A study of social services rendered by The Urban League in Englewood, New Jersey.

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A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES RENDERED BY THE URBAN LEAGUE IN ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
ELSIE HERMOINE WHITLEY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JUNE 1948
AN ABSTRACT

by

ELSIE ERNOE WHITLEY

Significance of Study

During the World War II years, it was shown how the races could successfully fight together for a common cause. There was conflict in some instances, but on the whole, the composite picture contained facts which proved that men of different colors could overcome race prejudice and become friends. When the war was over, most of these same men returned to their homes; some of them remained liberal in their beliefs, while others reverted to their pre-war habit of denouncing people of different nationalities and refraining from cooperating.

In order to further race relations in a community, it has been desirable to approach the job on a cooperative basis. The Urban League in Englewood, New Jersey has based its rendering of social services on interracial cooperation in planning.

The National Urban League has been an organization which has believed that cooperation between the Negro and white races could lead to the social and economic improvement of Negroes. Specifically, the purpose of the National Urban League has been "To promote interracial organization and action; to improve economic and social conditions among Negro populations in cities, to conduct social research and planning in behalf of the Negro population; to promote specific social work activities among Negroes until other agencies are found to accept responsibility for such programs; to promote the occupational advancement
of Negroes by carrying on programs of industrial relations, vocational guidance, and public education, and to encourage the training of Negro social workers through fellowships in accredited schools of social work.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study will be to present the social services rendered by the Englewood Urban League. These social services will be analyzed in relation to the needs of the Negroes in the Englewood community.

Method of Procedure

The information for this study has been collected chiefly from the published and unpublished material of the Englewood Urban League. Interviews were held with Mrs. Marion Forrester and Mrs. Consuella Giles. In making this study, much valuable information was gained through the material of such authors as Wayne McMillen, Jesse Steiner, E. C. Lindeman, Adeline Sterling and others.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to present and analyze the social services of the Englewood Urban League in relation to the needs of the Negroes in the community. As a result of this study, the author has concluded:

1. Englewood was a residential community and was located four miles from New York City. It was protected by a Master Plan, a Zoning Code, and a Building Code. The Fourth Ward was where the Lincoln school was located and this was where the majority of the Negro population resided. Three Negro teachers were placed in this school by the Englewood Urban League during the past two years.
2. Since 1930, the population had grown consistently. The attitudes of the whites toward the Negroes had tended to be paternalistic. The principal employment of Negroes in Englewood had been domestic while those engaged in the various professions usually worked in New York City.

3. The Englewood Urban League had been incorporated in 1943 and in 1944, a permanent home had been established for the League and an Executive Secretary and Office Secretary employed.

4. Englewood Urban League had served as a medium through which the Negroes could verbalize their problems and through cooperative methods seek ways of solving them. The Board of Directors had been composed of thirty lay persons who had been elected at the annual meeting of the League. The League had operated through its ten active committees which had been made up from the membership.

5. The educational activities of the League had been directed toward cementing better relationships between the school and the Negro community.

6. The Englewood Urban League had made use of the Credit Union plan which had encouraged thrift and made loans for provident purposes.

7. The Englewood Urban League had realized that the effectiveness of its social services could be furthered through cooperating with other organizations.

8. The Englewood Urban League had been an important organization in Englewood. It had attempted to meet the needs of the Negroes through its varied and stimulating program of activity. The Negro community had awakened to the fact that in order for the League to continue to be successful, cooperation between the races should be continued.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

Cooperation, properly understood, is an ethical motive. Cooperation, literally, means "working together." But before men can work together, they must be together, belong together, feel themselves together, comprise a single organism of memory and of hope. Life is a common enterprise; the roles individual men play and serve must needs be manifold and diverse. But none is without honor and no worker is superfluous or trivial...Success by its very nature is an end in which all must serve alike.¹

During the World War II years, it was shown how the races could successfully fight together for a common cause. There was conflict in some instances, but on the whole, the composite picture contained facts which proved that men of different colors could overcome race prejudice and become friends. When the war was over, most of these same men returned to their homes; some of them remained liberal in their beliefs, while others reverted to their pre-war habit of denouncing people of different nationalities and refraining from cooperating.

In order to further race relations in a community, it has been desirable to approach the job on a cooperative basis. The Urban League in Englewood, New Jersey has based its rendering of social services on interracial cooperation in planning.

The National Urban League has been an organization which has believed that cooperation between the Negro and white races could lead

¹J. Henry Carpenter, Peace Through Cooperation (New York, 1944), p. 16.
to the social and economic improvement of Negroes. Specifically, the purpose of the National Urban League has been:

To promote interracial organization and action; to improve economic and social conditions among Negro populations in cities, to conduct social research and planning in behalf of the Negro population; to promote specific social work activities among Negroes until other agencies are found to accept responsibility for such programs; to promote the occupational advancement of Negroes by carrying on programs of industrial relations, vocational guidance, and public education, and to encourage the training of Negro social workers through fellowships in accredited schools of social work.¹

Although this has been the purpose of the National Urban League, the Englewood Urban League, as an affiliate, has tried to uphold this traditional aim. It has been an interracial agency for social service among the Negroes in Englewood and its main emphasis has been the provision of intelligent and well directed programs for community betterment.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study will be to present the social services rendered by the Englewood Urban League. These social services will be analyzed in relation to the needs of the Negroes in the Englewood community. A brief history of the League will be given in order to present a picture and to ascertain the importance of the League in Englewood.

Scope and Limitations

This study will be limited to the social services rendered by the Englewood Urban League. It will also present the history of the League. The social and economic aspects of Englewood will be analyzed in terms of the needs of the community. This study has been limited by the lack of statistical material and certain research data in the files of the League.

Method of Procedure

The information for this study has been collected chiefly from the published and unpublished material of the Englewood Urban League. Extensive use was made of the League files. Interviews were held with Mrs. Marion Forrester, Executive Secretary, and Mrs. Consuella Giles, Office Secretary. In making this study, much valuable information was gained through the material of such authors as Wayne McMillen, Jesse Steiner, E. C. Lindeman, Adaline Sterling and others. The files of the Englewood Press proved very helpful as well as the material furnished by the Englewood Chamber of Commerce.
CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLEWOOD

Historical Development of Englewood

The historical development of Englewood had its roots in the soil of "New Amsterdam," now New York. Its first settlers were Dutch migrants from Manhattan. In 1858 it acquired the name "Englewood" and with the opening of the first railroad in 1859, it was incorporated as a city.

Early settlers were prosperous farmers and traders. Newcomers came at the insistence of friends who had moved there seeking a friendly, country atmosphere, but always new residents were those who could build substantial homes. They were substantial doctors, lawyers, bankers, realtors, importers, and builders, most of whom had businesses in New York City. They commuted by ferry, then railroad. This was many years before the construction of the George Washington Bridge which linked the shores. At the time of this study, the community was served by the Erie railroad and motor coach lines to all points, while the George Washington bridge was located only two miles away.¹

Englewood was a residential community which was located four miles from New York City. It covered an area of six square miles with sixty-five miles of paved streets. The community was protected by a Master Plan, a Zoning Code, and a Building Code. Its elaborate zoning plan had prevented the development of any "nuisance-type" businesses although provision had been made for a "light industrial" area which included

repair and machine shops of any size, laundries, dyeing and cleaning
works of any size when conducted without public hazard, lumber and coal
yards and all processes of light manufacture. Throughout the years,
Englewood had maintained its status as an ideal suburban home for the
man with business interests in New York, yet easily accessible to business
and entertainment centered in nearby New York City.¹

Organizations to meet community needs had been developed over the
years. There was a hospital with segregated facilities for Negro patients.
The Social Service Federation, whose staff handled a case load of about
fifty per cent white and fifty per cent Negro, had not hired a Negro
case worker. There was a chapter of the American Red Cross. There were
Boy and Girl Scout Troops for white children and the same for Negro, but
none were interracial. The recreation program for children and adults
was conducted at Memorial House and was on a five day schedule; two nights
at Memorial House were used for Negroes and two for whites. One night
was for either group which desired it for special meeting purposes.
There were two Negro workers on the staff—a Negro boys' worker and a
Negro girls' worker. Memorial House included a nursery which was inter-
racial. Each of these organizations was partly or solely supported by the
Community Chest. The Urban League in Englewood was the only organization
in the city whose purpose was the improvement of interracial understanding
and the betterment of living and working conditions for Negroes.²

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²Interview with Executive Secretary, Mrs. Marion Forrester (Englewood
Educational Facilities

One large high school, one junior high school, one junior high-grade school combined, and four grade schools comprised the public school system. The Catholic parochial school program of the community included a high school and a grade school. There was a private school with divisions for boys and girls, a small business college and several day nurseries.

In studying the community for this study, it was interesting to notice the set-up in the schools. About ninety-five per cent of the Negro population resided in the Fourth Ward. Here was located the Lincoln school, which until 1938, was a grade school. Since it had been the rule that children attend the school in the district where they lived, the percentage of Negro children in the Lincoln school had tended to be high. In 1937-38, it had been eighty per cent Negro; in 1937-38, it had been ninety per cent Negro; in 1938-39, it had been 91.9 per cent Negro. From 1934 to 1939, the Negro population of the school had not increased. Rather, the population of the white students had decreased because their families left the district. A new building had been built near to the Lincoln school and its emphasis had been on vocational training. The Urban League had been successful in having three Negro teachers placed in the school in the past two years.

In 1945, a survey of high school students in Englewood indicated that out of a total 1,600, only seventy-five were Negroes. Mr. Franklin's

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report showed that the disinterest on the part of Negro students for continuing in school after their sixteenth birthday was due to the lack of job opportunities following the completion of a high school education.¹

Population Growth

Englewood had grown consistently since 1930, having increased from 17,805 in 1930 to 18,966 in 1940.² Although the Negro and white population had increased, the foreign born had decreased 5.8 per cent during the last ten years. The native whites had increased 3.1 per cent since 1930 and the Negroes 1.6 per cent. Despite this increase in Negro population and the decrease in foreign born, there had been less than one per cent more Negroes than foreign born. In 1930, Negroes had been 14.2 per cent of the population of Englewood. In 1940, they had been 15.8 per cent of the population. The native whites in 1930 had been 66.1 per cent of the population and by 1940 they had increased to 69.1 per cent. The native white stock had increased, but the important change in rate of growth of the population concerned its minority group; a 5.1 per cent decrease among foreign born and a 1.5 per cent increase among Negroes over a ten year period.³

There had been two migratory movements of Negroes to Englewood which corresponded to the general migration of Negroes from the South to the North throughout the country. These movements occurred between

¹Ibid.


³Ibid.
1900-1910 and 1920-1930. This fact has been emphasized in Table 1.

Englewood's attitude toward newcomers had varied according to the desirability for the increase in population. In the early years, new arrivals had been assimilated and welcomed. They had been one of two groups—wealthy, seeking a haven from "big-city life" or Negroes and immigrants who had gravitated to Englewood to perform the domestic and menial jobs of those of higher income. The gradual growth of the city had caused pride rather than fear as long as the original patterns of the sub-urban community remained intact. The rich had been the benevolent fathers, as was hinted in this paragraph describing the impression that the flu epidemic in Englewood during World War I made on the minds of those Red Cross workers who cared for the sick:

Tragic as was the epidemic, perhaps nothing in the history of Englewood, save the Great War itself, has so knit together the lives of the entire community. Those who worked in the homes of the poor came to a realizing sense of the responsibility for the conditions in which their neighbors had to live, and resolved that they would not be content until equal privileges for sanitation and health were given to the whole town. On the other hand, the less favored people learned to appreciate the interest that was taken in them by the "other side." The spirit of unity in the time of crisis made the troubles of the few the vital concern of all.¹

Camp Merritt, one of the largest embarkation points of World War I had been located in Crestkill, two miles from Englewood. There had been a large number of Negro soldiers at Camp Merritt who had found comfortable quarters in Englewood and at the close of the war, many remained and made it their permanent home.² With the "Boom" period following the war,

² Ibid., p. 353.
there was no problem of absorbing these newcomers as domestic servants. The community, without heavy industry, had never offered immigration incentives to Negroes, as a class, except in the field of domestic service.

TABLE 1
GROWTH OF THE NEGRO OVER 40 YEAR PERIOD IN ENGLEWOOD, N. J.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2,524</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Employment

Many minorities have suffered from unfair employment practices. Discrimination is most acutely felt by minority group members in their inability to get a job suited to their qualifications...This discrimination has forced many minority workers, regardless of their qualifications, into low-paying and often menial jobs, such as common laborer and domestic servant. And once he gets himself hired, the minority worker often finds that he is being paid less than other workers of the same level of education and ability.¹

¹To Secure These Rights (Government Printing Office), p. 57.
**TABLE 2**

**DISTRIBUTION BY OCCUPATION IN ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY, 1945**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Un-Skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This table has shown the extent to which Negroes were employed in domestic work three years ago. The majority of those listed under "Professional" and "Business" found their work in New York City. Skilled jobs included those persons working as tradesmen such as carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, painters, and a small number of small contractors. The unskilled jobs included laborers, truck drivers, garbage wagon drivers and street cleaners.
CHAPTER III

THE ENGLEWOOD URBAN LEAGUE

History of the Agency

Thirty years ago, in 1918, a group of people active in Englewood's social service field concluded that the work among the Negro population could be done more effectively if there were some provision for including Negroes in the planning. Accordingly, the League for Social Service Among Negroes (an affiliate of the National Urban League) was organized, and was later renamed the Englewood Urban League. To serve adequately nearly 4,000 Negroes, a financial campaign was launched in 1943 to raise enough money to employ an Executive Secretary. The goal was $3,000.00; the amount raised was $3,418.74. The Englewood Urban League was incorporated in 1943. In 1944, it employed an Executive Secretary, an Office Secretary, and established a permanent home.¹

The League was the only social agency of which Negroes were a vital part. Through the League, they could give voice to their problems and cooperatively seek methods of solving them. The existing public and private agencies served the Negro citizens. However, the Englewood Urban League was the only agency which provided a common meeting place where white and Negro persons could discuss problems which especially affected Negroes, but which were related to the life of the entire community. The League had a membership of over 1,000 persons, white and Negro.

¹Files of the Englewood Urban League, Englewood, New Jersey, 1944.
Board of Directors

Board members were elected at an annual meeting of the Englewood Urban League which was attended by more than 350 persons. The Board of Directors was composed of thirty persons and the officers were: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer. The Board met monthly, except during June, July, and August. It was through this Board of Directors that the Executive Secretary of the League determined what should be included in the yearly program.

Staff

The staff of the Englewood Urban League consisted of an executive secretary and an office secretary. The Executive Secretary was vested with administrative responsibilities and worked through an Executive Board of responsible white and Negro citizens. The office secretary was secretary to the Executive. Her duties were varied and she was invaluable as the Executive's assistant. These two comprised the minimum requirements of an Urban League staff and it was through them that many of the community organization procedures were initiated.

Committee Structure

The Englewood Urban League operated through its functional committees which were made up from the membership. The chairman of each committee was a highly trained and experienced volunteer who was interested in bringing rewards to the privileged and underprivileged. The committees were interracial and any member of the Urban League could serve on a committee. Since the Englewood Urban League was a social service agency dedicated to interracial team work, its members were
encouraged to take an active part in the program.

Financial Support

The budget of the Englewood Urban League was met through voluntary contributions from civic minded individuals and through partial support from the Community Chest. For the 1947 campaign, Annual Reports were prepared, appeal letters were sent to regular contributors, and a house-to-house canvass was conducted in the Fourth Ward. Follow-up letters were sent to regular contributors and to persons who made pledges to the League. The financial drive was officially opened at the Annual Meeting and Dinner promoted by the Finance Committee.
CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL SERVICES RENDERED BY THE ENGLEWOOD URBAN LEAGUE

Educational Activities

The Education Committee, operating on the principle that any basic misunderstanding was an ingredient for the further development of friction had attempted to cement better relations between the schools and the Negro community.¹

The program of the Education Committee had been very stimulating to the community. The Committee had held conferences with the Superintendent of Schools in reference to adult education; conferences with the principal of Lincoln Junior High school in reference to the formation of a Parents-Teachers Association, and was successful in both instances. The League recruited seventy-five members for the Parents-Teachers Association and brought about an appreciative understanding for the work of the Board of Education. The League's request for Negro teachers in the Lincoln school was also successful.

The committee had sponsored yearly vocational opportunity conferences. In 1946, two hundred teen-aged children attended this conference. Special exhibits and vocational guidance material, which have been used by schools, churches, and other agencies serving young people, had been prepared by the members of the Education Committee.

In cooperation with the Public Library, the committee had sponsored vocational study groups which had met monthly. Over two hundred senior

and junior high school students had been profiting from this project. The study groups had aided the students in making a vocational and academic adjustment. Dr. Alphonse Heningburg of the National Urban League had been invited to speak to the students on vocational guidance.¹

This committee had tutored students who had graduated from Lincoln Junior High to Dwight Morrow High School, which had bridged the gap and enabled the students to make the most of their high school academic careers. The Englewood Urban League, through the efforts of its Education Committee, had proved that better relations between the schools and the Negro community could be achieved through persevering efforts.

Health Activities

The Englewood Urban League's health program had been designed to create positive action in raising the health level among the Negro population and the environment in which Negroes had found themselves. This in turn had been beneficial to the community at large.

The Urban League had been recognized by the Englewood Health Department for its cooperation in bringing about the marked reduction in infant deaths, contagious diseases, and other health ills among the Negro population of Englewood. Because of the efforts of the League, it had been possible for the Health Officer to state that the drop in infant mortality had been an indication of the improved health standards and attitudes of the residents of the Fourth Ward. Lincoln school had shown a record of one hundred per cent immunization and vaccination of

¹Ibid.
all school children during the past five years. This record had surpassed all other schools in Englewood. In April, 1947, the League had been asked by the Health Officer to "round-up" 150 pre-school children for immunization. The children had been taken to the clinic weekly by volunteer workers.¹

In a summary of a report of the Englewood Health Department for the year 1946, the following excerpt appeared in the local newspaper:

Other indications of the health standards set by Fourth Ward residents lie in the fact that only 93 cases of communicable diseases were reported in the Ward, whereas the total for the city was 673—this rate was set while at the same time the Ward maintained a population rate of better than 25 per cent of the city total. Much of the credit for the improvement in the health of the Ward community is given by Health Officer Martin to the public health nurses, and to the health committee of the Englewood Urban League, which has conducted a campaign each year to acquaint the community with the benefits of the Health Department, of the immunization against whooping cough.²

A neighborhood health project sponsored by the League had proved to be a most unique idea in community education for maintaining better sanitary living conditions. The Health Committee had been constantly cooperating with existing health agencies in an effort to make the population health-conscious. Families had been assisted with individual problems such as budgeting, and the selection, preparation and use of foods. The League had worked with tenants to help them as a group to meet their common problems, such as over-crowding, home hygiene, and sanitation. The landlords had been shown how they, as citizens, had an


important responsibility to the City of Englewood as a whole, as well as to their individual tenants.¹

The Englewood Urban League had been successful in alleviating the poor health conditions in the Fourth Ward. This had meant much to the Negroes in the Ward as well as to the Englewood community.

Housing Activities

The Housing Committee of the Englewood Urban League had been interested in improving shelter facilities and living conditions in the Fourth Ward, and had taken a positive attitude in its program toward this end. While the over-all program of community improvement called for relief of over-crowding and for the relief of unsafe and unsanitary structures, the Housing Committee's current activities had been concerned with the problems of returning veterans. It had sought, through orthodox principles of real estate investment, to solve the veterans' housing problems through the provisions of a modest program of home ownership and low-rent privately owned housing.

Equality of opportunity to rent or buy a home should exist for every American. Today many of our citizens are confronted not only with a general housing shortage, but also prejudice and discrimination that puts them at a disadvantage in competing for the limited housing that is available. The fact that many of these people are veterans only underlines our bad housing record.²

The Lafayette Avenue and Rosemont Place sections of the Fourth Ward contained the most beautiful homes for Negroes, but with few exceptions, housing in this ward had been deplorable. Much of it had been constructed

¹Files of the Health Committee, op. cit.
²To Secure These Rights (Government Printing Office), p. 67.
on low land, near the city dump. Despite the installation of a new sewerage system during the 1930's, heavy rainstorms and winter snows had caused the streets to be banked with high water and the cellars to remain damp and dark. The area had previously been marshland and a swamp; not any kind of cellar flooring had seemed to prevent the seepage of water when the ground was wet. Most of the houses had been build as attached frame buildings, some of which presented a fair external appearance. However, the interiors of these homes were dark and dingy. Many small houses had been divided into apartments to accommodate more people. With the exception of a few privately build houses in recent years, all of the houses were old and some did not have the modern facilities of the average home—electricity, piped water, and bathing facilities. (See Appendix A).

In August of 1938, a committee was appointed by the Common Council to study the social conditions of the Fourth Ward and report back to the Council results of their study.1 Reverend C. H. Pearson, minister of First Baptist Church, the largest Negro Church in Englewood, was on that committee. It was he, who, as spokesman for the committee, reported to the Common Council in September. Reverend Pearson made clear the fact that there was grave inadequacy of housing among Negroes, a situation which was partially the result of racial restrictions, compelling the Negro to bid in a discriminated housing market. He told of the increase in population of the Negro in Englewood and the lack of construction to house him, leading to serious overcrowding.

1"Minutes of the Common Council," (City of Englewood, New Jersey, August 22, 1938.)
Pearson discussed the low income status of a large portion of residents in the Fourth Ward, making private construction by them impossible. In behalf of the committee, he presented the following resolution to the Council, with the approval of five churches and the Englewood Urban League. The resolution was:

1. Whereas: There exists in Englewood serious over-crowding of families of low income groups which is steadily becoming worse because of the long overdue condemnation process which is forcing the evicted into already over-crowded quarters; and,

2. Whereas: A number of tenanted dwellings are in such condition as to be a menace to health, morals and safety; and

3. Whereas: Funds for such purposes may be obtained for Englewood only if the City of Englewood adopt a resolution creating a Housing Authority of Englewood, under the laws of New Jersey as of March 8, 1938, Chapter 19:

Therefore, we the undersigned citizens of Englewood earnestly request the Mayor and Common Council of Englewood to pass immediately such a resolution in order that these deplorable conditions may be remedied as soon as possible.1

No immediate action was taken by the Mayor and Common Council.

However, in 1940, two years later, the housing situation was studied by the newly created Housing Authority, but the findings were never utilized to foster a program of social action in getting more adequate housing.

In 1942, the Urban League stated that twenty-four buildings in the Fourth Ward were unfit for human habitation and that since 1939, only twenty-five houses had been turned over to Negroes.2 It was pointed out that these twenty-five houses served only those Negroes in the

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1 Ibid., September 20, 1938.

highest income brackets and accommodated approximately one hundred people. Facts to substantiate the theory that private enterprise had never been able to build houses of high standards that low income groups could afford to rent were given as a supportive argument favoring a public housing project. No action was taken.¹

In 1944, the Englewood Urban League again urged the local Housing Authority to recognize the facts of the community's housing situation, and proceed working on plans directed toward the building of a public housing project as soon as materials should be made available. The recommendation was also made that a specific ordinance be passed to set up for Englewood a modern sanitary code for housing. Englewood has had a group of enabling acts, but has never had a modern sanitary code for housing.²

The Urban League, determined to see that the housing needs for Negroes in Englewood were more adequately met, continued to seek for a tool to arouse action. When the Health and Housing Committee held its first meeting of the New Year in January, 1946, it decided to concentrate on the veterans of World War II. Out of the war had come the "G. I. Bill of Rights," making it possible for veterans to secure loans for home-building purposes. The Committee believed that the possibility of a program for constructing homes for veterans was more realistic than for any other particular group. Mr. Norbert Brown was selected as


²Interview with Executive Secretary Mrs. Marion Forrester (Englewood Urban League, Englewood, New Jersey, May 29, 1947).
chairman of the Health and Housing Committee. He was considered well qualified by the Committee because of his varied experiences in Housing as Field Director of the National Committee on Housing, and because he was an asset for gaining community acceptance for the kind of program they were planning for the veterans.

Negroes in Englewood had never found it easy to obtain loans from the banks, or building and loan associations for construction or mortgage purposes. Since the crash of 1929, with its concomitant social problems relevant to the Negro, it had been more difficult than ever. The Health and Housing Committee had to face this fact when considering the possible places where the local Negro veterans could get loans. Mr. Brown assured the Committee at the outset that he could get loans for those veterans interested in making a loan—if not in Englewood, then outside. Contacts which he had made in his work made this a certainty.

Since it was possible for the veteran to secure loans, the Committee proceeded with plans for a preliminary survey of Negro veterans to determine who were willing and able to invest in housing. Names and addresses were pulled from the files of the Selective Service Draft Board. The race of the soldier was not listed with the Draft Board, but a member of the Health and Housing Committee recognized Negro servicemen by the name and address given. Three hundred and fifty names were included on the list to be surveyed. About 250 of these men or their families were actually contacted and private interviews given them.

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2 Ibid.
visits were made and in some instances, men came to the Urban League office. It was not possible to survey one hundred per cent of the men because of those still in service. Also, there were those who had not returned to Englewood, and the working hours of other made a contact impossible. The surveying was done by five individuals. Of the 250 men interviewed, thirty-four indicated real interest in a proposed plan of housing for Negro veterans and their families. Of these thirty-four, eighteen were eligible to invest in homes. Eligibility was based on the type of job and the amount saved to invest in a home.¹ (See Veteran's Schedule in Appendix B).

These eighteen men did not, as a whole, represent the low income group in the community. Seventeen of the men were permanently employed as were ten wives. An over-whelming majority desired a single house in preference to a double house or apartment. This maintained in preference for ownership in lieu of renting. The amounts which had been saved for home investment ranged from $200.00 to $2,500.00; the majority had saved at least $500.00.²

The findings of the survey and the thinking of the veterans under the leadership of Mr. Brown were placed at the disposal of city officials and individual members of the Housing Authority. The League cooperated with city officials and members of the Emergency Housing Committee on the establishment of a moderately priced permanent rental project for veterans in the Third and Fourth Wards. After a year's

¹Files of the Health and Housing Committee, op. cit.

²Ibid.
research, it was found that the cost of building then was prohibitive for the majority of the veterans. Therefore, the Englewood Urban League had been building three houses, one duplex, and one single house.

All the while that plans were being worked out to assist veterans, the League had continued, in cooperation with the Building Inspector and Health Officer, to improve conditions of sub-standard houses in the Fourth Ward. Weekly investigations had been made by the building inspector and the Executive Secretary of the League. Landlords had been called in for public hearings and told that city ordinances must be obeyed. On the whole, the Englewood Urban League had been instrumental in improving the living conditions of the Negroes in the Fourth Ward.

Industrial Relations Activities

... a primary task of all Leagues is to find jobs, more jobs, and better jobs for Negroes. They all function as employment agencies. The attempt is to run these agencies in an active way, opening up new jobs and preventing loss of jobs already held by Negroes. They have to get in contact with employers and trade officers and try to "sell" Negro labor—impressing upon the employers that Negro labor is efficient and satisfactory; and upon the unionists that the Negro is a good and faithful fellow worker. A careful check-up has to be made on references, and a reputation must be gained and defended for the type of labor offered. The possibilities of vocational training have to be kept open to Negro youth, and the youths themselves have to be encouraged to be ambitious. The civil service boards have to be watched so that they do not discriminate against Negroes, and Negroes must be encouraged to take civil service examinations.1

The Industrial Relations Committee of the Englewood Urban League had impressed upon the workers that service counts, from the most menial to the highest job; it had urged them to be punctual and attentive. This

1Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma (New York, 1944), II, 839.
committee had asked employers to up-grade workers for merit. If unions discriminated, they had been encouraged to change their practices. The committee also had worked diligently with Negro veterans, helping them to solve their employment and adjustment problems.

The Committee had given vocational guidance and had aided in the placement of applicants for skilled, semi-skilled, and professional positions. A major accomplishment of the Committee during 1947 had been its placement of Negro telephone operators in the Englewood office of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. The Negroes in Englewood had also been placed successfully in the following positions: stenographers, in commercial establishments, cashiers and sales girls in New York Department stores, trainees and apprentices in industry, insurance agents, teachers, recreational workers, truck drivers, and others.

A study of the Negro industrial workers and industrial plants in Englewood had been made by the Committee in order to serve as a clearing house for employer and employee; it had referred workers to centers where technical and vocational training had been provided. This group had brought together representatives of the Transport Workers Union and the employer of a private bus line, and had been successful in securing whole-hearted support from the Union representatives and the employer to the extent that they agreed workers should be hired on the basis of merit, and not on the basis of race, creed, or color. The Englewood Urban League had been asked to screen qualified men and refer them to the bus company for positions as bus drivers.

To support the job placement activities, the League had set up an Employment Clinic which helped solve employment problems of people who
had registered for jobs at the League office. Practical services had been given to unemployed persons; to those who had wished to change jobs; to those who had wished to learn new skills; and to persons who had found their working conditions unsatisfactory because of discrimination, sanitation, hours, or other reasons.¹

Neighborhood Groups' Activities

The Neighborhood Committee of the Englewood Urban League had worked on the principle that social service for Negroes should become a vital part of the community pattern and not a special unrelated activity. Therefore, the Committee had organized five neighborhood units in the Fourth Ward to be a practical demonstration of the League's philosophy. These units had been governed by the neighborhood council whose duty it had been to plan and supervise the activities of each. This council had been composed of three delegates from each group who had met monthly to discuss community-wide neighborhood council developments. It had been conceded by the council that, whether it was a street or neighborhood, those who lived within its confines could evaluate the needs of their area and set up programs for its improvement.²

Wayne McMillen reported:

Social social workers believe that the community organization process should originate in neighborhood


groups. In a number of cities neighborhood councils have been developed to provide a channel through which the process may operate. In some instances social workers have stimulated the development of such councils. ¹

The neighborhood groups of the League had been named: Regent, West Forest Avenue, McKay, Twilight, and Sunset. The programs of these units had been varied.

The "Regent" unit had made neighborhood group history in Englewood with the oft repeated story of the catch basin problem. The determination of its members to alleviate a deplorable condition had resulted in the installation of additional catch basins which had brought about partial relief from an unpleasant long standing flood condition in that area. When the members decided that they needed a safe playground for the smaller children, they proceeded to make plans to get it. They succeeded and two young girls were sent to school by the group for a course in playground work. They took over the duties of management the following season.

The group spirit had also been high among the neighbors of the "West Forest Avenue" neighborhood. This had enabled them to tackle backyards, gutters, and paving. The interest in community children had been demonstrated by the fund-raising activities throughout the year which enabled them to send needy youngsters to camp during the summer months. The neighborhood children had always enjoyed a Christmas tree and presents supplied by the group. The spirit in which they aided their sick and sent flowers to their dead had been an attribute to their neighborliness.

The "McKay" neighborhood group recognized the need of constructive

activity for young people. They finally agreed to sponsor an amateur hour at the Lincoln school. The preparation necessitated a basement where the youngsters could train for the show. Specialists in the fields of music, dancing and dramatics were recruited. After a two month training period, the young people presented a commendable performance. In addition to working with the young people of William Street, the McKay group busied itself with making bandages for Englewood Hospital.

The "Twilight" neighborhood group had bordered on the intellectual in that they constantly had been inviting outside speakers and had been debating on topics of the day for hours. Supplementing their intellectual pursuits, the group had taken time to have teas, the returns generally finding their way into the Urban League funds. This group had learned a lesson from the Regent neighborhood group by buying eggs wholesale and passing the savings on to the members. Seemingly, this had been the beginning of a cooperative neighborhood buying club.

The "Sunset" group fostered the unique idea of a parents club. The membership had consisted of all parents in the school district. These parents had been especially interested in cooperating with the Parents-Teachers Association. They had recently passed a resolution to attend all Parents-Teachers meetings and take an active part in the activities of the organization. Child behavior and character building had been primary interests. Social gatherings had been arranged among the children so that they might learn early the warmth of neighborliness and friendships. Negro History had been a special topic in the meetings of this group and a library had been started to build a carefully selected collection of books by and about the Negro which had proved of interest
throughout Englewood. This had shown promise of becoming an interracial
group unit.

Aside from their community problems and accomplishments, the
neighborhood groups had been counted upon to aid the League in other
ways whenever necessary. Captains and workers in the Annual Donations
and Membership Drive had been nearly all members of these groups. It was
they who made sure that tickets for the Yearly Fall Festival were always
sold out ahead of time. The quarters, halves, and dollars of these members
had had a great deal to do with the increasing wealth of the Englewood
Urban League Credit Union.¹ It was the author's opinion that much had
been done by those neighborhood groups spiritually and materially to
justify their existence and they had become recognized bodies for com-
munity betterment. The Neighborhood council had served as a connecting
link between the five groups and in the opinion of McMillen: "Un-
questionably, neighborhood councils have great potentialities as mediums
through which an understanding of social problems and social programs
may be disseminated."²

¹ Files of the Neighborhood Groups Committee, Englewood Urban League,
Englewood, New Jersey, 1944-1946.

² Ibid.
CHAPTER V

POLICIES AND PRACTICES INDICATED BY ACTIVITIES

Credit Union

The Englewood Urban League Federal Credit Union had been organized as a project of the Neighborhood Council. The League had established a national precedent in 1946 when it organized a credit union for the benefit of its members. It had marked the first time in the nation that the membership of a social agency had made use of the credit union plan.¹

The purpose of the Credit Union had been to encourage thrift and to make loans to its members for provident purposes. A member could borrow a sum of money with the approval of the credit committee and be required to pay only one per cent interest on the unpaid balance.

At the time of this study, the membership had totaled 161 persons. Membership in the Credit Union had been gained through the purchase of one share and payment of a twenty-five cent fee. The democratic principle of each person having an equal right to vote had been carried out in the credit union, where one share or one hundred shares had bought only one vote for a member. Each five dollar investment had allowed the investor to hold union shares. No age limit had been placed on investors. This had been significant because many youths in their formative years could learn lessons in thrift.²

During the year, loans had been made to union members to pay off

¹"The Urban League News Front," Opportunity (Summer Issue, 1947), 156.
mortgages, to provide college entrance fees, to pay taxes, to pay coal, and to consolidate small debts. The Credit Union had not made a "bad loan" since its existence.\(^1\)

A supervisory committee of the Union audited the books every three months. This audit had been reported to the Federal Reserve Bank regularly. An additional audit of the Union's books had been made by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation every six months.\(^2\)

The Credit Union's record so far had indicated that the Negro population of Englewood had the same high standards for thrift as was found elsewhere. It was the opinion of the author that in terms of meeting the needs of the Negro community, the Credit Union had played a very valuable part.

Public Relations

The program of the public relations committee had been geared toward educating the community on the value of interracial understanding and keeping the community informed about the activities of the League's committees. This had been done by means of speeches by the Executive Secretary and many of the Board members who had spoken to innumerable local organizations and had constantly worked with city officials with the hope of fully interpreting to them the League's program.\(^3\) Newspaper articles and occasional pictures had appeared regularly in The Englewood Press and the Englewood Journal. Articles had also appeared in such national publications as the "National Housing Agency Bulletin" and the "Secretariat".

\(^1\)Ibid.

\(^2\)Ibid.

\(^3\)Interview with Executive Secretary Mrs. Marion Forrester (Englewood Urban League, Englewood, New Jersey, May 29, 1947.)
Negro speakers had been secured for various white groups during Brotherhood Week and Race Relations Week.

Publicity is merely capitalizing certain tools to work with by which interpretation can be spread more broadly...Never should be considered as an exclusive interpretator of the agency..."1 policies in relation to its program.

Radio.—The Englewood Urban League had been sponsoring a weekly radio program over Station WPAT in Paterson, New Jersey. These programs had included such topics as: discrimination in the medical schools of the nation, veteran's problems, household problems of employer and employee, race relations, and others. The programs had been interracial in character and lay and professional people had been used for the broadcasts. Newspaper publicity had been prepared for each program and postcards sent to the Urban League members.

Race Relations

The committee on race relations had promoted more stable human relations and in doing so, had eased tensions in Englewood. This group had its origin in a "heightened consciousness of the need for greater objectivity and realism in meeting interracial problems."2

This committee had served as a speaker's bureau for both white and Negro groups; it had cooperated with existing organizations; it had supplied race relations material to the adult population; and it had worked with the churches in observing Brotherhood Week. Special intercultural exhibits had been displayed at the Englewood private schools,

1 Pierce Atwater, Problems of Administration in Social Work (St. Paul, 1937), p. 115 (Mimeoographed.)

the Englewood Public Library, and the Englewood Public Senior and Junior High Schools, books, pamphlets, and other material on the subject had been made available to the entire student population, both white and Negro. A point of view for the writing of an essay had been provided by the exhibits and other material. All senior and junior high schools had participated in the Essay Contest, white children eighty-five per cent, Negro children fifteen per cent. These essays had shown the clear and objective thinking of the white and Negro students on the subject of race relations.

Race relations in Englewood had been gradually improving and through the efforts of the Race Relations Committee, the tension in the community had been greatly lessened.

Cooperation with Other Organizations

Every social agency must fit its program into the community and while it is of prime importance that the agency program be well conducted, it is utterly impossible to have it so function unless the whole administrative policy is into the totality of the whole picture of community life.¹

The Englewood Urban League had cooperated with the programs of the following organizations: City Welfare Board, Housing Authority, Public Library, Poor Mistress, Bergen County Maternal Health Center, Bergen County Tuberculosis and Health Association, Red Cross, Englewood Hospital Salvation Army, Police Department, Boy and Girl Scouts, Recreation Commission, Board of Education, Board of Health, Veteran's Service Center, Social Service Federation, and Community Chest. The League had not

attempted to duplicate the services of those organizations. Rather, it had sought to further those organizations' activities in order that the needs of the Negroes in the community might be alleviated.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been to present and analyze the social services of the Englewood Urban League in relation to the needs of the Negroes in the community. As a result of this study, the author has concluded:

1. Englewood was a residential community and was located four miles from New York City. It was protected by a Master Plan, a Zoning Code, and a Building Code. The Fourth Ward was where the Lincoln school was located and this was where the majority of the Negro population resided. Three Negro teachers were provided in this school by the Englewood Urban League during the past two years.

2. Since 1930, the population had grown consistently. The attitudes of the whites toward the Negroes had tended to be paternalistic. The principal employment of Negroes in Englewood had been domestic while those engaged in the various professions usually worked in New York City.

3. The Englewood Urban League had been incorporated in 1943 and in 1944, a permanent home had been established for the League, and an Executive Secretary and Office Secretary employed.

4. The Englewood Urban League had served as a medium through which the Negroes could verbalize their problems and through cooperative methods, seek ways of solving them. The Board of Directors had been composed of thirty lay persons who had been elected at the annual meeting of the League. The League had operated through its ten active committees which had been made up from the membership. The membership had consisted of over
one thousand persons. The budget had been met through voluntary contributions from civic minded individuals and through partial support from the Community Chest.

5. The educational activities of the League had been directed toward cementing better relationships between the school and the Negro community. This had been achieved through Parents-Teachers Association meetings, the sponsoring of vocational study groups, and the tutoring of students in order that they might make the most of their high school academic careers.

6. In its health and housing program, the League had sought to alleviate the poor living and housing conditions of Negroes in the Fourth Ward. Special attention had been given to improve housing for World War II veterans and their families. Families had been shown how they could raise the health levels of their homes which in turn, would help reduce health ills.

7. The Industrial Relations Committee had been instrumental in getting employers to up-grade Negro workers and had aided in placing applicants in various skilled, semi-skilled, and professional positions.

8. The Neighborhood Groups, Regent, West Forest Avenue, McKay, Twilight, and Sunset, had proven that organization on a neighborhood basis could help achieve many aims for community betterment.

9. The Englewood Urban League had made use of the Credit Union plan which had encouraged thrift and made loans for provident purposes.

10. The Public and Race Relations Committees had attempted to educate the community on the value of interracial understanding. This had been achieved through such media as the radio, newspapers, and public speaking.

11. The Englewood Urban League had realized that the effectiveness of its social services could be furthered through cooperating with other
organizations. Alone, the League had been powerless; through cooperation, the League had been powerful.

12. The Englewood Urban League had been an important organization in Englewood. It had attempted to meet the needs of the Negroes through its varied and stimulating program of activity. The Negro community had awakened to the fact that in order for the League to continue to be successful, cooperation between the races should be continued.
### APPENDIX A

**Characteristics of Housing in Wards One and Four, Englewood, New Jersey, 1940**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ward One</th>
<th>Ward Four</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Occupied</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale or Rent</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
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<td>Vacant, not for Sale or Rent</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing Major Repairs or No Private Bath</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needing Major Repairs</td>
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<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Private Bath</td>
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<td>241</td>
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APPENDIX B

Veteran's Schedule

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<th>Age</th>
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| Address | |
|---------| |

| Occupation | |
|------------| |

| Wife's Name (If Married) | |
|--------------------------| |

| Wife's Occupation (If She Works Regularly) | |
|-------------------------------------------| |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<tr>
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| Head of Family (If Not Married) | |
|---------------------------------| |

| Number of Dependents | |
|----------------------| |

| Other People In Family | |
|------------------------| |

Are You Regularly Employed

| Is Your Wife, or Other Member of Your Family Regularly Employed? | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------| |

Are You Adequately Housed at Present?

| Amount Saved to Invest in a Home | |
|----------------------------------| |

Preference For:

- Single House
- Double House
- Apartment

Preference For:

- Ownership
- Rental
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