WITHOUT REFERENCE TO RACE OR COLOR: THE FIGHT TO ESTABLISH PLAYHOUSE SETTLEMENT IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, 1914-1922

by

MICHELE THOMAS JOHNSON

(Under the Direction of John Howard Morrow)

ABSTRACT

In the winter of 1914, the Men's Club of the Second Presbyterian Church decided to establish a settlement house for African Americans in Cleveland, Ohio. Despite the city's small black population and their desire for such a facility, the black community balked when they understood the settlement would serve only African Americans. The resulting conversation within the community changed to address issues of race, accommodation, and integration, and what it meant to be black in this Midwestern city.

INDEX WORDS: Accommodation, Segregation, Integration, Settlement house, African Americans, Cleveland, Progressivism

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B.A., Boston University, 1988

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2018

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December 2018

DEDICATION

This is for my grandmother, Arleatha Collier, who is greatly missed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the staff at the John Hope and Aurelia Franklin Memorial Library at Fisk University, especially Chantel Clark. Everyone offered dining advice and places of interest to visit, which unfortunately I did not get to do. Still, it meant a lot that you were so thoughtful and caring while I was in town. I would also like to thank the staff at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus, Ohio. I spent a lot of time at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland where several great people helped me. Vicki Catozza, George Cooper, and Ann Sindelar were amazing. I appreciate you all being so accommodating and patient with me.

I would like to thank professors in the History Department for their kindness, support, and assistance. First, I want to thank my committee members—John H. Morrow, Cindy Hahamovitch, and Chana Kai Lee—for guiding me through this process. I would also like to express my gratitude to Stephen Berry, Jim Cobb, Peter Hoffer, John Inscoe, Stephen Mihm, Diane Morrow, Reinaldo Román, and Steven Soper who offered encouragement and guidance both inside and outside of the classroom. Last, but not least, Laurie Kane helped me figure out all of the things that I needed to do in LeConte Hall.

Graduate school was all the better for the friendships I made while learning more about history and myself. Katie and Andrew Fialka opened their home and helped me when I was struggling, especially my first semester. Kate Dahlstrand helped me discover my activist side while serving as a voice of reason and providing oft-needed writing advice. Kurt Windisch helped me exercise away my anxiety by convincing me to run up one of the steepest hill in Athens. James Wall and Alex Nordlund made me laugh when I felt like crying. Barbara

Christopher always checked on me and kept me in line. I also want to thank James Owen, Ashley Roseberry, Whitney Priest, Bryant Barnes, and Kate Korth for their friendship. If you ever read a draft of a paper, listened to me rant about writing, or convinced me to go out and do something fun, thank you.

Many years ago, Jacqueline Rouse convinced me to rethink the type of history I wanted to study though she probably does not realize this. Anthony White encouraged me to go back and complete my studies even when I wanted to give up. Thank you both for your support.

My mother, Shirley Collier, demonstrated to me that you are never too old to give up your dreams. To my children, Joshua and Noah, even though you think I have been in school all of your lives, I have not. Still, I hope I have demonstrated what it means to work towards a goal and ultimately attain it.

My husband decided that if I wanted to go to back to school that I should go, especially if this meant he could have some peace and quiet. Thank you, Troy, for your encouragement, love, and support.

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CHAPTER 1

WITHOUT REFERENCE TO RACE OR COLOR: THE FIGHT TO ESTABLISH PLAYHOUSE SETTLEMENT IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, 1914-1922

Although it was no longer snowing in Cleveland, the wind that blew off Lake Erie made it seem colder. Several warmly yet fashionably dressed white men arrived at the city's genteel Hollenden Hotel together. The men were members of Second Presbyterian Church's Men's Club. A few weeks earlier, their fellow club members had selected them to form an "Investigating Committee of Fifteen."[1] Their task was to assess conditions in the Central Avenue district just a few blocks south of the church. Their investigation would lead to the establishment of the first settlement house in Cleveland's African American community. The settlement house, at least as the members of the Men's Club conceived of it, would be for black people only.

The settlement house was controversial even before it existed. Cleveland's black elites believed assimilation, not segregation, was key to improving the status of the city's African American residents. At the same time, they recognized the importance of racial uplift and self-help organizations to Cleveland's largely impoverished black community, but they also recognized the growing residential segregation that was boxing in even Cleveland's most successful black residents who lacked places for their children to play. A new settlement house might benefit everyone in the community and provide a place for working class and impoverished residents to absorb middle-class American values but while they wanted a settlement house, most rejected the idea of a segregated one.

[1] Karamu Papers, MS 4606, Western Reserve Historical Society.

The black elites not only wanted to shape the dialogue regarding the settlement house but also to steer the course of race relations within the city. While most 'old-timers' continued to have good relations with whites, they were aware of the changing attitudes toward themselves and other black people. Ideas regarding the separation of the races were gaining ground within the city.[2] Older black elites wanted to retain the status quo and to continue to participate in activities and frequent establishments based on their economic status. Newcomers wanted to pursue the idea of accommodation and have their own facilities where they knew they were welcome.

White progressives surveyed black leaders near and far, so they were well aware of black resistance to a segregated facility, but they forged ahead with their plan—to be known as the Playhouse Settlement—anyway. The result was a fascinating fight over race and progressivism. This fight is important because few Progressive Era reform campaigns targeted African Americans. The vast majority of progressives were members of the white middle class who focused on political corruption and the rise in immigration, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and wealth disparity in the United States during the mid to late nineteenth century but not as it affected black people.[3] Many reformers believed that those issues were leading to the destruction of American democracy without noting that the simultaneous rise of Jim Crow laws and customs

[2] Progressives were hampered by the blinders they put on in regard to race. They believed that removing those with differences, in this case blacks, from the mix, they would be able to protect them and prevent a race war. They also believed separation would give blacks more time to 'develop' and become more civilized. Many of their beliefs came from scientific studies and ideas about Social Darwinism. David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform, 1900-1917* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2006), 43-71; Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 182-218.

[3] Several monographs and articles have been written regarding the Progressive Movement and its origins. See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); John Whiteclay Chambers, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992); Arthur Link and Richard McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1983); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in American, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2003); Walter Nugent, *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

that were leading to the destruction of black political rights.[4] The progressives sought to use government—local, state, and federal—to alter society and remake it in their image as they worked to restore order to a world they perceived as out of control. Expanding the rights and improving the living conditions and opportunities of black people was rarely part of that mission. Settlement houses were key ways that progressives addressed the multiple evils of poverty, disease, immorality, and other societal ills but of the approximately 390 settlement houses created between 1890 and 1915, only fifteen were specifically meant for African Americans.[5]

White reformers rarely considered the needs of African Americans, despite increasing migration of black southerners to northern cities during the First World War. Since the majority of blacks still resided in the South, progressive reformers, most of whom lived and worked in northern cities, often viewed the African American experience as apart from what occurred in the rest of society. And yet the period between 1890 and 1917—the height of the Progressive Era--was also the nadir of race relations. This was the height of lynching, the period when disfranchisement policies spread across the South, and when segregation was formalized in many parts of the country north and south.[6]

Thus, the experience of African Americans in the North during the Progressive Era was not isolated.[7] Northern blacks had to confront the same issues immigrants faced: crowding,

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[4] Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, 5. Hofstadter in particular was concerned with how this idea and believed that progressivism was an attempt to "restore" lost economic individualism and democracy.

[5] The numbers listed are based on a manual count by this author of the settlements listed in *The Handbook of Settlements*, which was published in 1911. The accuracy of the numbers could be incorrect because of this manual count. Settlement workers did not often include African American settlements, but at least fifteen were listed in this volume. *The Handbook of Settlements*, ed. Robert Woods and Albert Kennedy (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1911). See also David W. Southern, *The Malignant Heritage: Yankee Progressives and the Negro Question, 1901-1914* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1968); John Dittmer, *Black Georgia in the Progressive Era, 1900-1920* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1980); David W. Southern, *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform, 1900-1917* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2005).

[6] Rayford W. Logan, *The Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Collier Books, 1965), 52-3.

[7] Pero Dagbovie discusses how scholars reduce the African American experience in the Progressive Era to "as passive…within the context of presidential administrations and broader social and cultural transformations." In other

urban filth, lack of political power, threats to child welfare, and so on. But they also had to face intensifying racism that made all these issues worse but preventing black people from moving out of impoverished urban neighborhoods. The Men's Club's effort to create a settlement house for black people is a rare example of a progressive project that tackled black poverty but the fight over it reveals that most black leaders in Cleveland refused to privilege the very real problem of black urban poverty over the growing problem of racism in the North. They recognized the need for reform but wanted uplift *and* equality. As one black local weekly commented, "segregation in one thing, in any community, means segregation in other things."[8]

The vast majority of historians who have written about the Progressives have dealt with white progressives and the white immigrants they targeted but there are exceptions. Two historians have in fact written at least in part about black Cleveland in the Progressive Era. Kenneth Kusmer argues, for example, that the "ghettoization" of the black community occurred following the "influx" of migrants and a "hardening of racial lines" after 1915.[9] Kimberley Phillips demonstrated how black, working-class migrants shaped their experience through kinship and their southern culture.[10] Both historians briefly mention the establishment of Playhouse Settlement but neither pays attention to the early discussions surrounding the settlement's founding.

Several scholars have discussed progressives' lack of attention to black poverty. Allen Davis argued that settlement workers believed they could change the world if they lived close to

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words, the richness of the black experience is reduced and sometimes focuses on a certain trope. Pero Dagbovie, "Reflections on Conventional Portrayals of the African American Experience during the Progressive Era or "the Nadir," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 13, no. 1 (January 2014): 8.

[8] *Gazette*. January 24, 1914.

[9] Cleveland was home to two progressive mayors, Tom Johnson and Newton Baker. Baker later became the Secretary of War under Woodrow Wilson. Kenneth Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape: Black Cleveland, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1976.

[10] Kimberley Phillips, *AlabamaNorth: African American Migrants, Community, and Working-Class Activism in Cleveland, 1915-1945* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 1999.

immigrants, but they were reluctant to live in black areas as they did in immigrant communities.[11] According to Davis, some settlement workers struggled to deal with their prejudices and bigotry but strove to assist African Americans apart from the immigrants they wanted to Americanize.

Even though they were aware of "systemic discrimination against black Americans," and some were early members of the NAACP, settlement house leadership focused more attention on other reforms.[12] Ruth Crocker examined "second-tier settlements" outside of the larger urban centers of Chicago, New York, and Boston to focus on their interactions with African Americans.[13] She shows that black progressives sought to elevate the status of all people within the African American community through work with local settlements and by providing education about morality and cleanliness within the home. In contrast, whites reformers sought to exert social control. She looked at settlements established by "coalitions of white and black reformers" and how those relationships impacted the settlement and the people within those communities.[14] Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn builds on Crocker's argument to uncover white settlement workers' neglect of the needs of black clientele and their racialized arguments of why separate settlements proved necessary. White settlement workers' preconceived notions about African Americans (such as their belief African Americans lacked a culture) prevented settlement workers from developing policies and programs to support services for black people.[15] Linda Gordon argues that African American women were particularly active in

[11] Allen Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1984), ix.
[12] Mina Carson, *Settlement Folks: Social Thought and the American Settlement Movement, 1885-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 195.
[13] Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 7.
[14] Crocker, *Social Work*, 7.
[15] Elisabeth Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors: Race and the Limits of Reform in the American Settlement House Movement, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

"welfare activism" during the Progressive Era.[16] This activism stemmed from a long tradition within the black community of self-help and working to support those less fortunate.[17] Between 1890 and 1920, African American women strove to "uplift" the race through organizations like the National Association of Women's Clubs by bringing progressive ideals to the poor and working class.

Although these arguments have merit, there is more we need to understand about the establishment of settlement houses established for the sole benefit of African Americans, especially African American's involvement in and response to them. In Cleveland, there was lots of interest in the African American community in launching a settlement house on their own but little capital to do so without the support of white philanthropists. Those financial backers were loath to allow black reformers to run such a facility without the oversight of whites. The establishment of Playhouse Settlement occurred with white funding and white directors, but with strident voices of in the black community shaping its mission. Black people's resistance to a segregated facility forced the settlement's directors to be more aware of what the community wanted and implement programs to support assimilation and cultural recognition.

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The African American population in Cleveland during the mid-nineteenth century was quite small. Several of the original black settlers arrived in the city before the Civil War, and most were descendants of free blacks and later became part of the elite.[18] Five years after the war

[16] Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 111.
[17] Gordon, *Pitied*, 112-20.
[18] African Americans could not legally live in Ohio without providing a $500 bond and filing their "certificate of freedom" in the local clerk's office to gain employment. The state, in fact, had Black Laws, which were enforced intermittently. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 4-5.

ended, however, no more than 1,500 blacks resided in the city with their numbers increasing to approximately 3,000 by 1890.[19]

Those considered elites often established businesses or offered professional services, while middle-class blacks found employment as teachers or skilled artisans.[20] Working class blacks found employment as unskilled labor with black women primarily employed as domestics in laundries or white households.[21] As immigration to Cleveland increased before World War I, African Americans in those unskilled jobs were hard pressed to hold on to them as competition between blacks and immigrants increased.[22]

Most African Americans resided on Cleveland's east side in the Central Avenue district.[23] This area was bounded to the north by Euclid Avenue and the south by Central Avenue with the eastern boundary of East 55th Street.[24] Several immigrant groups also lived within this area due to financial constraints and the proximity to employment opportunities.[25] While blacks lived in other sections of the city, black migrants had long settled in this particular area. As more black migrants began to arrive from the South during the war, they found themselves hampered by restrictive covenants and by white realtors and homeowners who sought to "to limit [black residential] mobility."[26] These limitations mostly affected working-class blacks, since some middle-class blacks were able to move a little farther east, but not far enough to encroach on the newly established suburban areas.

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[19] Kusmer, *Ghetto*, 38.
[20] Kusmer, *Ghetto*, 75-90; Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 126-8.
[21] Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, 60.
[22] Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, 61-4.
[23] Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 41.
[24] The area in which African Americans resided in Cleveland encompasses more than just this area, however, this is the one of the main locations of the black population during the period. There are additional boundary lines to the area, still it was one which had long been settled by blacks. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 36-42; Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, 129-134.
[25] Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, 130.
[26] Phillips, *AlabamaNorth*, 133; David A. Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 294.

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While some well-to-do blacks were able to move out of the Central Avenue district, they were still confronted with racism in other ways. Some restaurants and other establishments sought to bar them, for example.[27] In the early 1900's, at least twelve "civil rights suits against restaurant owners" made their way through the court system.[28] The Hollenden Hotel, which housed a barbershop run by an African American, seldom allowed blacks to overnight in their facility.[29] By 1908, de facto segregation was the norm in the city.[30] Restaurants and hotel dining rooms denied accessibility to blacks while certain theaters required blacks to sit in the balcony.[31]

Some members of the black community's initial response to this growing trend was to fight for separate but equal facilities. Cleveland's YMCA opened in 1858, and the YWCA, ten years later. When the YMCA opened, a few African Americans were allowed to join. By the late 1890s, however, requests for membership by black men were refused.[32] After 1900, the remaining black members did not have their membership renewed.[33] Around the same time, black women who requested membership or to join training programs at the YWCA received negative responses.[34] G.K. Shurtleff, YMCA Secretary, "admitted he desired segregation" in his all-male facility in early 1907.[35] The women's facility followed suit. Since it was clear that the YMCA refused to allow African American membership, several men believed this was the

[27] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 259-261.
[28] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 260-61.
[29] The exception was Booker T. Washington. He stayed at the hotel several times, although he may have felt uncomfortable. In his last few visits to Cleveland, he stayed with George Myers, Charles Chesnutt, or other friends in the city.
[30] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 262.
[31] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 261.
[32] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 263.
[33] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 263.
[34] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 263.
[35] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 263.

perfect opportunity to build a separate 'Y' for blacks. The Cleveland Association of Colored Men (CACM) was at the forefront of this push.[36]

CACM grew out of an earlier organization called the Cleveland Board of Trade, which formed in 1905.[37] Several of the members of CACM were younger, recent arrivals to the city, however, not all the members fell into that category.[38] Educated and a generation removed from slavery, they accepted the accommodationist stance espoused by Booker T. Washington.[39] If the YMCA in Cleveland would not allow blacks to join, then they would build their own. Although they did not have all of the funds to do so, the group was buoyed by the possibility of funding from Julius Rosenwald, who made his fortune with Sears and Roebuck, and offered to give $25,000 to any community in which African Americans raised $75,000 to build a YMCA.[40]

The community was divided over the issue. Nahum Daniel Brascher, the editor of the *Cleveland Journal*, an African American weekly, and a member of CACM, was one of the most vocal in support of building the segregated Y. The Ministers' Alliance, an organization of African American ministers of several local black churches, also supported the effort. Older community members were often opponents of the facility.[41] [no evidence of a split yet] Carrie Clifford, a member of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), and John P. Green, a local attorney, supported CACM.[42] Clifford's argument was based on NACW's motto, "Lifting

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[36] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 389.
[37] The Cleveland Board of Trade was a member of Booker T. Washington's Negro Business League, which promoted the entrepreneurial spirit among blacks. The belief was that if blacks developed businesses and economic power, they then would be accepted into the larger white society. "Cleveland Association of Colored Men," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, accessed March 14, 2018, https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/cleveland-association-of-colored-men.
[38] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 387-9.
[39] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 387-9.
[40] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 455-8.
[41] At least two younger men joined the older community members in opposition to the segregated YMCA. Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 455.
[42] Carrie Williams Clifford was responsible for the establishment of the Ohio State Federation of Colored Women in 1900 and that group later joined National Association of Colored Women. Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 329; "Carrie

While We Climb." She believed that recreational facilities for young black men and women at the segregated facility would provide wholesome activities to protect the morality of black womanhood and manhood. Green also stressed the importance of having recreational facilities for all African Americans.

The black opponents of the YMCA were members of the older black elite. Some in this group had come to the city prior to the Civil War.[43] These men were "economically better off" than other African Americans within the city and were eager to retain their perception of the status quo.[44] This perception included the belief that Cleveland had "less prejudice than any other [city] in the United States" and the city's stance on integration made it possible for black people to attain an education and economic security.[45] Not all of the opponents came from the older elite. A few younger men, who believed that segregation was unacceptable, opposed the segregated YMCA.[46]

Two black weeklies debated the issue as well. The editors, Harry C. Smith, of the *Gazette*, and Brascher's *Journal*, exchanged heated words in the pages of their papers. Smith exploited his editorial prerogative to criticize the Ministers' Alliance. He disparaged their support for the "Jim Crow" YMCA and expressed anger that they would consider supporting the facility.[47] Brascher took a more modulated tone, explaining why the facility was necessary.[48]

Williams Clifford." In *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. Case Western Reserve University, 2017. https://case.edu/ech/articles/c/clifford-carrie-williams.

[43] Gatewood, *Aristocrats*, 126.

[44] Gatewood, *Aristocrats*, 128.

[45] Gatewood, *Aristocrats*, 127.

[46] One of these younger men was Harry E. Davis. Davis was elected to the Ohio General Assembly and Ohio Senate and participated in the local NAACP chapter and several other civic activities. Russell H. Davis, *Memorable Negroes in Cleveland's Past* (Cleveland, OH: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1969) 48-9; "Harry Edward Davis." In *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*. Case Western Reserve University, 2017. https://case.edu/ech/articles/d/davis-harry-edward.

[47] *Gazette*, April 14, 1914.

[48] Gerber, *Black Ohio*, 455-7.

George Myers, a local businessman, sought support outside the local community to prevent the facility from becoming a reality. Myers wrote Booker T. Washington in February 1911 to see if Washington had been misquoted in the *Journal* by Brascher regarding Washington's support for a segregated YMCA. Myers expressed his disappointment with Washington and the Cleveland contingent both of which sided with Brascher.[49] Myers believed that the article had "greatly stirred the community and I fear will…[cause] discrimination in many avenues where it did not exist."[50] He wrote that while blacks in the South had to contend with segregation, blacks in the North did not have to abide by the same rules, even as whites in some areas accepted *de facto* segregation.[51]

Myers attempted to use the broader public opinion in the city to end the dispute, asking the editor of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* for assistance in shutting down the movement. The paper, which usually ignored the black community, printed an article that underscored the fact that African American citizens would find raising funds of $25,000 to $50,000 "a preposterous burden."[52] The community could not support the home for senior citizens, the Eliza Bryant Home for the Aged, without soliciting outside the community for financial assistance.[53] According to the *Plain Dealer,* the black community's inability to support a home for older, indigent blacks demonstrated the economic limitations of Cleveland's black community while still revealing the need for self-help facilities.

An all-black facility for women was just as controversial. Jane Edna Hunter, who trained as a nurse at Hampton Institute, decided to establish a facility for black women in light of the

[49] Myers stated in his letter that Nahum Brascher, Thomas Fleming, Welcome T. Blue, and John P. Green were among the men who supported the segregated Y.M.C.A. In a follow up letter, Washington stated that he was not in a position to "outline a program for the Negro people of Cleveland." Essentially, Brascher twisted Washington's words to represent what he wanted them to mean. George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[50] George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[51] George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[52] *Plain Dealer*, February 1, 1911, p. 4. (February 24, 2018)
[53] *Plain Dealer*, February 1, 1911, p. 4. (February 24, 2018)

YWCA's policy to exclude them.[54] Hunter arrived in the city in 1905 and found it difficult to find adequate housing as a young woman alone. Her experience led her to think about what she could offer to black women in a similar situation. She gathered the "poor and lowly" of her friends, and they established "The Working Girls' Home Association."[55] Hunter soon discovered that there was opposition to her plan among other African Americans. The women who joined Hunter in her endeavor were working-class women like herself. Opposition came from Cleveland's black clubwomen, many of whom were middle-class and adamant that segregation did not exist within the city. The fact that they could not join some of the local organizations to which white women belonged contradicted that belief. Still, many of these women, along with their husbands, had migrated to Cleveland shortly after the Civil War and had not been excluded from public spaces.

Harry C. Smith, the editor of *The Gazette*, was rabidly opposed to the Working Girls' Home, (name later changed to the Phillis Wheatley Association) and its mission. In a letter to George Myers, Smith stated that the "home is doing NOTHING [sic] except furnishing rooms for two or three who can be housed elsewhere."[56] While Smith may have believed there was a place for these women, there was no safe space for these women to reside.[57] Realizing that segregation at the YWCA put black women at risk, Hunter was willing to defer to whites who preferred blacks not share their spaces.[58] She decided to proceed despite few in the African American community who supported her efforts.

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[54] Hunter discusses the hardships she faced in her travels to Cleveland after the completion of nursing school at Hampton Virginia. Jane Edna Hunter, *A Nickel and a Prayer*, ed. Rhondda Robinson Thomas (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2011), 68-79.
[55] Hunter, *Nickel*, 81-3.
[56] Letter dated April 10, 1914 from Harry C. Smith to George Myers. George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[57] Jane Hunter often spoke of her own experience as a woman alone in Cleveland and the trials and tribulations she endured to keep her virtue and person safe.
[58] Hunter, *Nickel*, 85.

As the Ministers' Alliance and CACM had done, Hunter sought support and funding from the white community. Several of her advisors were white women affiliated with the YWCA. They suggested Hunter write to Booker T. Washington, which she did.[59] Washington sought advice about Hunter when she wrote requesting financial assistance for what she called the Phillis Wheatley Association (PWA).[60] Washington wrote a "confidential" letter to George Myers to inquire about "accepting [an] invitation" from Hunter.[61] In his reply, Meyer opposed Hunter's project and suggested that Washington decline Hunter's invitation to Cleveland to support of her endeavor. Myers believed that Phillis Wheatley was "fostered by a few misguided whites endeavoring to relieve their conscience of the discrimination by the YWCA against [black] women."[62] Myers went on further to state that Hunter had "no standing among [the] *better class of women*,"[63] a clear jibe at her working-class status.[64]

A visit by Washington at this particular juncture would have bolstered the efforts of both CACM and PWA to establish segregated facilities in Cleveland. His visit would have provided an opportunity for both groups to fundraise among the African American community as well as among whites. While the black community might have supported Washington's visit, his message of accommodation was not one that everyone in the African American community supported even though they believed it was worthwhile to employ in the south.

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[59] One of her white advisors may have suggested that Hunter contact Washington since his stance on industrial education was well known. It is unclear who actually made the suggestion. Hunter, who attended Hampton Institute, also believed in this form of education and structured her organization with those ideals in mind.
[60] Hunter wrote her letter to Washington in July 1914. She did not discover that Washington had written to George Myers until later, but it is unclear when she learned this fact.
[61] George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[62] George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[63] George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
[64] Myers also stated that Hunter had intended to contact Jane Addams and W.E.B. DuBois in search of support for the Association. George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.

The black YWCA went down to defeat in 1911. Three years later, the members of the Second Presbyterian's Men's Club looked around them and decided there was a problem to be solved. Most of them were attorneys, bankers, and businessmen. Several of the men in this group were involved with other philanthropic ventures in the city, so their involvement with the Men's Club would not have been unusual. Most of the men in the group were married. They watched, and even encouraged, their wives' involvement in social justice work in Cleveland. Some of their wives were involved with the YWCA and even with Jane Hunter's PWA. They proposed a segregated settlement house over which they would retain control.

Dr. Paul Frederick Sutphen, as minister of Second Presbyterian, may have been behind the impetus to start the Men's Club.[65] Before becoming minister of Second Church,[66] Sutphen occupied the pulpit of another church in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve from 1886 through 1893.[67] He left Cleveland to lead churches in Newark, New Jersey, and Philadelphia. At some point after his to return to Cleveland, Sutphen was asked to be a trustee of Hiram House, one of the city's oldest settlements.[68] The settlement initially served Russian Jews, and later on, Italians. It did not provide services to African Americans.[69]

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[65] There is no evidence to support this, but Sutphen was very involved in the initial push to establish the settlement.
[66] This is what residents of Cleveland called Second Presbyterian.
[67] Cleveland was initially part of the Western Reserve that was established in the early 19th century. "Rev. Paul Frederick Sutphen," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, accessed March 14, 2018, http://case.edu/ech/articles/s/sutphen-rev-paul-frederick/.
[68] It is unclear how long Sutphen served as a Trustee Board member of Hiram House. Hiram House had been established in another area of the city and did not support services to African Americans.
[69] Greeks, Germans, Hungarians, and Czechs also resided in this neighborhood and could have received services at the settlement. Other scholars have pointed to the fact that Hiram House offered its services to African Americans, but any blacks that went to the settlement felt uncomfortable and unwelcome. This does not also negate the fact that when the neighborhood began to change, the settlement moved to another location. Judith Trolander, "Twenty Years at Hiram House," *Ohio History Journal* 78, no. 1 (January 1969), 28; John Grabowski, "From Progressive to Patrician: George Bellamy and Hiram House Social Settlement, 1896-1914," *Ohio History* 87, no. 1 (January 1978), 42.

A month after the Men's Club initiated its efforts, Sutphen gave a series of evening lectures at the church about the African American experience in America.[70] How the black and white communities received these lectures is unknown.[71] Still, his lectures apparently appealed to members of the church and other local Christians who were interested in social justice reform.[72] Why they were motivated to action is unclear but their church was located a few blocks north of the Central Avenue district. While they would not have lived in the neighborhood any more, they could not have been ignorant of the conditions that existed there.

The Men's Club met in January 1914 to establish some guidelines for the project they would undertake. Before the conclusion of their lunch, the men had elected a chairman for their Investigating Committee.[73] They agreed to meet the following evening to continue their assessment of how to go about establishing a settlement.

The Men's Club planned to establish a settlement house like those first established in England in the late nineteenth century and then in Chicago, New York, and other cities.[74] Americans modeled their settlement houses in the United States on the first English settlement, Toynbee Hall.[75] Reformers, often middle-class, college-educated men or women, would decide

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[70] The first lecture was about "The Causes and Results of African Slavery." The second discussed "African Development since the Civil War." The third lecture covered the topic of "What the Afro-American Needs the Most." The last lecture concerned "The White Man's Duty Toward the Afro-American." It is quite unusual that Sutphen employed the term Afro-American. Most whites used Negro. *Plain Dealer*, January 31, 1914.

[71] The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* ran the advertisement for the lectures. There do not appear to be any letters to the editor regarding whether or not community members commented on the lectures or the topics.

[72] Between 1890 and 1914, many Protestants believed that their role as Christians was to bring about change in the world through good works. The Social Gospel is one way in which progressives sought to bring Christianity into their work. Walter T.K. Nugent, *Progressivism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 59-63.

[73] Henry Pope was president of the National Malleable Castings Company. The Men's Club members included Charles E. Briggs, Phillip H. Collins, Walter J. James, Frances E. Drake, A.T. Hills, S.F. Haserot, W.H. Cottingham, Amos B. McNairy, Dudley S. Blossom, R.A. Harman, W.R. Warner, E. R. Perkins, Arthur Judson, and Harold T. Clark.

[74] Toynbee Hall officially opened in January 1885. Robert C. Reinders, "Toynbee Hall and the American Settlement Movement." *Social Service Review* 56, no. 1 (March 1982): 39-54; Lucinda Matthews-Jones, "Settling at Home: Gender and Class in the Room Biographies of Toynbee Hall, 1883-1914," *Victorian Studies* 60, no. 1 (Autumn 2017), 32.

[75] Reinders, "Toynbee Hall," 41-45; Matthews-Jones, "Settling at Home," 41.

where to locate their settlement. The level of poverty and despair in an area determined the settlement's location. Often the settlement workers would meet and interview others who worked in the area—educators, missionaries, or newspaper reporters—as those people would have viewed conditions firsthand. The next step was to find a building in which to house the settlement. Frequently, the building's acquisition came through personal contacts or an introduction to a philanthropist. The contact person would agree to lease or sell the facility for a small fee. After repairs and the acquisition of furnishings, the head settlement workers would move in and open their facility to the community. Few in the community would gravitate toward the settlement until a respected and trusted local made the acquaintance of or had multiple conversations with the head workers. Once others in the community came to trust the settlement workers, the settlement would offer more programs. The settlement usually solicited volunteers from the community to help run the facility. They would also expect to continue to recruit sympathetic philanthropists to provide operating funds.[76] By this time, there were settlment houses in list a few places. If there were other black settlement houses, mention them here.

Sutphen came prepared to discuss his course of action at the next meeting. The first order of business was research. Progressive reformers often undertook and conducted extensive research to uncover the information necessary to formulate new policy and reforms. This group was no different.[77] Sutphen recommended that the Investigating Committee divide into three groups. Each group would have a distinct purpose and goal. The committees were: Outside Investigating; Inside Investigating; and Site and Maintenance.[78] The three groups of five men

[76] Most of this is based on Jane Addams description of how she and Ellen Gates Starr began Hull House. Their model is the exemplar since most white settlement workers established their settlements this way. African American settlement workers followed a similar model, but in most cases, it was a little different. Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (New York: MacMillan Company: 1910), 89-112.
[77] Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*; Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, Carson, *Settlement Folk*; Karamu Papers, MS 4606, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[78] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

would interview or correspond with people they considered experts. While most of the information they would collect would be about African Americans, the rest dealt with different aspects of settlement work.

The Outside Investigating Committee sought answers to questions about the African American community from whites who were considered experts about black people. The first question concerned the demographics of the Central Avenue area. The committee had a number of questions they wanted to answer about the African American community. One question they wanted answered was precisely how many African Americans lived there.[79] . Dr. Charles E. Briggs was given the task of contacting the Census Bureau. When Briggs inquired, he learned that unfortunately, the requested data had not been analyzed.[80]

Other committee members consulted YMCA and YWCA workers (though they must have known that the Y did not serve African Americans), judges, school officials, and people or groups who provided social services in Cleveland for information about the "moral conditions and social needs" of the African American community.[81] They contacted the local school board to discover the extent of illiteracy among the black community as well as the number of children who attended school and the highest grade level attained. George Bellamy of Hiram House was approached, along with a few others, for commentary on crime and juvenile delinquency.[82] One committee member wrote to Hollis Burke Frissell, the principal at Hampton University but most of the inquiries were to Cleveland residents.[83]

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[79] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[80] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society. In the letter received from the Census Bureau, the worker from the federal government stated that this information would be compiled in the next year, but it would be provided to the group as soon as it was available.
[81] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[82] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[83] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

The Inside Investigating Committee gathered information from "the colored [sic] people themselves and from agencies at work among them" in Cleveland and around the country.[84] A.T. Hills, an attorney, headed this committee.[85] At the top of the list of contacts were two nationally recognized, African American men—Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. They also contacted several black settlement houses in the Northeast.[86] Also, the committee cited an investigation conducted by the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA) in Chicago. This group, founded by Jane Addams in 1901, provided the first juvenile probation officers in the United States.[87] The committee received a booklet that showcased the JPA's work. Some of the men believed that the information contained therein "[reflected] the general condition in Cleveland almost as well as though it had been prepared from data obtained here."[88] The statement suggests that the committee believed that African Americans in Chicago and Cleveland lived under similar conditions.[89] In some instances, their assumptions were correct, even though Chicago had

[84] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[85] It appears that the Inside Investigating Committee also contacted the Census Bureau, but why their work overlapped is unclear.
[86] The committee contacted the Robert Gould Shaw House, the Harriet Tubman House, the Theodore Parker Memorial, and Robert N. Wood, South End House. South End House did not work amongst African Americans, which led to the establishment of the Robert Gould Shaw House. There were several well-known settlements in the South—one at Hampton, Virginia and another at Atlanta, Georgia. These were run by African Americans and would not have been contacted.
[87] JPA offered these services in Chicago before this became a governmental function. Juvenile Protective Association, accessed 13 June 2017, http://jpachicago.org/about.
[88] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society..
[89] Cleveland, however, had a smaller black population and lacked some of the job opportunities which existed in Chicago. Still, even though blacks encountered segregation in both cities, some distinct differences existed in regards to the type of experiences had in those cities. African Americans in Chicago would have had better employment opportunities in Chicago than in Cleveland. The following books look at black migration in several Midwestern cities, particularly Chicago and Detroit, which were often compared to Cleveland. James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); James Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); David M. Katzman, *Before the Ghetto: Black Detroit in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1976); Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); Allan H. Spear, *Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).

a much larger black population. The committee obtained additional information from other groups, such as the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes.[90]

When the committee sought to consult Washington about the settlement, the men may have naively assumed he knew about all things related to and that occurred in African American communities nationwide. Although Washington was not ignorant of conditions in Cleveland—he regularly corresponded with George Myers, the barber at the Hollenden Hotel, and Charles W. Chesnutt, the Cleveland-based author of *The Marrow of Tradition*—he was "not able to offer…any practical suggestions for the undertaking."[91] As his work focused on industrial education, agriculture and the establishment of black businesses, he had little to offer those located in urban areas, he informed them. In fact, Washington wrote that African Americans should remain in the South rather than migrate to urban centers in the North in search of better opportunities. Still, he suggested that committee members contact those who performed settlement work among African Americans around the country. The committee had already taken those steps.[92]

W.E.B. DuBois's response to the Investigating Committee had a different tone. He suggested that local whites interested in the betterment of conditions for Cleveland's African American community join the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).[93] When the Second Church members began their undertaking, the

[90] Atlanta University, where W.E.B. DuBois had taught, developed a sociology program under his tutelage. The pamphlet from AU entitled, *Social Betterment among the Negro Americans*, supposedly held 133 pages. The nascent National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes, which George E. Haynes helped found in 1910, also had mailed several bulletins from which the Inside Investigating Committee gathered information.
[91] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[92] Washington regularly corresponded with George Myers, barber at the Hollenden Hotel, and Charles W. Chesnutt, author of *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901).
[93] At the time DuBois responded to the committee, no whites belonged to Cleveland's NAACP. Letter from W.E.B. DuBois to A.T. Hills, MS 4606 Karamu House Records, Western Reserve Historical Society

NAACP had existed for approximately five years, though Cleveland's chapter was still relatively new and quite small.[94]

As editor of the NAACP's *The Crisis*, DuBois was known for his biting editorials that often denounced racism. He offered the committee his editorial platform to alert readers of the actions being taken by locals to begin a settlement in Cleveland. What is most interesting is DuBois's last piece of advice for the committee. He advised the men to contact the "natural leaders of the group" of African Americans in the city.[95] "Work in conjunction with [the city's black] putting the whole movement on the plane of an effort by Americans to help Americans, DuBois suggested, and taking special care not to let it appear that this is an effort of the high to bend to the low or white to help the Negro."[96]

The Site and Maintenance Committee's had a difficult task. The members had to find "a suitable site to establish work in the neighborhood."[97] In other words, this committee needed to figure out the actual location for the settlement and find a building to house it. Members of the committee took to the streets and "individually canvassed" the area. They discovered that the "geographical center" of the black community was between 32nd and 36th Streets and Central Avenue.[98]

The neighborhood was in flux as African Americans had begun to move eastward and northeastward into other areas of the city, but still prevented from moving too far outside of

[94] Cleveland's NAACP branch was founded by local postal workers who were concerned that they would lose their federal jobs due to the policy changes enacted under Woodrow Wilson's administration. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 200.
[95] W.E.B. DuBois to A.T. Hills, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[96] W.E.B. DuBois to A.T. Hills, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[97] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society. The committee discovered that the majority of African Americans lived in the following area: the north/south boundaries were East 9th Street and East 55th Street with the east/west boundaries of Cedar and Woodland Avenue. According to their data, most lived between East 14th and East 38th (north-south) and Cedar and Scovill (east-west).
[98] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

segregated areas. The progression out of the district, however, was quite slow.[99] Not all people in the neighborhood were African Americans. While the committee recognized other groups lived in the area the committee could not be sure who would want to take an interest in the services of the settlement. The common belief was that immigrants would not want to participate in a settlement that served blacks.[100]

The Committee on Site and Maintenance completed their report first. Like the Outside Investigating Committee, Site and Maintenance had also contacted George Bellamy. As founder of another of Cleveland's earliest settlements, Bellamy had almost twenty years of experience with settlement work. He founded Hiram House shortly after his graduation from Hiram College in 1896.[101] The settlement initially served Eastern European Jews, but as the community changed, the staff worked for a time with the incoming Italians residents. In its early days, Hiram House was located close to the area in which Second Presbyterian wanted to establish their settlement. As the original clientele moved to another neighborhood, Bellamy also moved.[102]

Even though his settlement did not remain in the Central area, the Men's Club considered Bellamy the local expert.[103] The committee had multiple questions about funding and finding a suitable person to run the settlement among others. In his letter to the committee, Bellamy detailed the start-up costs associated with the establishment of a settlement. During the first two

[99] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[100] White settlement workers believed that it was better to separate immigrants and blacks. Whites may have been projecting their own beliefs upon immigrants, however, they also segregated facilities, because it was perceived as the best way to serve African Americans. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 94.
[101] Hiram House was named after the college.
[102] Bellamy preferred to work with certain populations and thus moved his settlement to be closer to that group. Judith Trolander insists that Bellamy allowed African Americans to participate in programming at his settlement. While this may be true, according to Thomas W. Fleming, his sons went to the settlement a few times, but ultimately decided that they were not wanted or welcome. They did not return. Judith Trolander, *Settlement Houses and the Great Depression*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 24; Thomas W. Fleming Memoir, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[103] Despite the host of other settlements in the city, the records do not show that the Site and Maintenance Committee contacted anyone else involved in settlement work. Of all the settlements, there were only three run exclusively by men. Hiram House was one of these settlements. Paul Sutphen may have decided that he preferred the Hiram House model, especially since he was on the board.

years, Bellamy required over $3,000 just for maintenance at Hiram House.[104] However, as Bellamy's settlement house had been established almost twenty years earlier, the costs would have increased.[105] Still, his information provided the committee with an estimate of how much money they would initially need. To reduce costs, Bellamy advised the settlement to "secure…Public School buildings…and possibly private institutions"[106] to provide services to the African Americans in the district.

The final paragraph of the report from Site and Maintenance was about the actual structure for the settlement. The committee members received a lead on a rental house but then decided not to ask about it, uncertain whether it would be able to accommodate the programs and people.[107] Other concerns, especially cost, moved to the forefront. Based on information members discovered on their own and from conversations with Bellamy, the final cost of the settlement would be about $4,000. The price tag included maintenance for the facility as well as the number and types of programs the settlement would provide. On top of those costs, an additional $2,000 was necessary to cover the salary of the person who would run the facility.[108] The report provided no recommendations on how to raise this money.[109]

The subcommittee wrote only one sentence on what might have been their greatest obstacle: black Clevelanders opposed the idea of a segregated settlement. "A general feeling of non-segregation is desired by them," the report noted simply.[110] Committee members neither seemed concerned nor understood why this issue troubled the African Americans to whom they

[104] The cost of maintenance was equal to the cost of 150 men's suits at $20 apiece. Cleveland Plain Dealer, May Company advertisement, 1915.
[105] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[106] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[107] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[108] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[109] Laura Tuennerman, *Helping Others, Helping Ourselves: Power, Giving, and Community Identity in Cleveland, Ohio, 1880-1930* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), 118-121.
[110] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

had spoken. In fact, later in the report, they wrote that "there *seems* (emphasis added) to be a disposition to co-operate with the undertaking."[111] As the committee members had indicated, the settlement would be in an area inhabited by a large number of African Americans. Therefore, in the committee members' minds, the location necessitated that it would be for black citizens. This idea persisted even though other groups resided in the area. They made a note of the concerns of the African American community, but those apprehensions did not change their plans.

The Inside Investigating Committee completed its report in early March under the guidance of Dudley S. Blossom, a businessman and philanthropist. Blossom drove through the Central Avenue district in early February but saw "few people on the streets [because] it was very cold."[112] He described the area as similar to other "poor districts" in the city of Cleveland and elsewhere. His statement established one of the significant problems in the area—its poverty.

The push to establish the settlement house continued through the spring of 1914 despite the concerns of the African American community. As the Committees completed their research, all the men remarked in some way about the concerns of local blacks but made no concessions to those sentiments. By the end of April, all of the subcommittees had completed their research. The men voted to proceed with the establishment of the settlement.

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As word spread that the Men's Club of Second Presbyterian would proceed with the development of a settlement house for blacks only, the initial response of the black community was trepidation. Many among "the better class of colored people" still supported a settlement[113] But worried about what a segregated settlement would mean. African Americans realized they

[111] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[112] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[113] The interviews with Cleveland's black elite suggests that they wanted a settlement in the city. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

were increasingly being subjected to racial discrimination and segregation and sought ways to counter and obstruct the expansion of those ideas. Black people in Cleveland utilized the court system and boycotts to prevent their exclusion from public spaces.[114] They believed Jim Crow was something that existed below the Mason-Dixon Line. While they had no control over what happened to African Americans in the South, Cleveland's black residents did not believe segregation belonged in the Midwest. Thus, with little economic power and even less political clout, the African American community worked to prevent the establishment of a segregated settlement.[115]

George A. Myers, the owner of the fashionable Hollenden Hotel Barbershop, almost immediately contacted R.A. Harmon, chairman of the Site and Maintenance Committee. In his letter, Myers stated that he had "seen and communicated with those of my people most interested in the work" that the Men's Club "contemplated."[116] Several other members of the Men's Club also contacted Myers. Myers was not a Cleveland native--he had arrived in the city in 1879 after he left Baltimore following a family disagreement-—but once in Cleveland, he had come under the tutelage of several influential men. One of these was Marcus A. Hanna, who would later become Ohio's United States Senator.[117] Through his friendship with Hanna, Myers came to wield considerable political clout in Ohio's Republican Party because of his ability to help swing

[114] Harry C. Smith called for boycotts of Luna Park, an amusement park in Cleveland that limited the attendance of blacks to certain days. While he called for boycotts, most African Americans continued to frequent the park on special occasions. Smith also reminded his readers about the two civil rights laws enacted during his term as an Ohio State congressman, which barred racial discrimination in public spaces. He encouraged readers to use these laws to fight back against racism and segregation.
[115] Larry Cuban, "A Strategy for Racial Peace: Negro Leadership in Cleveland, 1900-1919," *Phylon 28*, no. 3 (3rd Quarter 1967), 299-311.
[116] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[117] He had been a political ally of Marcus Hanna, who served as the Senator from Ohio from 1897 to 1900. Myers claimed to have bribed an individual in his barber's chair, which led to Hanna's election. Even though he had a certain renown in the Republican Party during Hanna's time in office, Myers never took any political positions, although he did recommend others for political appointments. Due to his prominence in the GOP, Myers received recognition from and corresponded with national leaders in African American community

the African American vote. Upon Hanna's death, he took a step back from politics.[118] This prestige was presumably one of the reasons many whites in Cleveland consulted Myers. Another was his racial background; several whites commented on the barber's "considerable white blood."[119] This heritage, according to whites, made Myers a man of "good judgment" and knowledgeable about racial matters in Cleveland as well as across the United States.[120]

However racist, this assessment of Myers was correct. He corresponded with various black leaders across the United States. The barber also considered himself a power broker in Ohio. As an extremely prosperous businessman, Myers held an economic status that was far above any of the African Americans in the city.[121] As such, he held very strong opinions, including about the settlement. Blossom wrote that in Myer's opinion, "any effort to do any up-lift work in that section for the colored people "exclusively" would be both futile and harmful."[122] Myers reiterated that the African American community did not want a segregated settlement house. He intimated that the use of the word "exclusively" would drive any self-respecting black person away from the facility. "Whatever is done should be done not only for the colored people of that section but also for what-ever [sic] white folks that are in the section."[123] Myers made it clear to Blossom and the other men from Second Presbyterian that segregation of any kind would be unacceptable. He objected also to the proposed "black" YMCA. If the Men's Club presented a segregated social settlement in the community, it would fail.

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[118] Myers never ascended to the national stage due to his race.
[119] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[120] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[121] The business of being a barber had long been associated with increased socioeconomic status for black men. While Myers may have considered himself to be of equal stature to those he seated in his barber chair, in the eyes of his clients, he was not. On a certain level, he was still a black man, whom they would never consider equal to them, despite his successful business and participation in Republican politics. Douglas W. Bristol, *Knights of the Razor: Black Barbers in Slavery and Freedom* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2009), 133-6.
[122] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[123] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

Blossom obtained a different opinion from his conversation with Robert R. Cheeks, who was a local attorney and president of the Cleveland Association of Colored Men.[124] While Cheeks agreed with Myers that "whatever was done should be done ostensibly for the poor of this district regardless of color,"[125] he thought the facility would be used even it were segregated. Even if it were integrated, Cheeks "admitted that this would be mere words and that whatever philanthropic project would be launched…would be of benefit to the colored people exclusively."[126] The settlement house might be officially integrated but it would be in a black neighborhood and would thus be a settlement for black people. The white people who lived nearby would presumably avoid such a place.

Having sought out Cheeks's and Meyers's opinions, Blossom set out to ignore them. When Cheeks wrote that he perceived a lot of unfair discrimination against African Americans, Blossom replied that he thought Cheeks was a "broad enough man" to understand that discrimination against blacks was "natural"[127] and that discrimination against African Americans would end only "after years of [black] development."[128] Blossom acknowledged that both Cheeks and Myers believed the word "exclusively" in relation to the settlement should be avoided at all costs. Whether or not the other committee members would listen was the question.

Members of the Inside Investigating Committee spoke with and listened to multiple African Americans in the city. They had a long list of local black people to contact. Many with whom they corresponded comprised what the whites termed the "better class of colored people," who had come to Cleveland in the first few decades following the Civil War.[129] They were

[124] The Cleveland Association of Colored Men was an organization that grew out of an earlier group affiliated with Booker T. Washington's National Negro Business League.
[125] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[126] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[127] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[128] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[129] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

educated, owned businesses, and were involved in the local civic community. This group of black men and women would have comprised what DuBois called "the talented tenth."[130] Above all, they wanted the project to move forward and told the Men's Club they "ha[d] been praying for [a settlement] for years."[131] They wanted a place where they could "find some social recreation and amusement…apart from the saloons."[132]

Still, each person had slightly differing views regarding the settlement. Charles Waddell Chesnutt, a Cleveland native, was well known across the country as the author of *The Conjure Woman* (1899) and *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901).[133] A member of the city's Chamber of Commerce and involved in numerous other civic organizations, Chesnutt was approached by two of the committee members, but he responded by letter to only one. He began with a reminder that the most successful work would be in the "colored district" near or on Central Avenue.[134] He did note that the local YMCA and YWCA did "not welcome [colored youths] with open arms."[135] Chesnutt was firm in his assessment that the new "institution…not be conducted on race lines."[136] Many "colored people object[ed]," he added, to segregation as it placed them on a different level and "seem[ed] to regard them as unfit to associate with other human beings."[137] African Americans, in Cleveland and across the country, believed that segregation was an attack on their humanity.

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[130] W.E.B. DuBois discusses the Talented Tenth in *The Souls of Black Folk*. The original discussion about the Talented Tenth is in *The Negro*, an edited collection, featuring essays by Booker T. Washington and others, published in 1903.
[131] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[132] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[133] Charles Chesnutt was born to in Cleveland, but his family moved back to Fayetteville, North Carolina. He grew up in the North Carolina but moved as a young man in order to seek greater opportunity for himself as a novelist and his family. Helen M. Chesnutt, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 35; Russell H. Davis, *Memorable Negroes in Cleveland's Past* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1969), 28.
[134] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[135] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[136] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[137] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

The last portion of Chesnutt's letter concerned the financing of the institution. He was concerned about how building a facility and how it would remain open. Most importantly, Chesnutt recognized that most of that work would have to be done by whites, "because the colored people are poor."[138] Despite their poverty, he was certain that all those who could would "contribute according to their means."[139] Chesnutt also asked that Men's Club attempt to find the right person to run the settlement. "It should have at its head an experienced social worker, in sympathy with the needs and aspirations of its chief beneficiaries."[140] While he did not have a person in mind, it was clear that Chesnutt wanted someone who would support African American interests, but also to acknowledge their humanity.

John P. Green also corresponded with the Inside Investigating Committee. Green came to Cleveland as a young boy from North Carolina in 1857. He attended the local high school, and after graduation, attended law school. Green briefly left Ohio for North Carolina but returned in 1872. A year later, he was elected justice of the peace, serving in that capacity until 1882 when he was elected to the Ohio state legislature.[141] Green estimated that there were about 15,000 African Americans in Cleveland, but made clear that they were all individuals.[142] The race held people of different hues, who were engaged in various enterprises, and had different jobs and levels of education, he noted.[143] He emphasized that their "degree of intelligence is fairly equal to that of any other class of citizens."[144] Green also stressed there while the churches in the area provided a gathering place for them, "when they [were] not in church, there [was] a total absence

[138] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[139] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[140] Charles Chesnutt to A.T. Hills, 18 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[141] Russell H. Davis, *Memorable Negroes*, 27.
[142] There is no accurate data about how many blacks resided in Cleveland at this time. It is unclear as to where Green attained his information, particularly in light of the Men's Club's inability to get the same information from the Census Bureau.
[143] Letter to A.T. Hills from John P. Green. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[144] Letter to A.T. Hills from John P. Green. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

of any adequate…entertainment for [blacks]."[145] In essence, Green wanted the Men's Club to know that blacks, like other groups, wanted a place where they could go and enjoy their leisure. They wanted a place to swim, play sports, hear lectures, and learn skills. Like George Myers and Charles Chesnutt, Green warned against the establishment of a segregated facility. "There will be…opposition to the establishment of any institution for colored people exclusively," he noted."[146] The facility would experience great success if the Men's Club was sure to "open [the settlement] to all people, regardless of color."[147]

Another attorney, Alexander H. Martin, affirmed the belief that if the settlement house was only for African Americans, they would not partake of its services. Martin was born in Ironton, Ohio, close to the Kentucky and West Virginia borders. He attended college in Cleveland. Following his graduation in 1895, he won a scholarship to Western Reserve University's law school.[148] Upon completion of law school, Martin worked as an attorney. Often nominated to serve as a judge in the local courts, he was never elected to the post.[149] He was also involved in multiple civic organizations including the Cleveland Association of Colored Men. Martin's letter to the Investigating Committee was similar to that of the other black men consulted. While he did not support a segregated settlement, his reasons were different.

In his letter, Martin stated that African Americans "who [strove] to break away from…unwholesome conditions" were often forced to "remain always and permanently under said conditions."[150] He believed society forced African Americans to live under these conditions because of racism and the lack of available opportunity to blacks, even as they made strides to

[145] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[146] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[147] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[148] "Alexander H. Martin," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, accessed March 17, 2018, https://case.edu/ech/articles/m/martin-alexander-h.
[149] "Alexander H. Martin," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, accessed March 17, 2018, https://case.edu/ech/articles/m/martin-alexander-h.
[150] Alexander Martin to A.T. Hills, 2 February 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

move beyond the conditions in which they lived, made their lives difficult. Martin added that "blind race prejudice" prevented the United States from assisting its black citizens as "it ran half around the world to spend millions of dollars and sacrifice many lives to educate and uplift aliens" overseas.[151] He went on to stress that "the white American [has] imagined for a long time and sought to scientifically demonstrate that he was the product of a different creation from that of the black."[152] All of these issues had brought blacks and whites to the point that it was difficult for the two races to interact with one another. If there were "brotherly feeling" of whites towards blacks, then the "common…enmity" would drop away.[153]

Martin believed that religion would fix the racial problems in Cleveland. He wanted the city employed as a test case. If local African Americans interacted with "kindly disposed, Christian men and women of the whites," then past problems and issues could be resolved.[154] Martin suggested that an "Institutional Church" made up of men and women of both races "would be the proper method of attack."[155] He desired this change since current methods proved unsuccessful. Unlike the others who corresponded with the Investigating Committee, Martin ended his letter with recommendations of Congregational Church leadership whom he claimed conducted "Institutional work."[156]

Lethia Cousins Fleming and her husband, Thomas Wallace Fleming, were one of the few black couples consulted about the settlement. Someone interviewed Thomas Fleming, while Lethia Fleming wrote a response. Fleming provided an overview of the neighborhood, where he had resided for over twenty-two years. As the city councilman for Ward 11, he wanted a place

[151] Martin alluded to the Spanish-American War. Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 18, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[152] Martin commented on the pseudoscience of eugenics. Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 2, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[153] Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 2, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[154] Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 2, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[155] Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 2, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[156] Letter to A.T. Hills dated February 2, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

where residents of the area could go to escape some of the unsavory aspects of life in the district.[157] In his interview, however, he mentioned an incident that had occurred years earlier to his sons who were forced to halt their attendance at Hiram House because of the attitudes of the white children there.[158] He desired "clean, healthful recreation," as well as an institution that would welcome black children.[159]

Lethia Flemings, like her husband, believed "a Social Settlement…would greatly improve the youth in every way," although she had only lived in the city for two years.[160] She echoed her husband in regards to the types of entertainment available to young people, claiming that young people "have no place to go" and "become contaminated with those of bad morals and vice."[161] Fleming believed that movies and saloons were dens of iniquity. A settlement, she believed, could provide a place for wholesome activities. Her list was long. She thought there should be rooms to teach people to cook, sew, and basic hygiene along with a reading room, gymnasium, bowling alley, and a playroom for younger children.[162] All of these things would help the African American community build its "character."[163] This character development would allow blacks to demonstrate their progress as a people. Fleming believed, however, that the Cleveland Association of Colored Men should undertake "the proposition."[164] The white men

[157] Kenneth Kusmer writes that Fleming did not do much as city councilman. While he did attain a few patronage positions for blacks in the community, Fleming did little to address crime in the area. Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 144-8.
[158] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[159] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[160] Lethia Cousins Fleming to Francis Edwin Drake 28 January 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[161] Lethia Cousins Fleming to Francis Edwin Drake 28 January 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[162] Lethia Cousins Fleming to Francis Edwin Drake 28 January 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[163] Lethia Cousins Fleming to Francis Edwin Drake 28 January 1914, Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[164] Letter to Francis Edwin Drake from Lethia Cousins Fleming, dated January 28, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

would be "associated…so as not to make it appear that this is an Institution [sic] for colored people only."[165]

The blacks consulted by the Men's Club agreed that the settlement should not be for blacks alone. George Myers especially wanted African Americans who supported integration involved with the project. Myers wrote a letter to one of the committee members introducing Mrs. Hattie Fairfax, who lived in the district and thus was knowledgeable about the area.[166] Fairfax, enslaved at birth, moved to Cleveland sometime after the Civil War.[167] She was very involved in civic, political, and social activism in the city and served on the Mt. Zion Congregational Church Missionary Society. Myers "delegated" Fairfax to visit Harmon and other members of the Committee of Fifteen, which included no women let alone black women.[168]

Harry C. Smith, the editor of the *Gazette*, one of the city's black weeklies, approved of the new settlement project so long as the intention was to make it a facility open to anyone. Smith was quite vocal about his lack of support for segregated facilities, regularly writing editorials about Jim Crow in the North. In January 1914, he wrote that plans to establish a separate children's home for black children were unnecessary "and our people should not waste their money by contributing or giving to this movement."[169] A few weeks later, he asked if black citizens would be "gratified" to see "separate schools for their children and 'jim-crow' streetcars" for adults as a result of "our best people" accepting segregation.[170] Since he lived most of his life in Cleveland and had seemingly never experienced segregation, Smith believed

[165] Letter to Francis Edwin Drake from Lethia Cousins Fleming, dated January 28, 1914. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[166] Fairfax resided at 2213 East 35th Street with her husband and children.
[167] The 1880 Census in Cleveland lists Fairfax and her husband John.
[168] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[169] *Gazette*, January 10, 1914.
[170] *Gazette,* January 24, 1914.

Jim Crow had no place in the North. He was adamant that African Americans in Cleveland and other northern cities should do everything within their power to prevent segregation's spread. Smith reminded his readers on a weekly basis that he was the sponsor of civil rights legislation when he served in the Ohio State Legislature.[171]

Nonetheless, Smith corresponded regularly with George Myers and immediately expressed his enthusiasm for the project. Like Myers, Smith also wanted Hattie Fairfax and Blanche Gilmere to be involved with the effort.[172] In fact, Smith sent the women to discuss the issue with Myers. Smith reiterated that he would support the establishment of a settlement house in the area where the majority of African Americans lived if it was "with the distinct understanding that it will be open to all without reference to race and color."[173] As Smith lived in the area, he knew that immigrants also resided there. The editor intimated that those other residents should also be considered recipients of the good work of the settlement house. Smith further stated that the settlement would "be welcomed by all of us."[174]

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After eleven months of research, the Men's Club was eager to move forward with the settlement house. While they sought the input of some of Cleveland's black residents, they did

[171] S.E. Stevens and O.V. Johnson, "From Black Politics to Black Community: Harry C. Smith and the Cleveland Gazette," *Journalism Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 1093. In 1896, Smith sponsored another major bill, the Anti-Mob Violence Law of 1896 (General Code 6278-89). This law provided monetary funds to a victim of lynching or any surviving dependents. These funds would come from the county in which the mob violence took place. This meant that law enforcement officials could not be complicit in acts of aggression that would lead to the death of a prisoner. Eventually, the Smith Act became a model for anti-lynching legislation in other northern states. This law was also the model for the NAACP's federal anti-lynching bill. Russell H. Davis, *Black Americans in Ohio's City of Cleveland: George Peake, the First Black Settler to Carl Stokes, the First Black Mayor*, (Washington: Associated, 1972), 134; Jack S. Blocker, *A Little More Freedom: African Americans Enter the Urban Midwest, 1860-1930* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 109.
[172] Harry C. Smith to George A. Myers, 3 February 1914, George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[173] Harry C. Smith to George A. Myers, 3 February 1914, George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[174] Harry C. Smith to George A. Myers, 3 February 1914, George A. Myers Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

not seem to take seriously their concerns that the facility be integrated. Based on their initial research, the men had come to a realization. The settlement required someone who would "undertake the initiative stages, but…be sufficiently devoted to the possibilities of such an undertaking to carry it on for a reasonable number of years and insure [sic] its permanency."[175] For this reason, Charles Briggs wrote Russell Jelliffe in November 1914.

Russell Jelliffe was from Mansfield, Ohio, located approximately eighty miles southwest of Cleveland. In 1910, Jelliffe had entered Oberlin College.[176] He initially planned to study political science but changed his plans after he met Rowena Woodham and served in student government. She was a native of Albion, Illinois, who planned to major in psychology and sociology. Several things changed the trajectory of this young couple's lives. As a senior, Jelliffe was elected class president. His involvement in campus politics led to further interest in progressive reform. Jelliffe also realized a commitment to civil and political rights for women and minorities. Before they left Oberlin, Jelliffe proposed to Woodham.[177] Both students received scholarships to attend the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy.[178] While in Chicago, committee members approached Jelliffe about directing the settlement house on the recommendation of one of his former Oberlin professors.[179]

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[175] Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

[176] Oberlin College, "Early History," accessed May 16, 2017, https://new.oberlin.edu/about/history.dot. Oberlin College was founded in 1833 by Rev. John J. Shepherd and Philo P. Stewart, a Presbyterian minister and missionary, respectively. Their goal was to establish a center of learning for Christians in the "American West." With the adoption of the motto, "Learning and Labor," the school became one of the earliest institutions that allowed African Americans to obtain an education beginning in 1835. The school was also noted for its abolitionist sentiments in the mid-nineteenth century. This may have played a role in Jelliffe's commitment to political and civil rights for minorities and women, although the school and the town would later be plagued by stories of racial divisions.

[177] The couple married in 1915.

[178] In 1920, the Chicago School of Civics merged with the University of Chicago and became the School of Social Service Administration. Joanne Goodman, "Social Services," Encyclopedia of Chicago, accessed 17 May 2017, http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1160.html.

[179] Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
The Chicago School of Civics later became part of the University of Chicago's School of Social Work. Briggs writes in his letter that Jelliffe was recommended by "Mr. Bohn of Oberlin."

Jelliffe was very familiar with the Wendell Phillips Settlement (WPS), which was located on Chicago's west side, because he had volunteered there. This settlement received its initial backing from supporters of Jane Addams's Hull House [180] but did not receive enough financial backing and was "seriously handicapped by [the] lack of funds," which in turn limited its ability to conduct settlement work.[181] Even though money was in short supply, Jelliffe reported that several aspects of the settlement functioned well (his work there was with Boy Scouts).

Russell Jelliffe wanted the job the Men's Club offered. Jelliffe planned to visit Cleveland in December 1914 to meet the members of the Men's Club. He would not conclude his studies in Chicago and be able to begin working until June 1915. In his letter to the Men's Club, he showed that he had, or at least attempted to have, a better understanding of the African American community than that of his would-be sponsors. He wanted the settlement to be a success and tried to look at the project from a variety of angles. He believed that in order for the settlement to be successful, it needed "to be…a social center for all people."[182] This echoed what WPS's head settlement worker and many black Cleveland elites stressed.

If Russell Jelliffe was especially keen to take the job the Men's Club offered, the men of Second Presbyterian were equally eager to have him accept it. In early December, Dr. Briggs set up a meeting between Jelliffe, the Men's Club, and a few other local citizens. He scheduled a meeting with George Bellamy, the head settlement worker at Hiram House. The committee wanted to employ Bellamy's model for the settlement they would establish, which meant that the settlement would have a long-term director.

[180] Lasch-Quinn, *Black Neighbors*, 15.
[181] Russell Jelliffe to Dr. Briggs, 2 December 1914, Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[182] Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

Russell and Rowena Jelliffe were engaged to begin work in the Central district in June 1915.[183] While the Committee of Fifteen had done the preliminary research, they wanted to do their own. Their research provided them with a twofold opportunity. The Jelliffes could meet community members as the community became acquainted with them. While waiting to start the settlement, the Jelliffes worked at a local playground without pay,[184] which allowed them to meet the children in the community, and, to a lesser extent, their families. Eventually, parents of the children the Jelliffes met at the playground called them "the playground house people."[185] According to Jelliffes, parents and other family members began to ask for "advice about their wayward boys and girls, the health and education of their children."[186]

When they began the work of the settlement that summer, Russell Jelliffe expressed concern about racial conditions in Cleveland. Since the settlement did not have enough room at the small rented facilities, they had to hold some of their operations at local public places. Jelliffe wrote that he had issues with the directors of the playground the settlement frequented in the Central District. The two "directors [were] both Jewish and [had] made no attempt[s] to encourage the colored children" to play on the playground, but rather "discouraged them."[187] As the Jelliffes wanted all of the children in the area to participate in their few programs, the response of the directors disappointed the Jelliffes. They were also worried about how the adults in the district would respond to them.[188] Some in the community did not believe that the Jelliffes should live in the area and undertake the work they planned.[189]

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[183] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[184] The Jelliffes worked at Grant Park in the evening. John Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, (New York: World Publishing, 1966), 20.
[185] The house was behind the playground that the Jelliffes worked at in the evenings and the location of the original settlement facility. Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 20-23; Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[186] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[187] Russell and Rowena Jelliffe Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[188] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 23.
[189] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 23.

A year later, the Jelliffes wrote a brief "historical sketch" of the settlement house, which had been named the Playhouse Settlement.[190] They wrote that "the immediate thought of this group of men" was to stop the changes they viewed as detrimental to the area "south of the Second Church, the so called Central Avenue district."[191] The Jelliffes discussed their survey with George Bellamy. He suggested that they were ready to move into "a more active and definite way" towards the goal of establishing a settlement house. They needed to find a facility where they could live and work. Having this combination space would also allow them to move forward in their plans to work more closely with the community in the establishment of the settlement.[192] With the assistance of the Men's Club seed money, the couple purchased two "cottages," which were adjacent to the playground for $4,150.[193] One of these would become the home of the Jelliffes, while the other building would house the settlement. The address for the settlement was 2239 East 38th Street. The settlement and their home were in the middle of the "Roaring Third."[194] The "Roaring Third" was the name given to area in the city where the third precinct of the Cleveland Police Department was located as well as the vice district in Cleveland that was part of the Central Avenue area.[195]

At the time they wrote their report, the Jelliffes stated that over 1,500 children and adults had participated in activities at the settlement. They were concerned, however, about the war, as well as the departure of two other settlement houses from the area.[196] At least one of the settlements left because the immigrants to which it had catered began moving from the area. The

[190] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[191] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[192] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[193] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 23.
[194] Peopled called this neighborhood the "Roaring Third" because it was in the area of the Cleveland Police Department's Third Precinct.
[195] Selby also gives a general geographical range for the area. He states that it was between E. 14th Street and East 55th Street between Carnegie and Woodland Avenues. Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 11.
[196] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

Jelliffes recorded the effects of black migration more sympathetically, noting, for example, that police arrested black men for being "suspicious"[197] and that employment agents enticed black migrants to Cleveland who had made promises that they could not keep. One company, they reported, told the black men they enticed to come to Cleveland for lucrative employment opportunities to "sleep along the lake front – out doors" when there was no place for them to stay.[198] The local Y.M.C.A. did not offer a place for black migrant men to stay, they noted, because of *de facto* segregation in their facilities. Later, authorities released several of the men, arrested for loitering.

By October 1917, Playhouse Settlement was providing services to the community. The settlement depended on the community for volunteers to help them with their programs. The Jelliffes found support from members of the community to work alongside them to offer classes in weaving, crocheting, cooking, and manual training.[199] One of Charles Chesnutt's daughters offered a class on making paper dolls.[200] The outbreak of war increased the pressure on the community to find jobs and housing for current residents and recent migrants to the city. During a luncheon at the City Club on October 23rd, for example, several men came together "to discuss matters relative to work among colored people of Cleveland which would relieve problems of health, housing, and recreation."[201] What was most desired the African Americans was a "strong colored organization" to work closely with existing agencies.[202] One of the speakers at the luncheon presented information about the Urban League, which was based in New York City but beginning to spread to other cities around the country. Both of the Jelliffes joined Cleveland's

[197] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[198] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[199] The book does not provide a description of exactly what manual training was. It was probably some combination of woodworking and other practical skills, which employ hands. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[200] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[201] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[202] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

affiliate, the Negro Welfare Association. Russell Jelliffe was also one of the few white members of the local NAACP. At the height of the migration of African Americans to the city in 1917, Russell Jelliffe attended almost daily meetings as several local blacks worked to form an affiliate of the Urban League.[203] The Jelliffes also worked to ameliorate conditions for those who arrived in the city without proper housing or employment.[204]

Because the Playhouse Settlement did not have facilities large enough to encompass what the community members wanted to do for "wholesome" events it contracted with the Cleveland Board of Education for the use of other facilities. The Board of Education allowed the settlement to operate out of the Longwood School gymnasium, where it provided "folk dancing and [a] gymnasium, and basketball [space] for boys and girls and men."[205]

By 1918, the benefit of the settlement to the community was apparent. In a memorandum, the settlement touted the fact that the Head of the Council Education Alliance, Mr. Solomon, believed the Playhouse "Settlement is actually doing the kind of work that other Settlements have talked of doing for years."[206] In the same year, the population in the area had increased. The *Gazette* estimated that more than 10,000 resided in the Central Avenue district, which brought the total of African Americans in Cleveland to between 25,000 and 30,000.[207] Several key problems intensified due to the large numbers of people confined to the district. There were issues with housing and landlords who used the lack of space to price gouge tenants. The housing issues led to an increase in health problems as well as an increase in criminal activity.

[203] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[204] Russell Jelliffe wrote in the daybook about the arrest of black men for loitering, because they had no place to stay and no jobs. Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[205] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[206] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[207] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.

Most pressing (or so it seemed) to the settlement was the inability of people in the district to have access to "recreational facilities.[208]

The settlement finally incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under the name the Neighborhood Association on September 22, 1919.[209] "Said corporation [was] formed for the purpose of conducting social settlement work, and acquiring, providing and maintaining suitable property and facilities therefore."[210] Most of those who signed the corporation forms had been involved in the process to establish the settlement house from the beginning.[211] The Code of Regulations for the Neighborhood Association consisted of nine regulations. The first regulation stipulated that anyone could become a member of the Association through her acceptance of the "Articles of Association and Code of Regulations" and her election by the Board of Trustees. The regulations do not specify whether members had to be white. If the Neighborhood Association members could be anyone who met with the approval of the trustees, then it would be conceivable that members could be white or black. Still the original trustees signed off on the Code of Regulations. None of them were black, and none were female.

After establishing Playhouse Settlement, the Jelliffes began to see the facility as belonging to them as well as the community. Upon reflection fifty years later, the Jelliffes claimed they attempted to separate themselves from the Second Presbyterian's Men's Club almost immediately.[212] They believed that the settlement should have the support of the community rather than the men who provided the financial backing.[213] To have community

[208] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[209] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[210] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[211] The following men who signed the Articles of Incorporation were also on the Investigating Committee of Fifteen: Dudley Blossom, Charles Briggs, A.T. Hills, and Paul Sutphen.
[212] John Selby wrote that the Jelliffes *gradually* worked on separation from the Men's Club. This may be why they did not incorporate until September 1917. Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 27.
[213] The Jelliffes also stated that they wanted to move away from having a particular religious organization back them, as they wanted to avoid "rules or dogma." Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 27.

support, they needed to embrace the diversity of the people who lived around their facility. From the beginning, they made every effort to make Playhouse inclusive.[214] It is not clear from the records, however, of the exact ethnicity of participants. On one occasion, a church group asked for Playhouse to "allow girls to come to demonstrate their folk dance" and the head workers give a presentation.[215] Unfortunately, some of the members of the Men's Club, who initially sought a segregated institution, did approve of or accept the policy of inclusiveness.[216]

The settlement, however, began to move away from typical settlement-type activities sometime in 1917. The Jelliffes desired to break boys and young men from their attachment to athletic activities, shifting instead toward artistic pursuits.[217] It was Rowena's belief that the arts would help counter racial divisions. In order to test this theory, the settlement put on their first play, *Cinderella*, in which the director cast blacks in the roles of the fairy godmother and Cinderella.[218] The theater productions that followed offered integrated casts, often with plays with African American subject matter written by "both black and white authors."[219]

By the early 1920's the community was in flux. As black migration from the south continued, immigrants moved out of the Central Avenue area. There was no escape for most blacks as financial constraints and restrictive covenants prevented them from moving out of the area. As such, Playhouse Settlement began to segregate over time. A group of young people who participated in events at the settlement decided to organize a theatrical group. [This is confusing since you had theatrical events in the previous paragraph. They originally named themselves the

[214] Kenneth Kusmer argues that the Jelliffes aimed the original programs at groups other than African Americans and the Jelliffe's goals included having a "biracial community center." Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 216-7.
[215] Karamu Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society.
[216] Kusmer, *A Ghetto Takes Shape*, 217.
[217] On January 21, 1918, several resolutions passed at an evening meeting. The idea at this point was to find other activities for the young men.
[218] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 41.
[219] These productions caused divisiveness in the community, as some did not like the portrayals of African Americans in some productions. Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 41-50; Blood, "Theatre in Settlement Houses," 53.

Dumas Dramatic Club.[220] However, after Charles Gilpin, the African American actor who gained fame as the original Emperor Jones, came to Cleveland they renamed themselves the Gilpin Players in his honor.[221] Theatrical performances gradually dominated the Playhouse's work.[222] By the late 1920's, the settlement changed its name to Karamu, which is Swahili for "a place of joyful meetings."[223]

As white and immigrants continued to move from the Central Avenue area in the years following World War I, the black residents realized that segregation would be the norm. Even men like George Myers and Harry Smith came to realize that they had fought a losing battle. Most bided their time or resorted to other methods as they sought to effect change in the city.[224] The Playhouse Settlement, however, never enforced segregation. The facility catered to all who desired to participate in its services. Not until the late 1920's and early 1930's, as white and immigrant families continued to move from the Central Avenue district, did the settlement become segregated. Rowena Jelliffe recognized the importance of bringing African Americans and their experiences into "the larger American culture" with the promotion of their "specific artistic heritage."[225] To do this successfully, the Jelliffes had to listen to the concerns of the African American community. Black residents repeatedly told the white men of Second Presbyterian they did not want a segregated settlement. Russell and Rowena Jelliffe, against the wishes of the Men's Club, offered the community an integrated facility. Other forces beyond their control caused the settlement's segregation.

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[220] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 43.
[221] Gilpin was one of the most successful African American actors of the early twentieth century.
[222] Blood, "Theatre in Settlement Houses, 49.
[223] Selby, *Beyond Civil Rights*, 3.
[224] Phillips discusses how Southern migrants become some of the most vocal in challenging the status quo following; they are unwilling to accept segregation and the lack of opportunity in their adopted home. See specifically chapters 6 and 7.
[225] Blood, "Theatre in Settlement Houses," 57.

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