

# PHYLLIS WHEATLEY

## YWCA COLLECTION, 1897-1955

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**Collection #'s**

M 494

OM 300

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### USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 3 oversize folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1897-1955

PROVENANCE: Luther E. and Mildred M. Hall, Indianapolis, Indiana, 18 August 1986.

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 86.0536

NOTES:

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### HISTORICAL SKETCH

On November 1, 1914, nineteen young black women met at a small church in Indianapolis to discuss the "advisability

of [forming a] Young Women's Christian Association." The group of women, out of a strong sense of conviction, felt a need to establish a religious organization that would also offer a constructive, cultural, and educational program. They wanted to "be one great sisterhood, have Harmony, peace, and union." During the preliminary meetings, where they met at Madame C.J. Walker's Assembly Hall at 640 N. West Street, these women actively sought support and membership for their organization. Although they tried to establish themselves as a permanent branch of the Central Y.W.C.A. of Indianapolis, they failed to do so and disbanded by the fall of 1916.

However, seven years later there was a group of black women that succeeded in establishing a Y.W.C.A. on January 1, 1923. The goal was primarily the same as the earlier organization: to have a center to benefit the different needs of black women in the community. By 1928 the branch known as the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, named after a famous African-American poet, had its own building located at 601 West Street. It became a hub of cultural and educational activity for Indianapolis black women. The organization offered concerts, plays, and various seminars and conferences, while it also offered physical education programs, recreational facilities, and practical classes such as sewing.

The newsletter was an important organ of information and a forum for the exchange of ideas. Throughout the history of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA, the newsletter had at least 3 different names: *The Phylligram*, *The New Phyllo-gram*, and *The Phyllogram*. The Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the YWCA served the black women of Indianapolis for over 35 years, until 1959 when the YWCA became an integrated institution.

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### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials included in this collection are divided into three types of information related to the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA. They are: 1) pamphlets and programs of the organization; 2) a collection of the organization's newsletters; and 3) newsletters from the Senate Avenue Branch of the Indianapolis YMCA.

The contents of the collection deal primarily with the years 1930-1950. The first box contains programs and pamphlets illustrating the wide variety of functions performed by this branch of the YWCA. The annual meeting programs and *The YWCA Magazine* give a good overview of the group's activities. Also included in this box are some materials dating from the late 1920s and the early 1950s. Several issues of the Senate Avenue YMCA's newsletter, *The Y's Man*, can also be found in this part of the collection.

The oversized folders have newspaper clippings dealing with the YWCA and a copy of *The Directory*, a black newspaper dated from 1897. The 1931-1933 editions of *The New Phyllo-gram*, the newsletter of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch, can also be found here.

For related information, see M 485 (Indianapolis YWCA Collection, Box 15), and Ruth Hamlin Bell's *A History of the Phyllis Wheatley Branch of the Indianapolis Young Women's Christian Association: 1923-1944*.

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### BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

#### **Box 1** **Folder**

- 1: Activities from May 31, 1931-May 6, 1945.
- 2: Miscellaneous, no dates.
- 3: Panorama (Annual meeting), January 29, 1932.
- 4: Annual Dinner Programs
- 5: *The Phyllogram*: 1929-1945.

6: *The YWCA Magazine*, 1954.

7: *The Y's Man*, October 23, 1943-October 29, 1955.

## **Oversized Manuscripts Folder**

1: Newspaper clippings

2: *The Directory*, 1897

3: *The New Phyllo-gram*, December 19, 1931-December 18, 1933.

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### **CATALOGUING INFORMATION**

MAIN ENTRY: Phyllis Wheatley YWCA

SUBJECT ENTRIES: Senate Avenue YMCA (Indianapolis, Ind.)

Young Women's Christian associations--Indiana--Indianapolis

Young Men's Christian associations--Indiana--Indianapolis

Afro-American women--Indiana--Indianapolis

Afro-American women--Indiana--Indianapolis--Societies, etc.

Afro-Americans--Indiana--Indianapolis

Afro-Americans--Indiana--Indianapolis--Recreation

Afro-Americans--Indiana--Indianapolis--Societies, etc.

Afro-Americans--Education--Indiana--Indianapolis

Women--Indiana--Indianapolis

Women--Non-formal education--Indiana--Indianapolis

Women--Indiana--Indianapolis--Recreation

Women--Indiana--Indianapolis--Societies and clubs

Women--Health and hygiene--Indiana--Indianapolis

Physical education for women--Indiana--Indianapolis

Physical fitness for women--Indiana--Indianapolis

Sports for women--Indiana--Indianapolis

Newsletters--Indiana--Indianapolis

Programs--Indiana--Indianapolis

Pamphlets--Indiana--Indianapolis

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