



MYRA HUNTER REEVES CULTURE CLUB

History of Federated Women's Clubs

During the late 19th and early 20th century, African American women organized clubs based upon their collective belief in the need to uplift their families and their communities. For them, the impact of abuse and degradation of black women, the poverty and illiteracy among black families, and the need to improve lives and build a future for their community was among the most important issues effecting African Americans in the United States of America. These women understood that improving both their own lives and the lives of those around them was the single most important, post reconstruction action plan for the survival and growth of the African American culture. To that end, uplifting and aiding themselves and their community found its focus in the organization and participation in federated women's clubs.

National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc.

In 1896, a conference was held between two like-minded groups of black women. They came together to discuss and develop solutions that would effect the problems facing women, children, families and their community. The Colored Women's League of Washington, D.C. and the National Federation of Afro-American Women voted to consolidate their efforts and merged to form the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC). This merger enhanced the communication and social service life-line that supported the needs of the African American community and its goal of equal rights.

Since its founding, the women of NACWC have volunteered their time and talent, raised money, and committed their personal finances, in support of a social welfare agenda that continues to uplift women, children and families today. There is a federated women's club in every state of the United States of America.

The NACWC constitution and by-laws are the organizational templates for all federated women's clubs and are used and expanded upon by club leadership to develop ongoing programming and community projects. The federated women's clubs of the NACWC are inclusive, non-partisan, and ecumenical with respect to members' religious affiliations.

The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC) pre-dates and is a charter (founding) member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League. In addition, NACWC is the oldest African American women's organization in the United States of America.



Lifting As We Climb is the motto of NACWC. This motto is the guiding principle for all federated women's clubs and its leadership. The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization.

National Association of Youth Clubs

The National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) was formerly known as the National Association of Girls' Clubs and the National Association of Boys' Clubs. Organized in 1930 and 1983 respectively, the girls' and boys' clubs of NAYC are a part of NACWC's youth department. The girls' club motto is *Know Thyself* and the boys' club motto is *Service With A Plan*. Regional, state and district associations of NACWC, as well as local federated women's club affiliates pattern their youth clubs after the NAYC model.

At each biennial convention of the NACWC, a ceremony is held for NAYC delegates who are graduating. All graduating NAYC club members have the option of joining the young adults department of their local federated women's club or NACWC men's auxiliaries.



Young Adults Department of NACWC

The Young Adults Department provides a channel for the participation of young adults between the ages of 18-25 in the local, district, state, regional and national levels of NACWC. The agenda of the Young Adults Department provides an opportunity for young people to develop their leadership skills. Young adult programs focus on:

- NACWC National Projects
- Community Service
- Community Relations
- Regional, State and District Projects
- Philanthropic Fundraising Projects
- Social Action Programs

Central Region Association, Inc.

The Central Region Association was organized at St. Mark A.M.E. Church in Chicago, Illinois on December 31, 1925. At that time there were 2 delegates present from each of 10 states. The association's first biennial convention convened in Indiana at the Indiana Women's Club House, in December 1927. Its motto, *Deeds, Not Words* sparked the actions of all organizational initiatives. As one of five geographic regions of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC), it is comprised of the following states: Illinois, Michigan, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, and Minnesota. The Central Region Association interprets and promotes the program of the NACWC in each of the states within its jurisdiction. The Central Region Association's constitution and by-laws follow NACWC guidelines.

Illinois Association of Club Women, Inc.

In October 1899, at Chicago's Institutional A.M.E. Church, the members of The Women's Conference Committee met to discuss becoming a part of NACWC. Out of that discussion came the formation of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the original charter name of the Illinois Association of Club Women, Inc. (IACW). Its motto, *Loyalty to Women-Justice to Children*, has been and is the organization's mission imperative. IACW represents federated women's club in the State of Illinois and is one of the 12 state organizations that are part of the central geographic region of NACWC.

Chicago and Northern District Association of Club Women and Girls, Inc.

On March 12, 1906, Mrs. Cordelia West called together the Presidents of 15 local women's clubs, to discuss the closer cooperation of club women and ways to help solve the social

problems facing the African American community. The meeting was held at the Fredrick Douglass Center, 30th Street and Wabash Avenue, in Chicago, Illinois. The result of this meeting was the founding of the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, the original charter name of the Chicago and Northern District Association of Club Women and Girls, Inc. (CNDA). With its motto *From Possibilities To Realities* as inspiration, CNDA's stated objectives are to promote the education and welfare of women and children; to raise the standard of the home; to secure and enforce civil rights for minority groups; and to foster interracial understanding, so that justice and good will prevail among all people.

The premiere fundraising event of the CNDA is its Cotillion. The Cotillion is now held biennially and is a coming of age event for young ladies and gentlemen. Participation is open to all young ladies and gentlemen of high school age. Contests held in association with the Cotillion award monetary and service awards to young participants. Funds raised through this event are used for CNDA programs and projects. The Cotillion is supported by all local NACWC clubs in its district jurisdiction.



CNDA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, charitable organization and is part of the state and central region organizational structure of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc.

THE FOUNDERS of the black women's club movement sprung from the intellect and organizational skills of African American women.

Harriet Tubman
(Abolitionist, Suffragette, & Organizer National Federation of Afro-American Women)



Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin
(First National Conference of Colored Women, President of the Women's Era Club of Boston circa 1895)

Ida B. Wells Barnett
(Before clubs were federated, she was the ideological creator and premiere organizer of the local black women's club movement.)



THE PRESIDENTS shown below are the first presiding officers of the federated women's club movement who personified the *Lifting As We Climb* principle of leadership.

Mary Church Terrell
(1st President of National Association of Colored Women's Clubs [NACWC] founded in 1896)



Joanna Snowden Porter
(1st President of Central Region Association founded in 1925)

Mary Jackson
(1st President of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs now known as the Illinois Association of Club Women, Inc. [IAWC] founded in 1899)



Cordelia West
(1st President of City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs now known as the Chicago and Northern District Association of Club Women and Girls, Inc. [CNDA] founded in 1906)

Myra Hunter Reeves
(1st President of Young Matrons Culture Club, now known as the Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club founded in 1911)



Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club

The original charter name of the Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club was the Young Matrons Culture Club, and it was organized by the late Myra Hunter Reeves on February 14, 1911, in Chicago, Illinois. The club's motto is *For Home, Community and Club*. The club flower is the chrysanthemum.

The Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club (MHRCC) is a local federated women's club affiliate of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC).

The club's objective is to improve the human condition through education, philanthropy, stewardship and support of the agenda, programs and projects of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc., the Central Region Association, Inc., the Illinois Association of Club Women, Inc., and the Chicago and Northern District Association of Club Women and Girls, Inc.

In its near 100 years of existence, the membership of the Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club, as individuals and/or as a group has through patronage, philanthropic donations and volunteerism supported the following programs, projects and organization.

- Alzheimer Foundation
- Army Community Service (ACS) USAG Kaiserlaurtern
- Black Composers' Restoration Project - Restoration of Betty Jackson King's Opera Saul of Tarsus
- Casa Retreat
- Chicago Community Chorus
- The Chicago Music Association

(Continued)

- The Du Sable Museum
- Epilepsy Foundation
- ETA Creative Arts Foundation
- Family Readiness Group - United States Army Europe (FRG-USAEUR)
- Giamaldi Art Gallery
- Individual Artists, Musicians and Composers
- Landstule Regional Medical Center (LRMC) Social Service Committee
- Local Community Projects
- Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAA-DD)
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Sickle Cell Anemia
- United Negro College Fund
- Urban League

Programs and Projects

The Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club sponsors the following:

- Family Living Seminar Series
- Annual Health Awareness Luncheon
- Annual Christmas Food Basket Distribution
- Annual Local NAYC Girls Club and Boys Club Pancake Breakfast

Youth Clubs

The Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club (MHRCC) has and continues to organize, sponsor and supervise girls' clubs and boys' clubs that function according to the constitution and by-laws of the National Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC). Club goals and tasks are divided into the following age-appropriate groups:

- Petites: 5 to 8 yrs
- Preteens: 9 to 12 yrs
- Junior Division: 12 to 18 yrs

MHRCC's NAYC youth clubs follow the programs, projects, and events outlined in the NAYC handbook of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. These include the following contests:

- Arts and Crafts
- Creative Design
- Fredrick Douglass Essay
- Handmade Fashion
- Mr. & Miss NAYC
- Oratorical
- Outstanding Youth of the Year
- Penny King/Queen
- PowerPoint Presentation and Web Page
- Scrap Book
- Talent

The preliminary judging of most NAYC contests is done at the local, district, state, and regional levels prior to the national finals. Members of the Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club's NAYC youth clubs attend the annual state and biennial region and national youth conventions of NAYC where all competitions are held.

The Myra Hunter Reeves Culture Club sponsors seminars and events for young people in the community that are not part of the NAYC program. It also sponsors participants in the CNDA Cotillion.

Scholarship Funds

National, regional, state, district and local level scholarships are available through the federate women's clubs of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. Scholarship monies are awarded to graduating high school seniors and those attending college. The scholarships have varying criteria. Major scholarship awards connected with NAYC require membership and participation in either the girls' clubs or boys' clubs.

The scholarships are:

- Peggie F. Myles Youth Scholarship
- Patricia L. Fletcher Scholarship
- Hallie Q. Brown Scholarship
- Central Region Scholarship Awards
- IACW Scholarship Awards
- CNDA Thelma Lee Jarrett Scholarship

For more information, contact a NACWC local federated women's club, or email either NACWC@verizon.net or ematthews@nacwcya.org.

The Club House Headquarters

For over a century, federated club women have supported their mission by establishing club house headquarters for projects and programs. There are twenty-eight (28) club houses maintained by local clubs and/or district, state, and regional associations throughout the USA. These club house headquarters are available to the local federated women's clubs, local NAYC youth clubs and their communities. Several are (or have been) the location for special long-term programs. These programs have included:

- Residences for orphaned and dependent children
- Daycare
- Arts Programs
- Safe Havens For Women and Families
- Tutoring Programs

The club house headquarters act as non-profit corporate offices, venues for the community, and the location for federated women's club sponsored events of local and national importance. In some cases, the buildings themselves are of historical significant housing memorabilia dating back to the late 19th century that documents the contributions of African American women to their communities, their race and to their country, the United States of America.

Headquarters of the Chicago and Northern District Association of Club Women and Girls, Inc. (CNDA)

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6736 South Jeffery Boulevard
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Headquarters of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC)

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LIFTING AS WE CLIMB

WITH DEEDS, NOT WORDS

LOYALTY FOR WOMEN - JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

FROM POSSIBILITIES TO REALITIES

FOR HOME, COMMUNITY, CLUB

MYRA HUNTER REEVES CULTURE CLUB

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