DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER
ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE PLACE OF ITS PROGRAM IN THE COMMUNITY

BY

ALICE ELIZABETH ANDREWS
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THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY ALICE ELIZABETH ANDREWS

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BE ACCEPTED* AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

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* Subject to successful final examination in the case of the doctorate.
† Required for doctor's degree but not for master's.

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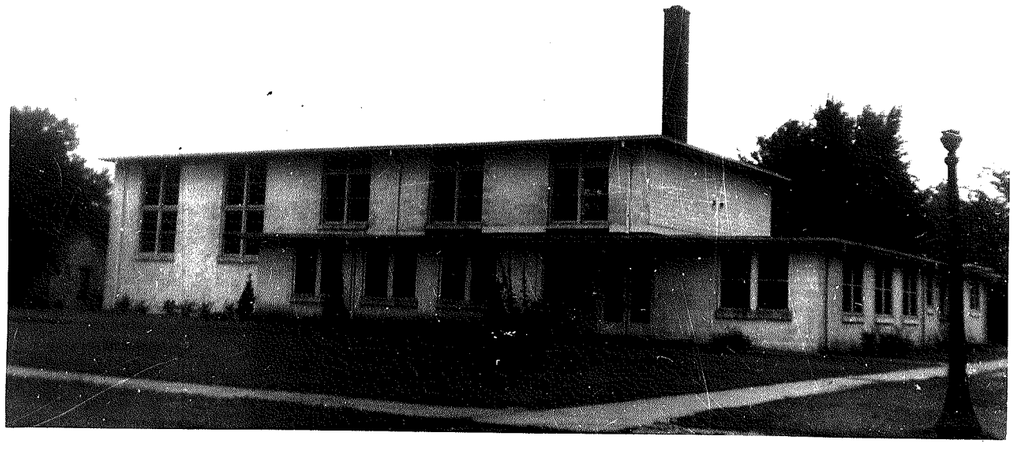
PREFACE

I wish to express my sincerest appreciation to Dr. Marietta Stevenson, Mr. Paul Simon, Mr. R. M. Scott, and the many others who gave their time and assistance in the preparation of this thesis.

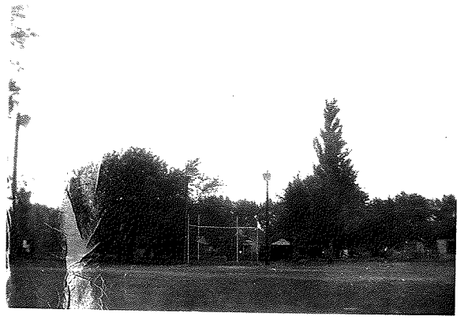
Alice Andrews



Douglass Community Center

East door to Center to Park

Picnic Area
House in background was
514 E. Tremont Center



Softball Diamond

Swings

Tennis Courts
Croquet Court in foreground

Shuffleboard

INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents the history and development of Douglass Community Center. Looking at the recreation and community facilities available prior to the establishment of the Douglass Community Center, one can understand the need that was partially met when the program of the Center was originated.

The establishment of this Community Center represents some of the phases of community organization and the methods that are involved in bringing about the objectives of many groups to reach a common goal that is satisfactory.

The material presented in this thesis was secured through newspaper files, interviews with individuals who were closely connected with the various phases of the project, information made available from the files of the Champaign Council of Social Agencies and Community Chest, and the author's experience as a Field Work Placement at Douglass Community Center.

Chapter I

THE BACKGROUND THAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

Characteristics of the Communities

The twin cities of Champaign and Urbana are located in East Central Illinois approximately one hundred twenty-eight miles south of Chicago. The cities are the home of the University of Illinois which had during the school year 1947-48 a total of 21,159 [1]resident students plus an academic and nonacademic staff of 4,690.[2] The activities of the University and the services needed by a body as large as the students and staff is considered the primary interest of the communities.

The second important interest is serving as a trading center for a radius of thirty miles in what is considered one of the best land areas in the United States.

Although Champaign-Urbana cannot be considered industrial cities, manufacturing is not negligible. Such products as drop forgings, road machinery, cement products, bleachers, soybean products, gloves, and academic apparel are produced.

The two cities have separate local governments which stimulates some rivalry, but there is cooperation among the citizens and organizations for the most part. The present

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1 University of Illinois Registrar's office, Mr. Ellington

2 Office of nonacademic Personnel, University of Illinois
Bureau of Institutional Research, University of Illinois

population of the twin cities is estimated to be nearly seventy thousand.

Within the twin cities the majority of the Negro population live in an area of the northeast corner of Champaign and northwest corner of Urbana. The area extends north from Washington Street, Champaign, which becomes Beslin Street in Urbana to the city limits about seven or eight blocks, extending ten to twelve blocks east and west. The Negro population in 1940 was 2,106 which was 5.5 percent of the combined population of the twin cities.[3] The total population of the twin cities has increased since 1940 to an estimated 53,000; 70,000 including the student enrollment.[4]

Housing conditions have been an acute problem for members of the community, but especially for the Negro population. Many Negro families have had to live in small crowded homes without the modern conveniences of running water or bathrooms. Several small houses can be seen standing on one normal sized lot. These conditions make it difficult for the children and young people to have the necessary space in which to carry on their few activities.

Facilities Available in the Communities Prior to Douglass Community Center

Recreation and community facilities prior to the

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3 16th Census of the United States 1940, Second Series. Characteristics of Population, prepared under supervision of Dr. Leon C. Truesdell, Chief Statistics for Population. See Appendix A

4 Chamber of Commerce, Champaign, Illinois

establishment of Douglass Community Center were relatively few. Douglass Park was the only recreational area provided for that part of the twin cities for many years. The facilities for the Negro young people and children were limited too because of some discrimination. There was no place to hold dances or any of their group activities. The taverns located in North Champaign were the places that the young people could have a date or spend their leisure time.[5]

Two centers were opened in 1937. In May of that year an education center[6] sponsored by the office of the County Superintendent of Schools was opened at 707 North Fifth Street in Champaign. It was primarily for adult participation. Instruction classes were given daily in cooking, sewing, dressmaking, French, reading, arithmetic, English, Negro history, and hygiene. Manual training and a glee club were added sometime later. The Education Center was in a house that had been repainted and repaired by interested persons in the community. Some of the business firms had donated equipment.

It was not until December of 1937, that a recreation center[7] was opened at 514 East Tremont Street, Champaign, by the Champaign Recreation Commission. The center was in a six room house on the west side of Douglass Park. The Champaign-Urbana Junior Women's Club cooperated with the Recreation Commission

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5 Interview April 1948 with Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary, Champaign County Community Chest.

6 Champaign-Urbana Courier Newspaper, May 24, 1937.

7 Op. cit. , November 30, 1937

in repairing and furnishing the new center. The Douglass Area Committee directed the activities of the center. The center provided a program of social activities, crafts, music, dramatics, and leisure time activities for all ages.[8] The staff consisted of sixteen people financed by the W P A and N Y A.[9]

The program in Douglass Park Area prior to the establishment of the Tremont Center had been conducted in Lawhead and Willard grade schools located in Champaign.[10]

The pre-school program was continued at Lawhead school after the other center activities were begun at the Tremont Center under the direction of one woman and with the cooperation of the school principal. An Athletic program was continued at Willard school using the playgrounds when the weather permitted.

The recreation program and pre-school program were partially financed by the Works Project Administration funds until they were liquidated in 1943.

In 1940 the house at 514 East Tremont was resold to its previous owner which made it necessary to move the Center's program to other quarters. Temporary facilities were used in the basement of the C M E Church, corner of Fifth and Grove, one block west of Douglass Park.[11] The basement was small and inadequate, and therefore limited the activities that could be

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8 Champaign News-Gazette, November 19, 1937 and December 4, 1937.

9 Interview with Mrs. Irma Bridgewater, Staff member Tremont Center, and Douglass Center in 1945.

10 Op.cit. , November 19, 1937

11 Interview with Miss Hazel Iungerich, Director of Recreation Commission, Champaign, Illinois, February, 1948.

carried on. Shuffleboard and pingpong were the games for which there was equipment available. The women's activities centered mainly around sewing with some handwork. The Center was housed in the church basement for one year, when another move was made to the American Legion Hall. The activities of the Center were limited to pingpong and dancing for the young people.

In October, 1943, the Champaign Recreation Commission opened a "youth center" entitled the Beardsley Center, 1302½ North Champaign Street in Champaign.[12] The Beardsley Center was located next to the Beardsley Park. Although the Center was called a youth center, the program was to include women. The evenings were given to the junior and high school age groups. The women came to the Center in the afternoons until four o'clock when the grade school children came until six. The Center stopped operation when leadership was no longer available.[13]

With the war in 1941, there came a need to supply activities and facilities for the colored servicemen who were being stationed at Chanute Field and at the University of Illinois, in Champaign-Urbana. A U S O Center was established in the two basement rooms of the Lawhead school in Champaign. The Center was used to some extent by the community, but the program was primarily for the servicemen since the small space was a limiting factor. One night a week was given to the young

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12 Champaign News-Gazette Newspaper, September 27, 1943.

13 Interview with Mr. Taylor Thomas, Director of Douglass Center, July, 1948.

people. The U S O Center had been a substitute when Federal Works Agency funds were not granted for a new U S O Building that had been requested by the Champaign Recreation Commission and the Douglass Community Service Organization. Although the Negro citizens had begun thinking and working toward a community center in 1940, it was not until the rejection of the grant from the Federal Works Agency that the Douglass Community Service began to work on a center through their own efforts.

Chapter II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

Plan for Community Center Originated with the Negro Citizens

Recognizing the need for recreational and community facilities that was existing in the twin cities, Champaign and Urbana, a group of Negro citizens met together in the Spring of 1940 and organized a committee called the Douglass Community Service Organization. Its purpose was to start some movement towards a community center building. The first step necessary was the purchasing of ground upon which the building could be erected. In an open meeting of interested Negro citizens held sometime later following the formation of the Douglass Community Service Organization, plans were made to raise the funds needed to purchase the lots adjacent to Douglass Park at 510-512 East Grove Street in Champaign. These lots are on the southwest corner of the Park. The amount of money necessary to purchase the lots was $750.00.

In the first financial drive, contributions were received from individuals and organizations in Champaign. Entertainments and benefits were given to help raise the money. Sufficient funds were raised as a result of this drive to make the first payment of $375.00 in July of 1941.

The next campaign to secure funds was made in the fall of 1941. The primary purpose was to finish paying for the lots. Any additional money that was contributed would be put into a building fund. On December 7, 1941, in the last meeting

of the campaign, the committee members were rejoicing that they had reached their goal, when the attack on Pearl Harbor was announced. The committee did not know at that time what form their plans could take in light of the uncertain future.

Several months later in the early part of 1942, the Douglass Community Service Organization was advised by the Champaign Recreation Commission that there was a possibility of receiving Federal assistance through the Federal Works Agency to erect a building which would then serve as a servicemen's center for the duration of the war. After the war, the building could be used as a community center. The basis for this recommendation was the fact that Champaign and Urbana are only 17 miles from Chanute Field, a permanent Army Air Base, and nearer than any other cities of similar size. Many servicemen were also stationed at the University of Illinois located in Champaign-Urbana. Men stationed at both places used the twin cities for their leisure time activities.

Representatives from the Champaign Recreation Commission and the Douglass Community Service Organization worked several months compiling necessary information and drawing up a petition which was presented to the Federal Works Agency in the fall of 1942. When no definite word had been received concern-in acceptance or rejection, the Committee asked to meet with a government representative for a report regarding the petition. A government representative came to Champaign and reported to the Committee that their petition had been given careful consideration, but must be rejected because the number of Negro

servicemen stationed at Chanute Field did not warrant the federal grant for the servicemen's center. A minimum requirement of one thousand Negro servicemen was necessary for establishment of the center. Apparently at the time the Federal Works Agency made its investigation there were less than that number.

Joint Planning of Community Chest and Negro Citizens in the Communities.

The Douglass Community Service Organization made no further plans until July, 1943, when a meeting was held in the Lawhead school building with representatives from the Champaign County Home and War Chest. When the Douglass Community Service Organization was asked if they were still interested in the servicemen's and community center, they stated that they were. The Chest representatives expressed their willingness to assist in the redrafting of the petition and submitting it again to the Federal Works Agency for funds, although they had no assurance that it would be granted.

To reopen the project, the Mayor of Champaign communicated with the Regional Director of the Federal Works Agency in Chicago early in the month of August, 1943, to ask for the reconsideration of the building project because of the demands the war had placed on the community.

On August 24, 1943, the Regional Director of the Federal Works Agency acknowledge the reopening of the project and indicated that the F W A would need to know certain facts:

1. In what way the war connected need had changed since the first submission of the project.

2. Reasons supporting war connected need for Negro recreation facilities:

   a. Number of Negro troops stationed at Chanute Field.

   b. Number of Negro servicemen who came to Champaign-Urbana from time to time.

   c. General information which could be used in support of rejustification of project submitted.

The application to the Federal Works Agency was for $18,500.00 as a part of the $32,600.00 necessary for the construction of a building for Negro servicemen. The local community had agreed to raise the remaining $14,100.00 necessary. Some contributions had already been pledged:[1]

City Recreation Commission	$3,500.00
Champaign County Home and War Chest	2,500.00
Citizens of Urbana	2,000.00

The Negro organizations of the twin cities had promised to make contributions.

The project had the backing of the twin cities and of Chanute Field. The Urbana City Council voted unanimously that solicitations for contributions from the citizens of Urbana could be made in the amount of $2,000.00 and the members of the Association of Commerce pledged themselves as citizens of the community to help make such solicitations.[2]

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[1] The Champaign News-Gazette Newspaper, September 17, 1943.

[2] Letter from Champaign Chamber of Commerce to the War Department F W A, Washington D C, January 18, 1944.

The Champaign Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Federal Works Agency and urged consideration of the federal grant and expressed their cooperation.[3]

The commanding officer of Chanute Field gave his cooperation and endorsement to the project saying, "the temporary facilities now available in a school building have proven inadequate. The proposed construction will make it possible for the community to provide the activities necessary to good morale and efficiency of our colored soldiers. It is believed that this construction is essential to the war effort. Adequate facilities and programs are available on the field for the colored soldiers, but they are in need of off-post accommodations. Champaign located about 17 miles from Chanute is the only community within a radius of 50 miles having an appreciable colored population. Satisfactory bus transportation is in operation between Chanute Field and Champaign."[4]

Copies of the forms for repetitioning were requested and the information was compiled.

On September 10, 1943, the application was sent to the Regional Federal Works Agency office in Chicago where it had to be passed on by their board.

A week after the application had been submitted to the F W A Regional office in Chicago a reply was received by

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[3] Letter from Mr. Oscar Steer, President of Urbana Association of Commerce to Mr. Lyle Gallivan Executive Secretary, Community Chest Association, September 2, 1943.

[4] Letter from Mr. Walter T. Meyer, Colonel Air Corps Commanding Chanute Field, to Mr. William S. Robinson, Regional Federal Social Agency, Chicago, Illinois, September 8, 1943.

the Champaign committee that the grant for $18,500.00 to be used in the construction of the building for Negro soldiers was approved by them, but the final approval of the application must necessarily come from Washington, D. C. national office.

With this encouragement, the Negro citizens began their solicitations for funds in October, 1943.

In seeking acceptance of the project in Washington, many people were asked to assist. Colonel W. B. Hayes who was originally from the Champaign community was stationed at the Pentagon Building, Washington, D. C. He was asked to help in any way that he could to present the need in Champaign as he knew it to be. Illinois Senator Scott Lucas was also asked to help with the approval of the project that awaited its verdict in Washington.

In the first part of November, 1943, the Regional Director of the Federal Works agency notified the Mayor of Champaign that the national office had disapproved the subject project "without prejudice." Without prejudice meant that the War Department considered the present recreation facilities at Champaign for the number of Negro troops in the Chanute Field area as being adequate at that time. They would, however, reconsider the project in the event that a definite war need could be established for additional recreational facilities for Negro troops in Champaign.[5]

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5 Letter to Mr. R. L. Zombro, Mayor Protem, Champaign, Illinois from Mr. L. A. Gillett, Regional Director, Federal Works Agency, Region IV, Chicago, November 4, 1943.

When the Federal Works Agency rejected the application on the ground that there was insufficient number of colored soldiers and sailors stationed in the area to justify the expense of a building, it allotted funds to operate the Lawhead servicemen's center in two rooms of the basement of the Lawhead grade school.[6]

After the Federal works agency rejection, the committee felt that the funds for a center would have to be raised from other sources. The final payment on the lots was made in December, 1943. Then representatives from the Community Chest and the Douglass Community Service Organization formed a committee which had been recommended by the Champaign County Home and War Chest Executive Committee. The committee was named the Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee. They met for the first time on November 27, 1944, under their new title and discussed some of the recommendations made by the Champaign County Home and War Chest. First preliminary plans which had been submitted by the architect firm Berger and Kelley were considered. "It is the sense of this committee that a building can be erected in the near future such as would satisfy the minimum needs of the colored people of this community." [7] It was the feeling of the committee that additional facilities other than provided in the preliminary plans would

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[6] The Champaign-Urbana Courier, November 30, 1944.

[7] Meeting of Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee, minutes for November 27, 1944.

be desirable if funds were sufficient. They also discussed the operation and maintenance of the Center. The plan was that the building was to be deeded to the city of Champaign and the operation of the program and maintenance of the building would be under the supervision of the Champaign Recreation Commission.[8] The Champaign Recreation Commission had indicated its willingness on November 15, 1944, to "assume all operating and maintenance obligations in the event that a new Negro Community Center Building is erected and the title deeded to the city of Champaign"[9].

From the 1944 Champaign County Home and War Chest campaign conducted in the fall of 1943, $2,500.00 had been allocated from its surplus for the Negro Community Center.[10] In the last part of November, 1944, the Champaign County Home and War Chest Executive Committee considered a proposal that half of its $34,000.00 surplus ($17,000.00) on hand be allocated to the construction of a colored community center in North Champaign. Although the Board of the Home and War Chest was voted in favor of the proposal, they submitted the proposal to all of the 12,500 chest subscribers. This was done by sending a letter to each donor, presenting the proposal with the facts at hand and giving him an opportunity to vote for or against the expenditure. (See Appendix B)

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8 Meeting of Negro Community and Service Men's Center Building Committee, minutes for November 27, 1944.

9 Letter from Recreation Commission to Executive Secretary, Community Chest, November 15, 1944.

10 Champaign News-Gazette and Champaign Urbana Courier, November 30, 1944.

Twin City Community Committee Plan for a Community Center

At the time the Chest was considering the proposal to use part of the surplus money of the 1943 campaign, the Twin City Community Committee, a newly formed organization to promote the broad community needs of the Champaign-Urbana community, expressed its interest in the Douglass Community Center and wanted to cooperate financially and in any other way they could. The joint Advisory Council of the Twin City community committee was made up of both Negro and white members. When the Twin City Community Committee learned that the Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee were planning the maintenance and operation of the Center to be under the Champaign Recreation Department and the building to be deeded to the city of Champaign, they felt that it meant the Center would be involved in city politics and possibly be shuttled around. Their belief was expressed by their chairman in a letter to the subscribers of the Champaign County Home and War Chest which was addressed

> Fellow Citizen: "We do not believe that the citizens of Champaign County wish that their Community Chest become involved in city politics. Neither do we believe that the citizens of Champaign County wish that the needed solution of serious problems concerning the Negro minority and the entire Community become involved in city politics ... We renew our previously reiterated conviction that the greatest need of the Negro minority is for an organization of its own which can meet to discuss without interference its major problems, and to seek their solution through existing agencies." [11]

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[11] Letter December 18, 1944, to FELLOW CITIZEN from Donald A. Taft, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Joint Advisory Council of the Twin City Community Committee.

The Twin City Community Council wrote to Mr. Clifford Shaw, at that time Director of the Division of Delinquency for the State of Illinois, for information concerning the operation of community centers, privately controlled and with trained directors. Mr. Shaw sent a representative to Champaign to survey the situation to determine whether the Negro people in the community were ready to take the leadership and carry the responsibility of such a project. Mr. Shaw's belief is that natural leaders from within groups should be used and their future leaders will grow out of that experience.[12] The representative made a short survey. His statement to the Twin City Community Committee was that a definite need for such a center existed and that the people in the community were anxious to take responsibility for its program. As a result of this statement the Twin City Community Committee took a firm opposition to the plan presented by the Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee. The chairman of the T C C C made this statement: "Favoring a self-help plan in which ownership would rest in a joint bi-racial commission and management would be in the hands of the colored group with advice of a bi-racial group the Twin City Community Committee and its advisory council have opposed the Chest arrangements." [13]

The Douglass Community Service Organization was

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[12] Interview with Professor Donald A. Taft, April 1948.

[13] Statement by Professor Taft, Chairman of the Twin City Community Committee, in the Champaign-Urbana Courier, 1944.

opposed to the position of the Twin City Community Committee and declared that a position for "self-help center" did not represent the viewpoint of the masses of the colored people in the community. Following is the statement which they had published in the Champaign-Urbana Courier Newspaper:

> "It appears that a number of the Home and War Chest subscribers are confused by the letter received from Professor Donald Taft, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Advisory group of the Twin City Community Committee. Some think that they are to decide as to whether they wish the proposed Negro Community Center building to be owned by the city Recreation Commission or whether it shall be privately owned and controlled."
>
> "This is not the case. As it appears to us there is no alternative. The only question is whether we have a city owned building or no building at all as there are no other provisions made in the money already raised or that offered by the Chest providing the subscribers agree."
>
> "The effort for a community building was begun in 1941 by the Douglass Community Service Organization. The movement was supported by thirty-two Negro Civic, Social, and Fraternal organizations of the twin cities."
>
> "Negro citizens of the community have contributed $3,000.00 to the building fund with the understanding and knowledge that the building would become the property of the city."
>
> "The five Negro members of the joint Advisory Council of the Twin City Community Committee have approved this plan, and two of its members served on the campaign for funds committee. This however, was before the Twin City Community Committee was organized."
>
> "The Chest committee plans to supplement the fund originally promised but later refused by the federal government."
>
> "While the Twin City Community Committee's letter may meet unanimous approval of the five white and five colored members of its advisory group, the Chest proposal meets the approval of the masses of Negroes who are to served by it, and the masses feel that the Chest proposal gives the only assurance of a building and of

a permanent maintenance and program."

"We do not feel that the city ownership of such a building will make it a political football any more than our city library or hospital, which are city owned, and tax supported."

"Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the need for such a building, and its use will be more urgent when our boys return from the war to a rehabilitation program."

"The committee of the Douglass Community Service Organization urges that you sign and vote favorably on the Home and War Chest proposal as a delay or an attempted change of policy may mean the loss of a much-needed building." [14]

Following the ten day period allotted for voting upon the use of half of the Chest surplus funds, the voting indicated that the majority of the Chest subscribers were in favor of the proposal.[15] With this favorable expression from the Chest subscribers, the Board felt that it was empowered to allocate the $17,000.00 of the Chest surplus to the Douglass Community Center building.

The Champaign Civic Foundation was formally asked to accept the title of the Douglass Community Center building. This Foundation was created in February of 1944 when one of the citizens made a gift of $5,000.00 to the city. It was created as a non-profit corporation to accept and administer gifts and bequests for civic, benevolent, educational, and charitable purposes benefiting the city of Champaign and its citizens. Although the initial gift was made without restrictions or qualifications the by-laws of the Foundation have been drawn

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[14] The Champaign-Urbana Courier Newspaper, December, 1944.

[15] See Appendix C

so that it may also accept grants to be administered for specific purposes.[16]

The Champaign Civic Foundation was asked to accept the title of the building because the committee felt that since it was a non-profit, non-political organization, it would reassure those individuals and groups who had opposed the Chest plan of operation of the Community Center.[17]

On January 16, 1945, in a meeting of the Board of Directors, the Champaign Civic Foundation resolved to accept the title to the building that was to be the community center.

The Twin City Community Committee expressed their approval of this plan to deed the proposed community center to a non-political body.[18] However, the Committee still supported the idea to have a program of adult and childhood education and welfare that fall outside the regular work of the Recreation Commission. The Committee informed the Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee about the possibility of securing trained leadership through Mr. Clifford Shaw. This could be done at state expense if it was clear that all groups were harmoniously cooperating on the project.[19] The Twin City Community Committee felt that such a worker would in no way interfer with the regular program of the Recreation Commission,

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16 The Champaign News-Gazette, February 27, 1944

17 Interview June 1948 with Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary of the Community Chest at the time project was begun.

18 Letter to Mr. Gallivan from Mrs. A. W. Clevenger, Secretary of Executive Committee of Joint Advisory Council, Twin City Community Committee, January 17, 1945

19 Letter to the Community Chest Executive Secretary, Mr. Gallivan from Professor Donald Taft, January 17, 1945

but would reenforce it. The Twin City Community Council asked that the Community Chest Building Committee of the Negro Community Center meet with Mr. Shaw to investigate a possible plan. A joint meeting was held on January 30, 1945, although Mr. Shaw was not present. No decision was made at this time and another meeting was called for February.

On the first of February, the Recreation Commission formally passed a resolution to accept the responsibility of the operation and maintenance of the Douglass Community Center. The Champaign Recreation Commission then leased the building from the Champaign Civic Foundation for $1.00 per year. This is the present plan of operation and maintenance.

On February 12, 1945, a report on money available up to that time showed $31,375.00. Items for the building expense were listed as follows:[20]

Base bid	$29,461.00
Addition to gym	3,286.00
Extending meeting room	640.00
Adding 20 x 30	1,729.00

On February 21, 1945, the Negro Community and Servicemen's Center building committee met. Nothing definite was done concerning the problem of securing a director at this time. The balance on hand which had been collected from the contributions and fund drives was voted to be placed in the hands of the building committee to be used in the construction of the Negro Community building. Thirty-three thousand dollars in

[20] Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee, Minutes of February 12, 1945 meeting.

cash was available at that time.

In a letter dated February 23, 1945 to Mr. Isaac Kuhn, treasurer of the U S O Fund Drive in 1942, the Executive Secretary of the Community Chest stated that the building committee for the Negro Servicemen's and Community Building was in need of additional funds for the erection of the building. It was the understanding of the committee members that a balance on hand of $997.76 from the 1942 U S O campaign still existed, and they requested that this amount be allocated to use in the construction of the building.[21] In a report on contributions to the Negro Servicemen's and Community Center, the amount of $1,005.41 labeled U S O Fund was allocated to the building fund. (See appendix D.)

The Douglass Community Service Organization had conducted a funds campaign which brough in additional funds amounting to $1,600.00. Other funds were gifts contributed by Champaign and Urbana citizens, organizations, and business firms.

On February 13, 1945, the contracts [22] were let to begin building the Center. Some revisions of the plans which would give additional space and facilities in the building were added when it was apparent that sufficient money was available.[23]

The first spade of dirt for the erection of the building was turned February 18, 1945, by a young serviceman from Champaign who was home on furlough at that time.

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21 Letter to Mr. Isaac Kuhn, treasurer of 1942 U S O Campaign, from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary Community Chest, February 23, 1945.

22 See Appendix E

23 See Appendix F

The furnishings for the Center were secured through the United Service Organization from U S O units that were being closed. The major part of the furniture was received from the U S O Center in Macomb, Illinois, in July before the building was opened for use.

The building was completed in the middle of September and the official opening and dedication was held Sunday, September 23, 1945. The program was conducted by the Community Chest and Building Committee members. The two mayors of the twin cities were present. Nearly three hundred people who had waited and worked for over five years attended the dedication to see the Center in reality.

Maintenance and Operation

A. Finance

The Champaign Recreation Commission assumed the administrative duties and financial obligations of operating and maintaining the Center as had been agreed which amounted to approximately $6,000.00 a year. In order to maintain an adequate program which would serve the community and also the servicemen, government funds which had been granted from the Federal Works Agency for the Lawhead School U S O Center in 1943 were available until June 30, 1946. By that time the number of Negro servicemen stationed in the Champaign area had diminished and the funds were discontinued for that reason. To offset the loss of federal assistance and to help with the servicemen's program which was still in effect, application was made to the National United Service Organization for funds. The application

was approved and a grant of $200.00 per month for six months was made beginning July 1946. The funds were to be administered by the U S O area council for salaries and other expenses of a recreation program for Negro servicemen. These funds were not to pass through the city department of recreation.[24] However, the U S O funds were deposited with Recreation Commission. The $200.00 allottment was cut to $175.00 per month January, 1947 because the U S O Area Council felt that there was not as great a need at that time.[25]

In March of 1947, the U S O funds were reduced to $100.00 a month and stopped entirely the following July. Since then financial support of the Center has been borne by the Recreation Commission supplemented occasionally by contributions from interested individuals and organizations.

Because the Advisory Committee and the executive director of the Center felt that the financial support was inadequate for the program in operation, application was made to the Champaign Community Chest April 28, 1948, for additional funds.[26]

Out of the $6,000.00 - $7,000.00 budget supplied by the Champaign Recreation Commission for Douglass Center, a little over $5,000.00 is spent for the combined salaries of the executive director, assistant director, and custodian. Heat,

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24 News-Gazette, July 17, 1946; and August 4, 1946.

25 Mr. Taylor Thomas, Director of Douglass Community Center

26 Letter to Champaign Community Chest from Mrs. Odelia Wesley, Secretary of Advisory Board, Douglass Community Center, April 28, 1948

light, water, and program equipment just be paid from the balance of the money.[27] For this reason, the Advisory Committee felt justified in asking for approximately $5,000.00 to supplement the amount that was allotted the Center by the Recreation Commission.[28]

The application was referred to the Council of Social Agencies for its recommendation. The Council had established a special committee to study this question. The recommendation to the Council of Social Agencies was:

"1. That the Council of Social Agencies ask the Community Chest for a clarification of Chest policy in regard to furnishing funds for agencies supported in whole or in part by public funds.

2. That the Council of Social Agencies ask the Community Chest for an opinion as to the possibility of the Chest supporting Douglass Community Center if the Center were to no longer receive any public funds.

3. That the Council express its willingness to make a detailed study of the program of Douglass Community Center, if such study is still desired by the Community Chest after their consideration of points no. 1 and 2 above." [29]

It was the belief of the Board of Directors of the Council of Social Agencies that "there was a real danger of the Chest supplementing public funds since such a policy would make it possible and probable that the public agencies would tend to decrease their proportionate share, and would open the door to requests for Chest funds from all sorts of publicly

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27 Interview with Mr. Taylor Thomas, Director of Douglass Center, June 1948

28 Letter to Champaign Community Chest from Mrs. Odelia Wesley, Secretary of Advisory Board, Douglass Center, April 28, 1948

29 Taken from the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors Community Chest of Champaign County, July 14, 1948

supported agencies."[30]

Although they recognized the values of Douglass Community Center, the Directors of the Community Chest declared that their policy was not to supplement an agency which is operated with tax-raised funds. At that time the Community Chest voted that they could not see any possibility of supporting entirely the Couglass Community Center.[31]

B. Personnel

When the Center was opened in September 1945, the two U S O employees - director and assistant for the U S O program conducted in Lawhead Grade School were employed on a temporary basis to begin the Douglass Center program. Both women were planning to terminate their service in the U S O as soon as the Board would replace them with permanent employees. The permanent director was employed the first of November 1945 and continued until his resignation effective August 1948. The director was without an assistant until the first of January 1946. Within the next two years and a half, the Center has employed four assistant directors and three custodians. A young woman was employed in 1946 as assistant director and in charge of the girls activities. The rapid turnover of employees has made it difficult to inaugurate and maintain a program for young people and adults who were unaccustomed to

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30 From the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of Council of Social Agencies, July 9, 1948

31 From the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Community Chest of Champaign County, July 14, 1948.

using facilities such as Douglass Center can provide.[32]

C. Advisory Committee

The formation of the Advisory Committee for Douglass Center was begun in November 1944 in a meeting of the Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee as follows: "----The general supervision of the facilities of the building should be turned over to an Advisory Committee, the majority of whom should be of the colored race" [33] and based upon a motion proposed and carried which conveyed their thinking in regard to forming an Advisory Committee.

A joint meeting of the Champaign Recreation Commission and the Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee was held on December 11, 1944, to discuss the possibility of forming an Advisory Committee to assume the responsibility of making policies for the operation of the Center. It was hoped that such a Committee would have a majority of Negroes to work with the Recreation Commission in the over-all planning of the program for the proposed building. There was some opposition expressed, but the general feeling of the two committees was that the plan as proposed was feasible and could be operated successfully.[34]

The Twin City Community Committee expressed similar recommendations. They felt that the Advisory Council for Douglass Center should be a bi-racial council and should

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[32] Interview with Director of Douglass Center, Mr. Taylor Thomas, June, 1948

[33] Minutes of the Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee Meeting, November 27, 1944

[34] Joint meeting of Champaign Recreation Commission and Negro Building Committee, December 11, 1944.

carry a maximum of responsibility in deciding policies and to convince the public that the welfare of the Negro Community will be a first objective. The Committee recommended that the Chest make provision for regular monthly meetings of the proposed Adivsory Council and that the educational authorities of both cities be represented.[35]

The Building Committee decided that the Advisory Committee for the Center would consist of eleven members who "would assist in the operation of the new Douglass Community Center. This committee is to act and assist the Champaign Recreation Commission activities of the Center so that the building may be of the greatest benefit tothe inhabitants to be served."[36] The Community groups asked to appoint representatives in forming the Advisory Committee were : Champaign Board of Education, one member; Urbana Board of Education, one member; Champaign Recreation Commission, one member; Champaign County Community Chest, two members; and six members to be elected at a meeting of the adult Negro citizens of Champaign County by private ballot. "The first election shall be at the call of the Building Committee of Douglass Community Center and yearly elections shall be held thereafter during the month of April under the supervision of the Douglass Park Community Center Advisory Committee. At the

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35 Twin City Community Committee meeting, minutes for January 12, 1945

36 Letters to Champaign Board of Education, Urbana Board of Education, Champaign County Community Chest, and Champaign Recreation Commission from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary of Community Chest, March 5, 1945.

first election the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be elected for a three year term of office, the two receiving the next largest number of votes is to have the term of two years and the remaining two elected for terms of one year. At the yearly election held thereafter two shall be elected for a term of three years.

"The other five members are appointed. At the first regular meeting of the Advisory Committee, the members appointed shall by lot determine their length of appointment. One member to serve for one year, two members for two years, and two members for three years. Succeeding appointments shall be for three years." [37]

The Douglass Center Building Committee realized that the building they had helped erect and the program put into action was just a beginning in meeting the need that exists in the twin cities today. The center feels limited in its ability to function adequately because of the limited budget and small staff.

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[37] Ibid, note 36

Chapter III

PROGRAM OF DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

First Year

When the Community Center was opened for the first time in September 1945, the U S O program was brought to Douglass Center from the Lawhead U S O Center. The U S O part of the Center's program was financed by federal funds under the Federal Works Agency until June of 1946. These federal funds had been used for the Lawhead U S O program. The remainder of the Center's program was operated by the Recreation Commission. The director of the Lawhead U S O was employed as director of the Douglass Center program on a temporary basis until a permanent director was found. The assistant director from the Lawhead U S O was employed as an assistant and remained with the program until her husband who was in service returned in late November of 1945. The Center was open to servicemen at all times with Sunday evenings from six to ten reserved especially for them. Hostesses were provided and the usual entertainment was dancing.

In addition to the U S O program for the Negro servicemen, activities were begun for the young people and adults of the community. The majority of the young people had never had the experience of participating in a community center program. The general conception of a center was a place to go and make friends and was a place where they could dance. The first few months there was dancing every night with some game equipment available for such games as ping pong if

anyone was interested in other activities.

In November of 1945, when the permanent director came to the Center, a varied program was inaugurated. Dances were limited to one night a week, on Saturdays. If there was a paid dance, a dance with an orchestra brought either by the Center or some special group admission was charged to cover the expense of the orchestra. The paid dances were usually on Saturday nights and when they were scheduled Friday evenings would be used for free dancing nights. This policy has been in force for the duration of the program. Limiting the dance nights made an opportunity for other types of activity, although it was met at first with disapproval of the young people. Clubs were started for the girls and boys. In the first year there were two basketball teams for boys: a junior team and a senior team. The Junior team was made up of boys who were junior and seniors high age or older. A girl's basketball team was also started for the high school age. Five clubs were organized in that first year. Three were girl's clubs; one, junior high age; and two, senior high age. These clubs were primarily social in their activities. The one group that was organized for the boys at that time was an orchestra made up of the high school age. The group paid dues which were used for the boys to take their lessons for the particular instrument that they had chosen to play. Their meetings were spent in practicing together as an orchestra. Some of the members became proficient enough to have several bands seek them as professional players. This eventually was the main reason that the group disbanded about

a year after its formation.

The Teen-age Club was formed in the early summer of 1946 for girls and boys who were in their teens. They elected a mayor and setup a police force. One of their main purposes was to help improve the conduct of the participants of the Center. Those belonging to the Teen-age Club were entitled to a membership card which gave the members entrance to all Douglass Center events at half price. Each card was authorized by the Director's signature. The adult leadership of the club was under the assistant director until she resigned in the fall of 1946. There was no one to take her place immediately and the Teen-age Club gradually disbanded.

The activities that first summer were confined primarily to a program in the Park. Organized games included softball, shuffleboard, hopscotch, horseshoe, and croquet. Tournaments were held among the various city parks. For these activities conducted in the Park the age division for the boys was 6-8, 9-11, 12-14, 15-17 and 18 years old and up. For the girls the age division was different. There were three groups; senior high, junior high and grade school. The program that first summer has been the pattern for the following summers and has changed very little.

A Douglass Center Field Day was inaugurated the first summer that the Center was open. The day was set aside for all boys and girls to participate in various competitive sports. The entire day was given over to these events. Awards in the form of ribbons were presented to the winners in the various

contests. The first summer the boys participated enthusiastically, but the girls showed very little interest in participating. The Douglass Park Field Day has become a tradition in the program.

The Douglass Park Field Day is similar to the city-wide field day which is held at the end of the summer and includes all the city parks. It is called a Gypsy Round-up. Everyone takes his own lunch and plans to spend the entire day.

Second Year

In the second year of the program the athletic program was enlarged. The boys basketball teams were better organized and participated in the city league games and often in out-of-town games. The high school girls formed a basketball team which was most active and had specific games scheduled to play. They also played out-of-town games.

In the fall of 1946 there were three more clubs added. A sewing clubs whose membership consisted of adult women was begun. There were no sewing machines available so their activities were confined to handwork, knitting, and crotcheting. The group consisted of approximately thirty-five members and now is one of the most active clubs at the Center.

A Girl Scout troop was organized that fall and met at Douglass Center. The group was extremely active until it lost its leadership a year after they were organized. Another club that formed at that time was a girls drill team of approximately twenty-five members, age 10-16. They met weekly for drilling and were dependent on volunteer leadership. The team participated

in out-of-town contests and was often a winner. When their leader was unable to meet with the group it meant is disbandonment.

A young girls married group was also formed that year. Their activities are primarily social; dances and picnics. They have contributed to the Center's program financially and have given such things as venetian blinds for two of the meeting rooms. This group is also active at the present time.

In that year, the University Young Women's Christian Association sent two volunteer students to assist with some of the groups of girls which met during the school year. The groups were mainly play groups and met once a week ending their program with a picnic. The leaders take their groups to the annual Y W C A doll show which is held at the University Y W C A on the campus.

Third and Present Year

In the fall of 1947 several new groups were organized. One of the new groups was a club for girls ages twelve to fourteen. The girls who were the first members felt that they wanted to have their membership closed and that they would vote in any new members. They named their club the Polly Pigtails after the name of one of the popular magazines for teen age girls. Their program varies from games to handicraft. The climax of their activities culminated in a spring carnival which they themselves sponsor. They plan the entire program and invite all those who participate in the Douglass Center program and the community to attend. They charge a small admission fee because

one of their purposes in giving the carnival is to make money. The Carnival program is made up of side shows and the evening ends with the main attraction which is similar to a variety show. Usually no other Cente. groups are invited to participate in the show; however, a rhythm band was formed in February of 1948 and they were asked to play as a specialty number. This club also raises money from concessione at the basketball games and the dances held at the Center. The girls usually bring the weiners and buns from home in order to sell at a greater profit.

Another group that was begun in the fall was the Brownie Scout troop. This group was active until the first of 1948, when it was turned over to volunteer leadership due to the limited time of the assistant director. The troop gradually discontinued because there did not seem to be sufficient interest on the part of the volunteers.

A boys choral group was organized that fall under the leadership of a student man at the University of Illinois. Some of their meetings were spent in listening and discussing some types of music which gave the group an understanding of kinds of music. When the student was no longer able to continue with his leadership, the director of the Center took over the leadership of the group. A mixed chorus was formed specifically for the Christmas season that winter under the guidance of the director of the Center. They were asked to sing carols down town Champaign.

Also at this time the Champaign-Urbana Kindergarten was organized to provide a program for the very young children.

The kindergarten was started again after the Washington Street Nursery in Champaign was closed when W P A funds were no longer available. A committee of mothers both Negro and white met in the summer of 1947. They consulted Dr. Perkins, Professor of Home Economics, at the University of Illinois, who specializes in Child Development. She gave her assistance in supervising the project that was to begin in the fall. The Champaign-Urbana Kindergarten committee began making plans to raise funds and to collect equipment to use for the kindergarten. When the kindergarten was first opened, the enrollment was limited due to a small staff. Dr. Perkins was the supervisor and there were two paid Negro teachers under her. The remainder of the teachers were recruited from volunteer University students and community people. This was not a satisfactory arrangement because the volunteers could not always be available. The second semester, Dr. Perkins remained as supervisor with two paid teachers. The rest of the staff were University graduate students in Child Development who were required to do some practice teaching.

The kindergarten is for both Negro and white and is set up for only ages four and five with the present enrollemtn of fifty to sixty. The kindergarten committee looks forward to the time when the younger children can have a similar program. The kindergarten is open from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. each afternoon Monday through Friday, except during the summer months. It is the hope of the Committee that in the future they will be able to provide a full day nursery program.

The kindergarten is independent financially of Douglass Center and has its own adivisory committee made up of both Negro and white members. The kindergarten pays the Recreation Commission for the heat, light and water that are used while they have possession of the building from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. and supplement the janitor's salary. Janitorial services are needed to move the kindergarten equipment from the gym to the storage room in order that the Douglass Center program can continue. This moving of the equipment is necessary each afternoon that the kindergarten is in session.

In February 1948 the Division of Social Welfare Administration at the University of Illinois made arrangements with the Champaign Recreation Commission and Douglass Center for a field work placement for two students in group work for one semester. The man student started a boys group ages eleven to fourteen with their interest focused on a rhythm band as their activity. The group began making their instruments, and then they learned how to play with several jazz phonograph records. The peak of their activity was being asked by the Polly Pigtails to participate in the Spring Carnival. This group met weekly on Saturday mornings.

The other student who was a girl worked with two of the groups of girls. One group had been formed from the girls who had been active in the Brownie Troop until it was discontinued. The group was reorganized in February 1948 under the name of the Blue Ribbon Club. The girls were nine through twelve years of age and were interested in being as much like the Polly

Pigtails as possible. The student leader was interested in the group work process and tried to use various activities that would be of interest to the group and be valuable in the group work process. The activities were handicraft and sewing of skirts interspersed with games and a picnic.

The other group the student led was a new group made up of young girls from six through eight years who were constant users of the Center on girls afternoons, but for whom no special program had been planned. The activities were based around their interested indicated verbally or by their behavior.

Beside these organized groups, limited equipment is available for young people to drop in at the Center and enjoy an hour or two of activities of their own choosing.

In the summer of 1948 a Boy Scout Troop was started and it is hoped that it will be able to continue the year round.

The Wars Mother Club which had been formed before the Center was built meets in the Center every two weeks. Members of the Club are women who all had or have sons in the service. Their purpose is to assist servicemen and the veterans in whatever way that they can. They raise their funds by sponsoring various programs during the year.

Outside groups may use the Center building, a rental fee which is used to supplement the budget is asked if the group charges admission for their event. The fee is determined by the amount the group requesting the Center charges for the event they are sponsoring. Groups that use the Center are the Legion Auxiliary, Junior Elks, Legion Post, County

Legion Post meetings, Masons, and Jehovah Witnesses.

Adults are welcome at the Center at all times. Their participation is mainly through their participation in the groups that meet at Douglass Center, but occasionally they use the Center to stop and relax and read or play some games.

Some of the programs that the Center sponsors are educational movies, and health programs. These meetings usually stimulate discussions and are usually well attended.

One of the small rooms at the Center is being used for a library. Books have been given the Center from interested individuals until there are several hundred. It was the project of a university student and librarian to begin cataloging the books. This is not completed, but the books are available for use.

The Center is a member of the National Association of Recreation which enables its leaders to know of recreational ideas and programs throughout the United States. Conferences are held for recreational leaders for training and exchange of ideas. The Center is also a member of the Champaign Council of Social Agencies.

The attendance for the past three years at the Center activities is interesting to note. When the Center was opened in the fall of 1945, the attendance was approximately from 1,000 to 1,100 weekly. At the time that the program was changed from every night dancing to one night a week, when groups were being organized, and boys and girls were given separate days for their activities at the Center except on weekends, the

Center attendance dropped to approximately 800-900 a week. The young people seemed uninterested in such a program and stayed away. Gradually as the program organization became more familiear to those who did participate, they convinced others that the various activities were interesting. The attendance increased to previous attendance and beyond. The estimated attendance at the present time is nearly 1,200 per week.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of Douglass Community Center has provided partial fulfillment of the many needs for the Negro residents of Champaign-Urbana. The center has provided the opportunity for these people for cultivating new interests and participation in activities of their own choosing and often their own instigation. The program of the center has been built to serve the people in many different areas of need, for children, young people and adults. Library facilities are available to them. Educational programs concerning health and welfare are brought before the various groups. The athletic program is a large part of the center's activities for almost every age level. There is some group or club to which every individual may belong and have the experience of group association. The programs of these groups or clubs are built around the interests under the participation of the leadership of the Douglass Community Center staff with the aid of University Students from the Social Welfare Administration Division or organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association or the Young Women's Christian Association and churches. The author who was a field work student from the Social Welfare Administration School at the center could observe that the program at the Douglass Community Center had given its participants an opportunity to grow and realize many fields of interest never before open to them.

The center has never been underable to get and train

leadership which has brought about a steady growth of a constructive program. The community has begun to realize what a center can provide and have used the facilities available. This growth has meant that the community center has thought of expanding its program, staff, and physical plant in light of the increased usage of the center and participation in the program. Douglass Community Center was not planned as an end in itself and is still in a stage of development. The financial status of the center does not allow for this expansion at the present time. Effort was made to secure Community Chest support. The application was refused on the center's method of being financed. Since it has a public supported program, the policy of the Chest made it impossible for the center to become a member of the Chest. This seems to be a sound policy and it would seem that the responsibility lies with the citizens of the two communities whose taxes support but are inadequate for the needs of the center to be met.

The operation of the center is under the auspices of the Recreation Commission with the policy making in the hands of an advisory board. This board gives the staff of the center full power to determine how the general policy should be put into effect. This organization of authority seems to be satisfactory and adequate for the Douglass Community Center. Not only does it have a responsibility to their board and those who participate in its program but to the two communities as a whole. This is for the use of any one in the twin cities and can never adequately meet every

person's needs. If this center can continue in its constructive growth it will be an example to the Twin Cities of the need for such a program and perhaps bring about concrete results.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS

1937 - May - Education center , 707 North Fifth Street
December - Recreation Center, 514 East Tremont Street

1940 - Recreation Center at 514 East Tremont resold. Moved to temporary facilities of basement C M E Church.
Formation of Douglass Community Service Organization.
Financial drive - First payment, July 1941.

1941 - U S O Center established in Lawhead Grade School in Champaign financed by Federal Works Agency supplemented by Champaign Recreation Commission.
Second campaign in fall.

1942 - Champaign Recreation Commission advised the Douglass Community Service Organization that there was a possibility of receiving federal assistance through F W A to erect a building.
Fall - Petition presented to F W A.

1943 - July - Meeting of Champaign County Home and War Chest and Douglass Community Service Organization to reconsider presenting a second petition to F W A for federal assistance for servicemen's and community center.
August - Mayor of Champaign asked for reconsideration of the building project by F W A because of the demands the war had placed on the community.
September 10, - Application was sent to the Regional Federal Works Agency.
September 17, - Regional office F W A approved project, sent application to national office, Washington, D C for final decision.
October - Negro residents began solicitations for funds.
November - Regional Director of F W A notified the Mayor of Champaign that the National Office had disapproved the project "without prejudice."
November 15, - Champaign Recreation Commission accepted operation and maintenance of new community center.
November 19, - Champaign County Home and War Chest Executive Committee considered a proposal that half of its $34,000 surplus ($17,000) on hand be allocated to the construction of a colored community center in North Champaign. Letter sent to 2,500 Community Chest donors presenting this proposal and asking for a vote on it.
November 27, - Representatives from the Community Chest and the Douglass Community Service Organization formed a committee named Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Guilding Committee.
December - Final payment of $375.00 made
December - Twin City Community Committee, a newly formed organization to promote the broad community need of Champaign-Urbana community, expressed its interest in Douglass Community Center. However, opposed the proposal of the Community Chest.
December - T C C C sought information concerning the operation of community centers that were privately controlled with trained directors from Mr. Shaw, at that time director of the Division of

Delinquency for the State of Illinois

1944 - December - The Douglass Community Service Organization was opposed to the position of T C C C and declared that a position for "self-help center" did not represent the viewpoint of the masses of the colored people in the community.

Following the ten day period allotted for voting upon the use of half of the chest surplus fund, the voting indicated that the majority of the chest subscribers were in favor of the proposal.

1945 - January 16, - Board of Directors, Champaign Civic Foundation resolved to to accept the title of the building that was to be the Community Center.

February 1, - Recreation Commission formally passed a resolution to accept the responsibility of the operation and maintenance of the Douglass Community Center. Leased the building from the Champaign Civic Foundation for $1.00 a year.

February 12, - The contracts were let to begin building the center.

February 18, - Building begun. First spade of dirt turned for the erection of the building by a young serviceman from Champaign who was home on furlough at that time.

April - Election of Negro members to advisory committee.

September 23, - Official dedication of the center.

September - Champaign Recreation Commission assumed the administration duties and financial obligations of operation and maintenance of the center.

September - Program began

Federal Works Agency funds transferred from U S O Lawhead Center to Douglass Center.

1946 - June 30, - F W A Funds discontinued.

July 1, - Douglass Center received U S O funds, $200.00 per month for six months for servicemen's program.

1947 - January - U S O Funds cut to $175.00 per month.

March - U S O funds reduced to $100.00 a month

July - U S O funds stopped entirely.

1948 - April 28, - Application was made to the Champaign Community Chest for additional funds for Douglass Center.

July 14 - Director of Community Chest declared their policy was not to supplement an agency operated with tax-raised funds. On that basis application was rejected.

APPENDIX A

Population of Champaign and Urbana
16th Census of the United States 1940, Second Series
Characteristics of Population Prepared Under Supervision of
Dr. Leon C. Truesdell, Chief Statistics for Population

	1930		1940		1948 *
	no.	percent	no.	percent	no.
Champaign					
White-Native born	18,070	88.8	21,486	89.9	
Foreign born	669	3.3	560	1.9	
Negro	1,598	7.9	1,802	7.7	
Other	11		14	.1	
Total	20,348	100.0	23,802	100.0	33,000
Urbana					
White-Native born	12,311	94.3	13,547	95.9	
Foreign born	337	2.6	268	1.9	
Negro	394	3.0	304	2.2	
Other	18	.1	13	.1	
Total	13,060	100.0	14,132	100.0	20,000
Champaign-Urbana					
White-Native born	30,381	91.3	35,033	92.2	
Foreign born	946	2.8	828	2.2	
Negro	1,902	5.7	2,106	5.5	
Other	29	.08	27	.07	
Total	33,258	100.0	37,994	100.0	53,000

* Estimate given by Champaign Chamber of Commerce

APPENDIX B

Copy of Letter to Champaign County Home and War Chest subscriber from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary of the Champaign Community Chest, December of 1944

While this letter is obviously a form letter, it is most important and we sincerely hope that you read it.

1. This letter is NOT paid out of Home and War Chest funds. Interested individuals in the project mentioned below have paid the expense of this letter.

2. As you may or may not know, there has been about $13,000.00 raised (in various funds) in our community over the past two years when it was understood that the Federal Government denied our petition "without prejudice". This simply means they did not think there were enough colored soldiers at Chanute Field to justify them spending the money for soldier spending alone.

NOW the Home and War Chest Executive Committee are in receipt of a petition signed by 400 Chest subscribers in which they ask that one-half of the Home and War Chest surplus (about 17,000 dollars) be added to the $13,000.00 mentioned above and the building be built immediately with the provision that the Champaign Recreation Commission agree to operate and maintain said building. Your Home and War Chest Executive Committee at a recent meeting approved unanimously this petition subject to a referendum of the Chest subscribers. The Champaign Recreation Commission had agreed to operate and maintain the building. The building when completed will be deeded to the City of Champaign for recreation purposes.

Your Board wishes to point out to you that the 2,800 Negro residents of Champaign-Urbana have raised $3,000.00 for this building among their own people. (This amount is included in the $13,000.00 mentioned above.) They advise us they will raise further funds if the $30,000.00 mentioned is not enough to complete and equip the building. The proposed building would adjoin Douglass Park. Also while the war is on, the building will be used as a center for colored soldiers.

For many, many obvious reasons, we are sure you can recognize why this building is a necessary one and in building it with these funds, it becomes paid for by the WHOLE community.

3. While your Board has approved this project, it felt that it should not expend one-half of the Chest surplus for this purpose unless you and the other 12,500 Chest subscribers had an opportunity to express yourselves. Accordingly, we are enclosing a postage free, self-addressed card on which we ask you to express your opinion. (If you do not reply in ten days, it will be considered that you are favorable to the project and in case the vote of a majority of the subscriptions involved is found favorable, your Board will so order.)

We feel that this is certainly the democratic way to handle this matter and we hope you will give us your advice by return mail."

APPENDIX C

Summary of Community Building Questionnaires

	Number of replies	Amount of pledges
Opposed		
Champaign and Urbana	261	$ 2,577.10
Qualified		
Champaign and Urbana	116	2,698.50
Favorable		
Champaign and Urbana	1,646	35,545.55
Total	2,023	$ 40,820.15

Two thousand twenty-three replies returned out of the 12,500 letters sent is approximately one-sixth of the Chest subscribers. Eighty-one and four tenths percent stated definitely that they were interested in the Chest proposal of using one-half ($17,000.00) of the Chest surplus for the Douglass Community Center. As was stated in the letter, those replies not returned were to be assumed as favorable.

APPENDIX D

Contributions to Negro Community Center *

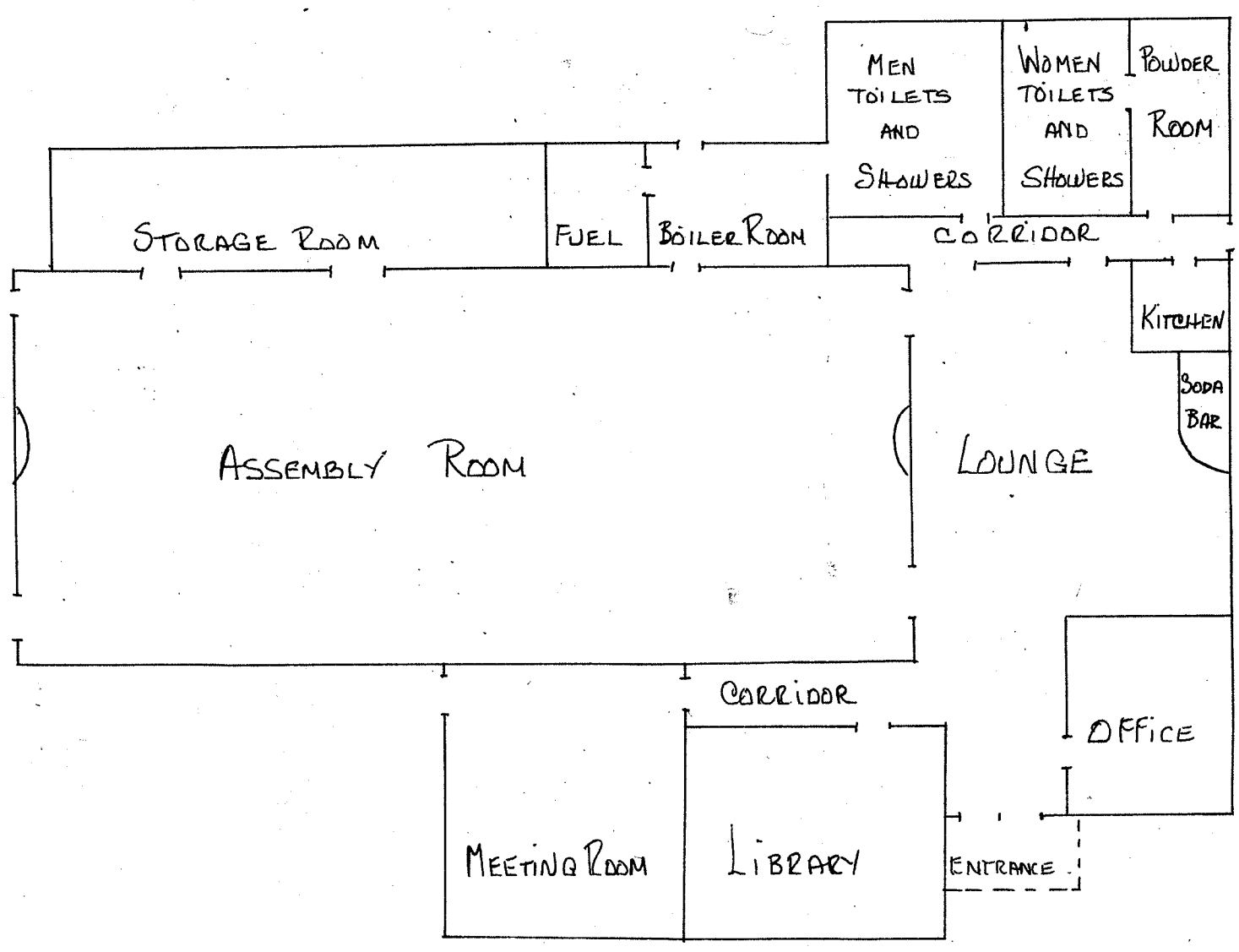
Champaign County Home and War Chest	$ 17,000.00
Champaign County Community Chest	2,500.00
Douglass Center Fund First Drive	2,200.00
Urbana Fund	2,115.00
Y M C A (Kuhn Fund)	1,225.00
Shmikler Trust Fund	500.00
W. Lewis and Company	500.00
Heffernan and Company	500.00
News Gazette	500.00
Eisner Grocery Company	500.00
F. K. Robeson	500.00
George Mattis	500.00
Isaac Kuhn	500.00
Mrs. Alma Trevett Gerber	500.00
Hartwell Howard	500.00
Nelson Concrete Culvert	100.00
Morris Hecker	100.00
Champaign Builder's Supply Company	100.00
Alpha Coal and Material Company	100.00
Don Vance	50.00
Reliable Furniture Company	200.00
Isaac Kuhn	500.00
Alloys Castings Company	325.00
Anonymous	500.00
Dr. Guy Tawney	510.00
U S O Fund	1,005.41
Douglass Center Fund - Second Drive	1,600.00
A. F. Byra	200.00
W E C Clifford	1,600.00
Phinney Thompson	100.00
Professor A. H. Lubyer	310.00
President A. C. Willard	10.00
Mrs. Julia Dodds	25.00
Harden Boulware	25.00
R. A. Stipes	50.00
Douglass Center	200.00
Fred Manthey	100.00
Dobbins, Dobbins	150.00
Total	37,900.41

* Copy from the Community Chest files lister under Negor Community Center

APPENDIX E

Douglass Community Center Contracts
Cost of Center

E. N. De Atley		
Base Bid	$ 25,250.00	
Gym Addition	3,238.00	
38' X 20' Addition	1,704.00	
Increase Lounge, toilets & bar	1,507.00	
	31,699.00	31,699.00
Extra for grading and fill	200.00	
Increase lengths of drains	45.00	
Walks	20.00	
	265.00	265.00
Champaign Plumbing and Heating		
Base Bid	1,815.00	
Enlarge toilets	215.00	
Kitchen	87.00	
	2,117.00	2,117.00
Dexter Electric Company		
Base Bid	696.00	
Gym Addition	48.00	
38' X 20' room	25.00	
Increase Lounge, toilets, kitchen, etc.	115.00	
Extra outlets	16.00	
	900.00	900.00
Berger and Kelley		1,200.00
5,000 feet asphalt tile at 17 c. plus ornamentation at $35		1,070.00
Legal fees and abstracting		224.10
Fire and Windstorm insurance (estimate)		50.00
Total		$ 37,525.10



FLOOR PLAN OF DOUGLASS COMMUNITY CENTER

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Dedication Speech for Douglass Community Center, September 23, 1945, written and presented by Mr. R. M. Scott.

16 the Census of the United States, 1940, second series, Characteristics of Population, prepared under supervision of Dr. Leon C. Truesdell, Chief of Statistics for Population

Social Work Yearbook, "Works Project Administration", Russell Sage Foundation, 1943.

The Ann Arbor Survey, A Study of the Social Welfare, Recreational and Public Health Program, 1940.

The Champaign News Gazette, Champaign, Illinois, Issues dated as follows:

November 19, 1937
December 4, 1937
September 17, 1943
September 27, 1943
November 30, 1944
February 27, 1944
July 17, 1946
August 4, 1946
August 25, 1946
September 20, 1946
September 3, 1947
September 7, 1947
September 14, 1947
October 5, 1947
November 20, 1947
December 20, 1947
February 1, 1948
February 19, 1948
March 7, 1948
March 21, 1948

The Champaign-Urbana Courier, Urbana Illinois, Issues dated as follows:

May 24, 1937
November 30, 1937
March 10, 1940
November 30, 1944
December, 1944
September 12, 1945
September 24, 1945
March 5, 1946
April 24, 1946
April 30, 1946
June 3, 1946
October 23, 1946
June 29, 1947
September 16, 1947
November 23, 1947
February 3, 1948
February 20, 1948
May 2, 1948

Interviews as follows:

1. Miss Doris Banks, Assistant to Director, Douglass Community Center
2. Bureau of Institutional Research, University of Illinois
3. Mrs. Irma Bridgewater, Staff member Tremont Center and Douglass Center in 1945.
4. Mr. Ellington, University of Illinois Registrar's Office.
5. Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary, Champaign County Community Chest, 1941-1945.
6. Miss Harris, Assistant Director, Non-academic Personnel, University of Illinois.
7. Mr. Edgar Harris, Editor of Illinois Times, Champaign, Illinois
8. Miss Hazel Iungerich, Director of Recreation Commission, Champaign, Illinois.
9. Mrs. Cullen B. Owens, Chairman of the Champaign-Urbana Committee, 1947

10. Mr. Warren Sawyer, Executive Secretary of Council of Social Agencies, 1948.
11. Mr. R. M. Scott, Chairman of the Douglass Community Service Organization 1940.
12. Secretary Chamber of Commerce, Champaign, Illinois
13. Dr. Donald Taft, Professor of Sociology, University of Illinois, Chairman of Twin City Community Committee.
14. Mr. Taylor Thomas, Director of Douglass Community Center.

Minutes of Meetings, from Council of Social Agencies files under Douglass Community Center.

1. Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee, November 27, 1944.
2. Joint Meeting of Champaign Recreation Commission and the Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee, December 11, 1944.
3. Twin City Community Committee Meeting, January 12, 1945.
4. Negro Community and Servicemen's Center Building Committee, January 30, 1945.
5. Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee, February 12, 1945.
6. Negro Community and Servicemen's Building Committee, February 21, 1945.
7. Board of Directors of Council of Social Agencies, July 9, 1948.
8. Board of Directors of Community Chest, Champaign County, July 14, 1948.

Correspondence from Council of Social Agencies files under Douglass Community Center.

1. Letter from Mr. Oscar Steer, President of Urbana Association of Commerce, to Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary Community Chest Association, September 2, 1943.
2. Letter from Walter T. Meyer, Colonel Air Corps Commanding Chanute Field to Mr. William S. Robinson, Regional Federal Social Agency, Chicago, Illinois, September 8, 1943.
3. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan to Colonel W. B. Hayes, Pentagon Building, Wasington, D. C., October 12, 1943.
4. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan to The Honorable Scott W. Lucas, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C., October 12, 1943.
5. Letter from Mr. L. A. Gillett, Regional Director Federal Works Agency, Region IV, Chicago, November 4, 1943.
6. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan to Major Air Corps, Special Service Section, Music Officer, Mark H. Hindsley, November 10, 1943.
7. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan to Lt. Colonel G. B. Inge, Legislative and Liaison Division, War Department, Pentagon Building, Washington, D. C., November 30, 1943.
8. Letter from Champaign Chamber of Commerce to the War Department Federal Works Agency, Washington D. C., January 18, 1944.
9. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary Champaign Community Chest Association to Twin City Community Committee, September 6, 1944.
10. Letter from Recreation Commission to Executive Secretary Community Chest, November 15, 1944.
11. Letter from Donald A. Taft, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Joint Advisory Council of the Twin City Community Committee to FELLOW CITIZEN, December 18, 1944.

12. Letter from Mr. A. W. Clevenger, Secretary of Executive Committee of the Joint Advisory Council, Twin City Community Committee, to Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary of Champaign County Community Chest, January 17, 1945.
13. Letter from Professor Donald Taft, Chairman Twin City Community Committee to Community Chest Executive Secretary, Mr. Lyle Gallivan, January 17, 1945.
14. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan to Negro Servicemen's and Community Center Building Committee, January 22, 1945.
15. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, to Mr. B. C. Hurd, President of McKinley Y M C A, January 23, 1945.
16. Letter from Champaign Recreation Department to Negro Servicemen's and Community Center Building Committee, February 1, 1945.
17. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary Community Chest, to Mr. Isaac Kuh, Treasurer of 1942 U S O Campaign, February 23, 1945.
18. Letter from Mr. Lyle Gallivan, Executive Secretary, Champaign Community Chest, March 5, 1945.
19. Letter from Dr. Donald Taft, to Mr. Lubyer, Professor University of Illinois, member of building Committee, March 8, 1945.
20. Letter Mr. Lubyer to Dr. Taft, March 9, 1945.
21. Letter from Mrs. Odelia Wesley, Secretary of Advisory Board, Douglass Community Center to Champaign Community Chest, April, 1948.