 1919.
she riff's neck and pulled the rope taut before Eley revealed that he had taken Daniels to Ottawa. Many of the members of the mob travelled by car to Ottawa where they again failed to find Daniels. In the meantime, Eley escaped. Subsequently, Lima law enforcement officials got the situation in hand. Nevertheless, it was reported that a strong undercurrent of feeling against Negroes continued to exist. The police advised permanent Negro residents of Lima to remain in their homes after dark.

Cleveland police were called out twice on June 11, 1917, to quell rioting in the Central Avenue and East 14th Street areas. Negroes and whites of foreign origin fought with fists, stones and clubs. Scores of people were involved but there were no serious injuries. The origin of the riot was unclear. It was rumored that a Negro had insulted a white woman. This rumor may have originated from a saloon incident. A group of whites chased a Negro, who represented himself as a beggar, out of a saloon for sport. Those seeing the Negro being chased by white men evidently assumed that he had insulted a white woman.

In 1919, attacks were made upon Negroes who used Cleveland parks. On the evening of June 24, about thirty boys and girls and their chaperones were attacked on a streetcar while returning from


23 The Gazette, June 16, 1917.
an afternoon excursion at Garfield Park. A mob of about fifty whites stoned the streetcar and abused members of the group. Also, in the summer of 1919, two little boys were stoned by whites while swimming in one of Cleveland's park lakes. Upon complaint, the lifeguards at the lake, who had not tried to prevent this stoning, were dismissed, and the Cleveland Police investigated the streetcar incident. 24

Competition between Negro and white laborers in Youngstown resulted in a riot in that city in the summer of 1917. 25

Although trends of feeling were not all in the direction of better interracial understanding in Columbus, acts of courtesy between members of the two races were not uncommon. Most Negro migrants took at least temporary residence in the established downtown districts not far away from the Union Station. The heaviest settlement was southeast of Union Station centering around Spring and Nellston Streets. There was a scattering of Negro population along Front Street from Fulton Street on the south to Goodale Street, where another district ran west; and Spruce Street along the railroad was heavily settled. If Columbus were divided into quadrants by the two main thoroughfares, High Street running north and south and Broad Street running east and west, it would be found that there were Negro settlements in every quadrant, that the northeast section was the most populous, and that the southwest was the least; that with the

24 Ibid., July 5, 1919.

exception of the large settlement northwest of the Union Station, there were relatively few Negroes in Columbus west of High Street; and that Negroes were more numerous in the older sections near the center of the city than in the outskirts of town. 26

The largest Negro section in the city was the East Long Street district extending from Third Street on the west to Taylor on the east and from Long Street on the south to Atcheson Street on the north. The pressure of increasing numbers of Negroes together with the scarcity of available homes made it a profitable business to sell and rent homes to them. 27

Whites resisted the encroachment of Negroes. They tried to keep them confined to the streets on which they were already living. But Negroes bought homes on the new streets through white real estate dealers who kept the color of the buyer a secret until the transaction was completed. Negroes were forced to pay higher prices for the homes thus secured, but they were willing to do so, knowing that as soon as they were settled on a new street they could soon buy other property at reduced prices. Usually after a Negro family moved into a new block, the whites living there tried to sell their property and move away. One Columbus Negro who had lived in a neighborhood since 1899, said that "it was fun to see the white people run after a Negro family moved onto the street." He said that he "bought the first property owned by a Negro north of Mt. Vernon Avenue

26Mark, Negroes in Columbus, p. 7.
27Ibid., p. 17.
and owned it for quite a while before the white tenants knew that they were renting from a colored man." A building-and-loan official said that "the next day after the first Negro family moved onto 22nd Street between Mt. Vernon and Long Street there were seven 'For Sale' signs put up within the block and many others followed immediately." Although property values in that area went down considerably, the neighborhood became popular among Columbus Negroes and persons in other parts of the city began to speak of it as the aristocratic colored district, and several real estate dealers, both white and colored, said that they had had more calls for east-end property among Negroes than for lots in other parts of the city.

There were several forces pulling Negroes into this east-end district. The railroad shops employed Negroes who wanted to live near their work and were willing to pay high rent to live there. This was a stimulus to landlords who owned property in the district and wanted profitable tenants and were willing to cater to Negroes. Another force was the presence of the wealthiest white residents of the city on East Broad Street. They desired to have Negro "help" nearby. The Long Street region was near enough for convenience and also far enough away to keep Broad Street exclusively white. A downtown real estate man, who had been in the city for a long time and

28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
30 Ibid.
who had done considerable business with the Negroes, said that "he thought this was the real reason for the location of this district;" he said further, "there will never be a similar district in the north-end because there is not the same wealthy class there."  

According to Nimrod B. Allen, Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League,

...If you were to imagine in your mind's eye a river coursing its way straight to the sea, being fed by tributaries from its northern boundaries that were direct opposite those southern boundaries, you would have an idea of East Long Street from the point of Negroes and white people. East Long Street is the river that is fed by all of the cross-section streets, from Long Street to Mt. Vernon Avenue, by Negroes, and the social, political and business life of this section is largely influenced by what happens on Long Street, which receives its white people from southern tributaries.  

Outside of the East Long Street community there were four principal areas where the newcomers settled; namely, the West Goodale Street section, the South Seventh Street community, the East Fifth Avenue neighborhood and the Southgate addition. Many of the migrant families settled in these sections because they were low-rent areas where economic and racial resistance was slight. Further, most of these sections were near the center of the city or adjacent to the factories where the migrants worked.

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31 ibid.

32 Nimrod B. Allen, "East Long Street," The Crisis Magazine, XXV (November, 1922), p. 13. (Hereafter this article will be cited as Allen, "East Long Street."

33 Mark, Negroes in Columbus, 15 ff.
Of the four principal areas outside the East Long Street community where the newcomers settled, the only one worthy of mention is the South Seventh Street community. This district was located within a geographic area which prior to 1918 had been known as the Bad Lands. In this area could be found a constellation of (1) licensed and tolerated institutions, (2) characteristic patterns of vice and crime, and (3) distinctive personality patterns. Three institutions constituted the structural framework of the Bad Lands--the saloon, the gambling hall, and the houses of prostitution--the most famous was the Hall of Mirrors. In the Bad Lands' heyday, Alexander "Smoky" Hobbs' combination gymnasium, gambling hall and opium den was the center of attraction. According to Dr. John Himes, research director of the Columbus Urban League during the thirties, the city began an anti-vice crusade during the first quarter of the Twentieth Century culminating with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1918. As a result, the Bad Lands, both as an area and as a significant phase of Negro life in Columbus, became a part of the past.

Negroes in Columbus suffered a political setback in 1912, when the election of officials by the ward system was abolished. The abolition of the ward system by the revision of the Columbus Charter in 1912, made it possible for members of the City Council

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35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.
and of the Board of Education to be elected at large, so it was impossible for any Negro plurality to win an election. Denied the opportunity of electing city officials because of the abolition of the ward system, and wedded to one party, the Negro vote became politically insignificant. Between 1920 and 1932, eight Negro candidates ran unsuccessfully for public office from Columbus or Franklin County. In spite of the political setback, Columbus Negroes were compensated in some measure by the more successful preoccupation of the group with their economic opportunities on the economic front along with the work of the Columbus Urban League and its affiliates on the social front. 37

Prior to the migration, Negroes in Columbus were engaged primarily as barbers, hack drivers, delivery men, and draymen, hotel waiters, bartenders, hostlers and yardmen, and as unskilled laborers in such manufacturing concerns as buggy works, brickyards, foundries, and lumber mills. 38 Most of the Negro leaders were barbers operating or working in shops serving white customers. Notable among these leaders were the Reverend James Poindexter and David Jenkins. These men had the opportunity to acquire information and culture from their patrons and to form the contacts which are essential to effective leadership. There was no professional nor any large middle class of Negro business enterprisers except barbers,

37 Ibid., p. 144.

38 Minor, "Negroes In Columbus," p. 40.
saloon keepers and restaurant operators. The period of middle class Negro business enterprisers and professionals came with the rapidly expanded production occasioned by World War I.

The southern migration introduced new blood into the economic life of the Columbus Negro community. For the first time in the history of the city, Negro labor came to be a significant factor in the production industries. In 1910, 26.5 per cent of the Negro workers of the city were engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries. By 1920, this figure had jumped to 41.9 per cent. Many of these workers were skilled and semi-skilled mechanics imported to man the machines and railroads of the city.

Table 2 shows a survey made of the occupations of Negroes in one of the districts of the city in which migrants had moved.

The occupations of the people in the district who were eighteen years of age or over were listed in all cases where the information was available. The differences of occupation between migrant and non-migrant men are not striking. A larger proportion of migrants were found in the building trades and working for the railroads, while a somewhat larger proportion of the non-migrants were general laborers. None of the migrants were engaged in clerical work. The employment of the women engaged in work outside

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39Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," p. 138.

40Ibid., p. 140.
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4 Mark, Negroes in Columbus, pp. 41-42. (The survey was made of the Champion Avenue district. Within this district information was secured for 188 households. In the 188 households there were 816 persons in all, 788 of whom reported the facts in regard to residence so that they may be classified as migrants or non-migrants.)
their homes were in all but a small proportion of cases domestic in character, and this is true of both groups.42

The migration of southern Negroes into the city had positive aspects as well as negative. A positive aspect of the migration was the rapid increase in the number of business establishments owned and operated by Negroes such as the Williams Building on East Long Street, the Supreme Life and Casualty Insurance Company, the Fireside Mutual Aid Association, the National Benefit Life Insurance Company, the Columbus Industrial Mortgage and Security Company, the American Woodmen, the Williams Real Estate and Rentals, the Empress Theater and office building, Alpha Hospital, and the Colored Odd Fellows Hall.43

A second positive aspect of the migration was the fact a few of the new citizens were persons who had had previous business experience. These newcomers put this experience to work creating a Negro market. En masse the newcomers comprised a self conscious, often isolated group accustomed to the dual economy of the South and receiving unprecedented wages in their new jobs. They were accustomed to Negro businesses catering to blacks and white businesses catering to whites. These newcomers therefore felt at home in their new environment and constituted by virtue of size, income and psychology a fertile market for the rapidly growing Negro business.44

42Ibid.

43Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," p. 144.

44Ibid.
An inevitable effect of these developments was the economic differentiation of the growing Negro population and the emergence of fairly distinct classes. It was possible to distinguish a professional as well as a business class. Doctors, dentists, lawyers, teachers, social workers, ministers, and other professionals multiplied rapidly. Symbolic of this new character of Negro life in the city was the organization of the Business Men's Club at the Spring Street Branch YMCA under the leadership of Nimrod B. Allen, then Executive Secretary of the YMCA, as a vehicle of unity and expression. Negro society in the city began to stratify naturally along economic lines. 45

In addition to the effect which the war-time migration had on the economic life of Columbus Negroes, it brought an immediate harvest of new social ills. As the tight little community tried to expand with unaccustomed rapidity to accommodate the massive black influx, for the first time welfare problems of Negroes came to be recognized as being social in character and as having implications for the well-being of the entire city. This was a novel point of view for residents of Columbus, for until this massive exodus shocked the city into recognition of the facts, the welfare problems of Negroes were thought in some peculiar way to be rooted in their African heritage. Such problems had been conceived of as by-products of the Negro's hereditary nature, and therefore not amenable to the spirit and method of social work. 46 But with a new point of view regarding the social ills of the growing population, the city set to work to do something about them.

45 ibid.
46 ibid., p. 149.
In 1917, Columbus agencies such as churches, ministerial alliances, schools, YMCA, NAACP, and others recognized the problem created by the influx of people who had come to the city without preparation, advance notice, or any definite place to go. A concerned black physician, Dr. William J. Woodlin, a member of the board of directors of the Spring Street YMCA in 1917, asked representatives from the above named agencies and others to meet with him to develop plans to help the strangers adjust to city life. The representatives of the various agencies met with Dr. Woodlin and hastily organized the Federated Social and Industrial Welfare Movement for the Negro. Some of the persons present were Cordelia Winn, International Secretary of the YMCA; Anna V. Hughes, director of a local nursing school; Elsie Mountain, a social worker; R. Doyle Phillips, pastor of Grave Baptist Church; J. J. Williams, a local realtor; Nimrod B. Allen, Executive Secretary of the Spring Street YMCA; E. W. Moore, Eliza Johns, and a few others. 

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1The Columbus Urban League, Twenty Years of Service in the Field of Social Work for Negroes and Inter-race Relations 1917-1937 (Pamphlet) Columbus Urban League Papers. (Hereafter this pamphlet will be cited as Twenty Years of Service in the Field of Social Work for Negroes.)

2Ibid.
The group discussed the problems brought about by the massive exodus of Negroes from the South and what they could do to help the migrants. Problems of concern were housing, recreation, delinquency, employment, and social welfare. But the most pressing problem was the immediate adjustment of the newcomers. It was decided by the group that a traveler's aid worker be placed at the Union Station to aid migrants in making contact with the agencies and with relatives and friends in order to find jobs and homes.\(^3\)

In April, 1917, the hastily organized Federated Social and Industrial Welfare Movement for the Negro became a permanent organization with the following black officers: William J. Woodlin, President; Cordelia Winn, Vice President; Anna V. Hughes, Secretary; R. Doyle Phillips, Treasurer. The executive staff included Nimrod B. Allen, general secretary and Elsie Mountain, a social worker. The Welfare Movement had as its objectives to welcome the newcomers to homes, schools and churches, to assist them not only in securing employment but to help them to become industrially efficient, and to assist them in securing comfortable homes with sanitary surroundings.\(^4\)

The work of the Welfare League during the first year seems to have fallen into three general divisions: employment, housing, and adjustment. The policy with regard to employment was to find and, where possible, to open new occupations hitherto denied Negroes. Prospective employers were reached by letter, telegram, and personal

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid.
contact. The Welfare League helped migrants find decent lodging, assisted them in finding houses, and helped tenants who were dissatisfied with poor quarters to find better ones. Through J. J. Williams, a real estate dealer and chairman of the Welfare League's housing committee, many migrants were able to find decent lodging. Williams purchased or leased several flats which were occupied by the newcomers. 5

Efforts to adjust the newcomers started with their entrance to the city. Under the supervision of Nimrod B. Allen, Elsie Mountain, and Harriet Derwin, traveler's aid workers did some very effective work in this area. Agents of the Welfare League met trains and directed migrants to destinations when they had addresses of relatives. Those who did not have addresses of relatives were sent to respectable homes for food and lodging and to the Welfare League's office to register for employment. 6

The financial report of the Welfare League for the fiscal year ending April 30, 1918, showed that $1,027.60 was raised by the Welfare League through membership campaigns, churches, concerts, and donations of various kinds. Six hundred dollars of this amount was given by Negroes and the remaining $427.60 by white people. The League recommended that the staff of one paid worker be increased and that

5First Annual Report, Federated Social and Industrial Movement for the Negro, April 30, 1918, Columbus Urban League Papers, Manuscript Department, Ohio Historical Society, Museum Library, Columbus, Ohio, 1969. (Hereafter Annual Reports of the Columbus Urban League will be cited by number, month and year.)

6Ibid.
a budget of $4,500.00 would be raised to carry on the immediate activities of the League.  

During the spring and summer of 1918, the Welfare League continued its work in the fields of housing, recreation, delinquency, employment, and social welfare. Elsie Mountain, the Welfare League's social worker, was sent to the National Urban League Convention in Detroit. The National Urban League had embarked on a program of expansion. The local Welfare League wanted to know what the National League was doing in helping the black migrants from the rural South adjust to urban life. The work of the National Urban League was explained to delegates from the various northern industrial cities. They were told of the serious employment situation which followed the opening of World War I and the massive migration of blacks from the South without preparation for living in the North. 

The League's program was based on the cooperative work of members of both races in the areas of health, housing, recreation, employment, school life, home economics, clubs for boys and girls, and the prevention of crime and delinquency in black communities. In local communities, local organizations which had become affiliated with the national organization were free to develop the line that it saw would be of most importance, so that there would be no serious

7Ibid.
divergence among the different branches although in general outline the work would be similar.8

Upon Elsie Mountain's return to Columbus, she reported her findings on the work of the National Urban League to the Welfare League's board of directors and recommended that the Welfare League should become affiliated with the National Urban League. The Welfare League's board of directors considered Miss Mountain's recommendation and decided to invite Eugene K. Jones, executive director of the National Urban League to come to Columbus and talk to members of the Welfare League, and explain further the work of the National Urban League. Out of Jones' visit came the organization of the Columbus Urban League.

On June 30, 1918, the Columbus Dispatch carried an article on the reorganization of the Federated Social and Industrial Welfare Movement for the Negro. According to the article:

... a meeting was held by interested Columbus people in bettering conditions in the Negro community. A committee from the Welfare League met with Eugene K. Jones, executive secretary of the National Urban League, who came to Columbus to assist in reorganizing the local Welfare League. Irvin Maurer was elected chairman and W. J. Woodlin first vice president. A budget of $5,000.00 was suggested to carry on the work of the coming year. Four thousand dollars was pledged by white members and $1,000.00 by colored members.9

The years 1918-1921, were trying ones for the new Columbus Urban League. John M. Pollard (black), who came to Columbus from St. Paul Episcopal School in Lawrenceville, Virginia, became the...


9Columbus Dispatch, June 30, 1918.
League's first Executive Secretary and served in that capacity until 1920. Pollard seems to have been a competent Executive Secretary but he was not an experienced fund raiser. During his few months tenure in the position, the League found itself with such dire financial problems that at a meeting of those interested in the Columbus Urban League held on April 10, 1919, W. E. Jones offered a motion that the YMCA and the YWCA be requested to take over the work of the League. R. C. Bondy of the Social Service Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce presented a strong argument for the independence of the Columbus Urban League. Director of Public Safety Arthur J. Thatcher also spoke of the value of the League's work. President Maurer decided to appoint a committee of five to decide what should be done. When the committee met on April 21, 1919, it decided to recommend to the board of directors that "the Urban League should be continued for another year and that definite plans be made by which the money necessary for its existence be raised. Further, it was recommended that the finance committee be enlarged; that a publicity committee be appointed; and that the fiscal year end April 30, 1919.""}

The Columbus Urban League was inoperative during the months of July and August of 1919. It was not until September that effective work by the League was resumed. Howard Gregg, who succeeded John

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10 Minutes of the Columbus Urban League's Committee on the Future of the League, April 21, 1919, Columbus Urban League Papers.

11 Ibid.
Pollard as Executive Secretary (after only a few months in the position) resigned on February 18, 1920, for a more secure position at Wilberforce University. Gregg's successor was E. A. Carter. Carter was brought to Columbus by Eugene K. Jones, National Executive Secretary, who recommended to the Columbus Urban League's executive board that Carter be hired as the League's Executive Secretary on a two-month trial basis.\(^\text{12}\)

E. A. Carter was a very dynamic, imaginative, and competent secretary. His first executive report was comprehensive and analytical. It included recommendations which it was hoped would make the League a more effective force in the community; it reported the strengths and weaknesses of the League; it presented an outline for reorganization of the League, with special reference to a constitution which would fit the conditions existing in Columbus; it recommended an increase in board membership so that there would always be a working body able to maintain the League's program; committees were to conduct much of the League's work because of the small number of persons involved and their ability to meet conveniently. Carter also spoke of the financial situation which he noted was anything but good.\(^\text{13}\)

On May 4, 1920, the Columbus Urban League was formally incorporated by the State of Ohio. Although the League had operated in

\(^\text{12}\)Interview Nimrod B. Allen (Columbus, Ohio, November 4, 1969). Allen was a member of the executive board at the time.

\(^\text{13}\)E. A. Carter, Report of Executive Secretary, May 19, 1920, Columbus Urban League Papers.
Columbus since 1918, it had not been incorporated by the State of Ohio. This move gave the League legitimate recognition in the State of Ohio. On July 13, 1920, the Columbus Urban League granted Carter a leave of absence to survey social agencies operating among colored people in Louisville, Kentucky. After his work was completed, Carter decided to accept a position with the National Urban League. J. J. Attwell, who was serving as director of Community Service Incorporated in Columbus, was given a leave of absence by that organization to become acting Executive Secretary of the League until a permanent secretary could be secured.

During Attwell's tenure, the League's activities centered around the auditing of the League's financial records, purchasing of equipment from Community Service, conducting the Community Center's activities, and fund raising. After several months in the position, Attwell announced his desire to retire. The League's executive board agreed that a letter commending Attwell for his services to the League be given to him by the League's president. The board also agreed to invite T. Arnold Hill, Executive Secretary of the Chicago Urban League, to come to Columbus on February 9, 1921, in the interest of financial reorganization. According to Nimrod B. Allen:

Hill came to Columbus to advise; he spoke of the methods used by the Chicago Urban League to raise funds; he made it known that an effective campaigner and fund raiser was necessary if the League was to overcome its financial difficulties.

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14 State of Ohio, Articles of Incorporation of the Columbus Urban League, Corp. No. 91708, May 4, 1920, Columbus Urban League Papers.
15 Executive Board Meeting of the Columbus Urban League, February 4, 1921, Columbus Urban League Papers.
16 Interview, Nimrod B. Allen (November 4, 1969).
Between February 9, 1920, and November 1, 1921, the League tried to secure such a person to serve as Executive Secretary of the League. A number of persons were recommended by the national office and other interested persons. But those who came to Columbus stayed for only a short while. They just could not cope with the financial situation. It was not until the League decided to turn to one of its local members that it was able to solve the Executive Secretary problem, and the League was enabled to make real accomplishments.

On September 30, 1921, at a monthly meeting of the League, it was moved by C. C. North, a professor at Ohio State University and one of the many white board members, and seconded by W. J. Woodlin that the board extend Nimrod B. Allen an invitation to become Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League at a salary of $4,000.00. Allen came to Columbus, Ohio, in 1916, to take a position as Executive Director of the Spring Street YMCA. He was a graduate of Wilberforce and Yale Universities. When Allen first arrived in Columbus he was looked upon by the Negro community with skepticism; but by the year 1921, he was respected by both black and white citizens of Columbus. His work at the YMCA was known and respected by city officials and especially by the Negro community.

17 Monthly Meeting of the Executive Board of the Columbus Urban League, September 30, 1921, Columbus Urban League Papers. From the very beginning the Columbus Urban League's board of directors consisted of both black and white citizens.

18 Interview, Nimrod B. Allen (November 4, 1969). The writer interviewed a number of senior citizens who did not want their names mentioned in this work but who confirmed Allen's statement.
The formative years for the Columbus Urban League were indeed trying ones. But the League's founding years were by no means different from the founding years of leagues in other large northern cities. Although the League was hastily organized to meet the massive exodus of southern rural Negroes during World War I, it succeeded during those years in making itself a part of the Columbus scene. Even with the very limited financial resources available, the League made important contributions toward helping to facilitate the social and economic adjustment of migrants. Independent finances plagued the League throughout its formative years. Unlike the Chicago League which had the financial assistance of Julius Rosenwald and others to help meet its financial obligations, the Columbus League had to depend upon contributions from its Negro members, fund raising campaigns and money that could be secured from the few white citizens who were concerned with the rapidly deteriorating condition of the Negro citizens of Columbus.

It was not until the League was able to secure the services of Nimrod B. Allen that a secretary was found who could master the techniques of fund raising and organization which were necessary if the Columbus Urban League was to become a successful organization in the city of Columbus. In spite of the trying experiences which the League went through during the early years, good communication was established between black and white citizens of Columbus which did not break down; it was able to survive and to look toward the post-World War I decade with glowing optimism.

\[19\] ibid.
CHAPTER III

The Post-World War I Decade, 1921-1931

In the decade following the first World War, the number of potential Negro wage earners in Columbus expanded considerably. As the migration continued, some found employment in the factories and in personal service while others joined the ranks of the unemployed. The death, crime, and relief rates among Negroes continued upward, causing fear and unrest among the whites and impatience among the blacks, especially the older residents.¹

There were among the Negro residents who were born in Columbus those who did not welcome the Negro migrants and felt that their coming meant increased discrimination. Many of these persons were unsympathetic with Negro organizations. They looked upon them as forms of segregation, and they were suspicious of any movement started by or for Negroes. There were others who felt the need of Negro organizations for the contribution they might make to the social, spiritual and moral development of the race and to the training of leaders. Among the whites were those who feared the blacks for there was a feeling that the Negro, newly arrived from the rural South, was not capable of adjusting to city life. A more liberal group believed

¹Frontiers of America, Inc., Advancement, Negroes' Contribution in Franklin County 1803-1953 (Pamphlet), Columbus Urban League Papers, pp. 25-26. (Hereafter cited as Advancement, Negroes' Contribution in Franklin County.)
that the Negro should have equal rights in public institutions but that there equal rights should end. A smaller though not very vocal group believed in the spirit as well as the letter of the law and was willing to give equality of citizenship to all people.\textsuperscript{2}

Reverend Irving Maurer (white), a member of the very small group of white liberals of the city and who served as president of the local league from its founding through 1923, received the following letter from a very conservative white lady of the city who was asked to make a financial contribution to the League for the year 1922:

The Negro problem is one which we should all get together upon as it seems as if it may be a very ugly one to bequeath to our children. I said the other day (thoughtlessly) 'The Columbus Urban League is one Philanthropy to which I would not subscribe as the Negroes are spoiled already but I am open to conviction.'

The deepest sympathy is of course due them and I have read many an article by DuBois which wrung my heart, but when I see how his teachings of race equality (that they must stand upon their rights to get anywhere) is putting them on the defense and wiping the carefree smile from their faces I cannot help siding with Booker Washington's theories as being best for their 'pursuit' of happiness.

It seems to me there had been a definite propaganda at work along the former lines; whether emanating from their churches or from your League I do not know, but I do know the kind-hearted, willing, happy worker has gone and instead we have an imitation of the white race at its worst and a suspicious unkind spirit of rivalry.

I have two colored girls working for me doing the housework and because they are of the best type of their race they have seemed illuminating. They have been up from Louisville two years and when they first came they were so kindly and so cheerful, but I have seen a distinct change in their attitude—towards service—not at all toward me, for I am fond of them and they are fond of me. I have the utmost confidence in their honesty.

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 15.
and decency. They are good—I was about to say 'Christian girls'—but is it Christian to begrudge service and consider certain tasks beneath one? Christ's washing of the feet proves not. Of course, their lack of an intelligent view of the matter I make allowance for, but is it right to make them unfit for and discontented with manual labor?

It is really amusing. These girls of mine are big, strong, healthy girls but they think because I occasionally lie down in the afternoon it is the thing to do so up they go leaving me to the mercy of the telephone and doorbell. I have never had white girls to refuse to help in housecleaning time and these girls, had they followed their natural kindly instincts, would not have done so, but they felt they must 'stand on their rights', so let me work all day alone while they did their regular tasks only and went to their rooms for two hours every afternoon. They used my front door for themselves and their callers until I forbade it and then resented it. To be sure, I could give no real reason for not permitting it, but if your Christianity carries you that far, does it stop this side of intermarriage?

At any rate, the comfort of Negro servants is gone with this 'chip on the shoulder' attitude. Demanding as they do, equal wages with whites, I feel as if I would never have them again. Is it doing them a kindness to make so many employers feel the same way?

It is not only in household labor that this attitude manifests itself. I only speak of that which I know most intimately. Hearsay evidence is abundant most everywhere. Anyone who uses the Long Street cars can testify that the aggressiveness of the Negroes demonstrates the need of a school of manners and Christian kindliness rather than equal rights.

Have not most of them more money than it is good for them now? My girls spend nearly as much for their clothes as I do and certainly think of little else. They have a superficial smattering of learning which they like to air but their end and aim of existence is to get through 'work' and to be 'out'.

To be sure, discontent and unrest are the faults of the age, but is your organization fostering or lessening them? What are you giving the Negroes to take the place of their happiness if you are not giving them the ideal of service? I feel confident you must at least be trying to give them that but what then is the strong influence opposing it?

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³Fanny Fullerton Miller to Reverend Irving Maurer, February 26, 1922 (copy), Columbus Urban League Papers.
Nimrod B. Allen (black) writing in 1922, made the following observation with reference to the Long Street district:

There is this danger on East Long Street. The block between Hamilton and Garfield Avenues, where the greatest number of Negro business enterprises are located, has become the rendezvous for 'hangers-out' both night and day. The passersby are forced at times to walk off the sidewalk by the group of Negroes who apparently have no place to go. They are purchasing nothing, and spend their time loitering, gazing and passing remarks concerning pedestrians. This is done to such an extent that some of the most thoughtful citizens are wondering if it might not cause serious trouble in the future. This and other racial problems in Columbus are being studied by the Race Relations Committee of the Columbus Urban League of which Dr. W. J. Woodlin, one of the physicians who practices on East Long Street, is the prime mover. This committee, through a process of education, hopes to better the race relations in Columbus.4

The letter by Mrs. Miller, a middle class white woman of the city and the comment by Mr. Allen, then Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League, are classic expressions of the concern of both white and black leaders of Columbus about the changing attitudes of both white and black citizens during the post-World War I decade.

The racial strife which beset the country during the twenties was not as tense in Columbus as it was in many other northern industrial cities. But the Negro's willingness to fight in his own defense injected a new factor into America's race problem. According to James Weldon Jonson speaking of the summer of 1919:

It was the summer of 1919, "The Red Summer," that ushered in the greatest period of interracial strife the nation had ever witnessed. From June to the end of the

4Allen, "East Long Street," p. 16.
year approximately twenty-five riots were held in American urban centers from Omaha, Nebraska to Longview, Texas. Many whites freely intimated that it was foreign influence, especially the association on the basis of equality with the French during the war and the propaganda of Bolsheviks after the war, that caused blacks to fight back. Negroes, however, ridiculed this view and contended that they were fighting only for what they thought was right. But Negroes soon learned that it would take more than courageous utterances and feverish fighting back in times of crisis to gain a respected place in American life. It was in this difficult climate that the Garvey Movement gained momentum nationally and organized affiliates throughout the country, including Columbus, Ohio.  

Garvey addressed Ohio audiences several times during the early nineteen-twenties. His Cleveland addresses in December, 1922, were described as "well attended." During the middle twenties, the editor of the Cincinnati Colored Citizen noted that: The Universal Negro Improvement Association, commonly known as the Garvey Movement, has had a large following in Cincinnati. Its headquarters on George Street is always thronged with its adherents. Its founder, incarcerated by the United States Government, is regarded as a martyr, and


6From the evidence available it could not be determined even approximately how many Columbus, Ohio, adherents Garvey had or precisely what their ideology and program were.

7The Gazette, December 2, 1922; December 9, 1922.
as desperate efforts for his relief are continually made, the zeal of the members is kept at fever heat and Sir William Ware, the president, is strongly supported.\textsuperscript{8}

The point of view of the Ohio Garveyites may be indicated by remarks of Sir William Ware, President of the Cincinnati U.N.I.A. Division, before a political meeting sponsored by his organization in October, 1927:

The Negroes' lamentable condition here (Cincinnati) is largely caused by sticking to preachers and the Republican Party. Many of them go to the Republican campaign managers, get about fifty dollars or a suit of clothes and say, solemnly, my church is with you. They tell us about Heaven. Nobody knows anything more about it than I do. If Christians are so anxious to go to Heaven, why do they send for doctors when they get sick? As far as Hell is concerned, we can't know anymore about it than we do about the other place. If anybody had gone there they have never come back to tell us about it. Our white speakers are always talking about Abraham Lincoln and their black mammas. We are tired of that stuff. I don't know anymore about Abraham Lincoln than I do about Jesus Christ. I have heard that they have been here, but I have never seen either one of them. About Ku Klux, why all white men are Ku Klux. They all want white supremacy. We should be black Ku Klux.\textsuperscript{9}

The nature of the program of the U.N.I.A. divisions of Ohio may be indicated by the activities of the Cleveland U.N.I.A. organization. In 1924, the Cleveland U.N.I.A. circulated petitions requesting the President and Congress to support "the creation of an independent Negro Republic of Africa."\textsuperscript{10} This effort in Cleveland was a part of a national campaign of the U.N.I.A. delegates, who had toured Europe and

\textsuperscript{8}Wendell P. Dabney, Cincinnati's Colored Citizens; Historical, Sociological and Biographical (Cincinnati, 1926), p. 188.

\textsuperscript{9}Reprinted from The Union, October, 1927, in Wendell P. Dabney's Chisum's Pilgrimage and Others (Cincinnati, 1926), pp. 21-22.

\textsuperscript{10}The Gazette, February 23, 1924.
Africa "in the Interest of the repatriation of Africa." In the spring of the same year, the Cleveland division heard an address by a national U.N.I.A. official on the topic "Reclamation of Africa by Negroes of Western civilization."12

In 1928, the Ohio Garveyites endorsed the Democratic candidate, Alfred Smith, for President.13 By 1928, there were enough U.N.I.A. units in Ohio for them to hold a state convention in Cleveland.14 The organization subsequently broke into factions and began to decline.

The widespread interest in Garvey's program was more a protest against the anti-Negro reaction of the post-war period than approvals of the fantastic schemes of the Negro leader. Its significance lies in the fact that it was the first real mass movement among Negroes which indicated the extent to which Negroes entertained doubt concerning the hopes for first class citizenship.15

Another movement which found expression in Ohio was the Ku Klux Klan. This organization was reorganized in November, 1915, by William J. Simmons. Ohio enrolled two hundred thousand Knights during the 1920's and ranked behind Indiana as the most populous

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11Ibid., February 23, 1924.
12Dabney, Cincinnati's Colored Citizens, p. 21.
13The Gazette, September 29, 1928.
14Ibid.
15Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, p. 481.
realm of the Invisible Empire. Directed during its expansionist period by David Stephenson, the Buckeye organization took full advantage of latent feelings against the influx of Negroes and East European immigrants into Ohio. Much of the realm's strength was centered in the state's large cities, seven of which claimed more than 130,000 inhabitants in 1920.  

In 1925, the Columbus Dispatch reported that:

Two huge meetings were held at Buckeye Lake: the first on July 12, 1923, and the second on August 29, 1925.

The headquarters of the Realm of Ohio was appropriately located in Columbus, first at the State Dental Office of the Grand Dragon Charles L. Harrod and later in the Yuster Building. The immediate objects of the Klan's concern were the capital city's Negro and foreign-born contingents, most of whom lived in segregated neighborhoods like Bronzeville and the Italian district northwest of the state capital. Officially designated Buckeye Klan Number 8, the flourishing Columbus chapter engaged in frequent charitable activities, held occasional open meetings in churches (particularly the Church of Christ), published a monthly newspaper known as the Pitchfork, and sponsored public viewing of the Klan propaganda film Toll of Justice.  

On May 4, 1923, Buckeye Klan Number 8 planned a large ceremony in the Columbus Driving Park just east of the city limits, but its opponents


17 ibid., p. 164.
secured a court injunction preventing Klan use of public facilities. Angry Knights then marched back and forth on High Street before driving two miles east of the city limits to "Smith's Forty Acres" and initiating fifteen hundred Franklin County men into the invisible Empire.18

In 1921 when Nimrod B. Allen became Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League, he made the goal of good race relations between blacks and whites one of his first priorities. Allen wanted to create an atmosphere between the races which would be workable enough to keep organizations expounding race hatred such as the U.N.I.A. and the K.K.K. from becoming successful groups in the city of Columbus.

Immediately after Allen became Executive Secretary, the League embarked on a new program which included creating a favorable atmosphere between the races, reorganization, securing new and active board members, organizing new committees and departments, and instituting a drive for new members.

The following article appeared in the Columbus Dispatch and the Ohio State Journal between December, 1921 and October, 1922:

Appeal in the form of Christmas invitation to aid the community 'in moving toward a better understanding among its racial group.' A Christmas gift to this League is an investment in defense of Columbus against the race troubles which in the past five years have caused many American cities to blush with shame. N. B. Allen had taken over the secretaryship of the League community center, 690 East Long Street.

The League is indorsed by the Chamber of Commerce, Retail Merchants Association, Columbus Council of Social Agencies and other bodies.19

A small request, but important, 'The Columbus Urban League,' an organization for social service among Negroes. White board members are Reverend Irving Maurer, Judge Kinhead, Kenneth D. Wood, Mrs. J. A. Jeffrey, Mrs. Myron S. Selbert and Mrs. Ella May Smith. The League has been

18 Ibid., Columbus Citizen Journal, July 13, 1923.
19 Columbus Dispatch, December 18, 1921.
of the highest value in meeting social needs of the colored population, and in maintaining a good understanding and friendly relations between the races. Doubtless the influence of the League has had no small part in keeping the Columbus community wholly free from such race troubles as have disgraced many other American cities, and not all of them outside of Ohio.\textsuperscript{20}

Columbus Urban League develops cooperation among Negro agencies and has a broad scope. Its work is heartily indorsed by numerous Columbus organizations. The organization meets existing conditions principally designed for social work among the colored population of the city.\textsuperscript{21}

On November 2, 1922, after twelve months of work, the new Executive Secretary reported to the Executive Board of the League on the progress the League had made since reorganization. The report indicated that the League's efforts had been spent in such work as promoting, developing, and coordinating work among social agencies in the city, and in the fostering of an interracial commission on race relationship.\textsuperscript{22} The financial condition of the League had improved tremendously during this period. Mrs. Joseph A. Jeffrey of the Jeffrey Manufacturing Company, also a board member, and other prominent citizens, both white and black, made handsome financial contributions to the League.

On November 1, 1923, the Columbus Community Fund welcomed the Columbus Urban League into its membership along with such agencies and organizations as the YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Supplementary Relief Bureau, health agencies, T.B. Association, the Cancer Clinic, Schonothal Community House, Red Cross's Relief Department, and others. The Community Fund,

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., December 19, 1921.

\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., January 1, 1922.

\textsuperscript{22}Nimrod B. Allen's Report, November 2, 1922, Columbus Urban League Papers.
organized in 1918, was an attempt on the part of Columbus citizens to meet the need for systematic giving of sums for relief and community welfare. The purpose of Community Fund as set forth in its constitution reads as follows:

The purpose of this organization shall be to strengthen the spirit of human helpfulness among the people of this community; to afford the citizens of Columbus and Franklin County, and elsewhere, the opportunity to contribute to human welfare work and to disburse the funds so contributed; to direct greater attention to preventive measures; to make the work of the social and philanthropic agencies of this community more effective, efficient, and economical, and to develop team work, cooperation and coordination among the social and philanthropic agencies and to prevent, in as far as may be, duplication of effort in their work.23

Many interviews and conferences were held during the twenties by the League. The subject of the interviews varied all the way from whether the term Negro, Colored or Afro-American should be used in speaking of the race, to information on theses of graduate students at Ohio State University. Most of the research work of the League was done through the Department of Sociology at Ohio State University.

Promoting good race relations was an important phase of the League's work. Its philosophy was that the fundamentals of race relations were the attitudes which the white man bears toward the black man and those which the black man bears toward the white man. Discovering those attitudes, discussing them for the purpose of finding what basic truths there were in them, conserving those truths,

23Community Fund, The Community Fund Comes of Age (Pamphlet) Columbus Urban League Papers.
and eliminating the false elements contained in them; were the main objectives of the League in its race relations work.  

In spite of the work the League was doing with regards to the health problem, the mortality rate among Negroes in Columbus was exceptionally high. Although Negroes constituted approximately ten per cent of the population, the death rate from communicable diseases in 1925, was 467.1 per hundred thousand compared with 149.6 per hundred thousand among whites. This ratio ran generally throughout the whole mortality rate with the exception of deaths resulting from respiratory complications which showed a higher ratio. For every white person that died, three and one-half blacks died.  

In order to reduce the mortality rate among Negroes, the League, in cooperation with other agencies, accelerated its health education campaign; talks were given at churches, lodges, schools, neighborhood clubs, still and motion pictures were shown, and literature was distributed. Approximately four thousand pieces of literature were distributed, reaching fifteen thousand people. Arrangements were made with the City Board of Health and the Capital City Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Society through which health education work was to be done throughout the year. Dr. A. F. McCoy, the League's eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, rendered invaluable service to the League's health cause.  

26 Ibid.
The League started a program for semi-delinquent Negro girls and boys. In the case of semi-delinquent Negro girls and boys, there was no organization in Columbus caring for the needs of those delinquents. The black community was faced with the abnormal migration of Negroes among whom the problem of delinquency was mounting because of their lack of adjustment to city life. To meet this need, the Friendly Service Bureau was the first step, followed by the organization of the Colored Big Sisters and the Big Brothers. The Friendly Service Bureau accepted counsel and other services from the League, but it was independent of the League. Its purpose was not to make arrests but to help the migrant adjust himself to city life. It was the particular work of the Bureau to develop in the community public opinion against crime and law violations, as well as organizations to cope with the problems affecting the community's environment. The facts of the Bureau's investigations were made known to ministers, churches and social agencies; and through its committees and volunteer workers, action was taken to rid black neighborhoods of unsocial influences.27

Organization of the Colored Big Sisters Association was completed in 1927, by the League and a program with an Executive Secretary was started. Like the Friendly Service Bureau, the Big Sisters Association was independent of the League, but its headquarters was in the League's office, and it accepted the counsel and other office services from the League. A Big Brothers Association very

27Advancement, Negroes' Contribution in Franklin County, Columbus Urban League Papers, pp. 25-31.
similar to the Big Sisters Association was also started by the League. The Big Sisters Association worked with semi-delinquent girls and the Big Brothers worked with semi-delinquent boys. In cooperation with the Alexanderian Civic Center, a recreation center in the northwest community, the Big Sisters and Big Brothers Associations were instrumental in reducing juvenile delinquency in the black community.28

The League started neighborhood club work in the black community. Health, recreation, and sanitation were stressed, and home economics training in sewing, cooking, basketry, child-welfare and home management was carried on. In most instances, the clubs met semimonthly. They were divided into health, education, clean-up campaigns, relief, recreation, and home economic committees.29 The aim of the clubs was to get black communities to help themselves and bring their own resources to bear upon whatever needs might confront them.

The industrial situation for Negroes in Columbus during the twenties left much to be desired. The Pittsburgh Courier published an article in May, 1926, by Nimrod B. Allen, which stated that:

Columbus is not an industrial center though it has a few industrial plants. The labor unions do not control the large industries in Columbus. Until 1912, Negroes were employed in smaller numbers in these various plants. Since then the number has steadily increased until the recent depression.

28Twelfth Annual Report, February 13, 1930, Columbus Urban League Papers.

29 Ibid.
The Negro bricklayer, carpenters, plasters and other building trade artisans, have been permanently introduced into Columbus and are busily employed, but generally on the smaller non-union jobs. The Ohio Malleable Iron Company, the Federal Glass Company, the Buckeye Steel Casting Company, and the Panhandle shops, employ Negroes in both skilled and unskilled work. The Jeffrey Manufacturing Company's secretary to the vice president is a colored man. The plant employs Negroes in both skilled and unskilled work and as clerks.30

Under the direction of T. Arnold Hill, director of the Department of Industrial Relations of the National Urban League, a study was made of the Negro in local industries. It was found that his employment varied from none to seventy per cent in the industrial plants. In public utilities, which employed meter readers, telephone operators, streetcar service men, and the like, there was practically no employment of Negroes. In 1928, the National Urban League reached an agreement with Standard Oil Company to place Negro attendants in the filling stations in districts where the patronage was mostly Negro. This was to be Standard Oil's policy throughout the country. The Columbus Urban League had interviews with managers of the chain stores operating in Columbus asking them to put on Negro clerks in districts where trade was largely Negro. The A & P manager promised to make an investigation of cities which the League gave as reference and would let the League know later what A & P would do.31

The financial condition of the League for the years 1927-1929, was better than anyone could have expected. With the contributions from Community Fund ($20,170.00 over the three-year period), the League

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30The Pittsburgh Courier, May 8, 1926.
31Tenth Annual Report, January 31, 1928, Columbus Urban League Papers.
was able to meet its annual budget and have a small balance left over each year. As the decade of the thirties descended upon Columbus, the Columbus Urban League braced itself for the unexpected with hope and optimism.
The stock market crash of October, 1929, ended the expansion of Negro life in Columbus as well as ending an economic epoch in America. Black-owned businesses in Columbus such as the Adelphia Building and Loan Association, the Columbus Industrial Mortgage and Security Company, the Clarod Service Company, and the Douglas Loan Company went down during the depression. The Pythian and the Lincoln Theaters, built by the black Knights of Phythias and the black Odd Fellows fraternities, were lost to Negro ownership.*

Unemployment in Columbus was as serious as it was in the nation at large, and the Negro did not escape. T. Arnold Hill, Director of Industrial Relations of the National Urban League, came to Columbus to assist the Columbus league in outlining a program for solving the problem of unemployment. After Hill's visit, the Columbus Urban League's Industrial Committee began working on the employment of Negroes in Columbus as a first priority. Some spasmodic success in the committee's efforts with the chain stores which operated in Negro communities was witnessed when those stores began to hire Negro clerks. A campaign was carried on to persuade those stores to retain their "colored help". The Negro community was advised to plant gardens,

*Advancement, Negroes' Contribution in Franklin County, Columbus Urban League Papers, p. 16.
and communications were made with white ministers of the city asking them to make a survey of their churches to find out how many jobs could be secured for the unemployed.²

A committee of the Columbus Urban League met with S. P. Bush, chairman of the Governor's Stabilization Commission on Permanent Employment. It had as its mission the securing of permanent employment for Negroes and the promotion of city-wide gardening. As a response to the committee's effort, plots of land were secured near the American Addition to be used for gardens. The plots were plowed at the expense of the Clinton Township trustees. They were divided into lots of 40 to 100 feet and were assigned to 150 different families.³ Two lots in Bexley were given, plowed, and assigned to two additional families. The Alexanderian Civic Center, which had become one of the League's branches, had forty families raising gardens. The Friendly Service Bureau, another branch, secured eight acres on Goodale Street just north of the railroad tracks and assigned sixty-four gardens. Approximately 3,700 plants and 30 pounds of seed were given by various persons and those redistributed to the gardens. It was estimated that there were over 1,000 gardens in the Negro community.⁴

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²Thirteenth Annual Report, January 15, 1931, Columbus Urban League Papers.
³Report to the Joint Committee of the Council of Social Agencies and Urban League, August 6, 1931, Columbus Urban League Papers.
⁴Ibid.
The work of the League during the depression had its roots in the progressive changes occasioned by the rapid increase of the Negro population in Columbus during the 1920's. The adjustment of rural southern migrants to the city was no longer a major problem. The changes in the total pattern of life, however, resulting from the unprecedented wartime situation crystalized into problems of Negro welfare and Interracial adjustment. During the twenties the League sought a workable accommodation of the newcomers to city life. But during the thirties it sought to bring about an adjustment wherein the life of the Negro would be normal in all respects as compared with every other group in the city.\(^5\)

The League's program during the depression years included both immediate and long-range objectives. The immediate objectives were concerned with (1) employment and industrial relations, (2) crime, (3) juvenile delinquency and social conduct, (4) health, Interracial goodwill and cooperation, and (5) wholesome intra-group relations. The aims were to define the nature of problems confronting Negroes, to develop a technique for meeting the problems and to secure resources and facilities to continue solutions to such problems. The long-range objective was to achieve a normal life for the Negro. The aim here was to reduce Negro problems to the point where they would not be excessive and to achieve a normal integration of the Negro into the life of the city.\(^6\)

\(^5\)Nimrod B. Allen to Ralph J. Bunche, November 2, 1939, Columbus Urban League Papers.

\(^6\)Ibid.
In spite of the work of the League, it could not counteract the effects of the depression. The plight of the Negro in Columbus continued to grow worse in the early 1930's. Negro businesses closed their doors one after the other. And as the roster of unemployment mounted higher and higher in the city, the Negro was particularly affected. No aspect of Negro life escaped the blight of contracted economic opportunity. Traditional Negro jobs, such as street cleaners, bellhops and redcaps, were taken by the white unemployed. Seventy-one per cent of the Negro wage earners in the city did not have regular full-time employment in private industry. Negroes formed a disproportionately large part of the dwellers in slum areas; there was more illiteracy among Negroes than among other groups in the city; proportionately, there were more Negroes on the rolls of relief agencies.

The League, in cooperation with federal agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, National Youth Administration, and other agencies, worked hand-in-hand in Franklin County and the city of Columbus to bring aid and relief to citizens, both black and white. In cooperation with the above named agencies, the League sponsored sewing units employing Negro youth and nursery schools providing employment for many black teachers; it assisted directors of other projects in the selection of personnel on playgrounds, and in 1935, established playgrounds in the Hill Top, Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," p. 152.

Twenty Years of Service in the Field of Social Work for Negroes, Columbus Urban League Papers.
Urban Crest, and American Addition communities. Community canning-kitchens and gardens were instituted, and the Good Neighborhood Club worked along with WPA workers in contributing aid to churches and other organizations.⁹

Although the economic situation in Columbus was dark for the Negro, the political situation was somewhat different. According to John S. Himes, graduate student at Ohio State University and research director of the League in 1937:

One unique significance of this economic condition is its profound effect upon the political activity of the group; for the first time economics and politics came to have a practical connection similar to that recognized by certain sections of white America for many years; in the election of 1932, the Negro vote severed the historical alliance which had won it the role of balance of power in local elections; this political upheaval in Columbus led to the election of Negroes in positions of ward committee-men and won unprecedented prestige and power for the city's Negro vote.

This new prestige is evidenced by the greater number and importance of appointive offices now filled by Negro Democrats and Republicans alike. Witness in addition to the host of clerks and lesser office holders such positions as Chairman of the Municipal Civil Service Commission, Assistant Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney, Assistant City Attorney, Assistant Clerk of Municipal Courts, various assistants and examiners in state departments and Negro members of state and county central committees of the two major political parties.¹⁰

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⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," pp. 152-153.
### TABLE 3.—Vote in Gubernatorial Elections in Columbus; Ohio's Predominantly Negro Ward in 1932, 1936 and 1938

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democratic Vote</th>
<th>Republican Vote</th>
<th>Democratic (%)</th>
<th>Republican (%)</th>
<th>Total Majority Party Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>2,836</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>3,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1,621</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>4,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1,416</td>
<td>2,359</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>3,776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the gubernatorial elections for the above years, the table shows that the Republican party did not receive the solid backing of Negroes during the decade as it had in the past. Instead, the Ohio Negro electorate achieved something like the kind of political independence that many Negro political activists had sought during the nineteen-twenties.\(^\text{11}\) This fact was also demonstrated in the presidential elections of 1936.

### TABLE 4.—Vote in Presidential Elections in Columbus, Ohio's Predominantly Negro Ward in 1936\(^\text{12}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Democratic Vote</th>
<th>Republican Vote</th>
<th>Democratic (%)</th>
<th>Republican (%)</th>
<th>Total Majority Party Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1,949</td>
<td>2,235</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>4,060</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\)Ohio Election Statistics. *Abstract of Votes, General Election, Board of Elections, Franklin County, Ohio (November 8, 1932, November 3, 1936, November 8, 1938).*

\(^{12}\)Ibid.
The growing power and prestige of the League in Columbus, especially in the Negro community, caused some Negroes to raise a cry of protest. In 1932, the League came under fire from a group of Negro citizens. A letter of protest was sent to the League's Board of Directors signed by A. J. Payne, D. H. V. Parnell, George Washington, Anna M. Ross, Edith W. Dickinson and I. J. Hall. The group listed the following grievances:

1. The Executive Secretary's outside business interests interfered with his work as Executive Secretary of the League.

2. The church study made by the League in 1930, was done without consulting church leaders.

3. The Executive Secretary's salary was too high for the amount of work he was doing.

4. The League was not giving Columbus the benefits offered in an urban league program.

5. The League had a tendency to crush any and all agencies which did not conform to its mandates.

6. The Executive Secretary had become too authoritarian and did not represent the Negroes of the city.

7. The importing of social workers to the city was unnecessary as long as social workers were already in the city and only too willing to offer their service.

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13 Report of the Committee authorized by the Board of Directors of the Columbus Urban League for the purpose of thrashing out the matter concerning the League, based on a letter of protest, July 19, 1932, and November 2, 1932, Columbus Urban League Papers.
On November 19, 1932 and September 29, 1934, the following articles appeared in the Ohio Examiner:

The Community Chest and the Urban League draw the ire of readers. Allen's interest includes: the Douglas Loan Company, a loan shark enterprise operating with the colored clientele; large owner of the Alpha Building and Loan Company with excessive interest rates; a real estate broker selling lots in Evergreen Cemetery Association, a cemetery for colored exclusively; draws a salary which is a huge slice of the amount allowed by the Urban League by the Community Fund. The Urban League also has under it the Colored Big Brothers, the Colored Big Sisters and other activities and of this money set aside to them by the Community Chest very little is used for actual distress relief.  

Colored pastors protest participation of Urban League in Community Fund; their argument was based on the grounds that in the present time of want, direct relief instead of high salaried 'welfare workers' is needed. The League has spent much time usurping colored associations.

A committee was appointed by the board of directors to investigate the charges. After reviewing the charges, the committee reached the conclusion that those who had signed the letter had a personal grudge against the League's Executive; that the charges were not factual; that the action of the Executive Secretary with regards to decisions affecting the League was taken with the consent of the League's Board of Directors, President, and Executive Board; and that personal matters of League members should not and would not become the concern of the League.

14Ohio Examiner, November 19, 1932.

15Ibid., September 29, 1934.

16Report of the Committee authorized by the Board of Directors, July 19, 1932 and November 2, 1932, Columbus Urban League Papers.
The Columbus Urban League and the cause to which it was dedicated during the depression owed a great debt to the untiring devotion of the members of the board of directors. Their unselfish labor was responsible for public interest in the League and meant much in the achievement of its purpose. Two Presidents of the League during the depression, Lee J. Levinger and W. D. Englis (white), assumed a large share of responsibility. They constantly advised the staff and interpreted the League to the general public. They knew the work of the League intimately and stayed in direct touch with each of its committees and departments. Under W. D. Englis' guidance, a membership of 2,000 was secured; the Monroe Avenue Social Center was added to the League; the Intra-race Relations Department, the W. D. Englis Child Foundation, a publicity department, and the Frontiers of America came into being.

The publicity department was created in 1933. It was formed to seek avenues of publicity for the League through (1) Columbus newspapers, and (2) group meetings and channels in which the work of the League could be publicized. The Frontiers of America was organized in 1936 as a service club similar to the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. Its purpose was to discover, train, coordinate, and put to work Negro leadership in community responsibility. This club grew from a local organization in 1936 to a national one by 1954.

17 Twenty Years of Service in the Field of Social Work for Negroes, Columbus Urban League Papers.

18 Interview, Nimrod B. Allen, November 4, 1969.
As the decade of the thirties came to a close, the Columbus Urban League looked back over the decade with pride as to its accomplishments but with the realization that its job had only begun. The League realized that, as times changed, its program had to be changed. It had to analyze, evaluate, and plan beforehand to meet situations peculiar to the black community. All of the departments and committees of the League worked diligently during the depression but the research department’s work was exceptionally outstanding. This department in cooperation with the Ohio State University Sociology Department made studies of the following:

1. "The Columbus Unemployment Study," made by the Department of Sociology of Ohio State University.


19Nineteenth, Twentieth and Twenty-Second Annual Reports, 1936, 1937, 1939, Columbus Urban League Papers.
The League did not encounter the financial problems it had during the early 1920's. Since becoming a participating member of the Columbus Community Fund, the League submitted a budget to the fund each year. In most cases, the League received the amount it requested. In cases where the League did not receive the full amount requested from the Community Fund, it always received enough money to carry on its program.

During the early 1940's the Columbus Urban League continued its work through its various departments, committees and affiliates. Two new affiliates were created in 1940, the Nut Club and the Big Walnut Country Club. The Nut Club was composed of a group of men interested in educational self-advancement. The Big Walnut Country Club was established to provide outdoor recreation for Negroes in central Ohio. 20

Although the League's goal was not to create an endless chain of departments and affiliates, it did seek to create new departments and affiliates to help solve problems in the black community when no other agency could be found to do the job. The League looked upon this as sound policy but even so, the League was beginning to overextend itself. By the end of 1941, the League's departments, committees and affiliates were as follows.

20 Twenty-Third Annual Report, 1940, Columbus Urban League Papers.
In 1942, a committee from the Board of Directors of the Columbus Urban League invited a survey team from the National Urban League to come to Columbus for the purpose of reviewing the program and activities of the Columbus affiliate so as to make recommendations based upon its findings whether or not the League's structural organization should be expanded.
changed; and to determine the strength and weaknesses of the existing League's organization. The survey team made its study of the local League's program and activities and recommended a number of changes. A committee from the Columbus League's Board of Directors reviewed the recommended changes and decided to make a further study of the League with a view to determine whether or not the recommendations made had been complied with and to evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the League's program. After the committee had studied the recommendations of the National Urban League survey team and evaluated the strength and weaknesses of the local League's program, it made recommendations which were adopted by the Columbus Urban League's Board of Directors. The overall change in the League's structural organization was called the "New Epoch" of the Columbus Urban League.

The following structural changes were made:

Representation on the League's Board of Directors was broadened to include representatives of capital and labor, social service, the home, law, medicine, and representation from the general public. Members who did not carry their share of the burden and make conscious efforts to develop future leadership in the board were to be dropped from the board. The publicity committee was disbanded and its work was assigned to a newly created Department of Public Relations. The research committee's duties were also assigned to the Public Relations Department, and the Departments of Sociology and Social Administration at Ohio State University were asked to continue to cooperate with the new department in making available studies relating to minority groups.

21 A Review of the Program and Activities of the Columbus Urban League, November, 1942, Columbus Urban League Papers.
The Industrial Department was reorganized and was to be headed by a full-time industrial relations secretary whose duties were designed to meet the criteria set up by the National Urban League's survey team. The Big Brothers and Big Sisters were united under one head, a department with a greatly expanded program (Youth Department). The extension work of the Monroe Avenue Social Center was included in a department called Community and Neighborhood (block units were included in its work). The Friendly Service Bureau was eliminated as an affiliate of the League.

Executive committee meetings were to be held quarterly rather than monthly. The assignment of clerical workers was clarified. Clerical workers would consist of four persons: (1) office secretary, cashier purchasing agent, secretary to the Board of Directors and Executive Secretary; (2) receptionists, switchboard operator and placement secretary; (3) secretary to the Departments of Industry and Public Relations; (4) secretary to the Youth and Community and Neighborhood Departments. Salaries of the League personnel were brought up to par with other agencies, taking into consideration their training, experience, years of service, and the wage level of the community.

The structural reorganization of the League reduced the departments of the League from ten to five and the affiliates from four to two. The five departments were: (1) Industrial, (2) Public Relations, (3) Youth, (4) Community and Neighborhood; and until the early 1950's, (5) Camp Brush Lake. Figure 1 shows the organizational structure of the "New Epoch."

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22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.
The NEW EPOCH

of

The COLUMBUS URBAN LEAGUE
Corporation—3000 Members

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Personnel Committee
Personnel Standards, Practices, Policies, Functions and Responsibilities

Executive Committee
Constitutional Responsibilities

Roll Call Committee
To provide the Urban League a constituency who support the philosophy carried out in the League’s program.

DEPARTMENTS

Youth
A. Guidance—Wholesome Leadership and Opportunity For Creative Expression
B. Big Brothers
C. Big Sisters
D. Coordinating Recreation

Industrial
A. Seek new job opportunities for Negroes and work with labor and Management for the smooth integration of Negroes in Industry.
B. Conduct a long range program of workers education and encourage Negroes in the efficient use and extension of their skills.
C. Conduct a Free Placement Service

Community & Neighborhood
A. Monroe Ave, Social Center
   1. Resident Activities
   2. Camp
B. Organization of Neighborhoods into Block Units
C. Neighborhood Social Work
   Hanford-American Addition—Urbancrest, etc.
D. Health, Recreational Activities

Brush Lake
A. Family Center for Social, Recreational and Educational Activities
B. Youth Summer Camp
C. Vacations, Retreats and Chautauquas

Public Relations
A. General Research Activities Re Negroes
B. Carrying on an Educational Program Concerning Industry-Health-Housing—and Minority Group Problems.
C. Interpretation of Negro Life
D. Public Contacts

Figure 1.—Organizational Structure of the "New Epoch"
In spite of the work of the Industrial Department of the League, by 1953, Negroes were still greatly restricted in their opportunities to secure jobs equal to their training and capabilities. Of more than 200 Columbus major industries and companies employing more than 326,000 persons, less than nine per cent of these companies employed Negroes in semi-skilled positions. Eighty per cent of these industries hired Negroes only in janitorial and unskilled jobs, in spite of the fact that satisfactory performances by Negro workers were reported by those plants and industries throughout Columbus which had initiated integration within their businesses. There was a growing recognition of the fact that Negroes succeeded at their jobs in much the same manner as other workers.

The Industrial Department conducted yearly vocational opportunity campaigns placing emphasis on the preparation of young people and veterans for the expanding job opportunities of the post-war world. During the late 1940's and early 1950's, the League cooperated with the Columbus Office of the Ohio State Employment and Veterans Employment Services, and labor and other civic and religious groups in such work. The department kept in constant contact with industrial concerns, with workers, and meetings with labor groups and other organizations.

During the 1940's and early 1950's, the Public Relations Department of the League conducted a weekly radio program called

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.
the "Tenth Man". The program offered opportunities to make new friends for the League and to serve as an educational contribution to the community. The department also began publication of a League paper "The New Epoch". This paper and the weekly radio program gave the citizens of Columbus and Franklin County a picture of the League's activities; and attempted to interpret the League's work clearly and effectively to the community. Roll Call campaigns were started annually at which time citizens interested in the League paid one dollar to become a member of the League and to have their names on the League's roll. The Roll Call was a demonstration of how blacks and whites could work together in real cooperation.27

On-the-spot adjustment campaigns were conducted annually with the Public Relations Department. The aim was to promote the importance of good conduct between black and white citizens on the spot where differences may occur (example—if a black person were to step on a white person's foot on a public bus, they should discuss the incident rather than fight about it; in the long run it would make for better interracial relations). These campaigns brought representatives of management, labor, schools, the press, the church, and civic and social agencies together for case discussions on interracial adjustment.28

27"Some Facts Concerning the Roll Call, The Columbus Urban League" (A memoranda, no date), Columbus Urban League Papers.

28Interview, Nimrod B. Allen, November 4, 1969 (All of the League's Annual Reports had articles on the on-the-spot adjustment campaigns.)
The Youth Department continued its work with the youth of the city. Big Brother and Big Sister units were organized in strategic areas throughout the city. The department worked with the Council of Social Agencies (Recreation and Youth Services Council) in developing a city-wide Youth Council. Summer employment projects to aid youths in securing summer employment were sponsored by the department. A large number of high school graduates and other youths were counselled concerning university scholarships and job placement. Many parents with problems concerning the unacceptable behavior of their children were also counselled. 29

The Community and Neighborhood Department developed neighborhood units into a more varied program of interest as well as a number of special projects. While the major concern of the units was to maintain and improve the general character of their respective neighborhoods, they were also interested in current civic and social programs. These interests kept them better informed on public issues and, in addition, presented a means of exchanging ideas. Through these units, the citizens could become better acquainted with the police officers, ward committeemen, health officers, and social workers in their neighborhood by inviting them to their meetings and hearing more about the activities and problems of each worker. In the exchange of ideas, they learned more about the value of well-balanced meals, the care of children, how to grow better vegetables and how to improve their flower gardens. 30

30 bid.
One of the highlights of the 1940's was the League's purchase of Brush Lake. In 1942, the League became aware of the fact that, within a radius of seventy-five miles from Columbus, there was a Negro population of more than 100,000 and that the recreation facilities for this large group were entirely inadequate. There were half a dozen mud holes, gravel pits, and creeks where black youths could swim, but they were not supervised or guarded and were a menace to health and safety. The League decided to do something about the problem by purchasing a beautiful tract in Champaign County known as Brush Lake. The property consisted of 54.48 acres; the main body of the lake comprised fifteen acres. The lake was fed by springs which provided a continuous source of fresh water. The buildings and grounds covered ten acres, and there were ten acres of farm land. The remainder of approximately twenty acres consisted of brush land and trees on the far side of the lake. The buildings were in good condition. There were electric lights, board and gravel walks, concrete benches, swings, and picnic benches. The lake was open to all races, creeds, and nationalities. All campers were to be treated equally. The program at the lake included vacation, chautauquas, outings, picnics, playground activities, boating and swimming. Throughout the forties and early fifties the black community in Columbus enjoyed the facilities at Camp Brush Lake.

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31 Twenty-Seventh Annual Report, January, 1944, Columbus Urban League Papers.

32 ibid.
The 1940's and early 1950's were, indeed, good years for the Columbus Urban League. By reducing the number of departments and affiliates of the League, it was able to work effectively within the black community without expanding its operation or creating new agencies. The League was not bothered by financial problems during this period. The Community Fund approved the League's budget each year and gave additional funds when the need arose. The League was proud of the fact that a substantial growth of Negro participation in every area in the normal life of the black community was witnessed during the early fifties. As the League geared its program for the mid-fifties, it witnessed the Supreme Court Decision of 1954 (Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka, 1954), and suffered a great loss in the retirement of Nimrod B. Allen, the League's Executive Secretary for more than thirty years.
The pronouncement of the 1954 Supreme Court decision (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka) and the retirement of N. B. Allen as Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League ended an era in Columbus Urban League history. Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka tested the validity of state laws providing for racial segregation in the public schools. The Court reversed the doctrine of Plessy v. Ferguson that the Fourteenth Amendment does not outlaw segregation so long as equal facilities are provided for each race. In 1896, the Supreme Court had upheld the right of a state to segregate Negroes on public conveyances and, by implication, in education and elsewhere. The decision opened the way to a flood of state segregationist legislation during the ensuing decades. One member of the Court, Justice John M. Harlan, refused to conform to the temper of the times and vigorously dissented.

As the climate of opinion in America during the late 1930's and 1940's veered toward a more sympathetic view of Negro needs and rights, so did the Supreme Court. It symbolized the change and

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contributed toward it. In far-reaching decisions, it pronounced against the South's white primaries, judicial enforcement of racial restrictive covenants, segregation in interstate travel and unequal provisions for black and white students in segregated schools. But its greatest contribution to equal rights was made on May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court declared segregation in public education illegal. Justice Harlan's dissent was finally vindicated. On May 17, 1954, and again on May 31, 1955, in what are now popularly known as the "School Segregation Cases," the Court ruled that "in the field of public education the doctrine of separate but equal has no place." "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," the Court affirmed; and Negro pupils, by being segregated, are "deprived of the equal protection of the law guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment." Desegregation had to proceed with "all deliberate speed" so the lower courts were assigned the responsibility for applying the Supreme Court's decision. Not only did the Court rule against school segregation in these decisions, it also implicitly challenged the entire system of legalized segregation as it existed in twenty-one states and the District of Columbia.

Despite the Court's order "that the defendants make a prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance" and proceed "with all deliberate speed" to admit children to school on a non-discriminatory

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basis, two of the four public school systems which were defendants in the Brown Case—Clarendon County, South Carolina, and Prince Edward County, Virginia—still had not admitted a single Negro to public schools as of February, 1964. To avoid compliance, Prince Edward County chose to close the public schools. In Little Rock, Arkansas, where Federal troops had to be rushed in 1957 to control mobs trying to stop nine Negro youngsters from entering a white high school, a mere 123 black children, out of a total black registration of 6,900, were attending desegregated schools in the 1963-64 school year. In Atlanta, with its reputation for compliance with law, a grand total of 145 Negroes were attending desegregated schools. In the South as a whole, only 30,798 black students, or 1.06 per cent of all black students, were attending schools with whites—and nearly half of this total was in Texas. In ten other states of the deep South, fewer than six-tenths of one per cent of all black students were in school with whites—ten years after the Supreme Court ruling.

Curiously enough, however, tension over school desegregation was running higher in the northern cities than in the South. Negro activists contended that the Supreme Court decision outlawed segregation as such, whether due to intent (as in the South, where state laws required separate school systems) or to accident (as in the North, where pupils were assigned to schools according to where they lived.

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6 Ibid.
rather than with regard to their color). Underlying the tension in the North were two basic factors: Negro dissatisfaction over the quality of education provided in urban slum schools; and Negro frustration over "resegregation"—rapid increase in the number of schools with predominantly Negro student bodies. The increase in the number of all-Negro schools reflected the basic population trends of large cities where black population was expanding rapidly and white population was decreasing.

Columbus, Ohio, was just one of the northern cities experiencing difficulties with regard to the 1954 Supreme Court decision. As whites moved to the suburbs, building new schools as they went, blacks continued to live in the city forming an inner-city with predominantly all-black schools. In 1853, according to state law, separate schools were provided for Negro children in Columbus under certain conditions and requirements as to number and residence. But when it is remembered that this law was enacted fifteen years before Negroes were made citizens by the Federal Constitution and twelve years before slavery was abolished in America, this enactment for separate schools, or schools of any kind for blacks, would, by the unprejudiced and unbiased mind, be called an act of humanity.

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7 Ibid., pp. 289-290.
8 Ibid., p. 290.
9 Ibid.
10 Advancement, Negroes' Contribution in Franklin County, Columbus Urban League Papers.
N. B. Allen, writing in 1922, stated that:

The Champion Avenue School, the only school exclusive for Negroes in Columbus, is one square and a half from East Long Street. Being in a Negro district, it is theoretically not a Negro school but is officered entirely by Negro teachers, with the exception of a manual training teacher, and all of the pupils are Negroes. Any white child who lives in that section may attend another school if he wishes.

John S. Himes, writing in 1942, states that:

The public education of Negro children in Columbus was for many years a major center of struggle. Although the right of Negro children to attend unsegregated schools was established by law, precedent and court decisions led to many varying patterns of race relations in the school systems of Ohio. In Columbus, Negroes had won the right to send their children to unsegregated schools a good while before the end of the last century.

When, after years of agitation, the disreputable old Loving school building for Negro children was demolished in 1882, the colored children were admitted to the school nearest their homes. The colored teachers for the most part found employment, although a few were transferred to other Columbus schools. Also during the same period Negroes won the right for their children to enter and graduate from Columbus high schools—in fact, for thirty years an ideal integration of Negroes in the public school system as pupils, teachers, and members of the Board of Education prevailed.

Even as early as 1909, the building of the Champion Avenue Junior High School set in motion a trend in the public education of Columbus Negro youths which was neither rare in northern communities nor short-lived in Columbus.


12 John S. Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," pp. 138-139.
Hannival G. Duncan states, in his work *Changing Race Relations in the Northern and Border States*, that:

There is along the southern border of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kansas, a semi-legal segregation in the schools in force. At least it amounts to tacit understanding in some of the towns that the colored children must go to the colored schools and that they will not be admitted to the schools attended by white children. In fact, in any northern town where they are proportionately numerous there is just the same tendency and desire to have them separated from whites that there is in the South.\(^3\)

According to John S. Himes,

No change in this pattern had developed since the building of the Champion Avenue School. The rapid concentration of a large Negro population in the eastern part of the city and the tense state of race relations just after the World War tended to contribute to extension of the practice. Three other schools were staffed by colored principals and teachers and devoted to the education of black children. It must be remembered in this connection, however, that colored children were not segregated in Columbus schools. Those living in other school districts and other parts of the city regularly attended the schools nearest their homes.\(^4\)

In spite of the writings of Allen, Duncan and Himes during the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's that the Columbus public schools were not segregated, it was a fact that *de facto* segregation did exist. The Columbus Urban League had recognized this fact, and in light of the 1954 Supreme Court decision, sought to present plans to the Columbus School Board which would assure the local courts that Columbus was


\(^4\)John S. Himes, "Forty Years of Negro Life in Columbus, Ohio," p. 146.
working "with all deliberate speed" toward implementing the Supreme Court's decision. The League had interpreted the Supreme Court's decision to mean that the mind was the essence in the promotion of full-class citizenship for Negroes. According to the League's philosophy, "America had to begin with the ghetto of the mind. Remove the intellectual and psychological walls of racism surrounding job opportunities and economic development, as well as housing and social relations, and begin with education in the public schools. Educate to change attitudes, to teach and develop skills."\(^{15}\)

In keeping with the insistence on action implementing the Supreme Court's decision, education was given an increasingly important role in the Urban League's local program. The "Back to School Week" campaigns were replaced by Tomorrow's Scientist and Technicians Clubs which stimulated interest in boys and girls to continue education for future careers.\(^{16}\)

Nimrod B. Allen had been with the Columbus Urban League from its inception in 1918 through June, 1954. He had served thirty-three years as Executive Secretary. Allen had thought of retiring a number of times over the years, but each time he was urged by board members to remain on the job until a person could be groomed to assume his position upon retirement.\(^{17}\) In March, 1954, Allen announced his decision to retire to the Board of Directors. He

\(^{15}\)Columbus Urban League, The Columbus Urban League 1917-1967 (Pamphlet), Columbus Urban League Papers.

\(^{16}\)ibid.

\(^{17}\)Interview, Nimrod B. Allen, January 10, 1970.
believed that it was time for a younger man to take over the office of Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League. Upon the insistence of Allen, the Board of Directors agreed to hire Prather J. Hauser as Associate Secretary of the Industrial Department, a job which would put him in a position to be the likely successor to Allen as Executive Secretary. Hauser had worked with the League during the 1920's while a graduate student at Ohio State University. He was familiar with the Columbus Urban League's program and the Board of Directors believed that he eventually would be Allen's successor. Hauser was hired in December, 1953, by the Board of Directors and fired February 12, 1954. A month after Hauser's firing, Allen submitted his resignation to the Board of Directors to become effective June 30, 1954. In his letter of resignation,

18 During the early 1950's two political factions in Columbus—one Republican and the other Democratic—wanted to involve the Columbus Urban League in partisan politics. Over the years the League had refrained from such involvements. The white power structure of the city, regardless of political party affiliation, had been very considerate to the League. Many influential whites had become members of the Board of Directors, served on various committees and, in general, had given the League the support needed in implementing various programs. It is the writer's opinion that the two political factions wanted Allen to take sides in their political struggle but he refused. In refusing, Allen realized that he would have to resign or retire, so he retired.

19 Persons interviewed refused to speak of the Hauser situation. The one person who did speak of the incident asked the writer not to mention any name. The writer did not find any records of the incident in the League's papers.
Allen spoke of his thirty-three years of service and of his belief that it was time for other hands to carry on the League's program. He asked the Board of Directors to make an appraisal of the League's work and audit the League's financial records so as to establish a basis for the new secretary to undertake his work in the further building of the League program. He also recommended that the National Urban League be consulted in evaluating the work which had been done; he let it be known that he would help in every possible way to carry out the transition in the program, and would acquaint recruits to the staff with the scope of the League's work. Allen assured president James J. West that he would remain with the League in hope that a satisfactory replacement would be obtained before June 30, 1954, and that, in the intervening period he would be at the League's service to counsel and help in any manner possible.

The Community Chest (which the League depended upon entirely for financial support) and the National League of which the Columbus


21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.
League was an affiliate were authorized to work with a committee of the League in carrying out an appraisal of the League's work. The appraisal was, in essence, a self-study which board members believed was important in re-evaluating the program of the League. Now that the local league had come face-to-face with the problem of choosing a successor to Allen, who had held the position for thirty-three years, the board realized that the responsibility of choosing a successor had to be the duty of both the National Urban League and the local league. This was to insure that protection was offered to the local league as well as the national movement. The National Urban League had no desire for national usurpation of local board authority; but, rather a sincere desire to let the local affiliate know that it intended to exercise tighter control over it than it had done in the past, and that the local league's program had to be in accord with the National Urban League. In order to make this possible, the National League had to play a role, no matter how small, in the selection of affiliates' executive secretaries.\(^{23}\)

Since Allen had been the Columbus Urban League's Executive Director for over thirty-three years, the board was not clear on Article VI of Section A in the League's constitution, in terms of affiliation between the local Urban League and the National League. Lester B. Grange, national Executive Secretary, explained this article and section to the Columbus Urban League president James J. West in letters of March 16, 1954 and April 19, 1954.

\(^{23}\)Lester B. Grange to James West, March 16 and April 19, 1954, Columbus Urban League Papers.
Article VI is a long-standing item of agreement in national-local relationships. Since your board has not changed its executive in the past thirty-three years, it is natural that your members could be unfamiliar with this provision, yet the reason for it is easily understood and well justified. Only by this kind of agreement could the Urban League movement be assured that professional leadership in all of its branches meet standard social work requirements.

The agreement had a two-way benefit. It rid the local league of the possibility of being embarrassed by having undue pressure exerted in favor of some local 'favorite son' who would not be from the best qualified selection. On the other hand, it enables the national office to propose to the local board the very best available nominations from which the board chooses.

It should be emphasized that this article does not give the national office the right to select the local executive—only the right to disqualify a candidate who does not meet the requirements of the post. If the local board has candidates which it wishes to consider, it passes these on to the national office for its observation; then to this group the national office adds the names of other persons whom it feels the board should consider. From that point the board exercises its own judgment, interviewing the candidates and making the selection, then notifying the national office of its choice. If the board is unable to secure a suitable selection from the list provided, it may request additional names until the board's wishes are satisfied.24

Andred Freeman, President of the Dayton Urban League, followed the suggestion of Nimrod B. Allen by submitting his application for the post of Executive Secretary of the Columbus Urban League. Allen had known Freeman since the organization of the Dayton Urban League and was familiar with his work as President of that organization. Freeman was also recommended to the Columbus League by Charles

24 Ibid.
Washington, Executive Secretary of the Dayton League. Freeman was hired by the Columbus Urban League's Board of Directors in September, 1954. Allen, with the assurance that Freeman was the man for the job, stepped down and into retirement.

It was possible in 1954, to look back over the past to 1915, when Allen was called to Columbus to serve as Executive Director of the Spring Street YMCA. It was also possible to evaluate and interpret the usefulness of Allen's service in a more analytical manner than had been possible for those who had been there on the firing line, meeting the day-to-day problems as they arose. Allen entered the Columbus scene during the critical period of World War I when there was a shortage of labor in the North and Negroes were being induced in great numbers to come into the industrial centers of the North. For awhile Allen was considered one of those southern rural migrants, by older residents, but his wisdom and farsightedness took him from the position of Executive Director of the Spring Street YMCA to the task of Executive Secretary of an infant Columbus Urban League.

In 1954, it was considered one of the most powerful National Urban League affiliates in the country. Of the many contributions which Allen takes pride while Executive Director was the formation of Frontiers of America, Incorporated, the only national Negro service organization in the United States as late as 1954.

25Lester B. Grange to James West, June 9, 1954, Columbus Urban League Papers.

During President Harry S. Truman's administration, the President recognized the good work of the Frontiers of America, Incorporated, in a letter of congratulations to the local office in Columbus. Since that time, President Dwight D. Eisenhower accepted an honorary membership and granted an audience to national officers in the executive offices at the White House. John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State, met with a group of Frontier officers brought to Washington by Allen.27

At Allen's retirement, 6,000 persons of both races were members of the Columbus Urban League, of whom about forty-five per cent were white and fifty-five per cent black. Allen had served the Columbus Urban League well. In recognition of his effort the Columbus Citizen Newspaper, now the Citizen-Journal, named him one of the "Ten Men of the Year", who had contributed the most to Columbus, 1951.28

It seems that Allen's timing was right in retiring when he did. Rapid changes were taking place in the area of civil rights as a result of the Supreme Court decision of 1954. Suits over public school desegregation, the Montgomery bus boycott and the sit-in movement in North Carolina were the most important. With the support of the liberal white community and an ever-increasing number of government officials, a new period of activism in the field of Negro advancement began. During this period of activism, it was up to Andrew Freeman and Chester Jones to gear the Columbus Urban League program for the late fifties and early sixties.

27Interview, Nimrod B. Allen, November 4, 1969. (The writer saw pictures of President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles with a group of Frontier officers in Washington, D.C., but Allen could not find the letter from former President Harry S. Truman.) Jet, April 9, 1953, p. 3.

28The Columbus Urban League, An Interracial Organization for Social Services, Columbus Urban League Papers.
CHAPTER VI

The Late Fifties: The Gathering Storm

The period of activism in the field of Negro advancement which characterized the late fifties was not entirely new to the city of Columbus. But the degree to which activism ascended, the scale on which the activists operated, the support they received from both blacks and whites, college students, adults, and major civil rights organizations was new, not only to Columbus, but to Americans everywhere.

The 1954 Supreme Court decision and the non-violent civil rights protest in general had reawakened the social consciousness of most Negro communities across the country, even though the most decisive efforts for full and equal opportunity was being undertaken in the South.¹

The 1954 Supreme Court decision had created a sense of crisis throughout the country, especially in the South. Ever since Reconstruction the South's social structure had been buttressed by both social and legal sanctions. Now the latter had received a body blow, one that threatened the whole social pattern of the South. In the

¹Edward R. Lentz, "Rationalization and Reform: The Columbus Urban League 1942-1962," Masters Thesis, Ohio State University, 1969, p. 95. (Hereafter this work will be cited as Lentz, "Rationalization and Reform."
border states the immediate reaction to the Supreme Court's decision was the attitude of "wait and see." But in the deep South the reaction was one of shock and anger, which soon hardened into defiant resistance. Gradually this spirit of resistance spread throughout the South, fanned by the familiar belief that civil rights meant social equality. The resistance movement was led by white supremacy groups, of which the strongest were the White Citizen Councils. The White Citizen Councils were generally made up of business and professional people, leaving to the Ku Klux Klan the mobilizing of lower income groups.²

Spearheaded by the White Citizen Councils, the strategies of resistance took many forms. On the constitutional level, the doctrine of interposition—that a state can interpose its own authority if the national government oversteps itself—was resurrected. Another form of resistance was economic reprisal. A Negro who sought to enter his child in a "white" school might find it difficult to keep his job, to have his teaching contract renewed, to extend his mortgage, or to get credit at the bank. Negro tenants ran the risk of being evicted and whites favoring integration were usually ostracized by their own group. A third technique was that of closing public schools and replacing them with "private" segregated schools. The White Citizen Councils disclaimed the use of violence, but some of the individuals and groups, advocating more direct action, found it a ready instrument of resistance by using

such methods as mob violence in keeping Negro children from entering white schools; the bombing of civil-rights ministers' homes and schools where integration had taken place; and shooting at civil rights workers.\textsuperscript{3}

The resistance technique of violence tended to be self-defeating. If violence did not create a sense of sympathy for its victims, it aroused a feeling of vexation toward its perpetrators. Thus, the Negro's battle for equality moved at a faster pace. New organizations came into existence, bringing to the force new faces and new techniques. The best known of the new leaders was Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist clergyman who became a national figure because of his role in the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott.\textsuperscript{4}

This movement started on December 1, 1955, when Rosa Parks boarded a bus in downtown Montgomery, took a seat in the section reserved for whites, and refused to surrender it to a white man who subsequently entered the bus. The arrest of quiet Rosa Parks, a college graduate and church worker, stirred Negroes of the city. In protest, they decided to boycott the bus line, forming an organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association, with King as president. Using the non-violent resistance to evil as expounded by Thoreau and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi, the boycott was successful. In December, 1955, the Supreme Court declared that Alabama's state and local laws requiring segregation on buses was unconstitutional. The victory was

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., p. 241.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., p. 250.
shared by thousands. The boycott and its leaders received national attention. Its success brought wide fame to King and endeared him to Negroes everywhere. Later King helped to organize the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and became its president. The technique of S.C.L.C. was non-violence. Its campaigns had a distinctly religious tone and its strength was centered in King who remained the most popular of Negro leaders.\textsuperscript{5}

Another strong civil rights organization, which came to the forefront during the late fifties, was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) which was akin to S.C.L.C. in that it held to a philosophy of non-violent direct action, and its national director, James Farmer, was akin to King as to Gandhi. CORE was organized during the early forties, but its growth was slow until the middle fifties, when it began to recruit students in increasing numbers and to move into the South. Part of its growth may be attributed to its use of new action techniques to combat discrimination. CORE trained many of the southern student leaders in the proper method of staging a "sit-in."\textsuperscript{6}

The two old line organizations—the N.A.A.C.P. and the Urban League—showed a resilient capacity to move with the times. The N.A.A.C.P. showed no signs of relinquishing its predominant role in the battle for equality. In court cases involving civil rights, it continued to furnish most of the financial burden. After the "sit-in"

\textsuperscript{5}ibid., p. 251.

\textsuperscript{6}ibid., p. 252.
movement had begun, the N.A.A.C.P. did pay more attention to the formation of youth councils and college chapters. It also took pain to make clear that its attack "has been from all angles, at all targets, at all times, with all weapons, over all the years." 7

The Urban League's internal situation was not as stable as the N.A.A.C.P.'s. A militant group within the League formed an "ad hoc" group, the "Disturbed Committee of the Executive Secretaries Council," to fight for a more daring program. Edwin C. (Bill) Berry, who later became Executive Secretary of the Chicago Urban League, was chairman of the committee. He contended that the League had "played it so safe that we are well behind the safety zone." Berry, along with others within and without the national organizations, called for new departures and a re-examination of basic premises. 8

John H. Johnson, publisher of Ebony, Jet, and Negro Digest, speaking of the League on its golden anniversary, issued another warning to the League. He called for a confrontation with the dominant challenge of the age, the Negro masses:

It is the responsibility of leadership to point out the hard and narrow path. But it is also the duty of leadership to travel that path, to set an example. People are no longer willing to follow the leader who says--don't do as I do--do as I say I do.

7Ibid., p. 255.

8Lerone Bennett, Jr., Confrontation Black and White (Baltimore, Maryland, 1966), p. 205.
I believe the leadership of the future will find it necessary to remain in close and constant touch with the masses of people. Too many Negro leaders live too far from the scene of battle. Too many of us are isolated from the people we are supposed to be leading.9

Although Lester B. Granger, National Director of the National Urban League, believed in the League's old approach, he recognized the impending crisis over school desegregation. In October, 1954, Granger wrote a memorandum to Executive Secretaries of affiliated organizations reminding them of the simmering pot of school desegregation which had boiled over in such cities as Baltimore and Washington, D.C. He spoke of the need to re-evaluate the League's thinking as to its special responsibility and opportunity--before and following the Supreme Court's clarifying decision.10 It was during this transitional period taking place in public education that Andred Freeman arrived in Columbus to take over the position of Executive Director of the Columbus Urban League. According to Robert Lazarus, Jr., president of the Columbus Urban League for three years during the 1960's, "Andy had a very difficult job when he came to Columbus; the League was in fairly poor shape in terms of public relations and in terms of community acceptance; Andy did a good job of rebuilding."11 Although Freeman had no previous experience as an

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Robert Lazarus, Jr., oral interview, July 23, 1969 (Oral History File), Columbus Urban League Papers. (Hereafter this interview will be cited Oral Interview, Robert Lazarus, Jr.)
Urban League executive, his prior work experience made that point irrelevant. He had been National Youth Administration Counselor during the depression both in Columbus and at Wilberforce College. He took his master's degree in social science at Ohio State University. During and after World War II, he served as employee counselor at Wright Field in Dayton. From 1947 to 1954, he was the personnel manager of the Dayton Malleable Iron Company. When he arrived in Columbus, Allen was still "Mr. Urban League." Freeman realized this immediately and made his decision--to run his own program, with his own style, retaining only those elements of previous organization and orientation that fit with his own idea of what the League should be.\(^\text{12}\)

Upon entering the Columbus scene, only a few months after the Supreme Court's decision concerning the integration of the nation's schools, Freeman realized that his stand with regard to the decision had to be similar to the National Urban League's. He decided to base his educational program on a memorandum from Lester B. Granger to executive secretaries of affiliate organizations of the National Urban League. In the memorandum, Granger listed the following suggestions as "must" steps to be taken in a community threatened or plagued with racial controversy over the school desegregation issue.

\(^{12}\)Andrew Freeman, oral interview, September 25, 1969 (Oral Interview File), Columbus Urban League Papers. (Hereafter this interview will be cited Oral Interview, Andrew Freeman.)
1. Local League officials should meet as soon as possible with local school boards and superintendents of schools to discuss the application of the court decision.

2. Form a select group of community leaders as a means of solidifying a body of supportive opinion. This group should represent the various prestige organizations of the community and should stay on the job, keep informed of progress and problems and give overall impetus, support and direction to subsequent operations.

3. Conferences should be held with leaders of key influence groups. The groups should be inter-racially balanced and should include church, labor, civic, business and similar groups. These groups should seek community support.

4. Meetings should be held with law-and-order officials so that the groups would be assured of solid, constructive community support in case of any outward incidents.

5. Activities should be expanded as far as possible in the direction of neighborhood meetings to reach people in the districts where they live and where frequently antagonisms begin to shape up.

6. Youths, black and white, of school age, should be indoctrinated against destructive purposes.

7. Intensive work must be carried on with the molders of public opinion.\(^\text{13}\)

Granger wanted to head-off anticipated trouble over the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling. He did not want local affiliates to witness the trouble over school desegregation that had occurred in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore.

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\(^{13}\)Lester B. Grange to secretaries of affiliate organizations of the National Urban League, October, 1954, Columbus Urban League Papers.
To Freeman, the Supreme Court decision affecting the integration of schools had many implications for the Columbus Urban League. He believed that the decision pointed the way to a new era of understanding and cooperation and renewed black Americans' faith in the democratic processes.\(^4\) Freeman hired an education director to guide the League's work on the educational front. But Columbus, as was the case with many other northern cities, felt comfortable during this period because, after all, the 1954 Supreme Court's decision referred to southern schools, involving de jure segregation. Columbus schools were for many years segregated de facto through housing patterns and gerrymandering of districts. Although quality education and desegregation of the Columbus school system were goals of the League during the late fifties, not until the sixties would the League's thrust in the direction of education really bear fruit.\(^5\)

In a letter to Lester Granger, Freeman after only a few months on the job stated that "Columbus is conservative; there are many unusual bright spots of integration, and there are many spots which need the illumination of enlightenment and intelligent interpretation. Columbus seems ready to move forward; it needs intelligent guidance, positive thinking, and Urban League leadership. That is our job and we are working at it."\(^6\)

\(^4\)Andrew Freeman's Report to the Columbus Urban League, September 15, 1954. (Hereafter this report will be cited Freeman's Report, September 15, 1954.), Columbus Urban League Papers.

\(^5\)Oral Interview, Andrew Freeman, September 25, 1969, (Oral History File), Columbus Urban League Papers.

\(^6\)Andrew Freeman to Lester B. Granger, December 29, 1954, Columbus Urban League Papers.
Freeman's program objectives included: (1) public relations; (2) industrial relations; (3) vocational and guidance services; (4) community organization; (5) reorganizing committee structure; (6) building a strong community relations program; (7) making necessary board appointments; (8) organizing an Urban League Guild; (9) establishing and maintaining a news bulletin; and (10) resolving the status of Camp Brush Lake. The rewriting of the League's constitution to fit the specifications of his plan was to mark the culmination of his planning.

Freeman's program was based upon the philosophy that the League was a social service organization for the improvement of living and working conditions of Negroes and for increasing cooperative and understanding relationships between black and white citizens. The program, basically, was one of community organization in the fields of employment, vocational guidance, housing, community service, and welfare service. It would be the League's task to interpret to the community-at-large and to organizations and agencies the needs and problems of the black community. It would also interpret the responsibilities of the community and organizations to the black community. At the same time, it would interpret to the black group its responsibilities and increased opportunities. This function would include promoting the extension

17 Freeman's Report, September 15, 1954.
18 Ibid.
of all community services and facilities to serve the entire community.¹⁹

Freeman's program was not really a radical departure from the program advocated by Allen. Freeman and Allen's views were primarily the same with regards to integration, but Freeman realized that the civil rights movement offered a challenge to traditional approaches of the League. No longer was the patient and slow pace of integrating blacks into America's life style acceptable to growing numbers of blacks.

Freeman wanted to bridge the gap between the traditional values of the League and the new groups such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which characterized the civil rights movement. He stepped up the League's public relations efforts making it clear to the department heads that public relations were of the essence in promoting the League's program. Freeman set forth ten program objectives with regard to public relations:

1. Make service to the community the real purpose of the Urban League.

2. Educate every staff member to be public relations conscious.

3. Interpret the Urban League's philosophy and program to the community.

4. Do as much by personal contact as possible.

¹⁹Oral Interview, Andrew Freeman.
5. Build and maintain an attitude of helpfulness.

6. Remember that as many persons can upset or wreck an organization as work for it or are served by it.

7. Remember that public relations is simply applying the "Golden Rule."

8. Encourage studies and surveys relative to the Urban League program.

9. Maintain an information library to be used by the staff and community.

10. Keep the public informed about the Urban League and interpret its program to the community.

The League's industrial relations program goal was to:

1. Expand job opportunities for blacks.

2. Offer the Urban League's services to employers who had black employees or who planned to hire blacks.

3. Collect and disseminate job information.

4. Make secure and stabilize those jobs already held by blacks.

5. Interpret to employers and the community their responsibilities to black workers.

6. Interpret to the black community job trends, the labor market, and worker's responsibility on the job.

7. Work with organized labor to promote job opportunities for black workers; to interpret the problems of black workers to organized labor; and to provide pertinent information as needed to labor leaders or organizations.

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20 Freeman's Report, September 15, 1954.

21 Ibid.
Problems were approached through conferences, workshops, and seminars for the black and white community. Adult education classes were established and aimed primarily at vocational assistance but also dealt with general educational matters where necessary. A variety of vocational opportunities and training clubs were established, with the League in an advisory position. Special vocational counseling services for individual cases were established in the department. The League furthered its association with organized labor by utilizing its board members from the labor leadership and urged freer Negro admission to union membership.  

In the direction of vocational and guidance service the League attempted to:

1. Secure and make available information and materials regarding jobs, job trends, training opportunities, and job qualifications.

2. Develop a limited counseling service for specialized needs.

3. Promote community guidance service for youth where needed.

4. Encourage all youth-guidance agencies to serve all the youth in the community.

5. Plan and promote group-guidance activities such as career conferences and vocational opportunity campaigns.

6. Point up the need for guidance service activities and encourage the development of such agencies.  

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22 Industrial Relations and Vocational Training File, Columbus Urban League Papers.

23 Freeman's Report, September 15, 1954.
The League's vocational and guidance service program was closely related to the League's community organization program which emphasized:

1. The organization of neighborhood organizations and programs of self-help.
2. Promoting the extension of services of community agencies to the entire community.
3. Organizing block units for better community services and to work on mutual problems of community living.
4. Working constantly for the inclusion of blacks in all community activities and organizations.
5. Maintaining a working relationship with city-government departments and community chest agencies.24

The organization of neighborhood organizations and programs of self-help was very important to the League. In the past, the League had attempted to answer the needs of the black community by exercising direct control over various community programs. But in the long-run this did not prove feasible due to a lack of funds and trained personnel. So the League slowly relinquished its direct control over a variety of community programs developed by the League and transferred them to local groups of private citizens who were concerned with the progress of their community.25

The Columbus Urban Renewal program was of immediate concern to the black community during the mid-fifties. The program involved

24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
eradication of the city's most blighted areas. These areas were occupied by blacks and thus the program imposed itself most strongly on the black community. Citizens in the affected areas appealed to city government, to the Urban League, and to other social service agencies within the city to impede the destruction of their communities and to alleviate the relocation problems of displaced persons.26

Community leaders on the near east side, private citizens, and civic leaders who were concerned about the impact of urban renewal in their community formed the Near East Side Action Council to deal with their common problems. These citizens believed that there was a need to take a direct hand in the planning and development of their own community.27 The Urban League established early contacts with the Near East Side Action Council and offered it the services and staff assistance of the League, and channeled much of its coordinated community planning through the group.

Freeman recognized very early the reluctance of the influential white citizens of the city even to discuss open housing when he arrived in Columbus in 1954. So he hired a full-time housing director in an attempt to increase the League's attack on the housing problem. But local institutions of the city, such as newspapers, T.V. stations, and radio stations, did not deem articles or statements concerning open housing to be newsworthy. These institutions would

26 Oral Interview, Andrew Freeman.

not accept such discussions, broadcasts or newspaper articles as in the public's best interest. In spite of this, the League continued to study the local housing market in attempts to show that property values did not decline with integration and that a massive untapped housing market was available among Negroes in the city.28

Very early in his program planning, Freeman decided that Brush Lake was a burden which the League had to get rid of. Each year the camp was losing money and taking up too much of the staff's time. Facilities were deteriorating and could not be repaired because the League did not have the funds to make needed repairs; it was developing a name which was repugnant to the League's image, as a result of the drowning of a child. Freeman believed that the camp had served its purpose during the forties and early fifties but, in view of the League's task during the mid-fifties, the camp was only a burden to the League. According to Freeman "when the camp was sold, the League's hand was freed from an enterprise that had become a burden and was no longer a part of the League's over-all program."29 As a result of the sale of the camp, the League's staff devoted more time to more vital areas of the League's program.

The League continued its attack on the problems engendered by urban renewal. Block units were re-emphasized by the League to


29Columbus Urban League Board Meeting, October 13, 1955, Columbus Urban League Papers.
pursue the activities of conservation, rehabilitation, and community involvement. The block units were to be part of a broad pattern of community advisory organizations which were to be integrated into local community councils, which themselves would be integrated into a system of community planning and coordination. The radio program initiated by Allen was continued by Freeman, but its name and format were changed. The name of the program was changed from the "Tenth Man" to the "Urban League Speaks," and its purpose was changed from that of creating an atmosphere which would enable both blacks and whites to live and work harmoniously together to one of promoting better understanding between the two races through community action by emphasizing the viewpoint that the problems of blacks were problems which were of concern to all citizens of Columbus and, until both realized this, interracial harmony could not be accomplished.

The Urban League Guild, another program initiated during Freeman's tenure, was a ladies auxiliary to the League. It had, as its purpose, the bringing together of women interested in building a better community through promotion of inter-cultural and inter-group activities. The Guild was very instrumental in bringing cultural events and programs to the city and worked hand-in-hand with the League in promoting its various programs in the city. The Guild gave strong impetus to the housing program through

\[\text{ibid.}\]
workshops conducted annually. The annual workshops were instrumental in changing many Columbus citizens' attitudes concerning fair housing legislation.\textsuperscript{31}

The League's new constitution was the culmination of Freeman's program for the Columbus Urban League. In the new constitution the objective was changed from that of an organization whose purpose was that of adjusting those unsocial conditions peculiar to the Negro brought about by discrimination, ignorance and poverty to that of a community planning agency coordinating interracial efforts for better community living in the areas of employment, vocational guidance, housing, and community service.\textsuperscript{32}

In the new constitution was a change in the duties of the Board of Directors which included the following:\textsuperscript{33}

1. Familiarity with the League's constitution and by-laws;
2. Attend board meetings regularly;
3. Develop policies with the executive;
4. Interpret community thinking to the executive;
5. Interpret the League to the community;
6. Accept specific assignments when necessary;
7. Chair departmental and other committees;

\textsuperscript{31}Columbus Urban League Guild File, Columbus Urban League Papers.

\textsuperscript{32}Freeman's Report, September 15, 1954. Constitution File; Constitution as amended March 14, 1956, Columbus Urban League Papers.

\textsuperscript{33}ibid.
8. Help in United Appeal Fund raising program;

Freeman's aim was to let the Board of Directors be an advisory group of influential citizens whose support and interest were a valuable adjunct to League work. If they could be induced to assist in League projects, all well and good, but the role of the board was more advisory than participatory. Although the board was to decline during the Freeman directorship, he never lost sight of the fact that public support, especially by influential citizens, was crucial to the success of the League.³⁴ Robert Lazarus, Jr., a board member and later president of the Columbus Urban League, states "to me the new duties of the board were very confusing; at times I did not know just what the board's job was or what it was expected to do; but I had faith in Andy and supported him all the way."³⁵

The United Community Council and United Appeal were the primary funding agencies for the League during the fifties and early sixties. Through the United Community Council (later became the United Appeal) and federal programs, money was allotted to the League annually. Money raised by the League, through membership or the like went to United Appeal to be distributed equally among organizations receiving support from United Appeal.³⁶

³⁴Lentz, "Rationalization and Reform," p. 88.
³⁵Oral Interview, Robert Lazarus, Jr.
³⁶Ibid.
In mid-1961, Freeman announced to the Board of Directors of the League that he had accepted an offer to become the Director of the Philadelphia Urban League. According to Robert Lazarus, Jr., "although we hated to lose Andy, this was indeed a step up for him." Freeman recommended to the Board of Directors of Columbus that Chester Jones serve as acting Executive Director of the League so that the League's program could be continued while the board looked for a new secretary. Freeman had hired Jones after he received his undergraduate degree at Ohio State University and kept him on the League's payroll while he studied for his Masters degree. After receiving his Masters degree, Jones continued to work with the League, doing an outstanding job. Jones had supported Freeman's programs and knew his style, so the transition in League leadership from Freeman to Jones was accomplished with little fundamental change in the organizational pattern of the League.37

Freeman's greatest contribution to the Columbus Urban League was in the direction of structural organization. He was instrumental in bringing about a high degree of professionalization with regards to the League's staff and overall program.38 Under his direction, the League had developed more generalized community innovations including the Urban League Guild and numerous vocational counseling

37 Oral Interview, Andrew Freeman; Lentz, "Rationalization and Reform," p. 108.
38 Oral Interview, Robert Lazarus, Jr.
organizations for youth and adults. He had helped in the development of community-area councils to assist in the resolution of particular social or economic difficulties within the black community. Although Freeman found it more difficult to implement his program than he had expected between 1954-1961, by the mid-sixties most of his program was in operation. As the Columbus Urban League and the citizens of Columbus felt the full repercussions of the "sit-ins" and "freedom rides" taking place in the South and the activities of CORE in the City of Columbus during the turbulent sixties, a period of change and innovation was inevitable in the League's program. But the organizational structure and emphasis on community organization, initiated by Freeman, would be continued by Chester Jones and his successor Robert Brown.
CHAPTER VII

The Turbulent Sixties; A Period of Change and Innovation

Chester Jones was not new to the Columbus scene. Jones was from Columbus and unlike the other executive directors of the Columbus Urban League had no reputation whatsoever to live up or down. He had a large number of relatives at all levels of community activity who supported him. According to Jones "any attack upon me by the community was an attack upon my family." 1

Although Jones had been recruited by Andrew Freeman in 1960, while in graduate school at Ohio State University, he had no real understanding of the National Urban League's work or its movement. He had finished Ohio State University with a Bachelor's degree in Correction but could not find a job in Columbus. Mathew Carter of the YMCA was able to help him get a job with the Minneapolis, Minnesota YMCA. But according to Jones, "this was entirely out of my field and I decided to return to Columbus to work on a Master's degree in social work and start looking for employment in Columbus." 2

It was at this time that Andrew Freeman recruited Jones as Community Relations Director of the Columbus Urban League and allowed

1 Chester Jones, oral interview, September 30, 1969, (Oral History File), Columbus Urban League Papers.

2 Ibid.
him to finish the requirements for his Master's degree while on the League's staff. Although Freeman taught Jones most of what he knew of the Columbus Urban League and its program, according to Robert Lazarus, Jr.:

Freeman and Jones were completely different personalities. Freeman was quieter; he was not an extrovert, as contrasted with Jones who made a very good appearance and was much better on his feet and much more extroverted. Freeman was a much better organized person; he was not nearly as flashy, but what he did, he did on a much more solid basis. Jones was a better man than Freeman on building people. Jones was more of a social worker and a damn good one.3

When Freeman came into the League during the 1950's, a social change was taking place in America. In the civil rights struggle, black thinking was directed toward the full integration of blacks into the main stream of American life. But during the 1960's when Jones became Executive Director of the Columbus Urban League, black thinking was directed toward self-determination. Integration into a society which did not reflect the aspirations of the majority of blacks was no longer the primary goal of black civil rights activists. Rather than being integrated into a predominantly white society, blacks desired an equal representation in American society.

Many young blacks such as Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, who had witnessed numerous acts of violence committed by whites upon blacks in the South during the early 1960's, concluded that integration could not work in America as long as it remained a racist society. Segregation, discrimination and degradation were just as present in

3Robert Lazarus, Jr., oral interview.
the North as the South. Young blacks such as Carmichael and Brown were welcomed by the black masses in northern ghettos. What followed in the late 1960's was civil disorder. Blacks began to chant such slogans as "black power", "self-determination", "black is beautiful", and "burn baby burn." Whites countered with such slogans as "law and order", "the white back-lash", and "the silent majority."

After assuming the role of Executive Director of the Columbus Urban League in 1962, Jones decided that the League had to adjust to the philosophy of the new civil rights activists. Under Nimrod B. Allen the League's approach to racial understanding was to realize that there was a difference between the black and white race, but differences could be reconciled by the spirit of interracial goodwill. He sought to change the attitude of the white community toward the black community by elevating the economic and social status of blacks so that the white community could see positive results on the part of blacks in seeking a normal participation in American life. But under Andrew Freeman and Chester Jones, the League's approach to the civil rights struggle was total involvement within the black community. The League had to interpret to the rest of the community the hopes, frustrations, and aspirations of the black community.4

Jones wanted a close-knit type operation. He brought into the League a number of fellows who had grown up with him and their relationship was not too formal. They could argue over certain issues,

4Andrew Freeman and Chester Jones, oral interviews.
have disagreements and still retain harmony within the local organization. This brought about a good working relationship. Jones also had a working relationship with CORE and the NAACP. According to Jones, "I could attend CORE meetings and get members to support certain Urban League programs. My relationship with the NAACP was a very good one; in fact, I grew up with Bobby Durham, Executive Director of the NAACP at the time."^5

Jones' philosophy was more in accord with Whitney Young who had taken over the role of Executive Director of the National Urban League at the same time that Jones had become Executive Director of the Columbus Urban League in Columbus, Ohio. Young and Jones knew each other prior to becoming Urban League Directors. According to Jones, "we knew and understood each other and had a good working relationship." Both men realized that the ideology expounded by the arch-militants could not be dismissed. Instead they had to be dealt with as a viable force in the civil rights struggle. The National Urban League and its affiliates had to adjust its strategy in the struggle to deal with the more militant civil rights groups. 6

Chester Jones realized that in the city of Columbus many persons both black and white expected the Negro to be united on all issues as if togetherness, or being of one mind, was desirable. But to him it was not necessary for all Negroes to agree with and feel warmly about the methods or goals of a particular organization, group

^5Chester Jones, oral interview.

6ibid.
or persons. Certainly the spectrum of organizations and persons engaged in some kind of conscious effort to "change things" in the racial situation was broader and more varied than ever before in American society.  

Jones believed that a social work agency like the Urban League could not be an NAACP or a CORE group, and the forces that pushed them toward trying to exchange roles for the sake of maintaining their position of leadership were to be deplored as dangerous and misguided. Jones stated in his "Factual Report on Race Relations in Columbus" in 1964, that:

The Negro minister, the Negro social scientist, the Negro man of arts and letters is expected to view all social, economic, political, indeed even aesthetic issues from the Negro angle. Why cannot this person speak simply as a member of a community, a citizen, a citizen of America, as a man of the world or the president of a school board who happens to be a Negro. In this community the Negro can grow to a degree of distinction, but always as a representative of "his people," not as an ordinary American or an individual in humanity. The Negro is defined as a "race man" regardless of the role he might wish to choose for himself. Related to this is this tendency to place all members of the Negro race into one group and not to consider them as individuals. The point is that people have rights to justice and opportunity because they are persons, not because they are a special kind of person.

On the sideline watching the civil rights struggle are the young Negroes; we have not heard from this group in the community. These are the sons and daughters of the World War II veterans. These are the youngsters involved in the direct action activities in the South—the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. They have made it plain to Martin Luther King and James Farmer that they are not moving fast enough. Indeed, leaders who planned the strategy of progress are being shoved aside by others who want no compromise. This movement has not reached the North yet.

7Ibid.

Chester Jones, Whitney Young and other young men who entered the Urban League movement during the sixties, defined their commitment to the League's program in terms of a "New Thrust." They defined the "New Thrust" as an Urban League commitment to creation of:

1. An open and ultimately integrated society—a society in which blacks are able to participate fully and achieve their maximum potential in all aspects of life; a society which, in the final analysis, lead to a color-blind culture in which people of all races interact freely. The ultimate goal is an integrated society which is oblivious to skin color, which organizes none of its institutions along racial lines, and in which blacks and whites interact on a basis of equality in all areas of life—education, political, economic and social. If an integrated open society is not attainable, one must be created in which the black man is able to realize his full potential. Separation may exist but the separation is a matter of choice and does not result in inequality or forced exclusion.

2. Equal life results—realization by the black man of his maximum potential as an individual and as a member of society. This means participation in and benefit from American life equal to that enjoyed by whites. The black man must take advantage of new opportunities opened up to him but until past wrongs have been righted, until black men manage to catch up with their white brothers, aggressive remedies are required to assure that Negroes can translate opportunity into equality.

3. Ghetto power—ability of ghetto residents to act in unison to influence and change the forces which affect their lives. This power would involve active ghetto participation in and, in some cases, ghetto control, over decisions and institutions which bear a direct relationship to ghetto life. It is a long-cherished American tradition that citizens maintain an effective degree of control over those forces which substantially affect their lives.
4. **Problem solving**—effecting a permanent, positive change in conditions which adversely affect the ghetto community. Community leaders must decide what action will provide the most far-reaching feasible solutions to a problem identified by the ghetto community. Ghetto residents must discover what problems they would like attacked and work to develop strategies for bringing about solutions.

5. **Service activities**—technical assistance offered by the Urban League to community groups seeking social change and assistance offered to individuals on specific problems. In the first instance of service, the League's staff offers ghetto residents its skills in such areas as planning, community organization and communication to enable them to more effectively push for desired social change. The second type of service is service given to individuals on specific problems which may be a means of establishing and maintaining relations with a constituency which can then be used to seek solutions to the problems which gave rise to the need for such services.

6. **System change**—a fundamental alteration in the operation of an agency or network of institutions. It is an attempt to organize black ghetto residents to alter permanently and positively the way in which institutional programs, policies and procedures affect their lives. Implicit in systems-change is an attack on the root causes rather than on the symptoms of basic problems.

7. **Confrontation**—any action which puts the people affected by problems face-to-face with those responsible for and capable of dealing with the problems—for the purpose of solving those problems. Confrontation as a tool can be implemented by any number of different strategies ranging from conference, to petition, to court action, to pressuring of public regulatory and administrative agencies, to boycott, to marching and picketing. The particular confrontation strategy used should be that which is most effective for the particular situation.
8. Coalition strategy—a combination of effort with groups from the total community which share a common goal with ghetto residents and a combination of efforts within the ghetto community itself. In the first instance, in order to produce maximum pressure for change, there must be a mobilization of all elements in the entire community which desire the same end sought by ghetto residents. In the second instance, unity must be promoted within the ghetto itself by working with the widest possible spectrum of ghetto-based organizations.  

In keeping with the "New Thrust" philosophy, Chester Jones concentrated on four areas: (1) Housing and neighborhood improvement; (2) Job development and employment; (3) Education and youth incentives; and (4) Health and welfare. The League's housing and neighborhood program's thrust was in the direction of open-housing and the beautification of neighborhoods in the black community. 

Urban Renewal, Expressway programs and other governmental actions had an untold impact upon the total housing market in Columbus and the Negro population was hardest hit. More than seven thousand families were displaced in the Columbus area after 1954. Approximately sixty-two per cent of those families were non-white. More than fifty per cent of the demolished units were occupied by non-white. More than seventy-eight per cent of the units occupied by non-whites were built prior to 1940. Since 1950, there have been built, 41,216 new housing units; non-whites occupy 2,599 of these. The non-whites' share in the newly constructed units in the ten-year period (1950-1960) was six per cent. In essence, the Negro was and

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9 Ibid.

10 John C. Alston, A Consultant's Report, Negro Housing in Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Urban League Papers, 1946, pp. 5-14.

11 Jones, "A Factual Report on Race Relations in Columbus."
still is restricted and excluded from the general housing market. The general fear among whites was the belief that "property will depreciate in value if Negro families move in." But studies by the League during the fifties and sixties showed that property values did not fluctuate because a Negro family moved into an all-white neighborhood. Property values changed only when fearful citizens panicked and sold. The primary conclusion of the studies was that property values increased in Columbus regardless of race—as long as district zoning was maintained. The League's progress on the open-housing front left much to be desired. A few Negro families were able to escape the ghetto but only in token numbers. A few blacks were allowed in a number of predominantly white communities as a means of saying to all who would listen that integrated communities were becoming a reality in the city of Columbus. But the majority of blacks knew that segregated housing was still the order of the day.

In the black community the League's housing committee published brochures on "Hints on Home and Neighborhood Improvement." They were designed to assist home owners, tenants, landlords and neighborhood groups in their attempts to rehabilitate and conserve their communities. The League decided to use the block unit approach as a sound approach to making improvements in the black community. Block units was a way in which neighbors could get together to decide what should

12 Ibid.
13 Columbus Urban League Housing Reports File, Columbus Urban League Papers.
be done in their block; it enabled citizens within a block to do things together that no one in the block could do alone; and it created a new feeling of friendliness in their neighborhoods.14

The Near Eastside Area Council also worked with the League in providing opportunities for citizens in specific geographical areas to plan and work together for neighborhood improvement. The Council served member groups as a clearing house for information and planned activities and it worked to advise government agencies and others on the housing, recreation and social needs of the community.

In the area of job development and employment, the League worked to raise the standard of minority group members and other disadvantaged persons by improving their opportunities as workers. The League insisted that all workers should have equal opportunities based on skills and qualifications. The League met, conferred, discussed and persisted in their efforts to remove barriers of race and co'or from the black community's economy. The League's objective was to seek employment, counseling and vocational guidance service for more persons entering the League.

Other programs were in the planning stage in the area of job development and employment. Such programs as (1) on-the-job training in partnership with the United States Department of Labor; (2) training seminars; (3) a pre-apprenticeship training in cooperation with the Columbus Building and Construction Trades Council and OSES; (4) Project Pride, a two-week summer program which enabled sixty-five

14ibid.
high school boys and girls to earn money for books and clothing by cleaning, fixing-up and painting premises of Eastside residents unable to do these tasks themselves. Jones left the Columbus Urban League before these programs in the area of job development and employment could reach fruition but during the late sixties, these programs were continued under Robert Brown.

In the area of education and youth incentives, the League's thrust was dynamic. The Tomorrow Scientists and Technicians program started by the League in 1958, was re-emphasized. During the early sixties there were five TST career clubs with a total enrollment of 188 members. Clubs were active in Champion, Franklin, Mohawk and Everett Junior High Schools and at East High School. All clubs were interracial with the exception of Champion Junior High School which had no white pupils. Plans were underway to organize clubs in other schools within the city. The TST program stressed cultural enrichment plus occupational information brought to schools by Negro scientists and technicians.

Program activities would include (1) speakers from scientific and technical fields; (2) demonstrations of scientific and mathematical principles and advanced technological developments; (3) special assembly programs, planned by TST club members, to bring TST programs and a knowledge of the TST concept to the student body as a whole; (4) field trips to businesses, industrial plants, hospitals, colleges.


16 Ibid.
and universities. A film titled "You Can Be There" shows on-the-job interracial work scenes taken in Columbus of scientific and technical occupations which was shown in most schools throughout Columbus. The film was purchased by twenty-eight Urban League affiliates, the National Urban League, and the Columbus Board of Education.17

In addition to the TST programs, Career Day Programs were conducted by the League in cooperation with the public schools. The purpose of such programs was an attempt to let high school boys and girls hear and learn about business, industry and professional opportunities.

Jones made plans for the decentralization of public health services in the city by starting health services clinics in neighborhoods where no health facilities existed. Money for the project would come from state and federal aid and private contributions. Plans were also made to work with the Franklin County Welfare Department and private industry to open day care centers at plants or some other location. The money for such centers would come from the state and from private contributions.

Jones had a number of other programs in the planning stage but during the latter part of 1965, he decided to accept a position on the National Urban League staff as an assistant director with the health and welfare division of the League program. According to Clifford Tyree, Columbus Community Relations Director, "Jones was a

17 Ibid.
very capable man. He knew the problems of the community and tried
to relate to the community’s problems. He sought to effect a change
as far as the image of the Urban League was concerned. Under Jones
the League became more involved, more relevant to the needs and to
the issues. The League became more controversial in taking stands
on issues that were controversial.18

Robert D. Brown, who had joined the Columbus Urban League in
1964 as Educational Director, became Executive Director after Jones
left. Brown had no previous experience in the League. However, he
was not new to the Columbus scene. He had grown up on the city’s East
side. He had attended Shepard, Mt. Vernon Avenue, Champion and East
High Schools. He held a B.A. degree from Ohio State and did graduate
work at Michigan State University and Ohio State University.

Brown and Jones had a good working relationship. Brown states
that:

Chet was the better of the other directors insofar
as what he was able to do during his tenure (1962-65).
Allen laid the groundwork but Chet brought the League’s
work home to the black community. Chet created other
groups such as the Columbus Leadership Conference and
the Community Resources Incorporated to seek total com­
munity participation. He opened doors by using other
organizations and creating other organizations.19

As more federal and state aid was poured into the black commun­
ity during the late sixties, the Columbus Urban League in cooperation
with the various federal and state agencies was able to get many
programs started that had been in the planning stage during the early

18 Clifford Tyree, Oral interview, August 13, 1969 (Oral History
file), Columbus Urban League Papers.

19 Robert Brown, Oral interview, May 4, 1970 (Oral History
file), Columbus Urban League Papers.
sixties. Brown did not discontinue any of the League's departments nor did he create any new ones when he became Executive Director, but many special programs were instituted.

The four areas of concern continued to be (1) housing; (2) education and youth incentives; (3) health and welfare; and (4) economic development and employment. In the area of housing, Brown believed that "in spite of the League's work, generally blacks are still denied equitable housing." He charged that the Columbus Board of Realtors had by design made white people move to new developments that they had developed and at the same time allowed blacks to move into old houses that the whites had lived in for several years that were in many instances on the verge of being run down. 20 The League decided to work on the housing problem through other organizations such as the Northwest Union Relations Council in Upper Arlington, the Worthington Human Relations Council in the white community, the Near East Side Action Council, Columbus Model Cities, and the Columbus Metropolitan Area Community Action Organization in the inner city; and the Columbus Fair Housing Committee. Model Cities and CMACAO are federally sponsored programs in the inner city for the purpose of improving conditions in general in the inner city. The League participated in the planning for Model Cities application and participated in its programming. The League also sponsored the Near East Side Neighborhood

20 Ibid.
Council and has close affiliation with the Community Action Organization in charge of OEO programming in Columbus.21

In the area of economic development and employment, the League made great progress. Labor relations in Columbus improved when the Office of Equal Opportunity required business having federal contracts to adhere to the practices of OEO. The League's main thrust was directed toward the building trades—electricians, plumbers, tile-setters, bricklayers, boilermakers, stone masons, carpenters and ironworkers.

During the League's second year of cooperation with the United States Department of Labor, it was awarded a $57,000.00 contract whereby the League pledged to place thirty black youngsters in the apprenticeship areas. The program is run by two co-directors, a League staff member and a building trades representative.

In cooperation with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, the League assisted in the organization of the Community Industrial Development Corporation which has provided one of the avenues for financing of Opportunity Products Incorporated which is a Negro industry that will be Negro managed and owned.

In cooperation with the Columbus Building and Construction Trades Council, the League is recruiting youths who have the basic qualifications to enter the various apprenticeship programs in the Columbus area. The program is called the Labor Education Advancement

21Ibid.
Program. Its purpose is to work in and with the labor movement to help the job problems of minority workers. LEAP attempts to:

Develop pre-apprenticeship programs for selected occupations. Programs of this nature will be concerned with the dynamics of disadvantaged Negro youths involving the utilization of union members to carry out the instruction emphasizing the actual demands and prerequisites necessary to enter into the apprenticeship program.

Develop programs for the minority trade unionists emphasizing their leadership role and liaison within the trade union movement. Included would be specific programs designed to depict their role and the labor movement's responsibility to community affairs.

Have the National Urban League establish and maintain the same kind of dialogue with the labor movement as it has with commerce and industry. This will mean establishing a Trade Union Advisory Council to coordinate this project providing staff services to affiliate and actively participate in international union conventions, conferences, workshops and other existing programs.22

In the area of health and welfare, the decentralization of public health services which was on the planning board during Chester Jones' tenure as Executive Director was put into operation. Money was secured from Columbus Foundations and private contributions. Health services clinics were opened on Mt. Vernon Avenue and Monroe Street. Four other public health facilities were planned for the North, South, East and West sides of Columbus.

In the direction of education and youth incentives, the League believed that it suffered a setback. The League completed a study in 1967 titled "Quality-Integrated Schools for Columbus, Ohio." The

22Columbus Urban League's LEAP Project (memorandum), Columbus Urban League Papers.
purpose of the study was to assist the Columbus Board of Education and the citizens of Columbus by extending the League's resources to the community in the search for solutions to the city's school problem. According to Kline Roberts, Chamber of Commerce Director:

...the League's study was good but the chamber believed that there were debatable things in it; but basically we thought it was sincere and a carefully conceived report. On the basis of this, the chamber asked that an additional study of the schools by Ohio State University be done. The Ohio State study was made and about fifty per cent of the recommendations were adopted.

Again according to Brown, "the Ohio State study's recommendations were basically the same as the League's."24

Programs advocated by the League in the area of education were:

(1) a tutorial program for inner city children, and (2) a pre-kindergarten program for inner city youth. These programs were a great success and served as a pattern for Head Start, a federally funded program for disadvantaged pre-school children.

The League's relation with local government continued to be a fairly positive relationship. The doors were open for the League's staff to come in and discuss their concerns with government officials. Often times government officials did not respond instantly but the doors were opened.25

23A Report by the Columbus Urban League Education Committee, "Quality-Integrated Schools for Columbus, Ohio," April, 1967, Columbus Urban League Papers.

24Robert Brown, oral interview.

25Kline Roberts, oral interview, August 5, 1969 (Oral History File), Columbus Urban League Papers.
According to Brown, "the League has had a good relationship with other organizations in the city, especially the Chamber of Commerce. Kline Roberts, chairman of the chamber, was doing the same thing with the Chamber of Commerce that I was doing with the League—changing the philosophy and thinking of its members and getting liberal persons on the board of trustees." Brown also has a good working relationship with the United Community Council—a planning organization for the city, and a strong relationship with the National Urban League.

According to Roberts:

The Columbus Urban League is like an auxiliary contact out on the East side with an important segment of the people, the Negro group. The introduction of new programs into the city caused the League to become involved in a wider number of programs and the pressure is on them because they are established. Their advice and assistance is absolutely essential to community action programs.

According to Curtis Brooks, Director of CMACAO:

The League has continued during the sixties as it has in the past to be an essential force in the black community. It remains the most stable professional group in the black community and can be relied upon for consistency. It provides a wonder catalytic role in trying to develop some kind of progress for the city.

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26 Ibid.
27 Robert Brown, oral interview.
According to Sylvester Angel, former Director of Model Cities:

The composition of the League's Board of Directors was instrumental in the League's continuing success in the city. Under Allen, white board members were considered "do-gooders". Under Freeman and Jones, whites were considered to be respectable and quiet. But under Brown, whites were young liberals who realized that changes were taking place in American society and they had to become more involved.29

During the sixties the League continued its policy of having members of the Board of Directors representative of the social and civic forces of the city. They represented a cross-section of men and women of both races who were interested in the welfare of the community in particular and great human problems in general. The list included ministers, bankers, university professors, brokers, attorneys, physicians, dentists, social workers and others interested in the development of human personality.30 By serving on the following committees and boards, the League's Executive Director, Robert Brown, has been able to keep the League's interest, programs and activities before federal, state and local agencies:

1. A member of the National Committee for the Support of Public Schools.
2. Vice President of the Council of Urban League Executive Directors.
3. A member of the Columbus Community Education Committee.
4. A member of the board of trustees of CMACAO.

29Sylvester Angel, oral interview, October 16, 1969 (Oral History File), Columbus Urban League Papers.

30All persons interviewed mentioned this fact.
5. A member of the Columbus Leadership Conference.

6. A member of the Big Brothers Association, YMCA, Community Service Council, Inc., Frontiers, Inc., and Governor's Fair Housing Committee.

7. Chairman of the Technical Advisory Committee for all programs submitted to the Office of Economic Opportunity, member of the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the board of directors of the Ohio Council for health and welfare.
CONCLUSION

By 1967, the Columbus Urban League had become one of the city's outstanding organizations in the field of social work. During the early years the League's work was of a benevolent nature. From 1924 to present, it has received enough financial support each year to carry on its various programs. As a result the League continued over the years to grow and by 1967, it had reached its full potential. The League's annual budget had risen from $6,809.05 in 1925 to $105,000.00 in 1967. The success of the League reflects the disposition on the part of concerned Columbus citizens both black and white to face one of its major problems at a time when it was unpopular to do so—the willingness to extend economic, social and political opportunities to a sizable non-white segment of its population. Columbus, Ohio, chose not to ignore these problems and to pretend that they did not exist.

The Columbus Urban League has been able to maintain continuous operation for more than fifty years as one of the most important social welfare agencies in the city of Columbus. During this period, the League was able to help direct the inevitable changes in race relations. At times progress was slow, halting and uneven but racial adjustments have undergone revision. Of necessity, the League had to reflect the dominant climate of opinion during the different periods of its history.
Between 1917 and 1919, Columbus had to become reconciled to the fact that blacks were becoming a significant minority in the city's population. The massive black exodus from the South—those seeking economic advancement and greater political and social opportunities—intensified the race question in cities throughout the North. Although many employers aided this migration and welcomed the new labor supply, most northern industrial cities seemed unwilling to think of the newcomers as a permanent addition to their population. Some employers thought of them as a temporary substitute for immigrant labor, which would again be available after World War I. Nevertheless, if these cities looked upon the migration as a temporary phenomenon and expected southern blacks to return home, black migrants did not. They had come North to stay, and many of their fellows in the South were awaiting an opportunity themselves to come North.

In 1917, black leaders in the city of Columbus became aware of the black migration; their solution was an organization that would help those individuals to find temporary lodging, relatives, and jobs to secure the necessities for living in an urban industrial society. White support was needed to establish stability within the black community since the economic structure depended upon the employment of the black masses in the general economy.
The depression disrupted this scheme of racial adjustment. The structure of black business institutions could not stand without the earnings of the black masses in jobs outside the black community. Gradually blacks began to realize that advancement could come only through their entrance into the mainstream of Columbus economic life. During the depression, the concept of racial integration—in the sense of equal participation in the institutions of the city—began to develop. White citizens, however, were slow to accept this concept. World War II brought some progress in economic integration but social integration has been slower and has met with stubborn resistance. The major social objective sought has been free access to the housing market but the only significant breakthrough in this area has been in getting a degree of adherence to the principle of open occupancy in public housing.

Since the end of the depression, the problem in Columbus race relations has been to close the gap between black aspirations and the receptiveness of the white community. Neither of these factors has been static, but black aspirations have risen faster than the degree of white acceptance. The two can meet only at that point where blacks are granted equal and unfettered opportunity—that is where caste no longer becomes a determinate of social, economic, and political status. Through the years the Columbus Urban League has tried to serve as a stimulus to black aspirations, as a prod to white conscience, and as a
bridge across the chasm separating the wishes of the two groups. The League's efforts to carry out these difficult functions are best exemplified in the careers of its four executive directors. Nimrod B. Allen laid the foundation work for the League and earned it a place on the Columbus scene. In 1921, the League needed an accommodating leader, one who could win white friends for blacks and raise money. Allen met the required specifications. He was tactful and diplomatic. Aside from his efforts in recruiting and raising money, his job was clear-cut. There were jobs for Negroes on the bottom rung of industry and Allen and the League were expected to screen the labor supply and provide their supporters the best men for the jobs available. In the meantime, they were trying to win more supporters among employers and thereby more jobs for blacks. In addition, the League helped in the adjustment of these workers teaching them proper work habits and modes of acceptable social behavior. During the 1920's Allen was able to span the gap between white and Negro opinions by what later became known as the Columbus Plan. This plan called for creating an "atmosphere for interracial harmony." This plan was rejected by many because of the time element necessary for education, but it was accepted by a few far-sighted individuals of both races.

The leaders of the League discovered that give the Negro his legal rights and in a clear-cut civil rights case, regardless of the evidence, the Negro would invariably lose. The League realized that
if justice were to be gained for the Negro in civil rights, there must be created in the mind of jurors a willingness to be fair just before they are called to jury duty; and that employment, health, housing, or what have you fall in the same category of having to first have an atmosphere created for the goal desired. As a result of this plan, Columbus, by 1954 had become one of the leading cities of the nation in interracial harmony.

Coming to Columbus as an executive in 1954, Andrew Freeman tried to adjust to the situation as he found it. He asked the white community to support him and the League in working to improve the general race relations situation and his approach attracted much support. In the Negro community he expounded the prevailing doctrine of integration through non-violent tactics. Then when the black community began to clamor for aggressive action, Freeman had to adjust to this change. He knew that white supporters of the League expected the agency to help in maintaining the status quo and to provide the type of leadership that they had become accustomed to from the League. The growing militancy within the black community and the League's attempt to maintain the confidence of both the black and white communities were major problems confronting Freeman.

The task of the League to still maintain the confidence of both the white and black communities fell to Chester Jones. Jones was an exponent of aggressive black community action. He sought to reconcile the more militant black civil rights activists' approach
with the Urban League's traditional but somewhat modified approach. Social work methods had to be reconciled with the more militant philosophy. Although many white people were beginning to acknowledge, in theory, the Negro's rights to first class citizenship, they were sensitive about the methods used in reaching this objective, especially the methods of the more militant civil rights activists. Jones succeeded in dedicating the League's goals to education, persuasion and cooperation. His militant protest activities were done through other organizations and those who were dedicated to civil rights.

Since 1966, the Columbus Urban League, under Robert Brown, has been successful in combining aggressiveness with social work procedures. Brown has been able to appeal to and gain the support of widely varied groups. But the changing climate of opinion and the work of his predecessors have facilitated his work. The "New Thrust" philosophy of the League has been built on the heritage of the old Urban League. Each of the former executive directors of the League sold the Urban League idea to different groups. Many of these groups may have had independent ideas of what an Urban League was supposed to be, but they believed in an Urban League. In addition, each executive in response to changing conditions raised the level on which the League attacked the problems confronting blacks. Many problems faced in 1967, were in the same category as those faced in 1921, but the nature of these problems had changed. In 1921, Allen had worked with these problems in their most elemental form. Blacks were trying to gain a foothold in the labor force. They were seeking
any form of shelter available and the right to consideration in the use of public and private facilities. During the fifties and early sixties, the situation became more complex. While most blacks were struggling on the elemental level, others were seeking better jobs, better housing, and self-determination with reference to the black community. By 1965, blacks' higher level of operation and the development of more articulate black leaders had enabled the League to abandon working on individual problems and to concentrate on facilitating the entrance of blacks into the mainstream of Columbus' economic, social, and political life. The "New Thrust" has made significant contributions to the efforts being made to realize this goal.

The League's philosophy has been consistent with the ideas and practices of a democratic society. The founders of the League realized that the Negro problems were America's problems and could not be effectively solved by a Negro group alone. With this in mind, they sought the help of interested white people in conducting its program for improving the economic and social status of Negroes in Franklin County. An interracial structure of the Columbus Urban League evolved in its fifty years of existence; operating in accordance with this philosophy has done much to improve the inter-relationships of whites and non-whites in Columbus, Ohio.

The League's aims have been high, its efforts have been continuous, its accomplishments have been felt, not alone for what it has done itself, but also for what it has inspired others to do in the integration of blacks in health, housing, industry and employment.
Its program has summoned all the forces in Franklin County in conducting the struggle for interracial cooperation. The League's Board of Directors (made up of men and women of both races) is representative of the social and civic forces of the city that guide the policy of the League.

The League today, as well as yesterday, is concerned with despair, discrimination, racism, the lack of services that engulf the black and poor ghetto dweller, and the League serves as a vehicle for him to migrate into the mainstream of American living.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

The First Officers

Dr. William J. Woodlin, President
Mrs. Cordelia Winn, Vice President
Miss Anna V. Hughes, Secretary
Reverend R. Doyle Phillips, Treasurer

The First Executive Board

Dr. William J. Woodlin
Mrs. Cordelia Winn
Mrs. E. W. Moore
Reverend R. Doyle Phillips
Mrs. Eliza Jons
Mr. J. W. Williams
Miss Anna V. Hughes
Mr. Nimrod B. Allen

Executive Directors

Nimrod B. Allen ............... 1921-1954
Andrew G. Freeman ............. 1954-1962
Chester H. Jones ............... 1962-1965
Robert D. Brown ............... 1965
APPENDIX B

Officers 1967-1968

Thomas L. Kaplin, Jr.
President

Mrs. George M. Curtis
First Vice President

Jean F. Emmons
Second Vice President

Robert D. Brown
Executive Director

Board Members

Dr. Bernard S. Abrams
Reverend Jacob J. Ashburn
Dr. Donald Beatty
Dr. Douglas E. Brown
Richard Compton
William J. Dupont
Jarret C. Chavous
Norman Folpe
William H. Garland
Judge William T. Glllle
C. H. Goodyear
Thomas Kohr
L. Bernard LaCour

Miss Dorothy J. Roberts
Secretary

Napoleon Bell
Treasurer

Frank W. Brink, Jr.
Assistant Treasurer

C. E. Lacy
Donald Leach
Curtis L. Lewis
Amos H. Lynch
Dr. Breaux Martin
Reverend Carl C. Murry
Dr. Anthony C. Riccio
Cecil K. Rose
Howard Spiller
Dr. Alberta B. Turner
Father A. L. Winkler
Mrs. Richard Witkind

137
Honorary Member

Dr. B. W. Abramson
LOCATION OF NEGRO NEIGHBORHOODS IN COLUMBUS

Mary Louise Mark, *Negroes in Columbus*, Columbus, Ohio, 1928, p. 15.
Location and Extent of the Champion Avenue District

Mt. Vernon Avenue

School

Ohio Avenue

Thorne Street

Champion Avenue

Granville Street

Church

Clifton Avenue

Howthorne Avenue

Ohio Avenue

Day Nursery

Long Street
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