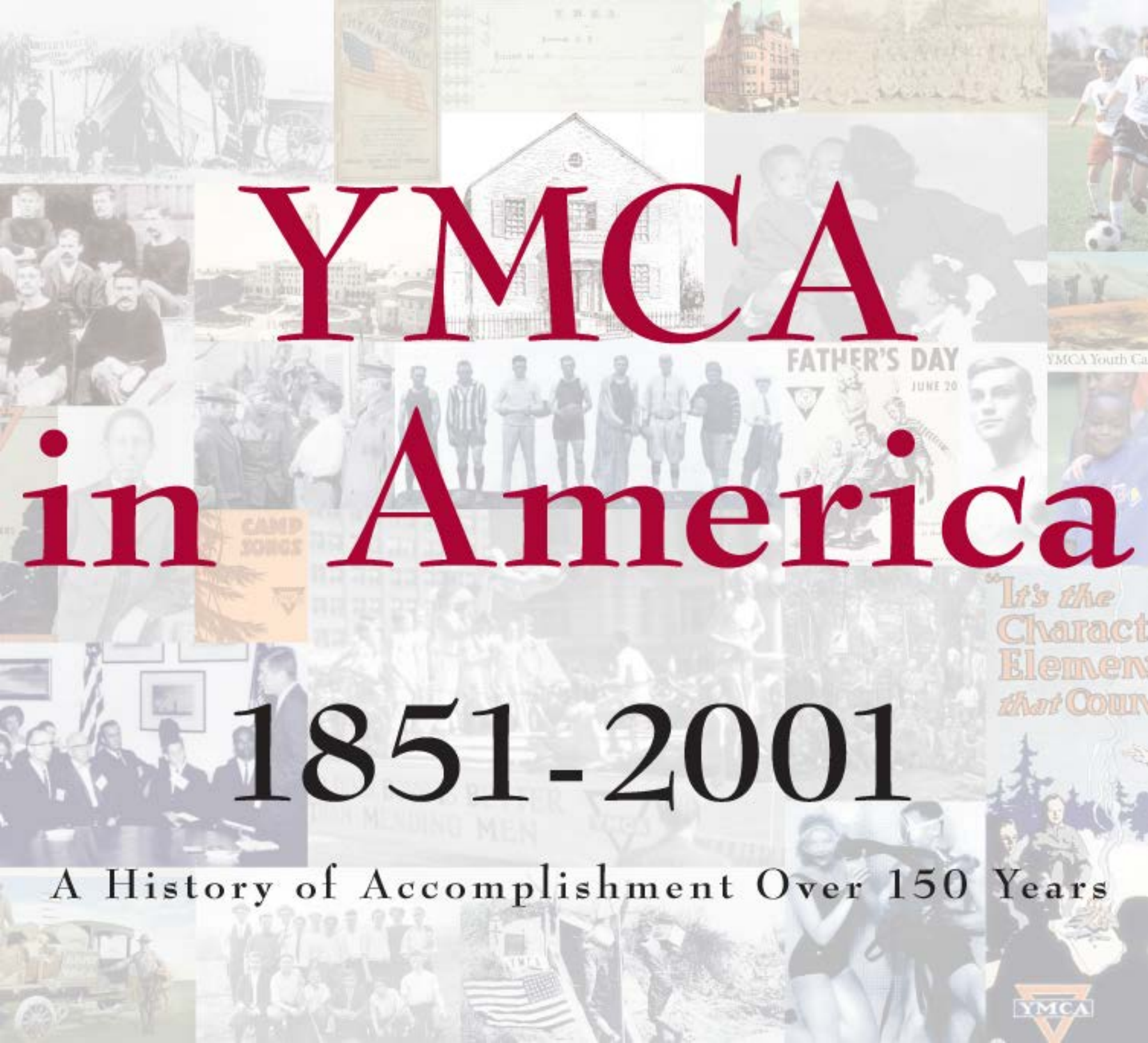


YMCA in America

1851-2001

A History of Accomplishment Over 150 Years

Thomas Valentine Sullivan

The Beginning: 1851

"He was shipwrecked in the Antarctic, fell from a yard and was nearly killed; was attacked by pirates off the coast of Brazil; by the time he was thirty-three he had made a fortune and lost it. Nonetheless, Thomas Valentine Sullivan's most long-lasting accomplishment was ... he founded the YMCA of the United States."

From "Seaman Extraordinary" by Leonard M. Snyder

1852 - New associations are reported in New York; Washington, D.C.; Buffalo; Detroit; Springfield, Mass.; and other cities. Early YMCAs offer prayer meetings, Bible classes, lectures, libraries, reading rooms and social events for members.

1854 - U.S. YMCAs hold their first meeting in Buffalo, N.Y. The Washington, D.C., Y reports that its library has 1,200 volumes and that its reading rooms are "the best in the city."

◆◆◆

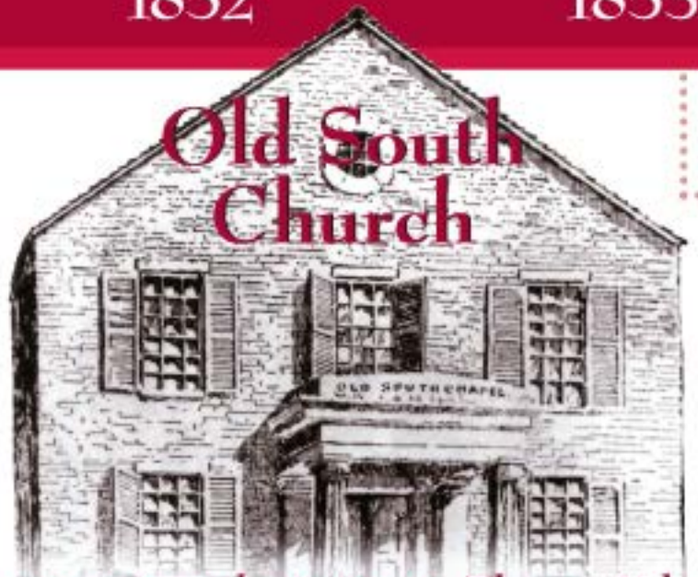
1855 - Typical of Ys at the time, the constitution of the new Columbus, Ohio, YMCA limits membership to young men ages 16 to 40.

The "World's Alliance of Y.M.C.A.'s" is organized in Paris.

1851 1852 1853 1854 1855

November 25, 1851 — First YMCA in North America is founded in Montreal.

December 29, 1851 — First YMCA in the United States is founded in Boston.



Anthony Bowen

One of the first YMCAs was also one of the earliest African-American organizations in the United States. Formerly enslaved, Anthony Bowen founded a black YMCA in Washington, D.C., in *1853*. A minister and the first African American to work in the U.S. Patent Office, Bowen became an outspoken advocate for the education of black children.

A Boston sea captain and missionary, Thomas Valentine Sullivan was inspired by stories of the YMCA in England. With six colleagues, Sullivan called the first meeting leading to a constitution, and on *December 29, 1851*, the YMCA began at the Old South Church in Boston.

"That they all may be one"

The Christian Principles of the YMCA

In 1844, George Williams founded the first YMCA in London for the purpose of offering mutual encouragement in the Christian faith. His goal: to establish "a work of sacrifice and service—a work for young men by young men, improving their environment, giving them victory over their temptations and, above all transforming character through allegiance to Jesus Christ." To belong, a young man was required to be either "a member of a Christian church" or to "give evidence of being a converted character."

In 1869, a national YMCA convention held in Portland, Maine, adopted what was called "the Portland Basis/Test," which limited active membership in local Ys to members of evangelical Christian churches. Criticized by many for excluding many different people, the Portland Basis did signal that the YMCA would not create a separate Christian church. Still, for the first 80 years, Ys were predominately Protestant and largely excluded people of other faiths.

Though members of Protestant faiths started the Y, many associations admitted Catholics as active members. As far back as 1903, the Mexico City association demanded this practice be officially sanctioned. When it was not, many YMCAs simply decreed that both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches fulfilled the Portland definition of "evangelical," a bold move for the times.

In 1931, the Y convention in Cleveland formally eliminated all theological tests of membership and abandoned theological identification of any kind. Two years later, YMCA policy changed to allow local Ys the freedom to open both membership and leadership roles as they saw fit.

YMCAs are still based on "Christian principles," the belief in the golden rule that one should "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The expression of YMCA inclusion is found in the use of the New Testament passage, John 17:21, which says "that they all may be one." ■

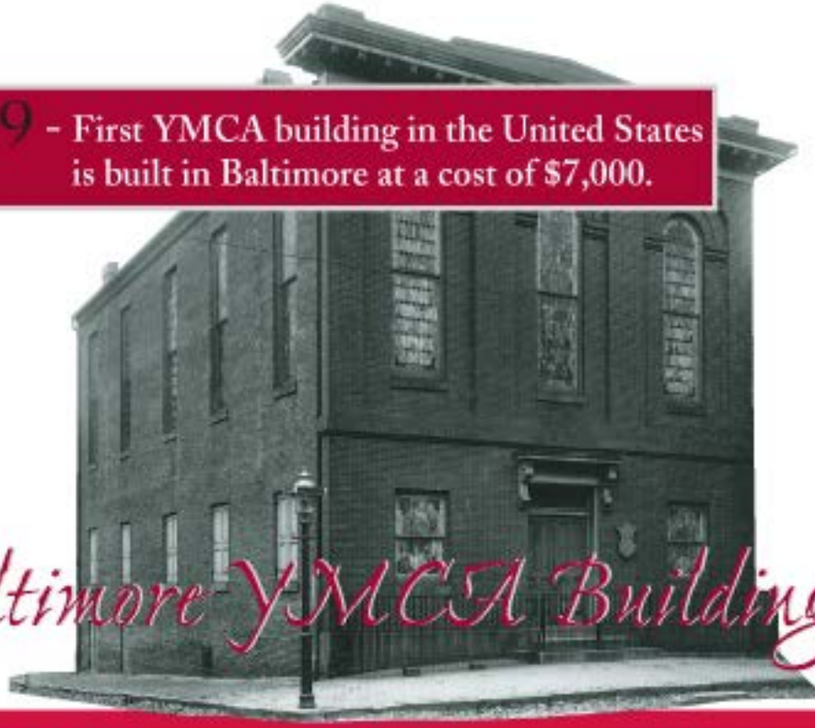
1856 - Student YMCAs organize at universities in Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin. *(page 7)*

The Cincinnati YMCA offers the nation's first-recorded English as a Second Language courses (for German immigrants). *(page 5)*

1857 - First YMCA to serve the military is founded in Portsmouth, Va.

The Brooklyn (N.Y.) YMCA adds "physical work" to its programs, basing its effort on the belief that "bodily health is intimately connected with mental and spiritual activity and development." The YMCA views physical work as a means of attracting to its Christian program young men it could not otherwise reach.

1859 - First YMCA building in the United States is built in Baltimore at a cost of $7,000.



Baltimore YMCA Building

1856 1857 1858 1859 1860

1857 - YMCA hires its first full-time employee, **John Wanamaker**, who, in 1861, uses his savings from working as a YMCA director to found one of the nation's largest mercantile businesses, John Wanamaker & Company.

1858 - The Charleston (S.C.) YMCA starts the first Y women's auxiliary. Women's auxiliaries led classes and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for new buildings.

1860 - 205 YMCAs have been established with the emphasis on Bible study, reading and counseling. Most Ys occupy churches or donated buildings.

"Morals are muscularly made."

1861

When the Civil War began at Fort Sumter in Charleston, S.C., YMCAs in the North formed the United States Christian Commission to aid the soldiers. More than 5,000 volunteers, known as "delegates" *(including poet Walt Whitman and YMCA leader Dwight L. Moody)* worked in the battlefields, hospitals, army camps and prisoner-of-war compounds. The Christian Commission was the predecessor of the Armed Services YMCA, and its splendid services won a national reputation for the young YMCA.

May 27, 1861 — New York YMCA Army Committee forms to aid soldiers in Civil War.

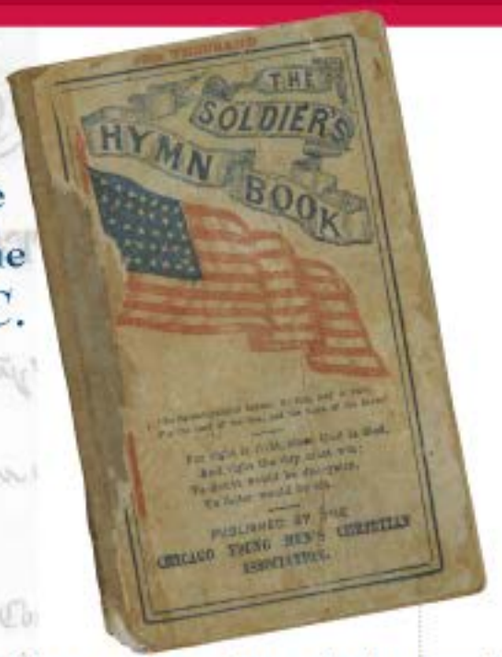
November 16, 1861 — Fifteen Northern YMCAs form "Christian Commission" for Civil War work.

Walt Whitman

1861 1862 1863 1864 1865

June 28, 1864 — President Lincoln signs the Congressional charter of the YMCA of Washington, D.C.

Abraham Lincoln



A soldier's Civil War hymn book provided by the Chicago YMCA. It belonged to soldier Everett L. Newton of Northfield, Mass.

The YMCA Leads the Way in Civil War Relief

YMCAs first served soldiers in 1856. The Portsmouth YMCA in Virginia supplied a library to the naval port and held Y meetings on board a navy training ship.

The YMCA had existed in America for only 10 years when the Civil War separated the country into North and South. The New York and Chicago YMCAs raised troops for the North, while several YMCAs in the South raised troops as well. In 1861, just six months after the creation of the American Red Cross, 15 northern YMCAs came together to create the "U.S. Christian Commission" for the relief of soldiers on the battlefield. A conference with President Abraham Lincoln led to the full-scale recruitment of YMCA volunteers, eventually numbering 5,000, who served as surgeons, nurses and chaplains. These volunteers distributed medical supplies, food and clothing, and even taught soldiers to read and write.

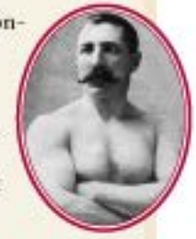
YMCA volunteers wrote more than 90,000 letters for the sick and wounded, and distributed $1,000 per week in stamps for soldiers' letters home. The YMCA Christian Commission also published a "Record of Federal Dead" which helped many bereaved families find their fallen sons.

Forty-three Christian Commission volunteers, including three women, lost their lives during service. American poet Walt Whitman served in the Y's Christian Commission and called his service, "the greatest privilege and satisfaction ... and most profound lesson of my life."

One "confederate YMCA" began during the war in a federal prison camp at Johnson's Island, Ohio. However, only two southern YMCAs survived the War Between the States: the Richmond (Va.) and Charleston (S.C.) YMCAs.

Although it would take several decades for YMCAs to regain their former strength in both the North and South, the work of the Y during the war had brought the movement great prestige among both Federal and Confederate troops. ■

Health and Fitness Came Early to the YMCA



The first YMCA buildings constructed with gymnasiums opened in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and New York City in 1869. Exercise at that time more closely resembled what we would now call gymnastics. But not for long.

In 1881, Boston YMCA staffer Robert J. Roberts coined the term "body building" and developed exercise classes that anticipated today's fitness workouts.

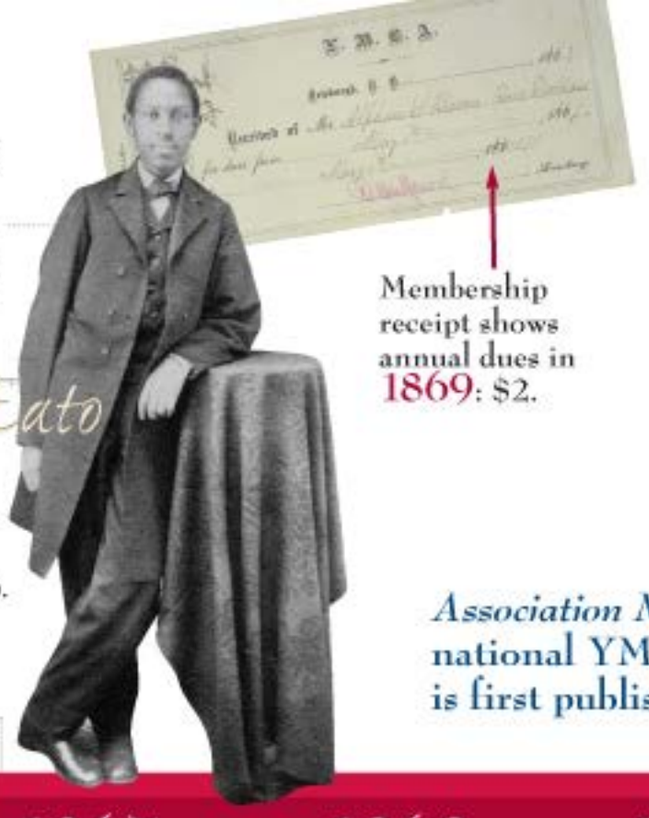
Meanwhile, at the YMCA Department at the School for Christian Workers (eventually to become Springfield College)—the nation's only training center for physical education—one man was instrumental in changing the American approach to health and fitness forever. He was Dr. Luther Gulick, who challenged instructor James Naismith to create a sport (basketball resulted) and who taught YMCA student William Morgan, who later invented volleyball.

They called fitness "muscular Christianity," believing that man's well-being depended on an "essential unity, body, mind and spirit," according to Gulick. Proponents of muscular Christianity believed Jesus Christ was a perfect man—a balance of body, mind and spirit. Gulick reflected that balance in 1889, when he created the YMCA's distinctive red triangle logo standing on its tip.

Today, the value of health and fitness activities is widely recognized and promoted by everyone from the president of the United States to the nation's surgeon general to hundreds of thousands of medical professionals.

Collectively, YMCAs are the largest provider and promoter of health and fitness programs, active in more than 10,000 communities across the country. ■

1867 - E.V.C. Eato of New York City becomes the first black delegate to attend the YMCA annual convention. He is given a standing ovation.



E.V.C. Eato

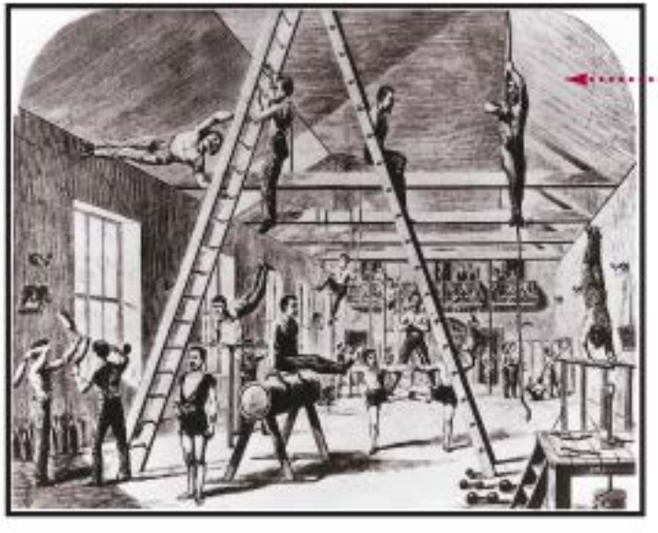
Membership receipt shows annual dues in 1869: $2.

1867 - First YMCA housing is established, Farwell Hall in Chicago. It would burn to the ground three months later. *(page 17)*

Association Monthly

***Association Monthly*, a national YMCA magazine, is first published.**

1866 1867 1868 1869 1870

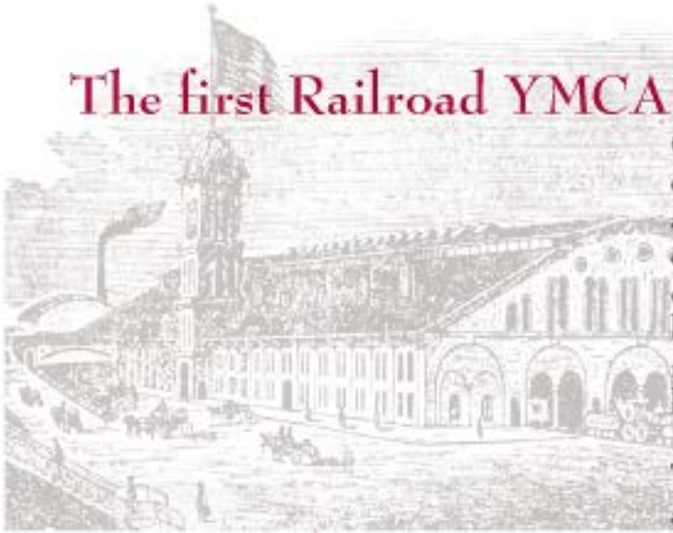


1869 - The first YMCA buildings constructed with gymnasiums are opened in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and New York City. Pictured is an artist's rendering of an early gymnasium.

First "boys' work" starts in Salem, Mass. This signifies the Y's entrance into youth work.

The Portland Basis/Test, adopted at the national YMCA convention in Portland, Maine, limits active membership in local YMCAs to members of evangelical churches. *(page 2)*

First black student YMCA is founded at Howard University in Washington, D.C.



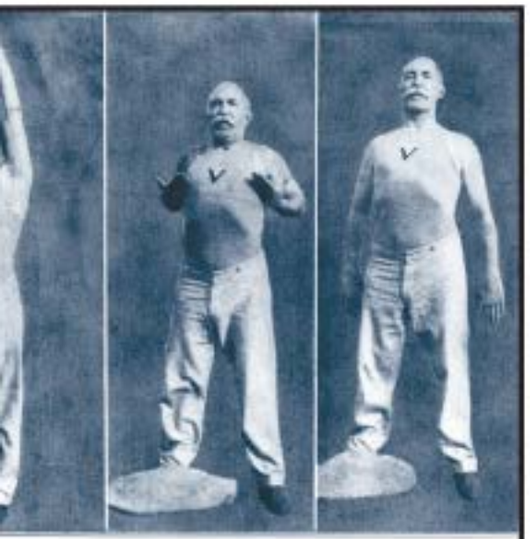
The first Railroad YMCA

was organized in a "lowly room set apart in the Cleveland Passenger Station, to improve conditions of railroad men." It proved to be an effective approach for serving the religious needs of laborers employed by the railroad companies. Out of a concern to protect railroad men from the influence of brothels and saloons, the YMCA worked with railroad companies to provide wholesome overnight lodging and meeting space for railroad workers.

The YMCA provided railroad secretaries and operated programs while the railroad company donated and equipped buildings. Programs included prayer meetings, revivals and Bible classes. Eventually the railroad work spread nationwide, and for many years it was the YMCA's most significant program for working men.

1872 - First railroad YMCA is organized in Cleveland.

1871 1872 1873 1874 1875



Normal Man's Home Drill
Posed by Robert J. Roberts

First Chinese-American YMCA is founded in San Francisco.

1871

Higher Education Innovations at the YMCA

Many early YMCAs included popular reading rooms and libraries and sponsored lectures by such luminaries as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois and abolitionist Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, father of author Harriett Beecher Stowe. At a time when higher education was not widely available and often expensive, the YMCA created a number of programs to make both vocational and higher education available to more people, especially working-class Americans.

For example, as early as 1878, the Detroit YMCA offered night classes in Latin, New Testament, descriptive and mechanical drawing, history, penmanship, freehand drawing, and more. And in 1893, large-scale evening classes began at the Boston YMCA, with the 700 students split between music, language and other liberal arts courses, and vocational courses such as bookkeeping and shorthand.

The nation's first-known English as a Second Language class—today known as ESL—was held at the Cincinnati YMCA in 1856 for German immigrants.

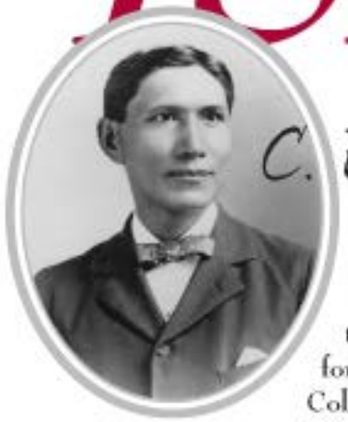
The YMCA founded numerous colleges and schools, even law schools. The YMCA Department at the School for Christian Workers later became Springfield College—the birthplace of basketball. In 1890, the YMCA founded a Midwestern YMCA school, George Williams College, today part of Aurora University in Illinois.

In 1881, the San Francisco YMCA opened a night school that grew into Golden Gate University. What is now Northeastern University in Boston began as informal law courses in 1897 when the Boston YMCA formalized "an evening institute." The Central YMCA College of Chicago became Roosevelt College in 1945, now called Roosevelt University.

continued on page 7

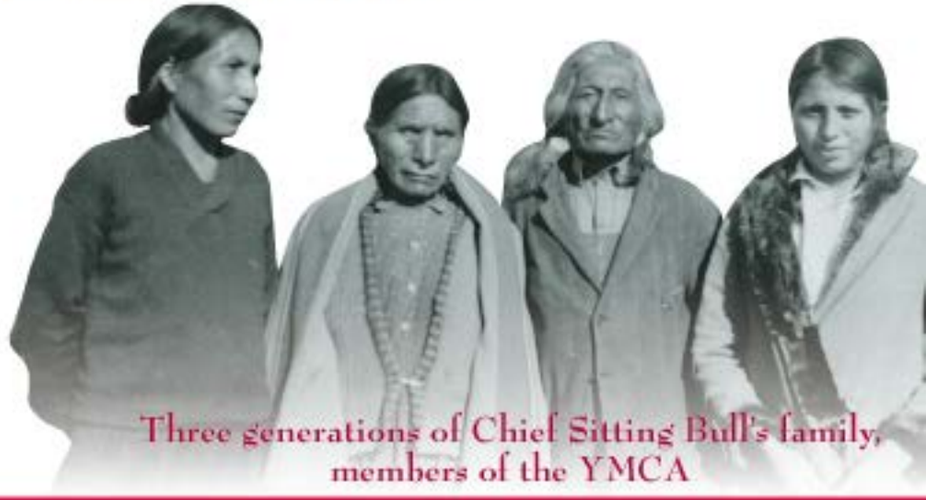
1879

The Baltimore Convention of the YMCA integrates student work into a permanent department of the International Committee. Student work grew to become an important part of the YMCA movement. Its activities were diverse, including such emphases as evangelical mission, advocacy of the Social Gospel and foreign missions, and denominational work among students.

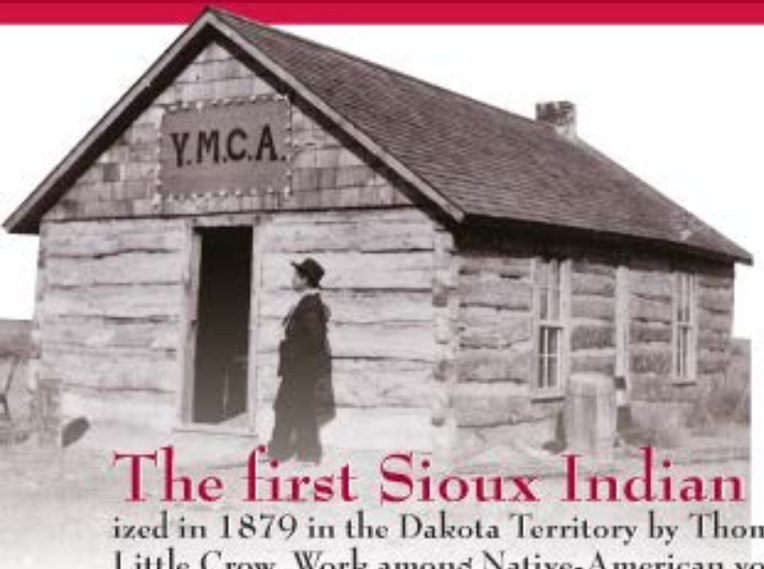


C. Eastman, M.D.

By 1894, there were 25 Native-American YMCAs with 698 members. The national YMCA selected *Dr. Charles A. Eastman,* a member of the Sioux nation, to head the "Indian" office to assist in the operation and formation of Ys among native peoples. Educated at Dartmouth College and Boston University, Dr. Eastman expanded the number of Native-American YMCAs to 40 in just four years; two of those YMCAs remain active today.



Three generations of Chief Sitting Bull's family, members of the YMCA



The first Sioux Indian YMCA was organized in 1879 in the Dakota Territory by Thomas Wakeman, son of Chief Little Crow. Work among Native-American young men and boys was carried out in the areas of education, health, public sanitation, employment, leadership development and Christian education. The number grew to 66 Sioux associations with more than a thousand members. In addition, YMCA work was carried out with other tribes across the United States.

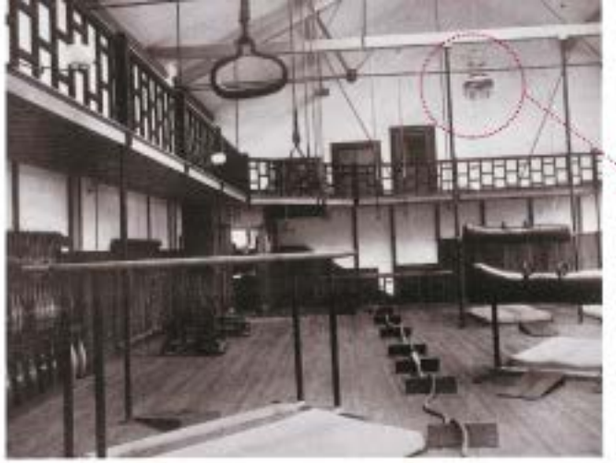
1878 - The Detroit Y offers night classes in Latin, New Testament, descriptive and mechanical drawing, history, penmanship, freehand drawing, and more.

T. Wakeman

April 27, 1879 — First YMCA serving Native Americans is founded in Flandreau, Dakota Territory.

1879 - St. Paul YMCA forms the first Army association at Fort Snelling, Minn.

Dwight L. Moody formally opens the Northfield Seminary for Young Women in Massachusetts. Unlike other private schools, at Northfield, students are asked to perform manual labor along with their studies. From this venture grows the college summer conferences, the student volunteer movement, and the American YMCA's foreign work, eventually called YMCA World Service.



An early gymnasium. Note the chandelier.

1881

1881 - Robert Roberts of the Boston YMCA coins the term "body building."

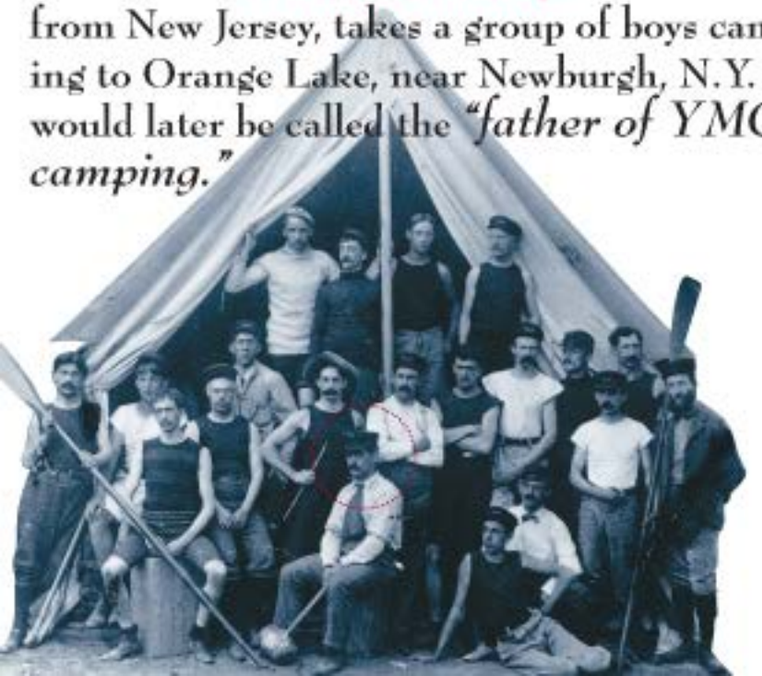
◆◆◆

1882 - YMCAs begin work with miners and lumbermen.

1884 - First YMCA training institute is established in Lake Geneva, Wis., for the continued instruction of YMCA staff.

1881 1882 1883 1884 1885

1885 — *Sumner Dudley,* a Y volunteer from New Jersey, takes a group of boys camping to Orange Lake, near Newburgh, N.Y. He would later be called the *"father of YMCA camping."*



1885 - J. Gardner Smith of the Bowery Branch YMCA in New York City starts a Leaders Corps of young people in the physical education department. By 1900, this program would exist as a national initiative to develop Christian leadership through gymnasium activities. The name would later change to Leaders Clubs. In 1905, there were 2,713 boys in Leaders Clubs. By 1925, there were 7,873.

YMCA's School for Christian Workers, now Springfield College, opens and, through the turn of the century, would be the only training center and innovator of physical education in the country.

continued from page 5

Higher Education Innovations

By 1916, more than 83,000 YMCA students attended 200 different courses. Thirty years later that number grew to 130,000.

By 1950, YMCAs operated 20 colleges in Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Detroit, Montreal, St. Louis, Seattle and other cities. After World War II, many of the YMCA-founded schools became freestanding institutions of higher learning.

The Y also was an early pioneer in many educational concepts. The YMCA's Springfield College gave rise to many athletic instruction innovations and spearheaded professional development concepts used in virtually all workplaces today.

The first "student YMCA" started in 1856 at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tenn., and the first black student YMCA formed at Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1869. Near the peak in 1900, 628 student YMCAs operated at universities and colleges from Hawaii to Maine, serving 32,000 students.

The YMCA also started the practice of awarding educational scholarships to soldiers returning from war. The Y awarded more than 80,000 educational scholarships to World War I veterans, a practice that the U. S. government adopted two decades later with the passage of the G.I. Bill following World War II.

Today, YMCAs operate 58 alternative high schools in the United States, and more than 300,000 children attend YMCA Afterschool at 1,340 YMCAs coast to coast.

The YMCA remains affiliated with two universities: Springfield (Mass.) College and Aurora (Ill.) University, while YMCA Program Schools train more than 16,000 YMCA staff and volunteers each year.

Twenty-two student YMCAs remain active on the campuses of major universities such as the University of Illinois and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ■

1886

The Buffalo, N.Y., YMCA hires the first boys' work secretary, Ellen Brown.

YMCA Institute and Training School is founded in Chicago.

Dwight L. Moody conducts collegiate "Summer School for Bible Study" for 225 college students, leading to the start of YMCA missionary work, or YMCA World Service.

THE MAKING OF CHRISTIAN CITIZENS

Ellen Brown

In 1886, at Buffalo, N.Y., Miss Ellen Brown was the first full-time secretary in America employed for work with boys.

For seventeen years, she served 'her boys', who at her death in 1922, erected a stone, the inscription on which includes these words:-

'Her influence over the boys of yesterday will live forever in the lives of Christian citizens of today and tomorrow.'

1889

A high-school YMCA club in Chapman, Kan., became the first recognized Hi-Y club. Later, the National Hi-Y Fellowship was formed to "create, maintain and extend throughout the school high standards of Christian character." Hi-Y clubs focused on helping boys develop standards of right and wrong based on Christian values and to apply them to all relationships. Hi-Y emphasized service and leadership in high schools, with a goal of promoting Christian character. The clubs also enabled boys to practice private meditation and prayer and to participate in group worship. Hi-Y clubs urged their members to become active members of the church of their choice and support its work. Eventually girls were included in Tri-Hi-Y clubs, and there were also mixed groups called Coed Hi-Y clubs.

1891 Luther H. Gulick, M.D.,

who revolutionized sports and physical fitness at the YMCA's Springfield College, proposed a red triangle as the YMCA symbol in 1891. The equal sides of the triangle, according to Gulick, stood for "man's essential unity, body, mind and spirit, each being a necessary and eternal part of man, he being neither one alone..." Dr. Gulick chose red for a symbol that would "stick right out" and "yet be just as simple and strong" as the Red Cross symbol. Dr. Gulick's students included James Naismith and William Morgan, inventors of basketball and volleyball, respectively.

1888 - William Hunton becomes the first African-American general secretary of a local YMCA in Norfolk, Va. *(page 19)*

•••

1889 - Hi-Y, a high-school boys' service club, starts in Chapman, Kan., to promote Christian character in speech, sportsmanship and scholastic achievement.

First permanent Army YMCA is built at Fort Monroe, Va.

•••

1891 - The national YMCA creates a "Colored men's department" and hires **William Hunton** as national secretary.

George Williams College forms by merger of Chicago Training School and Lake Geneva College Camp.

Water football is first played in the Y's Springfield College pool. This innovation leads to various other forms of water games including water polo and water basketball.

James Naismith

January 20, 1892 — First formal basketball game is played at Springfield College.

1892 - The first ever national YMCA "Hand-Book," published to guide local Ys, notes that membership limits are usually 16 to 40 years of age but that members "passing the latter limit are generally retained."

1893 - Seven hundred students enroll in evening classes at the Boston Y. Half of them take vocational courses such as bookkeeping and shorthand, but the rest choose music, language and other liberal arts courses.

•••

1894 - England's Queen Victoria knights YMCA founder George Williams on the 50th anniversary of the Y's founding.

A "Mr. Overman" of the Springfield (Mass.) YMCA invents rollerball, described as a combination of basketball and football, with a ball three feet in diameter. The game would not catch on around the country.

Charles Eastman, M.D., becomes the first national secretary for "Indian" work. *(page 6)*

YMCA Invents Basketball, the Ideal Winter Sport

At the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Mass., a rugby- and football-loving class of future Y directors didn't like indoor activities such as leapfrog and tumbling. It was December 1891, and the school's director, Dr. Luther Gulick, gave young physical education teacher James Naismith just weeks to come up with a winter game. Hanging peach baskets to the bottom of a second-level running track, Naismith tacked 13 rules to the wall and taught the men his game: basketball.

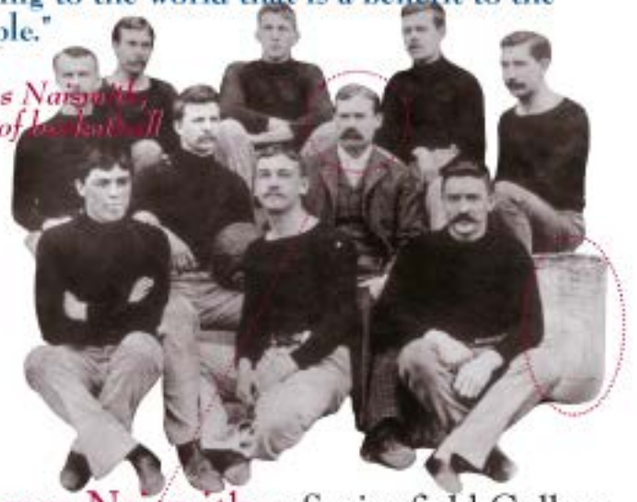
The students loved Naismith's invention so much they took it back to their hometowns during Christmas break, and basketball spread like wildfire. On January 15, 1892, Naismith published the first official basketball rules, and an indoor winter sport was born. The first women's team was recorded a year later, Naismith's future wife among the players.

Naismith, a physician and minister with additional degrees in education and psychology, also invented the football helmet.

1891 **1892** **1893** **1894** **1895**

"My pay has not been in dollars, but in the satisfaction of giving something to the world that is a benefit to the masses of people."

Dr. James Naismith, inventor of basketball



1891 - James Naismith, a Springfield College instructor, invents basketball as an indoor, winter sport. *Note the wire basket, which replaced the fragile peach baskets as the goals.*

1895 - The first American YMCA staff is sent to China.

William G. Morgan of the Holyoke (Mass.) YMCA invents volleyball. The game is originally called "mintonette."

YMCA leader John R. Mott founds World's Student Christian Federation. *(page 18)*

The Latrobe (Pa.) YMCA sponsors the first pro football game. *(page 11)*

BASKET BALL
OUTFITS.

Naismith never made any money from the game he invented. In fact, he refused compensation when he spoke about basketball in public, and he once turned down a substantial sum of money to endorse cigarettes. In 1895, he became director of physical education for the Denver YMCA.

Soon after, Amos Alonzo Stagg, a YMCA faculty member and a player in the first basketball games, recommended Naismith to start a basketball program at the University of Kansas. Naismith took the job, which he held from 1898 until his death in 1939, though he coached basketball for only nine years. The inventor of the game is the only coach in University of Kansas history with a losing record: 53 wins and 55 losses.

Basketball became an Olympic sport in 1936, and today it is second only to soccer as the most popular sport in the world. ■

Volleyball
"A Game Anyone Can Play"

In the 1890s, YMCA instructor **William Morgan** thought basketball was too strenuous for businessmen, so he blended elements of basketball, tennis and handball and called his invention "mintonette." Morgan borrowed the net from a tennis court and raised it 6 feet, 6 inches, a head above the average man's height. A new sport was born.

Middle-aged businessmen played the first game in winter 1895 in the gymnasium of **Massachusetts' Holyoke YMCA.**

In 1896, at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Mass., the name "volley ball" was first used to best describe the back-and-forth manner in which the ball flew over the net. The name would become one word, "volleyball," 56 years later. To increase the game's difficulty, officials raised the net height to 7 feet, 6 inches, and later to 8 feet in 1916.

Early players tried various balls until finally Morgan asked A.G. Spalding Company to create a special ball in 1900.

YMCA missionaries and students quickly took the game around the world. During World War I, YMCA relief workers introduced the game to soldiers. As troops returned home, they brought the game to towns and cities across America and throughout the world.

Dr. George Fisher, secretary of the YMCA War Work Office, included volleyball as part of military training camp programs.

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"Muscular Christianity"

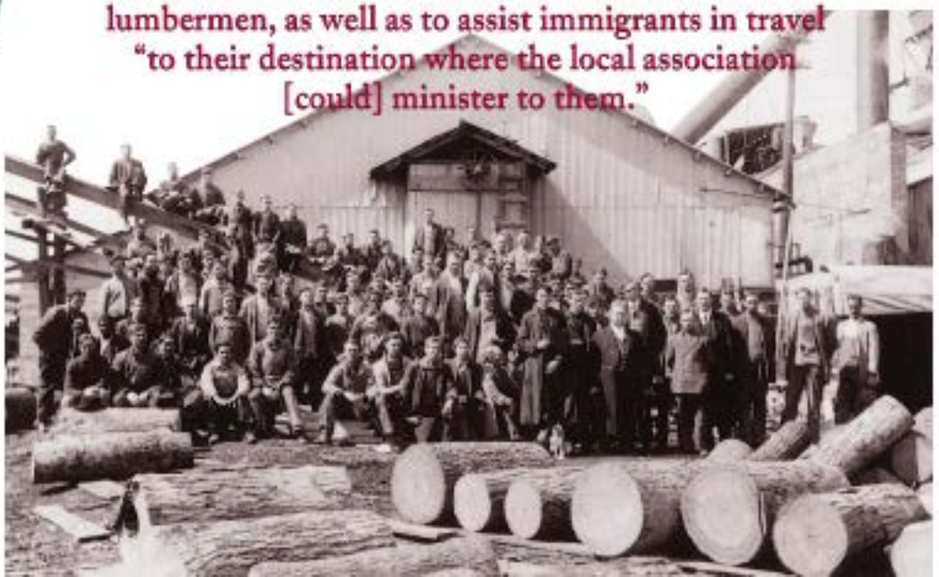
became a key slogan through which the YMCA demonstrated "that sound morals and sound body were entirely compatible; that an athlete could lead a team on Saturday and a Bible class on Sunday with equal facility and success."

In the span of *only four years,* the YMCA invented two athletic contests destined to be Olympic sports: basketball and volleyball.

1897 - Law courses are first taught at Boston YMCA Evening School, today's Northeastern University.

1896 1897 1898 1899 1900

The YMCA created an "Industrial" department in 1903 to work with railroad workers, miners and lumbermen, as well as to assist immigrants in travel "to their destination where the local association [could] minister to them."



1898 - The New York YMCA founds the Christian Home for Intemperate Men.

The YMCA establishes the Army and Navy Department during the Spanish-American War.

◆◆◆

1899 - The first and only prison YMCA is founded at Illinois State Reformatory in Pontiac, Ill.

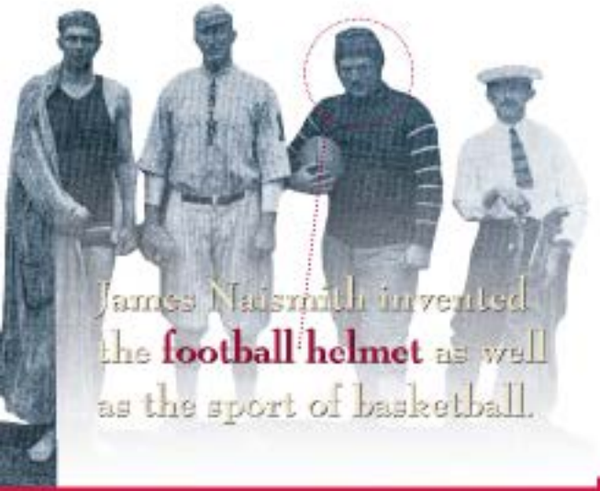
YMCA for coal miners is founded in Pana, Ill.

First Navy YMCA is founded in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Gideons International forms at a meeting held at the Janesville (Wis.) YMCA.

continued from page 10

The YMCA played a role in the development of professional football. According to The New York Times, *the first professional football game was played in 1895, in Latrobe, Pa., when the local YMCA paid John Brallier $10 plus expenses to replace the team's injured quarterback. The YMCA lost 12-0.*



James Naismith invented the **football helmet** as well as the sport of basketball.

1902 - YMCA Silver Bay training center for missionaries, foreign work staff and church leaders opens in Lake George, N.Y.

U.S. Congress funds the creation of 14 Army-Navy YMCAs.

"The thing I like about you YMCA folks is the way you mix religion and common sense."
President Theodore Roosevelt at the cornerstone laying of the Vallejo (Calif.) YMCA, 1903

1901 1902 1903 1904 1905

1903 - YMCA creates "Industrial" department.

◆◆◆

1904 - The North American YMCA sends its first national boys' work secretary, Charles Paterson, to India. He engages local youth by mastering their language, Bengali.

1905 — **Sir George Williams** dies in London. He is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Window in Westminster Abbey.

Volleyball

During WWI, 16,000 volleyballs were distributed to the military. Between 1918 and 1919, more than 1 million American soldiers participated in YMCA-organized volleyball games.

The United States Volley Ball Association was founded in 1928, and in 1957, at the urging of the YMCA's Harold Friermood, the game became an official Olympic sport, played for the first time at the 1964 Tokyo Games.

Today, more than 46 million Americans play volleyball, and 800 million people worldwide play volleyball at least once a week, making it one of the most popular sports. ■

Sir George Williams, Founder of the YMCA, 1821~1905

George Williams was born in 1821, the youngest of eight children. When he first came to London to work as a draper, he described himself as a "careless, thoughtless, godless, swearing young fellow." After becoming a devout Christian, he gathered a group of young men together for prayer and reflection. This simple act developed into the worldwide YMCA movement.

Williams became a successful businessman and was also known as a generous philanthropist, as well as a crusader for improved working conditions. By the time Sir George Williams was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1894, there were 5,000 YMCAs in 24 countries with 500,000 members. He died in 1905. A stained-glass window in Westminster Abbey honors him and the YMCA. He is buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, an honor accorded only to English heroes. ■

First Swimming Lessons and the First Pools

The YMCA didn't wade into aquatics, it jumped in. The Brooklyn (N.Y.) YMCA housed the first reported "swimming bath" in 1885. By the end of that year, 17 YMCAs sported pools and by 1900, that number grew to 100. Early pools were small, dirty and emptied when the water became filthy, as often as weekly. Not surprisingly, the medical community viewed pools as a health threat.

Dirty and contaminated water was a problem until 1909 when the YMCA's Ray Rayburn invented a swimming pool with a roll-out rim to exchange water at the Kansas City (Mo.) YMCA. The next year, the Y added the first filtration system, and health concerns surrounding pools soon disappeared.

In 1909, the YMCA launched an ambitious campaign "to teach every man and boy in North America" to swim. The need was truly pressing: The year prior more than 3,300 people drowned in the United States, mostly young men. The number of deaths grew each year, causing the head of YMCA "physical work," Dr. George Fisher, to lament the loss of life "for lack of the ability to swim a few strokes."

A young man named George Corsan arrived at the Detroit YMCA with an offer to teach swimming. The Canadian invented a new and radical method: group swimming lessons. He began with the crawl before moving to the more complicated breaststroke. After four years, Corsan took his method to the national YMCA staff and traveled around the country teaching large group lessons. In Newark, N.J., alone, he taught 800 boys in just four weeks.

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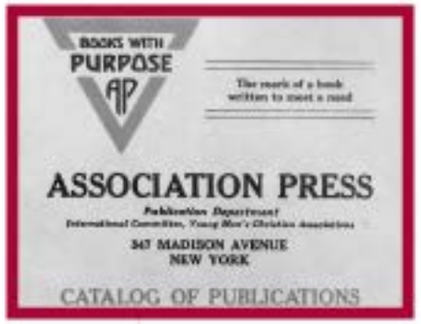
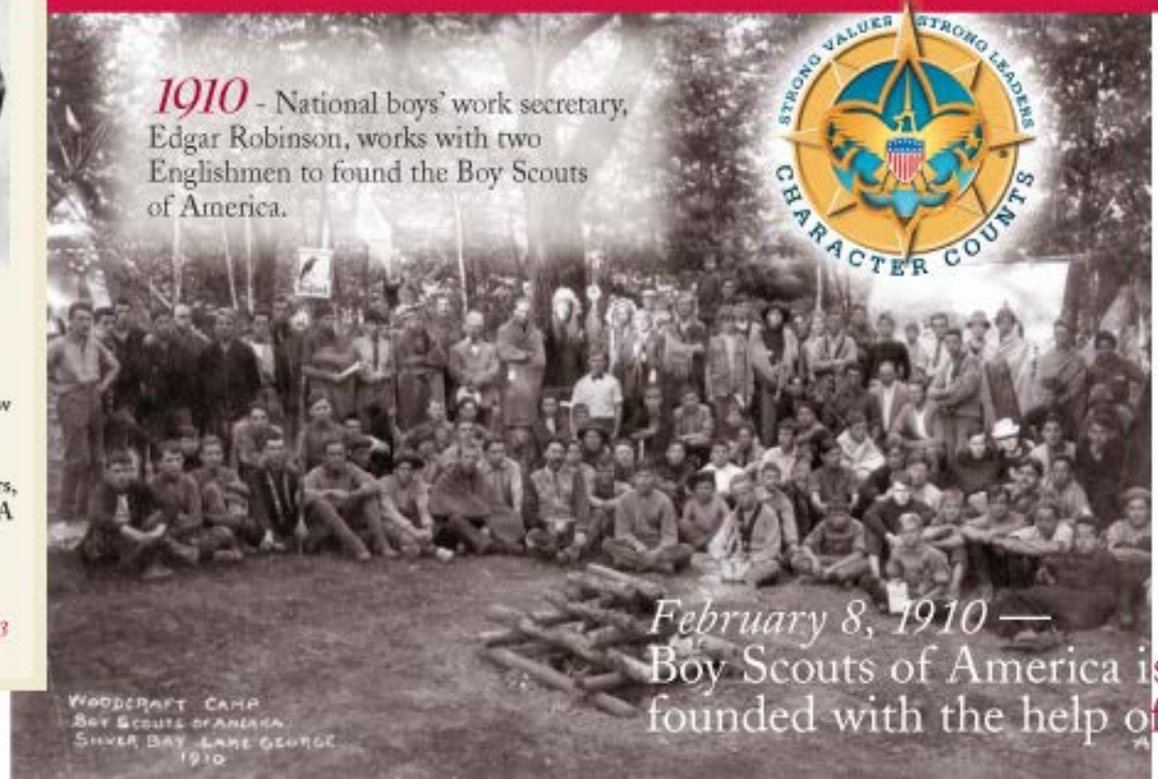


1907 - The YMCA movement establishes Association Press to share information and expertise among Ys and to publish books "which contribute to the making of Christian character."

1907
World's first mass swim lessons begin under the instruction of George Corsan at the Detroit YMCA.

June 6, 1910 — Father's Day, founded by Sonora Louise Smart, starts at the Spokane (Wash.) YMCA.

1906 1907 1908 1909 1910



1910 - National boys' work secretary, Edgar Robinson, works with two Englishmen to found the Boy Scouts of America.

February 8, 1910 —
Boy Scouts of America is founded with the help of the YMCA.

1910 - World's first indoor filtered pool is built at the Kansas City (Mo.) YMCA.

YMCA leader Dr. Luther Gulick and his wife, Charlotte, found the Camp Fire Girls.

1911

Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. of Chicago, **makes a $25,000 contribution toward the erection of the Wabash Avenue YMCA building in Chicago.** Rosenwald is so pleased with this experience that he offers to contribute $25,000 to any city that could raise at least $75,000 to erect a standard YMCA for African-American communities.
(page 20)

In 1915, Carter G. Woodson organizes the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History at the Wabash Avenue YMCA in Chicago. This leads to his starting Negro History Week in 1926, the forerunner of today's Black History Month.

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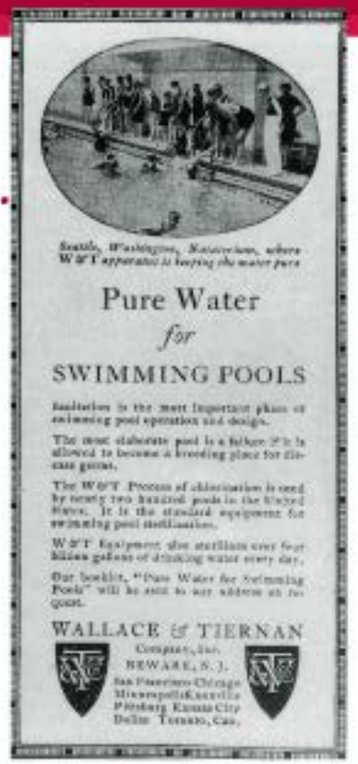
Swimming Lessons

The Y even taught soldiers how to swim during World War I. During World War II, the YMCA published "Warfare Aquatics," widely used by the armed forces for training amphibious troops.

The first mobile swimming pool was invented at the Eastern Union County (N.J.) YMCA in 1961, enabling the YMCA to take its lessons on the road.

Today, YMCAs are collectively the largest operator of swimming pools in the United States. ■



1912 - Canadian National Council of YMCAs forms an organization separate from U.S. movement, ending 58 years of joint operation.

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1913 - Springfield College student George Goss writes thesis on lifesaving, published in 1916.

◆◆◆

1915 - John R. Mott becomes second national general secretary.
(page 18)

Lifesaving and Scuba

YMCAs pioneered lifesaving. Springfield College student George Goss wrote the first American book on lifesaving as his college thesis in 1913. YMCA board member William Ball encouraged the American Red Cross to include lifesaving instruction along with its disaster and wartime services.

In the late 1950s, scuba and skin diving grew in popularity. Again the YMCA, fearful of lax training and safety, began teaching YMCA Scuba to certify skin and scuba diving instructors through a first-of-its-kind training course. Since 1959, more than 750,000 divers have been certified through YMCA Scuba. Today, almost one-third of YMCAs offer scuba training. ■

World War Relief

On April 6, 1917, the day America entered World War I, YMCA leader John Mott pledged to President Wilson to provide the morale and welfare services for the military. By the war's end, the YMCA operated 1,500 canteens in the United States and France; set up 4,000 YMCA huts for recreation and religious services; and raised more than $235 million—equivalent to $4.3 billion today—for relief work. The Y even built and operated 44 cookie and candy factories in Europe to serve the troops.

YMCA huts often sat on the front lines, close to the battle trenches. The cost was high for the 26,000 YMCA workers: 93 died in service, including eight killed in action, two of whom were women. A hundred more were wounded in battle.

U.S. Commanding Gen. John J. Pershing praised the YMCA, saying it "conducted nine-tenths of the welfare work among the American forces, ministered to not less than 19 million soldiers of the Allied Armies and extended its helpful activities to over five million prisoners of war."

The Y's war work even inspired song. American soldier and famous composer Irving Berlin wrote "I Can Always Find a Little Sunshine in the Y.M.C.A." during his WWI service.

After World War I, the YMCA awarded 80,000 educational scholarships to veterans, providing the model for the G.I. Bill after World War II.

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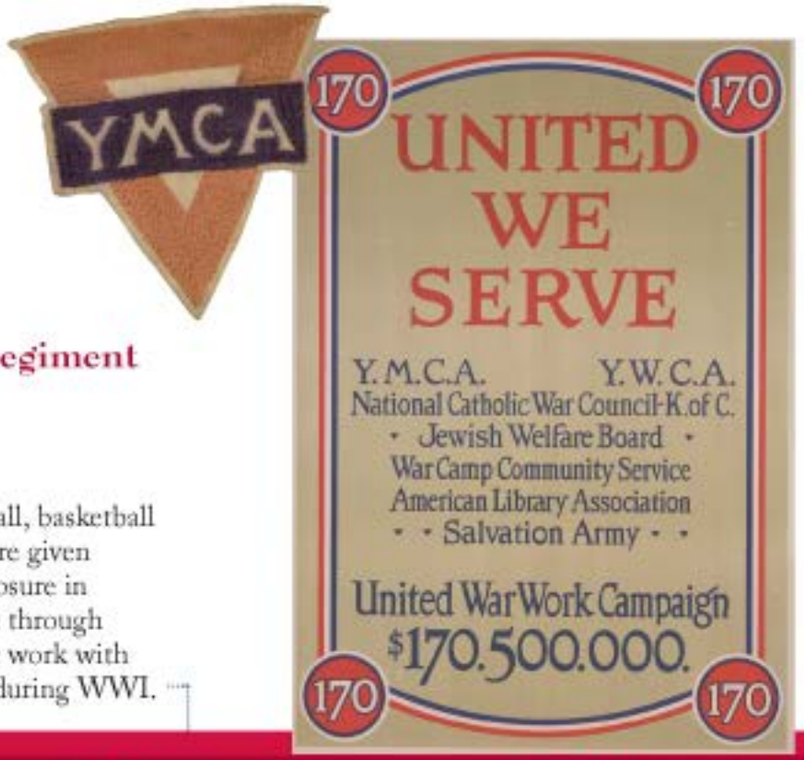
YMCA movie regiment

1917 - Baseball, basketball and volleyball are given widespread exposure in western Europe through YMCA athletic work with Allied soldiers during WWI.



1916 1917 1918

1918

Irving Berlin writes "I Can Always Find a Little Sunshine in the Y.M.C.A."

YMCA women workers for American soldiers in France during World War I, circa 1917-18

Mrs. Smith's Pies got their start at a YMCA in 1918. Amanda Smith sold her home-baked pies one slice at a time at the Pottstown (Pa.) YMCA lunch counter.

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War Relief

During World War II, YMCAs continued to serve the military. In 1941, the YMCA— along with five other national voluntary organizations—founded the United Service Organizations for National Defense, today known as the USO.

Through this new cooperative venture, the Y went on to operate 25 percent of the USO centers in the United States. Meanwhile, YMCA prisoner-of-war work took on massive proportions, serving 6 million service men held in 36 foreign nations and several thousand German and Italian POWs held in the United States.

In 1946, following the YMCA's war relief work in World War II, YMCA leader John R. Mott was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The YMCA also assisted soldiers during the Civil, Spanish-American, Korean and Vietnam wars. ■

YMCA secretary's uniform, World War I

1918 - In World War I, the YMCA raises a total of $235 million, mostly in small voluntary contributions, for war relief.

In the early 1920s, Dale Carnegie taught public speaking at YMCAs. Association Press published his classic, *Public Speaking*, in 1926.

1919 1920 1921

1920 - The first black baseball league to last a full season, the Negro National Baseball League, forms at a meeting at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Mo.

"During the [First World] war, the burdens put upon the Young Men's Christian Association by the Government were too heavy. The limitations imposed by the paramount requirements of the campaign prevented it from doing all that was assigned to it."

President and U.S. Chief Justice William Howard Taft, author of Serving with Fighting Men: An Account of the War Work of the YMCA

1922 - Judge Paul William Alexander of the Toledo YMCA founds the International Association of Y's Men service clubs to provide volunteer services for YMCAs.

John D. Rockefeller Jr. donates $1 million to start YMCA Retirement Fund.

BROOKLYN CENTRAL

VOL. XXI APRIL 28, 1922 NO. 33

BROOKLYN CENTRAL VOLLEY BALL TEAM

FIRST NATIONAL VOLLEY BALL CHAMPIONSHIPS
APRIL 28th AND 29th

Credit for Idea Goes to Bob Cubbon

The first National YMCA Volleyball Championship is held at the Brooklyn (N.Y.) YMCA. That Y would also host the first National YMCA Swimming Championship the following year.

Y-Indian Guides sought to foster the companionship of father and son "to be clean in body and pure in heart, love the sacred circle of my family, be attentive while others speak, love my neighbor as myself, seek and preserve the beauty of the Great Spirit's work in forest, field and stream." This parent-child program, based on the Native-American family model, was started in the St. Louis YMCA by Harold J. Keltner and Joe Friday, a member of the Ojibway tribe.

1926 - Y-Indian Guides parent-child program begins in the Richmond Heights, Mo., branch of the St. Louis YMCA.

Softball rules are created by Homer Hoisington, Denver YMCA state secretary. *(page 18)*

1930 - YMCA membership reaches 1 million.

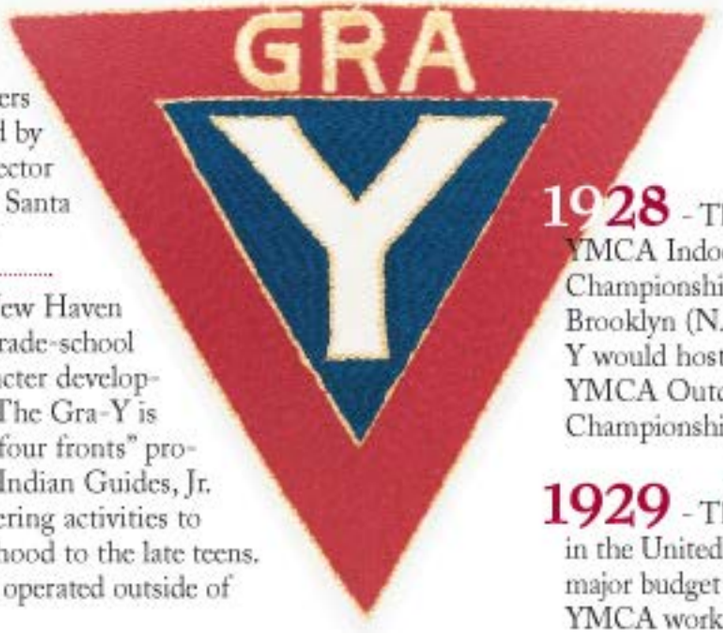
Detroit Y. M. C. A. Basket Ball Team Sails for Copenhagen

1923 - The first National YMCA Basketball Championship is held at the Youngstown (Ohio) YMCA.

The first Hi-Y Club for girls, Tri-Hi-Y, is organized by the Holyoke (Mass.) YMCA for high schoolers to promote "Christian" character development, speech, sportsmanship and scholastic achievement.

1924 - Toastmasters International is started by YMCA education director Ralph Smedley at the Santa Ana (Calif.) YMCA.

Gra-Y starts at the New Haven (Conn.) YMCA for grade-school kids to promote character development in young boys. The Gra-Y is part of the YMCA's "four fronts" program (also including Indian Guides, Jr. Hi-Y and Hi-Y), offering activities to boys from early childhood to the late teens. All of these programs operated outside of YMCA buildings.



1928 - The first National YMCA Indoor Track and Field Championship is held at the Brooklyn (N.Y.) YMCA. That Y would host the first National YMCA Outdoor Track and Field Championship the following year.

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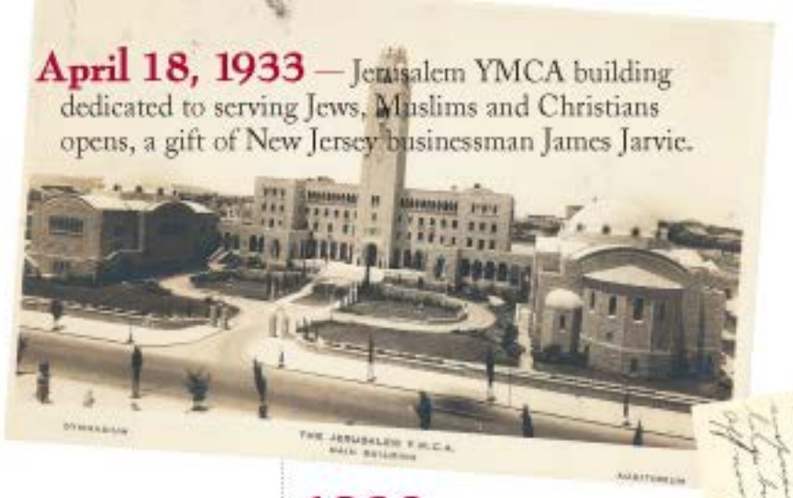
1929 - The Great Depression in the United States results in major budget reductions affecting YMCA work in other countries.



April 18, 1933 — Jerusalem YMCA building dedicated to serving Jews, Muslims and Christians opens, a gift of New Jersey businessman James Jarvie.

1933 - National Council votes that each association may determine qualifications for membership and boards.

Women are formally recognized and admitted to Association of Secretaries.

1938 - The Harlem (N.Y.) Y's drama program honors outstanding participants by inducting them into a Little Theater Guild at the end of each theater season.

1932 1934 1936 1938 1940

1931 - Portland Basis of 1869 is reversed, thereby lifting religious restrictions for membership.

1932 - The first National YMCA Wrestling Championship is held at the Grand Rapids (Mich.) YMCA.

1936 - Basketball becomes an Olympic sport.

Jackie Wilson, featherweight champion of the world in 1941, trained at the Central Avenue Branch YMCA in Pittsburgh.

YMCA Youth and Government program,

sponsored by the New York State YMCA, began at the state capital in Albany in 1936. Its purpose was to help high school boys and girls understand the process of government and help them prepare to participate in it. The program sought "to determine ways and means by which our Christian philosophy may be effective in civic life." Ultimately Youth and Government would spread to 40 states. Alumni serve in all levels of government as governors, representatives, senators and supreme court justices.

They Stayed at the YMCA

Historically, many YMCAs were known for the housing they offered, especially to young men moving to cities from rural roots. Housing was primarily a way to give young men an affordable, dependable Christian place of refuge from the "evils" of the world.

YMCA housing began in the 1860s, when Ys began building facilities with gyms, swimming pools, big auditoriums, bowling alleys and hotel-like rooms with bathrooms down the hall.

Only a teenager in 1910, Joyce Hall arrived in Kansas City, Mo., from Norfolk, Neb., with a shoebox of postcards he placed under his bed at the Kansas City YMCA. Hall's room at the YMCA became the first "office address" of Hallmark Cards.

The first known YMCA dormitory was Chicago's Farwell Hall, with 42 rooms, completed in 1867. It burned to the ground just three months after completion. Rebuilt, it burned to the ground again in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The third Farwell Hall was built in 1879—three buildings in 12 years.

From 1900 to 1916, 290 YMCAs offering more than 9,000 rooms to rent were built in the United States. In 1916, the Chicago YMCA Hotel opened with 1,821 rooms. Called dormitories or residences, rooms were designed into every new YMCA building from that time until the late 1950s. And some YMCAs even maintained emergency dormitories for the unemployed or homeless.

From 1922 to 1940, the number of YMCA accommodations grew from approximately 55,000 rooms to more than 100,000, more than any hotel chain at the time. Among those who stayed at YMCA residences: journalists Andy Rooney and Dan Rather, Wendy's restaurant founder Dave Thomas, black leader Malcolm X, country music star Charlie Rich, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., novelist Jack Kerouac and U.S. Ambassador Andrew Young. ■

Racquetball Gets Its Start, Softball Its Name, from the YMCA

Racquetball

In 1950, YMCA volunteer Joe Sobek could not find other squash players of his caliber to play in his hometown of Greenwich, Conn. So he invented a new game. After trying paddleball and platform tennis (a winter version of tennis), Sobek envisioned using a strung racquet, similar to a platform tennis paddle, to allow a variety of shots. After drawing up the game rules, Sobek approached YMCAs for approval by other players and formed the Paddle Rackets Association. Like so many other YMCA inventors, Sobek did not make a cent on his invention but gave it as a gift to all who play it today.

The International Olympic Federation is seeking to add racquetball to the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece.

Why blue? The original racquetball balls were half red and half blue. Sobek asked Spalding, the original manufacturer, to make balls all blue, which reportedly reduced the marks on court walls.

Softball

Popular for many years under such names as "kittenball" and even "sissyball," the sport now known as softball didn't get its name until 1926. In Colorado, YMCA leader Homer Hoisington noted the need for standardized rules, and Walter Hakanson of the Denver YMCA moved to settle on the name "softball," which quickly caught on nationwide.

The Denver YMCA adopted a softball declaration of principles emphasizing inclusiveness and good sportsmanship, which also spread nationwide. When the Amateur Softball Association of America was formed in 1933, the Denver YMCA team represented Colorado in its first national tournament. The Olympic Games added softball as a women's event in 1996. ■

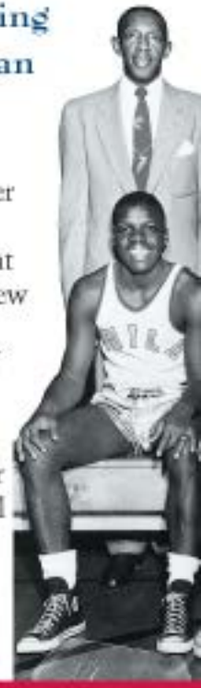
"When you hit the ball, it makes an awful pop, and that's just a very satisfying noise. It's an easy game to learn. In about 15 minutes of practice, anyone can attain instant mediocrity." —*Joe Sobek, YMCA volunteer, inventor of racquetball*

1941 - United Service Organizations (USO) is formed by YMCA and five other national service organizations.

1942 YMCA staff work secretly in U.S. internment camps holding 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. The Y's work consisted of clubs and camping for the youngsters in the camps. David M. Tatsuno, pictured with son, an internee and member of the Japanese YMCA in San Francisco, smuggled an 8-mm movie camera into the internment camp at Topaz, Utah, taking rare footage of daily life in the camp. Tatsuno donated the film to the Library of Congress, one of only two amateur films in the Library. "The Y never forgot us," said Tatsuno.

1949 - Twenty-six former prisoners of war, from six states and nine cities, meet at the West Side YMCA in New York City and organize the International Association of Barbed Wire Clubs.

1950 - YMCA volunteer Joe Sobek invents racquetball at the Greenwich (Conn.) YMCA.



1942 1944 1946 1948 1950

December 10, 1946— Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to YMCA leader John R. Mott *(second from left).*

Dr. John R. Mott, Global Citizen, 1865-1955

Dr. John R. Mott moved from the presidency of his student YMCA at Cornell University to 27 years as a leader of the Intercollegiate YMCA. An organizer of the student missionary movement, he went on to lead both the U.S. YMCA and also the World Alliance of YMCAs. Among other legacies, his missionary work brought increased respect for diversity; as foreign workers came to know other cultures better, they developed better understanding of cultural differences and expanded vision of the oneness of humankind.

Mott chaired the YMCA's war activities during WWI, initiating work on behalf of prisoners of war. In September 1939, when a War Prisoners Aid Committee was formed, he was the logical chairman. His work to bring aid to prisoners of all nations and creeds was far-reaching and inspirational. He also pioneered the concept of international observer teams in war-torn areas.

1952-53

1953 - The Christian Street YMCA in Philadelphia, with its star player, 16-year-old Wilt Chamberlain (holding ball), wins the 1952-1953 National YMCA Basketball Championship.

1958 - YMCA World Service launches "Buildings for Brotherhood" campaign.

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1959 - YMCA Scuba is born with the first training and certification.

1952 1954 1956 1958 1960

President George H.W. Bush was the founding chairman of the YMCA of Midland, Texas, December 7, 1953.

1951 - YMCA Centennial International Convention is held in Cleveland.

1953 - "George Bush Sr. and Jr. [sic] participated in the electric train races for Midland children and their fathers, recently sponsored by the YMCA, which provides recreational interests for Midlanders of all ages. George Jr. [sic] won first place in the 8-year-old age division."
—*Midland* (Texas) *Reporter Telegram*

African-American YMCAs 1853-2001

The first YMCA created by the black community began less than two years after Thomas Sullivan brought the movement to American shores. Anthony Bowen, a former slave and the first black employee in the U.S. Patent Office, established the first YMCA to serve the African-American community in his Washington, D.C., home in 1853.

In 1867, E.V.C. Eato of New York City became the first black delegate to join the annual Y convention. At the YMCA convention celebrating 25 years of service in North America, delegates called for a national staff member to work with the African-American community. Unfortunately, the first man selected for the position was white and a former general in the Confederate Army.

It was not until the national YMCA office created a "Colored Men's Department" in 1890 that an African American was hired to serve black communities. He was William Hunton, the son of a slave who had purchased his own freedom. A Canadian, Hunton joined the national staff from a black YMCA in Norfolk, Va., that he led for two years.

For the next 25 years, Hunton and his colleague Jesse Moorland assembled a staff of talented young men who carried the Y mission to African-American communities around the United States.

By the mid-1920s, black communities had started 51 city YMCAs and 128 black college chapters, with a total membership of 28,000. The African-American Ys usually had cooperative relations with white Y boards, who often provided some financial support. Still, the YMCA, like the nation, was largely segregated.

In 1907, millionaire industrialists George Foster Peabody and John D. Rockefeller gave funds and lands for the construction of "negro YMCAs" in Columbus, Ga., and Washington,

continued on page 20

continued from page 19

D.C. Three years later, Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., announced he would donate $25,000 toward construction of black YMCAs to any committee that could raise $75,000. Rosenwald donated $612,000 toward construction, while the black communities themselves raised $4.4 million. Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the mechanical grain reaper, matched Rosenwald's gift to build the Wabash Avenue YMCA in Chicago.

By 1933, "Rosenwald" YMCA buildings served 25 African-American communities, and many of the buildings still stand today. The African-American YMCAs built with Rosenwald grants included clean, safe dorm rooms and welcoming eating facilities which were a boon to black travelers, especially servicemen, in a segregated and discriminatory era.

War Relief

YMCAs provided service to both white and black troops while the U.S. Army remained racially segregated. YMCA "secretaries," as relief workers were called, were trained together: black and white. Addie Hunton, widow of YMCA leader William Hunton, was one of the first African-American YMCA women who went to France during World War I to aid the thousands of African-American soldiers serving overseas.

In 1919, the YMCA movement established the Interracial Commission (later called the Southern Regional Council) to work with black troops returning from World War I.

After World War II, there was increased emphasis on eliminating racial segregation in the YMCA. In 1946, existing YMCAs were urged to eliminate racial discrimination, and new YMCAs organized on an interracial basis. The YMCA national body officially banned segregation in 1967. ■

1962 - Youth and Government participants meet President John F. Kennedy at the First National Conference of Youth Governors in Washington, D.C.

"Through programs of study, group participation and religious devotions, the YMCA has played an important role in shaping our national character. And, in doing so, it has consistently recognized the relationship of physical vigor to responsible citizenship."

—Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General of the United States, *Journal of Physical Education, March/April 1964*

1961 - President John F. Kennedy founds Peace Corps, patterned after YMCA World Service, started in the 1880s.

1969 - Jazzercise®, invented by dancer Judi Missett, debuts at the McGaw YMCA in Evanston, Ill. A year later, Jackie Sorenson begins "dance exercise" classes at the Towson (Md.) YMCA, leading to the boom in "aerobics" in the United States and Canada.

1962 1964 1966 1968 1970

1964 - Volleyball becomes an Olympic sport.

1967 - YMCA creates and trademarks logo with red triangle.

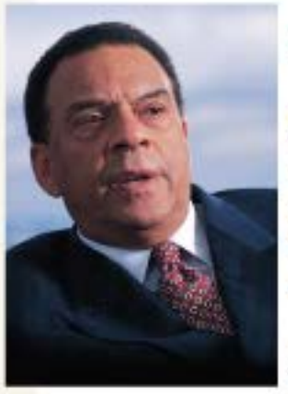
Racial discrimination is banned in YMCAs.

1969 - YMCA youth soccer leagues are developed.

The Civil Rights Movement and the Y

During the 1960s, many black YMCAs became meeting places and rallying points for the Civil Rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rev. Andrew Young often swam with their families while home from their obligations to the freedom movement.

Black leaders Vernon Jordan, former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, Martin Luther King Jr. and Congressman John Lewis all grew up at the historic Butler Street YMCA in Atlanta, while Andrew Young spent his grade-school days at the Dryades YMCA in New Orleans. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall grew up at the Druid Hill YMCA in Baltimore.



"The YMCA, as much as any other institution, has a record of working on desegregation. The only place you could meet in the South in the '50s, blacks and whites together, was YMCA camp in North Carolina."

—U.S. Ambassador, the Rev. Andrew Young, YMCA Alumnus, Dryades YMCA, New Orleans

1971

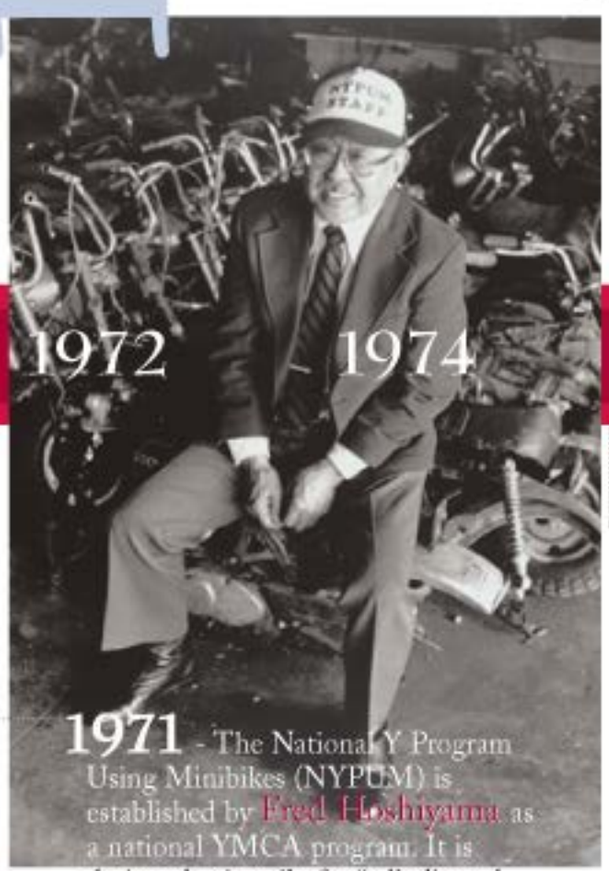
1971 - Dr. Leo B. Marsh starts the Black Achievers program at the Harlem Branch YMCA in New York. The program links adult volunteer mentors with youth.

Dr. Leo B. Marsh

1980 - YMCAs celebrate the 125th anniversary of the World Alliance of YMCAs.

1976 - YMCA launches nationwide cardiovascular health program.

1972 - 1974 - 1976 - 1978 - 1980



1971 - The National Y Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM) is established by Fred Hoshiyama as a national YMCA program. It is designed primarily for "adjudicated youth," those who were apprehended and convicted by the court system. The Honda Motor Company contributes the minibikes for the program.

1975 - The national YMCA and the NBA Players Association create the Youth Basketball Association (YBA) to organize youth into recreational sports programs that stress skills and teamwork over winning at any cost.

The National YMCA Swimming and Diving Championship, with 1,500 participants, becomes the world's largest swimming championship.

1978 - Pope Paul VI expresses "encouragement towards the work of the YMCA."

Women in the YMCA —Always a Vital Presence

Women have always been part of the YMCA even though the YMCA started as an all-male organization in 1844 in London. The Brooklyn (N.Y.) YMCA first admitted women in 1859, and a decade later it reported 1,200 female members. In the mid-1870s, the Scranton (Pa.) YMCA reported that one-third of its 600 members were women.

However, in early YMCAs women were less likely to be members than to be staff or volunteers focused on youth work and fundraising for women's projects. Women were often at the helm of programs for youngsters. For instance, in Charleston, S.C., the YMCA set up the first YMCA women's auxiliary in 1858, which ran an industrial school for girls.

In 1886, the first female YMCA "secretary" (director) was Ellen Brown, of Buffalo, N.Y., who was charged with "boys' work" at her hometown Y.

In the 1870s, student YMCAs were founded on college campuses across the United States with both male and female members.

But women really came to the forefront during World War I, when 5,145 women served the YMCA in the United States and in France. This group of pioneers included Helen Astor, wife of American social reformer Vincent Astor, and Edith Roosevelt, wife of Theodore Roosevelt Jr., as well as unsung women who ran canteens and organized entertainment and R&R (rest and recreation) for the troops. Two women were among the eight YMCA secretaries killed in action during World War I serving troops.

continued on page 22

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In 1923, the first Tri-Hi-Y Club was organized for high-school girls in Holyoke, Mass. However, not until 1933 could YMCAs officially include women on their boards. A year later, female staff were granted professional status, and female members began to be officially included in YMCA membership figures. That year, 275 YMCAs reported that women made up 6 percent of total membership, or nearly 60,000 members. By 1950, almost 1,000 YMCAs reported nearly 250,000 female members. ■

Child Care Pioneers from the 1850s

Before there were public schools in the United States, most early YMCAs cared for children of the poor through free Sunday schools and mission schools. In 1856, the San Francisco YMCA enrolled 44 boys and three girls in a Sunday school for "newsboys," kids who sold newspapers on the streets. The Washington, D.C., YMCA held "day-schools" for poor children. And in Salem, Mass., the YMCA's mission school offered classes and "social gatherings" for children who otherwise might not have had such opportunities.

By the end of the 19th century, as public education became widely available, YMCAs stepped away from the child care arena. But during the 1960s, when YMCA youth workers noticed that teens often cared for younger siblings while their parents worked, YMCAs began organizing high-quality, affordable child care for kids of all ages.

YMCAs pioneered after-school child care before the term "latchkey kid" was widely used. Today, 84 percent of YMCA school-age programs are located in schools, and many YMCAs receive support from local school boards. ■

1982 - First YMCA child care manual is published.

•••

1983 - YMCA Armed Services Department reorganizes as Armed Services YMCA of the USA, chartered as a national member association of the YMCA of the USA. It is designated as the YMCA's representative for the U.S. Department of Defense.

1986 - YMCA of the USA introduces the "YMCA Fitness Leaders" course, a standard program for training and certifying leaders of fitness classes.

1992 - YMCAs conduct the first national Healthy Kids Day to encourage healthy development of youth. It becomes an annual April event.

1982 1984 1986 1988 1990

1985 - YMCAs celebrate the 100th anniversary of YMCA camping.

1988 - First YMCA General Assembly is held in Boston.

•••

1989 - YMCA Earth Service Corps starts at the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

President Ronald Reagan

was a YMCA-trained lifeguard in his hometown of Dixon, Ill., and was credited with saving 77 lives from the currents of the Rock River. As a youth, Reagan also played in the Dixon YMCA's band.

1994 - YMCAs create the Character Development thrust in response to declining morality and lack of values education. The YMCA movement, celebrating a rich history in character development, formally defines character as the demonstration of four core values: caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

YMCAs celebrate the 150th anniversary of the organization's founding in London.

Children on a swing set at a day care center run by the YMCA. The center is in the Marine-built tent city on Harris Field, in Homestead, Fla. The tent city was built to house people made homeless by Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

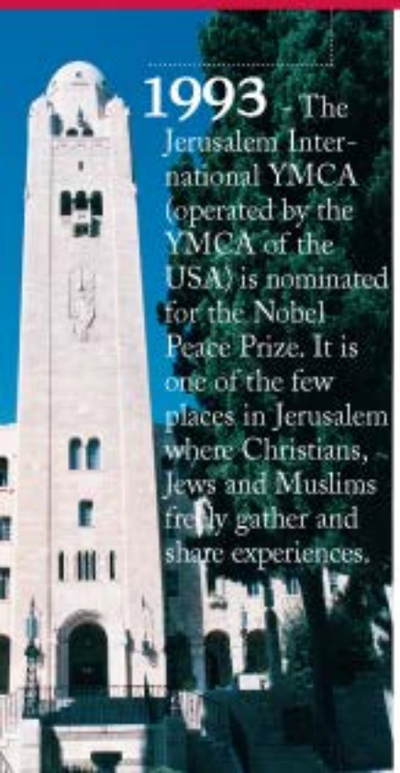
1997 - At the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, led by retired Gen. Colin Powell, YMCAs make up the largest contingent in attendance, pledging to add 200,000 more volunteers by the year 2001.

YMCAs formally adopt one logo and the theme, "We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities."

YMCA
We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

YMCA of the USA launches the first national public service television advertising campaign, featuring five real YMCA volunteers and members.

1992 1994 1996 1998 2000



1993 - The Jerusalem International YMCA (operated by the YMCA of the USA) is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. It is one of the few places in Jerusalem where Christians, Jews and Muslims freely gather and share experiences.

YWRITER'S VOICE™
We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

1996 - YMCA of the USA establishes arts and humanities as a national program area. Writer's Voice, part of the program, would grow into the largest national literary arts network in the country.

1999 - U.S. YMCA membership reaches 17.5 million. Half are female and half are under age 18.

YMCAs collectively raise $682 million to fund their scholarships, subsidies and community facilities.

2000 - YMCA of the USA co-sponsors first White House Conference on Teenagers.

More Than a Century of YMCA Camping

The YMCA first became involved in camping in 1867, when a Vermont youth director took a group of boys to Lake Champlain in New York for a summer encampment. By 1882, enough YMCAs were holding youth and adult camping that camping was included in national records as "outings and excursions."

In 1885, the YMCA started America's first known summer camp program when volunteer Sumner Dudley, long active with both the New York and the New Jersey YMCAs, took seven boys for a week's encampment at Orange Lake, N. Y. Eventually the nation's first permanent resident camp, Camp Dudley settled on the shores of Lake Champlain, N.Y., in 1908.

Dudley set up that first camp to provide "healthful recreation without temptation, the gratification of the natural desire for a free and easy life outdoors, together with the cultivation of a manly Christian character."

From those first seven campers in 1885, the number of Y campers grew to 6,348 in 187 YMCA camps by 1905. Ninety-five years later, 242 YMCA resident camps served more than a quarter of a million campers each year.

In 1910, YMCA leaders helped create the American Camping Association with YMCA camp director Charles Scott as its first president. Today the ACA accredits both private and public camps, including many YMCAs.

As the 20th century ended, YMCAs established more and more family camping experiences and year-round camps, even in harsh northern climates.

Today, YMCA camps spread from the shores of Maine to the peaks of the Colorado Rockies to the northwest beaches of Oahu, Hawaii. More than 1,600 YMCA day camps serve more than 500,000 children every summer. ■

2001 - YMCAs celebrate their first 150 years in America at the Anniversary General Assembly held in New Orleans.

YMCAs exceed pledge to Gen. Powell, raising more volunteers than the 200,000 promised—for a total of 600,000 YMCA volunteers.

The Next 150 Years

The rich past of the YMCA movement inspires staff and volunteers as they strive to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. YMCAs move into the 21st century with a pioneering spirit and a legacy of accomplishment. They retain a commitment to serve all ages, abilities and incomes; to meet ever-changing community needs; to remain a movement led by volunteers; and to live their mission every day.

The far-reaching accomplishments of the YMCA over the past 150 years reveal a mission to constantly search for innovative ways to meet community needs.

Founded to address the problems in America's communities, the YMCA looks to cities and towns at its sesquicentennial, leading new initiatives to help meet the critical needs of youth and families. YMCAs currently serve one in 10 teenagers and pledge to double that number within the next five years.

YMCAs' focus on teens is just one component of their dedication to juvenile justice issues. YMCAs are committed to developing teens, to preventing juvenile delinquency and crime, and to working with kids and families in high-risk communities throughout the country. In addition to family, sports and aquatics programming, YMCA offerings include mentoring, conflict resolution, gang prevention and programs designed for kids suspended from school.

Collaboration is a hallmark of all YMCA programs. YMCAs boast more than 400 partnerships with juvenile courts, 300 collaborations with public housing authorities, and nearly 3,000 collaborations with elementary and middle schools. To meet the many and varied needs of their communities, YMCAs often partner with women's shelters, welfare-to-work service agencies, job training organizations, health and wellness programs, police departments, hospitals, federal government agencies, and countless corporate supporters of the YMCA movement.

One hundred fifty years later, YMCAs still depend on the strength and passion of their volunteers. YMCAs are volunteer founded, volunteer based and volunteer led. In 1997, at the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, YMCAs promised to recruit 200,000 additional volunteers—for a total of 600,000—and serve 8 million kids by 2001. Ys met this pledge ahead of schedule. YMCAs encourage all members to become volunteers and donors, and offer opportunities for families to volunteer together in programs designed specifically for kids and teens.

The nation's 2,400 neighborhood YMCAs occupy a unique place in American communities and American history. No other organization serves the entire community in the way that YMCAs do. YMCAs bring together the poor and not-so-poor, men and women, people of all faiths and backgrounds. YMCA scholarships and subsidies help make this a reality. In 1999, YMCAs raised more than $682 million to keep their membership and programs open to everyone, regardless of ability to pay.

YMCAs will continue to "build strong kids, strong families, strong communities" for another 150 years.

National Initiatives
Focus on Diversity, Assets and Healthier Communities

The five years from 2001 to 2006 have demonstrated the collective power of the YMCA movement through the launch of a number of national initiatives. Although the tragic attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, caused YMCA leadership to cancel its formal introductory session to "Making Diversity a Priority in the YMCA," that date marks the transition of what had been a North American Urban Group "emphasis" into a movementwide institutionalization. The session was rescheduled in 2002, leading to the creation of the National Diversity Initiative.

Also in 2001, the boards of YMCA of the USA, YMCA Canada and Search Institute formally endorsed the Abundant Assets Alliance, a vision of YMCAs across North America integrating asset building into their programs and practices.

In July 2004, during congressional testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommitee on Appropriations, YMCA of the USA unveiled YMCA Activate America™, a long-term public health initiative of the YMCA movement that is focused on making healthy living a reality for millions of Americans. Then, in September 2004, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson awarded $2 million to YMCA of the USA through the Steps to a HealthierUS initiative. In September 2004 and again in December 2005, civic leaders and YMCA representatives assembled at the Pioneering Healthier Communities Conference to share knowledge of proven behavior-modification strategies.

In January 2006, YMCA Activate America was rolled out regionally through a series of meetings across the nation. As of June 2006, over 600 YMCA associations have become Activate America YMCAs representing over 2,000 branches. Each YMCA pledges to support individuals and the community in the pursuit for healthier living, while partnering with public, private and other nonprofit organizations. ■

2001 - YMCAs celebrate their first 150 years in America at the Anniversary General Assembly held in New Orleans.

YMCAs exceed pledge to Gen. Powell, raising more volunteers than the 200,000 promised—for a total of 600,000 YMCA volunteers.

November 2002 - YMCA of the USA and Search Institute release *Building Strong Families: A Preliminary Study on What Parents Need to Succeed.*

December 2002 - YMCA member associations vote overwhelmingly to adopt a new national governance system. More than 98 percent of eligible votes are cast, and 99 percent of those are in favor.

YMCA of the USA refocuses parent-child program resources from YMCA Indian Guides to YMCA Adventure Guides.

In April 2004 - YMCA of the USA and Springfield College sign a historic partnership agreement bringing the nearly 120 year partnership between the two institutions to new levels.

2004 - *The Princeton Review* cites YMCAs among the top organizations in the United States for "Best Entry-Level Jobs for College Students."

May 2004 - YMCA of the USA launches www.ymcaexchange.org, the Web site for YMCA staff and volunteers.

2001 2002 2003 2004

2003 - YMCAs celebrate African-American heritage with the Celebration of 150 Years of African-American Service in the YMCA, a conference in Washington, D.C.

2003 - Release of *"Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities,"* a report commissioned by YMCA of the USA and the Commission on Children at Risk that provides scientific evidence of the positive emotional and spiritual growth that kids experience through YMCA programs, underscoring the effectiveness of the Abundant Assets Alliance.

November 2004 - YMCA of the USA follows up on its 2002 Building Strong Families Study, with an in-depth look at family resources needed within minority communities—*Building Strong Families 2004 – A Study of African-American and Latino/ Latina Parents in the United States.*

December 21, 2004 - President George W. Bush signed U.S. Public Law 108-47, permanently classifying the plans sponsored by the YMCA Retirement Fund as Church Plans.

U.S. YMCA membership tops 20 million.

The YMCA Retirement Fund

The YMCA Retirement Fund was started in 1922 to ensure the longevity of the YMCA movement in America. Since 2001, it has withstood tremendous adversity, including a market collapse, a front line involvement in the events of 9/11, a global war on terror, a major Wall Street accounting scandal and a serious challenge to its church plan status by the IRS.

Since 2001, the Fund strengthened its independent Board of Trustees, developed its staff, upgraded its technology, professionalized customer service and received high marks for education and communications. It repositioned its investment portfolio to reduce risk while, at the same time, enhancing the prospects of long-term returns. The Fund is now managing over $4 billion in assets for 75,000 participants and retirees, with more than 900 participating YMCAs.

On December 21, 2004, President George W. Bush signed U.S. Public Law 108-47, clarifying the legal status of the plans sponsored by the YMCA Retirement Fund as church plans.

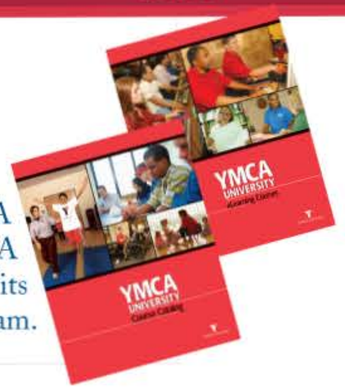
In 2005, in a survey fielded by the Association of YMCA Professionals, the creation of the Fund in 1922 was voted by YMCA staff and retirees as "The #1 event in YMCA history." ■

2005 - January, 2005- YMCA of the USA launches the *Beyond Borders: International Strategic Planning Project for the 21st Century* with the aim of shaping the future international vision of the U.S. YMCA movement; the most comprehensive international planning effort in 40 years.

April marks the 150th Anniversary of the World Alliance of YMCAs and the creation of the *"YMCA World Fellowship Fund,"* an international fundraising initiative to sustain YMCA organizational development and institutional strengthening initiatives around the world.

March 2006 - The Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA), in collaboration with Music for a Cause, asks all Americans to remember our nation's troops March 19, 2006, the third anniversary of the war in Iraq. ASYMCA and Music for a Cause launch the "Send a CD to a Soldier" program, a unique way to let men and women in uniform know that their service to our country is appreciated.

2005 2006



YMCA of the USA launches YMCA University and its eLearning program.

2006 - The nation's YMCAs celebrate 100 years of group swimming instruction.

YMCAs Today

The year 2005 marked the first time the YMCA could report that membership at YMCAs across the United States topped 20 million. That means more Americans now belong to a Y than live in the five most populous cities in the country.

Officially, U.S. YMCAs report a total membership of 20.2 million people, almost half of whom are under the age of 18. They belong to 2,617 YMCAs, which are served by more than 561,000 volunteers. The collective revenue of YMCAs is greater than $5 billion.

To put these numbers into perspective, consider that YMCA of the USA reported about 17 million members and 2,434 Ys only five years ago in 2001, and about 11 million members and 1,868 Ys in 1980. Few, if any, organizations in this country can boast such remarkable growth.

YMCA statistics also highlight the extraordinary generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations and public entities to the YMCA movement. Contributed gifts and public support represent nearly $1.4 billion, or 27.2% percent, of combined Y revenue. This includes more than $318 million raised in capital campaigns and $162 million in annual campaigns, as well as $86 million from the United Way and $632 million from foundation and government grants and contracts.

Answering the Call:
YMCAs Respond to Worldwide Crises

September 11, 2001–

On the clear morning of September 11, 2001, the United States and its YMCAs were shocked when terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. A third plane, likely headed for the White House, crashed in Pennsylvania. The YMCA of Greater New York assumed a critical role in helping the people of New York cope in the aftermath of the September 11 tragedy. Its 20 branches continued operations throughout the crisis, working in many different ways to alleviate suffering and to provide comfort to people from all walks of life. In the true spirit of the YMCA, the caring staff of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington set aside their own fears and concerns in order to serve adults, families and children in a time of need. Many YMCAs provided child care throughout the crisis for those who had to come to work in uncertain times, providing a safe and secure place while not disrupting the children's normal routines. Throughout the crisis, YMCA of the USA provided online resources to connect YMCAs, including a special Y-to-Y memo from the YMCA of Milwaukee, entitled "Talking with Youth and Teens about the World Trade Center and Pentagon Attacks" and a YMCA of the USA tip sheet, "Coping with Tragedy."

December 2004– Pacific Rim Tsunami

On December 26, 2004, a 9.0 earthquake, the strongest on record since 1964, created a tsunami that pummeled the shores of countries throughout Pacific Asia. Hundreds of thousands died and millions of people were left homeless and at risk. YMCAs in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand provided emergency assistance to the most damaged areas in their countries, including food, water, shelter and basic household items. The YMCA of the USA, World Service Campaign raised funds from our local YMCAs and donors and joined the global YMCA family to support the YMCA relief work and long term rebuilding efforts in the affected areas. This include repairs and construction of homes, community centers, educational scholarships, establishing their livelihoods (micro-credits for fishing boats, nets, and family businesses) and YMCA programs especially designed to rekindle the community fabric and its sense of hope, particularly among children and young people.

August 2005– Hurricane Katrina

When Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast region of the United States on August 29, 2005, area YMCAs were doubly challenged to support displaced YMCA staff and their families while responding to the needs of their surrounding communities. Many YMCAs throughout Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama sustained significant roof and structural damage while some YMCAs were left completely underwater. YMCAs across the country opened their doors to house evacuees from Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and augmented programming. In response, YMCA of the USA established the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. The trustees of the YMCA Fund Inc. agreed to match the first $1 million donated to the relief fund. ■

Affiliates Evolve and Grow in New Century

Association of YMCA Professionals Targets Mission

To foster a more collaborative relationship among the affiliated groups within the greater North American YMCA movement, the Association of Professional Directors (APD) Constitution and By-Laws were amended to include representation on the APD National Board of Directors for the chief executive officers of YMCA of the USA, the YMCA Retirement Fund, Springfield College and the North American Fellowship of YMCA Retirees (NAFYR). In 2004, APD changed its name to the Association of YMCA Professionals (AYP) in order to emphasize the YMCA movement and to clarify the important role AYP plays for its members. AYP also updated its mission statement to focus on the purpose of the organization: "To advance the YMCA profession."

NAYDO Focuses Direction, Gains Ground

The North American YMCA Development Organization (NAYDO), which provides financial development resources and support to YMCAs in all of North America, has seen tremendous growth and change in the organization's 25-year history. In just the last five years, a number of significant events have taken place, including NAYDO's status of becoming a limited liability corporation of YMCA of the USA. In 2004, NAYDO established an association membership to recognize YMCAs and their collective staff and volunteers as members of NAYDO. Since that time, NAYDO's membership has grown from 600 to over 3,600 individuals. In 2006, NAYDO celebrated its 25th year anniversary with record-breaking attendance at its annual conference, held in Indianapolis.

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