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100 Years

The Lancaster Branch of the NAACP



The Lancaster County Community Foundation

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100 Years

The Lancaster Branch of the NAACP



The Lancaster County Community Foundation

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Cover: After years of negotiation and litigation with little progress, the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP staged a protest or direct action at the segregated Rocky Spring Park swimming pool in August, 1963. Left to right are Chuck Cooper, Nelson M. Polite, Sr., Elizabeth Ford, and two unidentified women.

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Foreword

Honoring a Century of Building Strong Community in Lancaster County

Tracy Cutler



The 1920s was a decade of innovation and change. It was a time when many Americans first owned cars, radios, and telephones. Post World War I society brought the energy of Hollywood, flappers, and the Jazz Age. For the first time, more Americans lived in cities than on farms. The nation's total wealth more than doubled between 1920 and 1929, and gross national product (GNP) expanded by 40 percent from 1922 to 1929.

The 1920s was also a period of dramatic political and social change. Congress passed the 19th amendment giving white women the right to vote. It was a time of Prohibition, immigration quotas, and the Great Migration of Black Americans from the rural south to northern cities.

During this time, Lancaster was experiencing its own advances including the founding of two enduring organizations that have helped shape the Lancaster County we know today: the Lancaster Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Lancaster Community Trust (now the Lancaster County Community Foundation).

As more Black families made their home in Lancaster, finding both opportunity and discrimination, it spurred the founding of NAACP Lancaster in 1923. Since that time, committed Lancastrians have led and evolved this important organization that has consistently lifted and advocated for people of color in our community.

In 1924, just ten years after the community foundation movement launched in Cleveland, local attorney Martin M. Harnish brought this innovative concept to Lancaster. The Lancaster Community Trust became one of the earliest community foundations established in America and was the beginning of our community's endowment. This unique structure

enabled individuals across Lancaster County to leave permanent charitable legacy gifts that would grow over time and provide annual resources for organizations and causes that advance the common good in our community.

While they came at their work from different perspectives, NAACP Lancaster and the Community Foundation have an important common goal: enhancing the lives of Lancaster residents.

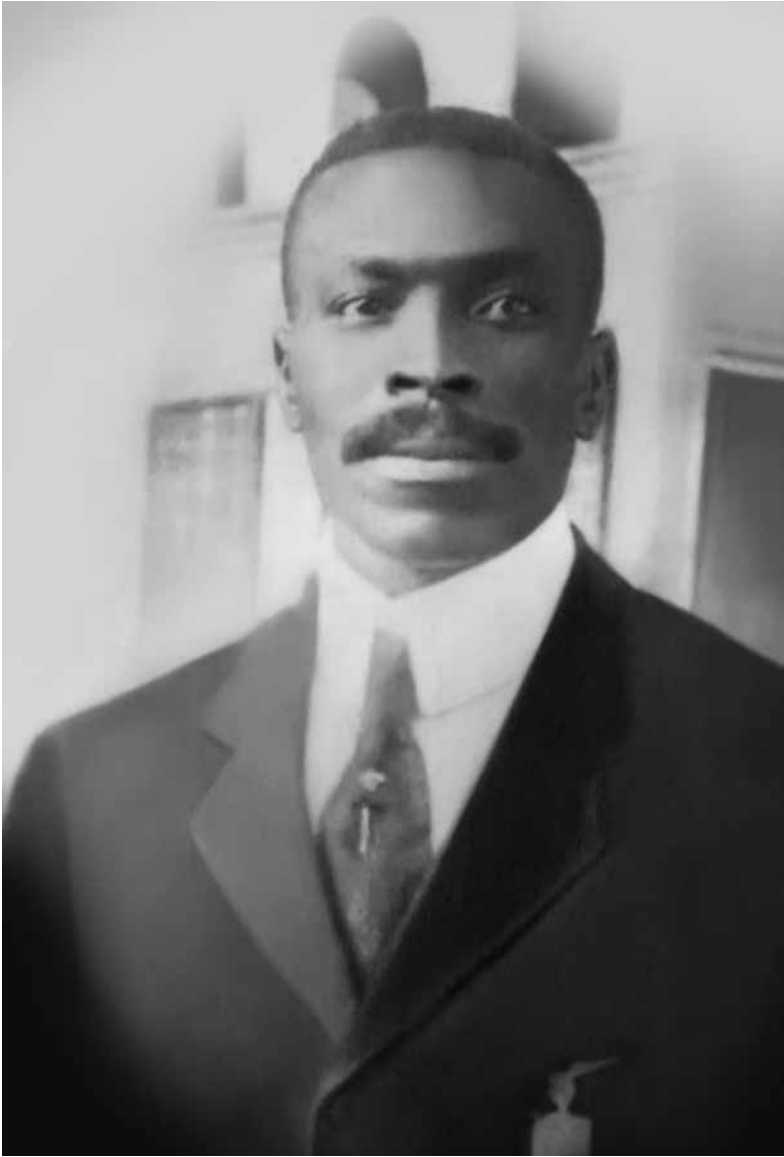
It is an honor for the Lancaster County Community Foundation to support the work of LancasterHistory, and to share our organizational history alongside the story of NAACP Lancaster in this special edition. Together, these organizations create a powerful legacy in Lancaster that encourage us to build on the commitments of those who have come before us.

As we reflect over the last century, we are grateful to the many individuals that have invested money, energy, and ingenuity in the possibility and promise of our community. Our hope is that when people look back on 2024, they will say our community made visionary choices to strengthen Lancaster County and make it even more equitable, resilient, and extraordinary for the next 100 years.

—Tracy Cutler

Executive Vice President

Lancaster County Community Foundation



Abram L. Polite probably arrived in Lancaster in his twenties, during the first decade of the twentieth century. For decades he devoted his considerable leadership skills to many church, political, and civic efforts in Lancaster and was a founder of the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP.

Courtesy of Nelson Polite, Jr.

The Lancaster Branch of the NAACP

Celebrating 100 Years, 1923–2023

Rosemary T. Krill



On the afternoon of June 8, 1923, A. L. Polite of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, picked up the telephone. It was a cold, cloudy, windy day. He called his colleague, Marianna Gibbons Brubaker at her family's duck farm near Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania. Polite had some good news of a new beginning in Lancaster. At a meeting on June 5 at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Strawberry Street, Lancaster, Polite and other church members had signed up the fiftieth member with the fledging local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).¹ Fifty was a crucial number. It was the requisite number for applying to the national NAACP office for a charter. It still remains the number to maintain a compliant local branch.²



The Lancaster group was now ready to submit their “Application for a Charter.” It was received at the national office on June 16, 1923. The list of fifty original members reads like a roster of leaders of the Lancaster community, both Black and white. Mrs. J. C. (Laura) Carter, president, served in that office for a decade. A. L. Polite and his wife Blanche were members, as was W. W. Griest, Congressman for Lancaster, his wife, and daughter Ella.³

The national Board of Directors of the NAACP voted to approve the application for charter at their regular meeting on July 9, 1923, the official founding date of the Lancaster Branch. Members of the board and founders of the NAACP, including W. E. B. DuBois, Mary White Ovington, and

Joel and Arthur Spingarn, attended the meeting and probably voted for Lancaster. A charter was forwarded to the Lancaster group on July 27, 1923.⁴ The group became Lancaster Branch 2302 of the NAACP (also called, in this essay, NAACP Lancaster). For the next one hundred years, through the Depression, World War II, the Communist scare of the 1940s and 1950s, and the continuing struggle for fair employment and housing opportunities, NAACP Lancaster worked, faltered, revived. These varying periods led to confusion about the longevity of the branch. As with many volunteer organizations without a permanent office, members sometimes remembered only their own experiences to denote the founding date. At various times, the Branch was listed as starting in the 1960s or reviving in the 1980s.⁵ This essay attempts to recapture and document the Branch



Marianna Gibbons Brubaker assisted her husband Oram with operating the duck farm near Bird-in-Hand. In addition to helping to start the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP, she corresponded with activists nationally, who supported her favored causes, anti-racism, world peace, and temperance. Image from the Collection of the Brubaker and Gibbons Families.

history. Through all these decades, as it formed and re-formed, Lancaster Branch mirrored the vision of the national NAACP, “to ensure a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination.”⁶

Admittedly, there were fallow periods, when circumstances or the absence of strong leaders caused the branch to reduce or cease activity, or in the terms of the national NAACP, become non-compliant. But the effort continued because the issues to be solved continued. Dr. Leroy Hopkins, whose knowledge of the history of Lancaster’s Black communities is vast, said, “The people persisted, in the face of great duress.”⁷

This essay attempts to document that persistence. It draws inspiration from the many people who supported social justice work in the county. It elaborates on the theme of NAACP Lancaster’s hundredth anniversary celebration, held on September 21, 2023, “Growing Equity! Growing Strong! The Journey Continues!” This backward look revives the history of Branch 2302, the continuing community development work to make Lancaster County more equitable. It is deeply connected to Lancaster County’s reputation as a diverse and welcoming place, where people of different cultures and faiths live in mutual respect and understanding. In the words of former NAACP Lancaster President Cobbie Burns,⁸ “We . . . forge ahead, no matter what.”⁹

This essay begins with the context that precedes the founding of Branch 2302, including the founding of the national NAACP in 1909. Local groundwork was laid by Black leaders who organized for access to employment opportunities. The post-World War I era, the 1920s, and 1930s, saw interest on the governmental level in learning about needs in the Black community and the organization of Branch 2302. In the late 1930s and 1940s, the Depression and the dislocations of World War II strained Branch 2302 into an era of non-compliance. The Branch was re-chartered in the early 1960s under the leadership of clergy and members of Bethel AME Church. From the 1980s until the present, strong, active leaders arose to maintain Branch 2302 as a focus for organization in the Black community and a conduit for their concerns to government and civic organization.



Before Branch 2302:
Founding and Growth of the National Association
for the Advancement of Colored People

The national NAACP's founding date is February 12, 1909, the hundredth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. A call for a general meeting to discuss racial injustice was released in New York City, signed by sixty people, both Black and white. They were motivated to investigate and to protest dangerous conditions for Black people, especially after a race riot in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1906, and in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln's home town, in 1908. Both riots lasted days and resulted in injuries, deaths, and damage to businesses and homes. Black people fleeing the violence numbered in the thousands.¹⁰

Some familiar figures signed the call, including W. E. B. DuBois, the sociologist and, at various times, the NAACP's director of publicity and of research; Ida B. Wells-Barnett, whose journalism exposed the devastation of lynching; and Oswald Garrison Villard, whose grandfather was the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. From the beginning, the mission was to support equal rights for Black Americans. The founders wished to implement the promises of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which abolished slavery, guaranteed citizenship to formerly enslaved people and equal protection of law to all, and granted Black men the right to vote. Initially, a focus was to assimilate Black people into existing society, to urge Black people to improve their lots and thus eliminate prevailing racist ideas. Later, in the struggles to integrate schools and colleges and to secure voting rights in the 1950s and 1960s, the NAACP fought for changes to the racist structures that damaged the opportunities of everyone.¹¹

By 1910, the NAACP established a New York City office, published *The Crisis*, its official magazine, and entered a legal case on behalf of a Black South Carolina man accused of murder. The key strategies of legal action and publicity were established. Another important strategy was to develop branches in cities across the country. Robert W. Bagnall became NAACP's director of branches in 1919 and corresponded with Lancaster activists

as they planned Branch 2302. William Pickens, NAACP's field secretary between 1920 and 1942, also assisted leaders in Lancaster. There were 350 branches during his tenure; today, NAACP numbers say it has over 2,000 local branches.¹²



Before Branch 2302:
Organizing in Lancaster's Black Community
in the Early Twentieth Century

Lancaster was ready for an NAACP branch in 1923. Global and local trends and events, strong faith communities, and a long tradition of organizing for community good created an incubator for a social justice organization.

World War I ended with the armistice signed on November 11, 1918. The United States' economy was in a growth period. Both returning veterans and local families turned their attention to matters in their home communities. In Lancaster, an important issue was lack of employment opportunities for Black citizens and of affordable housing to rent or own. Lancaster County simply was not a hospitable place for Black people. Before the Civil War, in 1850, the county's African-American population was about 3,600; at the turn of the twentieth century, it was under 2,000.¹³ Without jobs and places to live, Black people left Lancaster.

Churches had long been a focus for organization in Lancaster County. In church communities, members learned that their needs were not personal but shared with others, and that organization required leadership, attention, and hard work. By the early twentieth century, African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church congregations were organized at Bethel AME Church in Lancaster, at Mount Zion AME Church in Columbia, and at Bethel AME Church in Marietta. Several other churches at various locations have since disbanded.¹⁴ Ebenezer Baptist Church was located, at the time, on Locust Street in Lancaster.¹⁵

The Reverend F. M. Webster of Bethel AME Church organized a Negro Civic League in 1917. The group identified several needs in the Black community, including a community center, a day nursery, and a physician.¹⁶

Local government attention also brought forward health and welfare issues. Black people gained knowledge of and access to government offices, as well as leadership experience. In March 1923, Mayor Frank Musser, who represented a coalition of Republicans and Democrats interested in urban reform in Lancaster, announced Negro Health Week. Its activities included a program of educational talks, with the support of the Pennsylvania Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association, the Rotary Club, the Lancaster Board of Health, and the Lancaster Visiting Nurses Association. A. L. Polite served as chair, with Charles S. Beaubian chairing the program committee.¹⁷ Other Black participants included Mrs. Laura Carter, Mrs. Carrie Foster, Mrs. Ida Fairfax, Mrs. Laura Wilson, Miss Elizabeth Craig, and Miss Marybelle Millen. All these women would later serve NAACP Lancaster, as Executive Committee members, as committee chairs, or as volunteers.¹⁸ NAACP Lancaster sponsored a similar health week in 1924.¹⁹

The reports about health week indicate attitudes prevalent at the time about health conditions resulting from poor personal habits like cleanliness, rather than structural issues, such as segregated housing and inadequate sanitation services. However, positive reports about the cooperation of Black and white groups and a sense of accomplishment portray a hopefulness about improving cooperation among the communities.

A similar roster of Black leaders, with the addition of names such as James Hurdle, Beulah Beaubian, A. L. Polite, and the Rev. Mark Thompson, were listed as local correspondents for another significant government effort in 1924. Mrs. Maude B. Coleman led a survey of "conditions among the colored people in Lancaster." She was the field secretary for the Pennsylvania State Department of Welfare. Dr. Ellen G. Potter, secretary of the department, reported the findings at a meeting in the parish house of St. James Episcopal Church on April 19, 1925. Beulah Beaubian, president of the Hallie Q. Brown Civic Club, led the local canvass. The Hallie Q. Brown Women's Legislative Club of Colored Women or Civic Club was organized in Lancaster in April 1923 and carried on some of the aims of the Negro Civic League.²⁰

NAACP Lancaster was among a number of progressive civic organizations that rallied and grew in the 1920s. A sense of optimism, probably aided by a burgeoning post-war economy, fueled these efforts. A Lancaster

Republican political club for Black people organized in September 1922, and a Republican club for Black people met in Columbia in October of that year.²¹ In 1925, Mayor Musser organized an Inter-Racial Committee to complete a general survey of “racial conditions in Lancaster,” including home ownership. Both Black and white community leaders participated.²²

The Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), founded in 1873, and still in existence today, with a mission to encourage “total abstinence from alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco as a way of life,” was active in Lancaster County in the 1920s. It brought together Black and white people committed to community development. Marianna Gibbons Brubaker attended WCTU county conferences. Her friend, Elizabeth Griest, wife of the congressman, served as treasurer of a WCTU branch for Black people, founded at Ebenezer Baptist Church. The last names of other officers appear on the NAACP roster, including Mrs. Fannie Thompson, possibly related to Pastor Mark Thompson, pastor of Ebenezer Church, who spoke at an NAACP meeting in March 1925.²³

Social activities for young people and a place for people to gather, segregated as was the custom of the time, appeared often in a list of needs of the Black community. By 1926, a sub-committee of the Inter-Racial Committee, headed by Mrs. Beulah Beaubian and Grant D. Brandon, head of the Lancaster Recreation and Playground Association, organized a “community party” for young Black people. They met in Mayor Musser’s office and apparently had his support. The party was inspired by weekly Saturday evening parties held at the YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) probably only for white youth. The meeting with the mayor followed a community planning meeting, held at Bethel AME Church on January 30.

Lancaster newspapers reported that the first community party for young Black people would be held on Friday, February 19, at Independence Hall on South Duke Street in Lancaster. It was organized by the Recreational Division of the Inter-Racial Committee, chaired by Mrs. Beaubian, assisted by Grant Brandon. The list of “hosts and hostesses,” who may have been chaperones, as well as those responsible for refreshments, coat room, and tickets, includes names that are familiar on the NAACP leadership roster, including Mr. and Mrs. Samuel P. Saunders and Mr. and Mrs. H. P.

Smith. Mrs. Michaels and Mrs. Mortimer organized refreshments, and A. L. Polite, the ticket registry. The next party was planned for March 12, 1926, and a third for March 26. The parties continued at least until the end of 1928.²⁴



NAACP Lancaster Founder Profiles:

A. L. Polite and Marianna Gibbons Brubaker

The lists of names involved in the Hallie Q. Brown Civic Club, the Pennsylvania survey of the Black community, the WCTU, and the youth parties show that many Black Lancastrians devoted hard work to community development. And in 1923, they and others came forward to start a successful NAACP branch. The stories of two people reveal the deep supply of diverse skills that these leaders contributed.

Abram L. Polite was born, four or five years before the Compromise of 1877 and the end of Reconstruction, in Ridgeland, South Carolina. Today, Route 95 passes through Ridgeland, just over twenty-eight miles west of Beaufort, and seventy-five miles southwest of Charleston. The area is the fertile Low Country of South Carolina, where Black people had worked in agriculture for generations but where, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, many made the calculation that it was best to leave.²⁵

Abram or Abraham Polite, or A. L., as he was most commonly known, according to his grandson, Nelson Polite, Jr., left South Carolina for Philadelphia. Why he continued on to Lancaster is not certain, but it may have had some connection with the tobacco business. He arrived in the city by the time he was twenty-seven, at the turn of the twentieth century. He married M. Blanche Richardson. Together, they raised five children, living for many years in the family home at 540 North Street, Lancaster, where their youngest son, Nelson Polite, Sr., and his family continued to live with and care for them as they grew older. A. L. Polite worked as a janitor in Lancaster's City Hall. The job probably gave him knowledge of the political power structure and its various personalities and issues. He also was a caterer, worked at the Lancaster hotel called the Stevens House, received an appointment from 1936 until 1940 in the State Department of Revenue

in Harrisburg and, in 1937, as a senior messenger in the Department of Public Instruction. He served as an agent for the Industrial Life Insurance Company.²⁶

Polite was the leader of many events and organizations in the Black community. Bethel AME Church was his church home. He was a steward and trustee, and, for fifty years, director of the junior choir. In this capacity, he brought groups of choristers to civic events in Lancaster, thus strengthening relationships between Black and white groups. He was a charter member of the Conestoga Lodge of Elks No. 140. He served on regional Elks committees and assisted in founding a lodge in York, Pennsylvania. Starting in 1929, Polite became active in the Democratic Party.

The name A. L. Polite appeared in the local press often in stories of community activities, from leading an excursion of Bethel AME church members to Mount Gretna in 1922, to chairing Health Week in 1923, to serving on the Mayor's Inter-Racial Committee in 1925, to leading a local delegation in 1936 to a Democratic Party rally at Mount Gretna, the "largest Negro rally ever held in PA." In 1937, he was named to the board of directors of the Crispus Attucks Center. He was the founding treasurer for NAACP Lancaster, an office which he held through at least 1930, and was elected president in 1945.²⁷ His death, at his home on North Street, was reported in the *Intelligencer Journal* on January 15, 1968.

A. L. Polite's life connects Reconstruction, a time when there was a possibility of full civic participation by Black citizens, to the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and 1960s, when the national NAACP led activism and litigation to grasp that future again. According to his grandson, he brought a sense of that hope with him from South Carolina to Lancaster, and it imbued his life of community service.²⁸

Marianna Gibbons Brubaker lived with her husband, Oram Brubaker, on their farm on Beechdale Road, where they raised ducks for the Philadelphia market. She was the descendant of three generations of Gibbonses who lived in the area, all staunch members of the Society of Friends, abolitionists, and supporters of Black people struggling north toward freedom before Emancipation. Her grandfather Daniel Gibbons was an active station master on the Underground Railroad. Her father,

Dr. Joseph Gibbons, was a member of the state Anti-Slavery Society. His daughter assisted him with his organizing and writing efforts for the Society of Friends.²⁹

Brubaker was a dedicated activist for her favored causes, including world peace, temperance, and anti-racism. It was, perhaps, her lineage as well as her own dedication and self-assurance that led her to advocate for a local NAACP branch. In 1922, she was collecting funds for the NAACP in Lancaster. She wrote in her diary on November 27, 1922: "M. tries to see Jack Straub, to whom she has written about the N. A. A. C. P. but he tells her over the telephone that he is not interested! As he is said to be worth a million, he might become interested!"³⁰

To the leadership and organization of people like A. L. Polite and his colleagues, Brubaker had the means to contribute connections that linked the local civil rights efforts to a national body. She regularly attended the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends in Philadelphia. Her active participation in the Society of Friends meetings gave her the knowledge of and connections to the national NAACP. In 1922 and 1924, she attended the national meetings of the NAACP. She marked each meeting with several pages of notes, including names of speakers, topics discussed, and quality of presentations. On June 22, 1922, at the NAACP annual meeting in New York City, she met the wife of Robert W. Bagnall, who was the Director of Branches for the national office. The following year, during the branch organization, Brubaker wrote to Bagnall for advice, referred to meeting his wife, and invited him to visit the duck farm. Brubaker heard William Pickens, who had become NAACP field secretary in 1920, speak at the Longwood, Pennsylvania, Yearly Meeting in June 1922. Bagnall and Pickens regularly corresponded with the officers of the fledgling Lancaster branch and assisted them with their organizing efforts.³¹

It is not yet known how Brubaker met Polite. In November 1922, she and her family attended an "entertainment by the Choir of the A.M.E. Church of Lancaster" at their own church. As a long-time member in the choir and director of the junior choir, it seems likely that Polite would have been there.³¹ By April 1923, Brubaker clearly understood his potential important role in organizing a branch. She was visiting Lancaster to lobby pastors of Black churches in favor of a branch. Her diary records that ". . . M. calls on

A. L. Polite, janitor at the City Hall who gives her their street numbers. She calls on Rev. B. B. Fisher, A. M. E. and on Rev. Mark Thompson, Baptist and discusses with them the prospect of organizing a Branch of the N. A. A. C. P. in Lancaster. This is Negro Health Week here and, in connection with this, something may be done.”³³

Brubaker also visited NAACP and Urban League activists in other parts of the country. She and her husband traveled during January and February to warmer areas, often where he had business interests. In 1922, they visited Florida, Cuba, and South Carolina. She met the president of the Tampa NAACP. In 1923, she was excited to travel to Tuskegee Institute, visiting with Mrs. Booker T. Washington and recalling corresponding with her husband. She spoke with the president of the Tampa Urban League. In 1924, on a trip to California with her husband, Brubaker spoke with officers of the Houston, Texas, NAACP, and reconnected with the principal of a “Colored Graded School” whom she had met at the 1922 NAACP national convention. These visits strengthened her understanding of race relations across the country and, undoubtedly, her commitment to help organize NAACP Lancaster.³⁴ Brubaker continued to work for the branch into 1925 and served as a member of the Executive Committee often collecting dues and speaking at the monthly meeting when asked. She died in 1929.³⁵



Founding the NAACP Lancaster, 1923

In order to apply for a charter to the national NAACP, the local group needed fifty members. In the spring and early summer of 1923, they worked toward this goal. A meeting was called for Sunday, May 27, 1923, at Bethel AME church. The announced speaker was Louis H. Berry, executive secretary of the NAACP’s office in Harlem, New York. Marianna Brubaker attended with her husband and stepdaughter. Two other friends joined them. Brubaker reported: “The meeting is quite large, Mrs. E. P. Griest and Mrs. Ella also Cy. Herr being the only white people besides our party present. The speaker, Mr. Berry is quite good They got 35 members for the new Branch.”³⁶

They reached the fifty-member goal on June 5, 1923. On June 8, A. L. Polite telephoned Brubaker with the news. Meetings were set for the third Tuesday in each month.³⁷ The Lancaster group applied to the national NAACP office for a charter and listed the fifty members and their membership dues payment of \$1.00 each.³⁸ The Executive Committee was appointed and contained some familiar names: Mrs. W. W. (Elizabeth) Griest, Mrs. Miranna [sic] Brubaker, Mrs. John C. (Laura) Carter, who would become the first president, Mrs. Laura Wilson, Mrs. Howard Fairfax, Miss Maude Wilson, A. L. Polite, James Hurdle, and Harry Smith of Marietta.³⁹

The national NAACP office received the application for charter on June 16, 1923, and Robert W. Bagnall, director of branches, wrote to Ida Fairfax in Lancaster that “We are very much gratified at the splendid beginning made by the Lancaster group and we confidently expect that it will grow into one of the active and influential units of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.” The local branch received authorization papers from NAACP national office, which were read at a meeting on July 6, 1923.⁴⁰ Mrs. Carter became president and Mrs. Laura Wilson, vice-president.⁴¹

Church congregations clearly assisted the NAACP organization. They nurtured the fledgling branch’s leadership and provided locations for the first meetings. Bethel AME Church was crucial, and Ebenezer Baptist Church began to provide meeting space, a tradition that continues to this day. On August 2, 1923, the membership committee of the new branch met at Ebenezer Church. Brubaker attended and spoke. Her diary notes, “The meeting at the Church, tho small, is good. Of course M. is asked to speak and, equally of course she pleases her audience.”⁴²



Profiles of First Officers of NAACP Lancaster Branch 2302

The success of Branch 2302 depended on many people who knew each other, attended the same churches, and met at other community events. The stories of two members, Laura Carter, the first president, and James Hurdle, a secretary in the 1920s, are examples. Although apparently Laura Carter was appointed the first president of NAACP Lancaster when it was



Laura Carter served as the first president of the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP in 1923 and continued in that office until 1931. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, *Lancaster New Era*, May 3, 1924.

organized in the early summer of 1923, she was duly elected at a meeting on November 9, 1923, held at Bethel AME church. She was active in the Colored Republican Club, chaired by her husband. At the time of her election, she and her husband lived at 540 North Street, but they sold the home to Polite in January 1924. The house has been a center of activism in the Black community for one hundred years. Laura Carter served as president of NAACP Lancaster until her resignation in 1931. She died on January 8, 1940, at the home on 143 S. Duke Street, which she shared with her husband. She was sixty-four years old.⁴³

James Hurdle was secretary of NAACP Lancaster in 1923 and 1925. He attended the NAACP Annual Conference in Philadelphia in 1924, and reported on the meeting to the July Branch meeting.⁴⁴

James Hurdle was born in Virginia in the late 1870s, but by 1907, he was in Lancaster. In that year, he married Emma Kirk, whose family lived near Lancaster. At the time of his marriage, he boarded at 540

North Street, which the Carter family may have owned at that time. It is possible that James Hurdle and the Carters had connections prior to their living in Lancaster, as both were from Virginia, perhaps an example of the networks that created the Great Migration. After their marriage, the Hurdles lived at 536 North Street. Later, the family moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, possibly for a job opportunity.

Hurdle worked as a waiter. In 1925, he wrote “a Few extracts from the Life of Stevens Known as the ‘Great Commoner’” probably in preparation for speaking at a local NAACP meeting, an evidence of the persistence of the memory of Thaddeus Stevens in the Black community. The notes are

on the letterhead of the Penn Square Restaurant/Neal McConomy. He also reportedly worked at the Brunswick Hotel. By the late 1920s, James Hurdle was living and working as a waiter in Reading. He died in the Homeopathic Hospital in Reading in 1929, at the age of fifty-three. His death certificate was signed by his widow, whose address was the 400 block of North Street, Lancaster, and he is buried in Stevens Greenland Cemetery on South Duke Street, Lancaster.⁴⁵



The Work of NAACP Lancaster in Early Years

In its first decade, NAACP Lancaster focused both on civil rights issues and on the needs of the local Black community. A great deal of effort, too, concentrated on raising money for the national office to fund its staff and to support advocacy and litigation, for such issues as the national anti-lynching campaign and justice for the Leavenworth prisoners.

In September 1923, the national NAACP addressed a Pennsylvania issue. The mayor of Johnstown summarily ordered any Black person who had been resident for less than seven years to leave town, after the shooting of policemen by a Black man. The national NAACP protested to Republican Governor Gifford Pinchot, who wired the NAACP New York office that the state would maintain constitutional rights. The mayor was defeated in the primary, as a result of the NAACP protest. NAACP national staff alerted the local branch, and the incident was also reported in the local press.⁴⁶

NAACP staff urged local branch activity as a result of this incident. The NAACP Secretary wrote to James Hurdle: "This case offers your branch an excellent opportunity to capitalize this great victory. We urge that you immediately arrange a meeting. Not only does this victory mean a great deal to the colored citizens of Johnstown but it affects every community in the North to which Negro migrants from the South are coming."⁴⁷

A major concern for the national NAACP was the campaign against lynching and support of the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, which was introduced in the House of Representatives by white Missouri Republican Congressman Leonidas Dyer in 1918. It passed the House in 1922, but failed in the Senate, due to a filibuster by Southern Democrats. NAACP Lancaster invited Representative Dyer to speak at a branch meeting in October 1924.⁴⁸

NAACP Lancaster members advocated for the “Leavenworth prisoners.” These were soldiers of the United States 24th Infantry, an all-Black unit, who were imprisoned at Leavenworth, Kansas, for their part in the “Houston Riot of 1917.” The soldiers guarded the construction of Camp Logan. In Houston, a nearby city with municipal laws segregating public facilities, the Black soldiers resisted police harassment and violence, in a move that white authorities characterized as disobedience of orders by armed men. Later research revealed that the soldiers feared an approaching white mob. For responding to the mob, a military court found one hundred ten enlisted men guilty. Nineteen soldiers were hanged, and sixty-three men were transferred to federal prison with life sentences. NAACP Lancaster President Laura Carter urged members and friends to sign a petition to free the prisoners, and the branch reportedly collected 1,040 signatures. The national and local NAACP continued to advocate for the Leavenworth prisoners. The South Texas School of Law Houston, supported by the local NAACP, successfully had the convictions of the 110 Black soldiers overturned by the Army Board for Correction of Military Records on November 13, 2023.⁴⁹

In 1931, the national NAACP staff worked hard to raise funds for the defense of the Scottsboro Boys, nine Black youths who were accused of raping two white women, after a fight broke out on a train in northern Alabama. NAACP Lancaster officers corresponded with the national office about the difficulty of raising local interest in this case in August 1931 due to a conflict with a local church event.⁵⁰

In addition to national events and issues, NAACP Lancaster members worked for local needs. James Hurdle wrote to the national office for advice about establishing a community center.⁵¹ Hesitant about establishing a center that would mainly serve the Black community, Director of Branches Robert Bagnall discouraged this effort as a diversion from the mission of the branch to work for the civil, legal, and economic rights of Blacks, and as possibly establishing a “Jim Crow institution.”⁵² Members of the branch clearly supported the need for a community center as they had leased a house on North Street in 1924 for classes and athletics.⁵³

Adequate housing and good jobs were foremost issues from the 1920s into the 1960s and beyond. In May 1924, NAACP Lancaster prepared a report

of progress-to-date, focusing on Lancaster city, which was summarized in the *Lancaster New Era*.⁵⁴ The number of Black residents was estimated at 1,000. Fifty-seven residents either owned or were buying their homes, compared to twelve three years earlier.

The reporter complimented the personal thrift and improvement in the peacefulness and appearance of the community that this accomplishment represented. However, housing patterns revealed stark realities of segregation. Most of the homes pictured, on North, Locust, Atlantic, and Green Streets, were in Southeast Lancaster. Only one, on East Marion Street, suggested that Black families were welcome to purchase homes outside a narrow area.

Finding a job with a living wage, much less employment that tapped the significant skills of Black workers, was very difficult. The 1924 news report stated this problem: "When it is considered that the colored wage-earners are practically all of the unskilled laboring class, and that, too, within a restricted field, this substantial evidence of thrift and self-denial is doubly creditable." The letters from various NAACP Lancaster officers in the NAACP Papers in the Library of Congress give evidence of the significant organizational skills that would have benefitted many local businesses. The carefully composed and written letters show understanding of both the needs and organization of the local branch and the priorities of the national office and the strategies and tactics needed to advance both levels of the organization.

The squandered potential for community benefit that resulted from limiting skilled people to low-grade employment is evidenced by the jobs of several local NAACP leaders. A. L. Polite, as mentioned, was a janitor for the City of Lancaster, as was John C. Carter, Laura Carter's husband. James Hurdle was a waiter, and Carrie Foster, active in the Negro Civic League, the NAACP, and Crispus Attucks Center, worked at the public restroom in Penn Square.⁵⁵ The contrast between the accomplishments of these NAACP members in the volunteer arena and the restricted field of their employment is stark. Their persistence in volunteer work is exemplary, and it allowed them opportunities to apply their significant skills in community development, even if employment did not.

Fundraising demanded intense effort during the first decade of the NAACP Lancaster. Each branch contributed then, as it does today, a portion of each

member's dues payment to the national office. Each branch also contributed a national annual assessment, and there were special fundraising efforts as well. The local branches supported the advocacy and litigation efforts of the national office and participated in major civil rights actions. These payments caused much of the correspondence between the branch and the national office during the first decade. The Lancaster branch started out strongly. As the Great Depression worsened in the 1930s, it was probably these obligations, as well as changes in leadership, that caused the branch to weaken for a time.

Robert Bagnall, the director of branches, explained the need for the annual assessments to Lancaster branch secretary, Ida M. Fairfax, in the summer of 1923:

The apportionment of a branch is the amount of money it is asked to send in during the year for the purpose of supporting the work of the national Office. This year the money will be chiefly used to continue our fight against lynching and to carry on the fight against segregation, Jim Crowism, disfranchisement [sic] and peonage. In order that we may hope for success, you will agree every branch must do its duty.

We are asking you to accept \$50.00 as the apportionment of the Lancaster Branch and 100 members as its membership quota.⁵⁶

The NAACP branches today operate under similar rules, working toward annual compliance by recruiting a minimum number of members and paying annual assessments.⁵⁷

The branch's first year was successful. In late June-early July 1924, the NAACP annual meeting was in Philadelphia. Proximity made it possible for the Lancaster Branch to send several representatives, but only after holding a baby contest and a strawberry social to raise money to send delegates, including Secretary James Hurdle. M. G. Brubaker reported for the local branch and recorded in her diary: "Lancaster paid her full assessment, or as they say, 'Went over the top'."⁵⁸ In early February and March of 1929, Lancaster contributed to a national NAACP campaign to raise \$200,000 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the national NAACP's founding. President Laura Carter wrote to NAACP Secretary James Weldon Johnson

that “We collected \$28.50 in cash [and] received 497.00 in Pledges,” at a meeting on March 19, 1929.⁵⁹



1931: The Organizational Period Ends

As the national economy faltered and slid into deeper depression in the early 1930s, NAACP Lancaster ended its first decade. The branch continued to recruit members, and officers submitted a membership report for June 1931.⁶⁰

The local branch continued to raise money for the national office. In mid-1931, the national office initiated a contest for young women in the various states. For the title of Miss Pennsylvania, branch members would solicit memberships. Some of the funds collected would go to the national office, some to the local branch, and some to contestants. This complex activity generated correspondence about the correct accounting for funds between the national office and the branch. Contestants for the Lancaster branch were Miss Marybelle Millen and Miss Ethel Brown, both of Lancaster.⁶¹

By 1933, there were enough branches in Pennsylvania and enough activity in the state that a state conference was founded. The conference met for the first time in Harrisburg in August of that year. People familiar with Lancaster were involved in the state conference, including Maude Coleman.⁶² The Conference continues today. Blanding Watson, president of NAACP Lancaster, has served in various capacities for the Conference. In 2021, he was appointed president of the Pennsylvania State Conference by the NAACP national office.

NAACP Lancaster became inactive after 1931. Laura J. Carter had served as president for nearly a decade. The last correspondence on file between Carter and the national office was in November 1931. She asked William Pickens, national field secretary, about the local newspapers' use of the word “Negress” with a lower case “n.” She had consulted the dictionary and found the usage acceptable. Her letter was marked “Mr. White” at the national office, and may have been answered by the long-time national secretary, Walter White. On the reverse, in distinctive handwriting, is written: “Send her opinion of National office—have old release, or copy of it on subject. Inform her that our Branches protest “negroes” small “n” in Negro.”⁶³



Hard Times: The 1930s and 1940s Depression, War, and Efforts to Revive the Branch

As the 1930s wore on, there was probably little time and less extra money among the working people of Lancaster County to continue a local branch and to support the national office. In 1935, Sara Washington attempted to revive the branch. She was moved by the brutal lynching of Claude Neal in Greenwood, Florida. She wrote, "I find there is no organization here but feel one can be revived and kept alive." William Pickens, field secretary, noted that "Once Lancaster had an active and effective branch." "Trusting that I may be of some service to the organization and my people," Washington advertised an organizational meeting in newspapers, made calls, and sent out postcards. She was disappointed in the lack of support from the community center, where the meeting date conflicted with a card party, and in the limited attendance, only twelve people, at the meeting.⁶⁴

In 1935, another attempt to revive the branch was made by Mr. Harry T. Smith, but again, these efforts appear to have failed.⁶⁵ The NAACP Lancaster charter was revoked in 1939, after correspondence among staff at the National office and various people in Lancaster, including Sarah Washington, the Reverend Mr. Matthews on Locust Street, Margaret Wright, and Harry T. Smith. Smith was apparently considered the president, but had not called a meeting. Catherine Wright reported that Smith had moved to Harrisburg, but returned to Lancaster occasionally, where he could pick up mail, care of Laura Carter at 143 South Duke Street. However, the letter was dated November 14, 1939, and, as Laura Carter died in January of 1940, perhaps illness prevented her from taking an active role. Catherine Wright also reported that any funds were still with Sarah Munson, former treasurer, at Nine Points, probably the location between Quarryville, Lancaster County, and Atglen, Chester County, eighteen miles south of Lancaster City. When a letter reached Munson, she replied that she was not now and never had been associated with the NAACP.⁶⁶

This confusing period in the history of NAACP Lancaster illustrates the dislocation that the Great Depression had on the wage-earning population in Lancaster County, especially its Black members, whose employment

opportunities were limited. In 1933, during the depths of the depression, the unemployment rate in Pennsylvania reached 40 percent.⁶⁷ Those with jobs found income and hours reduced. The need to travel for a new job or to find housing with friends and relations would have made it difficult to communicate and meet.



The Issues Persist and Organizing Persists: The 1940s

World War II began in Europe in 1939, and the United States entered the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The development of wartime industries increased employment but only emphasized the disparity in opportunity between white and minority workers.

Black people in Lancaster City seized the tradition to organize for improvement, even in the face of depression and dislocation. Jobs and housing continued to be the major issues. In 1941, they founded a Colored Civil Liberties League, to gain equal rights for Black people. At least one name in the League leadership is familiar. A. L. Polite was secretary. George Parker was president, Howard Snow, vice-president, William H. Brown, treasurer, and Eugene C. Dunson, chaplain. Ernest Christian, who would later become president of a re-organized NAACP branch, served on the publicity committee. As in the 1923 NAACP organization, the leaders used existing community networks to strengthen this new initiative. They contacted churches, fraternal organizations, and civic groups. They succeeded. At an organization meeting on July 24, 1943, representatives attended from Bethel AME Church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Church of God in Christ, the Church of the Living Christ, the Conestoga Lodge of Elks, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, The Household of Ruth, the Queen of Sheba Temple, the Ladies of the Elks, and a youth organization. Organizers led discussion about employment and unemployment, housing, youth, civil liberties, and the role of women.⁶⁸

The League looked toward increasing political clout, but in a non-partisan way. Even at the beginning, the organizers were aware of and looked to national groups as models, stating as a purpose, "To improve our position as a group working along the lines of the National Association for

the Advancement of Colored Peoples and the Urban League.” The focus was on equal rights, war housing, integration, and employment opportunities for Black workers in local manufacturing plants. In September of 1943, A. William Hill, Jr., who was a funeral director and embalmer, inquired of the national NAACP about joining. Just as in the 1920s, the prestige and heft of a national organization seemed beneficial. He wrote, “We have an organization known as the Colored Civil Liberties Leagues which has done a marvelous job. But we feel that the same group can get more local support and national backing by changing our status from a local to a national affiliation.”⁶⁹

This strong local start prompted a re-organization of NAACP Lancaster in September 1943. Ninety-one members joined, and the Rev. Ernest Christian became president.⁷⁰ On October 21, 1943, the national NAACP office issued a new charter.⁷¹ By December, the branch had a printed letterhead listing officers and members of the Executive Committee. Additionally, the list shows the organization of the branch into committees organized around issues of interest, a structure that persists today. The officers were the Rev. Ernest Christian, president; William Winston, first vice president; Mrs. Florence Epps, second vice president; Leroy Campbell, executive secretary; Mrs. Blanche Sterrett, treasurer and chairman of finance; Mrs. Anice Travis, membership chairman; A. William Hill, Jr., press and publicity; the Rev. E. S. Dennis, legal redress; Merle Wilson, labor and industry; Mrs. Ruby Payne, education; Mrs. Ulrica K. Cook, Eli Hart, Nathaniel Spruiell, and Miss Naomi Polite, daughter of A. L. Polite, entertainment.⁷² Some officers remained active in the NAACP into the next decades.

NAACP focus during the 1940s remained on the two key issues of jobs and housing, but wartime conditions aggravated these problems. The increase in industrial production during World War II only magnified lack of opportunity for Black people in local firms. Dislocations and scarcity characterized housing.

In 1943, NAACP Lancaster conducted a housing survey among Black residents. Although not stated in newspaper reporting, the survey probably focused on the Southeast, where most Black residents lived. The results of the survey of 557 respondents were published in both the *Lancaster New Era* and the *Intelligencer Journal*. The major finding was a serious shortage

of housing. One hundred eighty-two respondents were identified as “war workers” who needed to rely on friends and relatives for housing. An additional 109 potential war workers were unable to find homes in the area. Because NAACP Lancaster conducted the survey, it seems a logical assumption that all these workers were Black, and that their housing search was mainly in the southeast section of the city. The survey revealed that 23 percent of the houses surveyed were overcrowded, to the extent that three or more people needed to share a room.

The solution offered in the article was that people report their problems to the local War Housing Center at 138 North Duke Street. The NAACP’s goal was to find adequate housing for these workers, so that “the labor supply from this section of the city may . . . be stabilized.”⁷³ The two problems, lack of housing and lack of good jobs, were intertwined.

The Lancaster Branch sponsored a Conference on Wartime Labor and Industry which was held on November 21, 1943, at the Crispus Attucks Center, for the southeastern district of Pennsylvania. It was open to the public. Speakers included the chair of the Pennsylvania State Commission on the Condition of Negroes in Urban Communities, the Manager of the Chester War Housing project, and the executive secretary of the Negro Victory Committee, New York City.⁷⁴

The NAACP on the national and local levels advocated for a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC). Harriett L. Stewart wrote to the national office requesting permission to support the Lancaster FEPC “since we are numerically, the largest group of organized Negroes in this Community” The response from the national office typically urged both local advocacy and the need to focus on and raise money for national programs. Ella J. Baker, then director of branches at the national office, requested letters to President Harry Truman supporting a federal FEPC. Although President Franklin D. Roosevelt had created a FEPC by executive order in 1941, it was discontinued after the end of World War II. President Truman’s attempt to send a civil rights bill to Congress in 1948 failed. Again, typically, the national office representative reminded the local leaders that any funds raised should be divided between local efforts and the national campaign for a new federal FEPC.⁷⁵

By 1945, NAACP Lancaster documented and officially reacted to incidents of prejudice and segregation. The record contains evidence of specific complaints against two local businesses, handled by an active Legal Redress Committee. Committee members interviewed the manager of The Roosevelt Grille, 1002 North Duke Street, after three people were refused service by a member of the wait staff. They had participated in a concert on December 4, sponsored by the Inter-Racial Council of Lancaster City and County. The manager declared no knowledge of the situation and said that it had not been brought to his attention at the time. He apologized and said that there was no need for legal action at this time and that the act of discrimination would not be repeated.

In a second incident, Committee Members the Rev. E. S. Dennis, LeRoy S. Campbell, and Dorothy Scharfe interviewed the manager of The Village Restaurant at 28 East Chestnut Street about a denial of service to three diners, including Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. The manager apologized, spoke about a “very discourteous” staff member, who had drawn complaints from patrons and who could not easily be replaced due to the current labor shortage. The manager said that “he saw no need of taking legal action because it would never happen again to the best of his knowledge.” Miss Scharfe also described an incident in which a Black patron took the only open seat in the restaurant at a table with a white patron, who refused to finish their meal, and demanded a refund. These incidents show the NAACP’s willingness to confront discrimination that appears to have been common in Lancaster businesses.⁷⁶ The members were also willing to consider legal action, according to the comments of the restaurant managers.

NAACP members could have relied on state statutes that would have supported suing against discrimination in a place of public accommodation. The Pennsylvania Equal Rights Act of 1939 made it a misdemeanor to deny service in a place of public accommodation on account of race, creed, or color.⁷⁷ This law would become important in cases about racial discrimination in swimming pools in the 1950s and 1960s. The threat of legal action shows the seriousness and assertiveness of the local NAACP Legal Redress Committee.

The late 1940s was another challenging period for NAACP Lancaster. In 1946, the branch elected officers and reported their names to the

national office. Mr. Eli Hart of 433 Green Street served as president. Miss Harriett Stewart was secretary, Miss Naomi Polite, assistant secretary, and Mrs. Ulrica Cooke, treasurer. As in the past, the area around Bethel AME Church, including North and Green Streets, running from the church on Strawberry Street to S. Duke Street, was the center of the organization.⁷⁸

In the following years, despite strong membership numbers . . . one hundred thirty-six members in 1946 . . . the branch faltered. It was not able to meet the aggressive membership goal, set by the national office, of 350 members in 1947. The housing shortage for Black people “has caused much distress among the Negroes here.” Members found housing only in the city outskirts. Maintaining address lists, communication, travel, and attending meetings became onerous. In March 1947, Harriett Stewart, secretary, whose address was now 444 South Christian Street rather than a North Street address of only a month earlier, reported to the national office that “Since the end of war there has been a general decrease in community interest in NAACP work and all other social progress movements here.”⁷⁹ By May of 1949, Miss Stewart was living outside the city at Apartment 4, Creek Lane and South Duke Street. She returned to the city only every two weeks to pick up mail.⁸⁰

There was lost communication between the national office and the local branch on both ends. The report of officers from the Lancaster branch to the national office was made to Ella J. Baker, then director of branches, on February 25, 1946. In March, a letter went out to the local branches asking for the report. On May 2, 1946, Harriett Stewart reminded Baker that the report had been sent. By March 1947, Stewart apologized for “the chaotic state our branch has been in for the several months.” She addressed a new staff member at NAACP, Lucille Black, membership secretary. On May 16, 1949, Stewart wrote to Miss Black that six or seven letters to the Director of Branches had not been answered and protested that the national office was apparently uninterested in a small branch. Stewart had received a letter from Black on May 4, 1949, suggesting that the charter be sent back to the national office.⁸¹



The “Communist Taint:” 1940s and early 1950s

In May 1950, Harriett Stewart was still living at Creek Lane and South Duke Street and interested in reviving the branch. She reported on an incident of discrimination against a Negro member of the C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) regarding the use of a swimming pool at the annual picnic. The C.I.O. took the incident to the Lancaster County courts, received a favorable verdict, but was unable to carry on when the ruling was appealed. The local NAACP took over, employed a Philadelphia attorney, Theodore Spaulding, and awaited a decision. Miss Stewart’s final comment summarized the challenges of the branch during the 1940s and 1950s:

The officers and members of this C.I.O. council have since come under suspicion of being Communistic adherents through a local newspaper campaign to expose Communism in labor organizations. Our Branch is in no way connected with this battle. I feel however that until much of the publicity against these people has died the fear of being tainted with Communism will retard our progress.”⁸²

630 from Here Signed Communist Petitions

**2 Investigations Being Made of 26,780
Signatures Filed at Harrisburg;
New Era Lists Local Names**

Many Lancaster residents wrote to the newspaper stating firmly that they had never signed a petition supporting Communist candidates or were misled. The United States House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities investigated. The impact of this incident as well as the pressures of the World War II years caused a quiet period for the Lancaster Branch. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, Lancaster New Era, June 24, 1940.

Harriett Stewart was right. The accusation of Communist sympathy seemed pervasive. This climate, added to the post-war dislocations, caused suspicion in the whole community, but especially among Black people. Any organization for social justice stalled.

The misgivings had been seeded in late 1939 and 1940 by a petition-signing incident in Lancaster city and County. In March 1939, six people circulated petitions throughout Lancaster County to add the names of Communist candidates for office to the ballot in the November election. They were Carl D. Reidel, salesman, 411 Church Street, Communist candidate for presidential elector; Reuben A. Carr, Lancaster, Communist candidate for assemblyman; J. Granville Eddy, Paradise; C. W. Morris, pattern maker, Columbia; Harry S. Yeager, cigarmaker, 248 West Liberty St., and Bruno Familiari, 213 East Chestnut Street. Six hundred thirty people with Lancaster addresses signed the petitions.⁸³

The signers attracted the attention of Congressman Martin Dies (D, Texas) and the Committee on Un-American Activities of the United States House of Representatives. The committee was "using the lists as a guide in their investigation of Anti-American activities, assuming that the names include those who would seek to destroy the present form of United States government."⁸⁴ The issue caused fear and consternation, especially among the people who had signed the petitions. Many signers later published information in the newspaper saying that they did not sign or did not understand what they were signing. They offered proof that they were loyal citizens.

The Black community and their leaders seemed especially affected by this situation because Reuben Carr had deep local ties. He was an occasional boarder at the Polite home at 540 North Street, a fond friend of the family, and a Communist.⁸⁵ In 1937, Carr had been one of the sponsors of a meeting of a local branch of the National Negro Congress in Odd Fellows' Hall, 525 Chester Street, on September 28. Other sponsors were respected members of the Black community, whose names also appeared in support of NAACP, including Dr. J. V. Sterrett, Ruby Payne, Mary Mortimer, and A. L. Polite. This meeting was one of many efforts to organize for social justice in the Black community.⁸⁶ Local delegates were selected to attend the

second national meeting of the National Negro Congress in Philadelphia in October, including Reuben Carr and A. L. Polite.⁸⁷

The National Negro Congress, active in the late 1930s and early 1940s, marked an effort by the Communist Party to build coalitions with other popular movements. It was an attempt, often tried in the United States but rarely successful, to unite people across racial lines to advocate for equal opportunity.⁸⁸

From June 24 until about July 10, 1940, local newspapers published concerned responses from the people alleged to have signed the Communist Party electoral petitions.⁸⁹ On June 26, 1940, the *Lancaster New Era* published the comments of Ruby Payne and A. L. Polite, who wrote that Reuben Carr was the only Negro Communist in Lancaster, that those who signed the petitions were misled and that “the rest of our people are loyal American citizens” The newspaper noted that “explanations are being published as rapidly as space will allow”⁹⁰ Some of the accused claimed never to have signed; others wrote that they thought the petitions were to improve housing, to support a third term for President Franklin Roosevelt, or to advocate for peace. *The Intelligencer Journal* editorialized, “All we have to say is that people, by this time, ought to have sense enough to read petitions before they sign them.”⁹¹ The community distress apparently resolved, but the so-called Communist taint had a longer life, even into the 1950s, when Harriett Smith mentioned it to the national NAACP staff.



Rumblings Before the Storm: The 1950s

During the 1950s, Lancaster Branch 2302 seems largely to have been dormant. Leaders did not appear to emerge and the concern about accusations of Communist sympathy was a disincentive in the early 1950s.

Lancaster newspapers continually reported about the NAACP activities on a national level and in other areas of the country. The organization was gaining strength and standing for some of the crucial civil rights conflicts of the coming years. Lancaster newspapers reported on the United States Supreme Court’s rulings about Black students attending the Universities of Texas and Oklahoma and about desegregation in railroad dining cars. Local readers read about the national NAACP’s

request for the desegregation of the United States Postal Service. Articles in the Lancaster newspapers reported about combatting segregation on many levels.⁹²

The newspapers repeatedly mentioned Executive Secretary Walter White and his statements about NAACP positions on national issues from the people appointed to Federal offices to fair employment policy. White was scheduled to speak at Lincoln University in Chester County in the summer of 1954. Eleanor Roosevelt, an NAACP board member, mentioned the organization repeatedly in her popular news column "My Day." Lancasterians read her eulogy of White in the *Intelligencer Journal* in April 1955, a month after his death.⁹³

Lancasterians also became familiar with the name of Thurgood Marshall, a Lincoln University alumnus and special counsel for the NAACP. The local announcement about the Supreme Court decision on the *Brown v. Board of Education* case appeared in the *Intelligencer Journal* on May 18, 1954. People would read his name repeatedly as school desegregation progressed through the abstraction of court cases to the reality of brave students challenging segregation in their daily lives.⁹⁴

Some of the first local public acts of resistance to segregation centered at Lincoln University, a historically Black college. On January 17, 1950, about twenty Lincoln students entered the coffee shop at the nearby Oxford Hotel, to find that they were offered menus and water but no service. A crowd gathered outside on the street. Students also resisted the segregated seating at the local theatre.⁹⁵

NAACP Lancaster continued to face accusations of Communist influence. As mentioned above, branch secretary Harriett Stewart reported to national Membership Secretary Lucille Black in 1959 that the suspicions would stall progress of a branch revival. Black replied, "The communist smear is simply another way of keeping Negroes and other minority groups from fighting for their rights."⁹⁶

The influence of the Communist taint on racial justice work cut two ways. While accusations of Communist sympathy impeded NAACP efforts, some newspaper columnists urged readers to "Lick the race problem" as a way to beat Communism. Progress on integration would deflate Communist criticism that the United States had racial problems.

This accusation, then, could not be used to influence people of other countries against the United States, especially countries emerging from colonial rule in Africa.⁹⁷

NAACP Lancaster in the 1950s became quiet in the face of the dislocations of post-war housing and employment and the Communist taint. However, branches in nearby Pennsylvania regions managed to continue operation. The Lancaster branch, led by Mrs. Annie Williams, was included on the 1933 list of members of the Pennsylvania State Conference. The 22nd Annual Meeting of the Conference, held in Erie, in October 1956, was led by President Henry R. Smith, Jr., from Pittsburgh. Thirteen branches, in the major cities of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh but also including Ambler, Chester, Blairsville, and Willow Grove, but not Lancaster, had a combined membership of over 19,000. Jackie Robinson, the famous Brooklyn Dodgers baseball player who broke the major league color line in 1947, spoke at the Pennsylvania State Conference Annual Meeting in 1957 in Reading.⁹⁸ The persistence of the other Pennsylvania branches, in contrast to Lancaster, suggests that there was a temporary local leader vacuum. The leaders of past decades receded. A new generation soon became active in the crucial decade of the 1960s.



New Beginnings for a Stormy Decade: The 1960s

The 1960s was a time of strength and growth for NAACP Lancaster, mirroring the civil rights movement nationally. From within the churches, the fraternal organizations, and the community, leaders emerged to organize the branch and work on the serious problems of housing, education, jobs, and segregated public accommodations. The group needed this strength. By the end of the decade, the shock of national events, growing frustration about housing for those displaced by urban renewal, and increasing tension in southeast Lancaster and in Lancaster City schools tested the NAACP.

On Monday, April 25, 1960, a group met at the Conestoga Elks Lodge, 425 South Duke Street, to reorganize the branch. Ashley Dudley, Jr., a long-time member of Bethel AME Church, led the meeting. He said that the branch had been inactive for more than ten years, although, as previously



CHARTER

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE

Lancaster City, Pennsylvania Branch

OF THE

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

GREETING:

Your Application for Admission to the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF COLORED PEOPLE

has been passed upon by the Board of Directors of the Association at its Meeting on
June 13th, 1960, and granted, and this charter is therefore issued to you.

Your organization is now enrolled as a Branch of the Association.

This Charter is granted on the condition that your organization will endeavor
to the best of its ability to cooperate with the National Association for the Advancement of
Colored People in furtherance of the Association's object, namely:

*"To uplift the colored men and women of this country by securing to them the full
enjoyment of their rights as citizens, justice in all courts, and equality of
opportunity everywhere."*

The Board of Directors reserves the right to suspend or revoke this Charter at any time the
Board shall deem it for the best interest of the Association.

Dated at New York this thirteenth Day of June , 1960.



Chairman of the Board

Secretary

In 1960, the national NAACP re-chartered the Lancaster Branch. The official signature on the lower right corner of the charter, saved by Karen Dixon, a member and officer for decades, is that of Roy Wilkins, national NAACP secretary. Courtesy of Karen Dixon.

noted, that was not for lack of effort.⁹⁹ NAACP Lancaster re-applied for and was awarded a charter by the national office in 1960.

As in the earliest years of the branch, NAACP Lancaster was challenged to meet strong membership and fundraising goals set by the national office. Through the early 1960s, memberships ranged from forty-one to one hundred fifty against a quota of two hundred.¹⁰⁰

The national NAACP did indeed need funds. Litigation continued in many states, regarding the desegregation of schools at all levels and state challenges to the operation of local NAACP branches. Lancaster newspaper readers learned of them all. In February 1960, for example, there was a report of a class action suit in Pensacola, Florida. The same month brought news of the Supreme Court's decision striking down efforts of Little Rock and North Little Rock, Arkansas, to impose fines on the local branches for refusing to disclose membership lists. Arkansas NAACP leaders survived years of aggression after the 1957 efforts to integrate Central High School in Little Rock. In January 1961, there was news of legal action regarding the University of Georgia.¹⁰¹

The determined legal work of the NAACP was challenged by efforts at direct action, including sit-ins, protests, and demonstrations. Even Thurgood Marshall, known as the NAACP's chief legal strategist, said of the students who were advocating sit-ins and demonstrations, "They have made us reexamine our sights. The least we can do is support them."¹⁰² In March, the national NAACP asked members to apply economic pressure by avoiding four major variety store chains—Woolworth, Kresge, Dress, and Grant—that refused to serve Black people at lunch counters. Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her column "My Day" asking everyone to support the store boycotts, but former President Harry S. Truman issued a statement criticizing the NAACP and deriding the sit-ins. President John F. Kennedy was making highly visible appointments of Black leaders to government positions, including Robert C. Weaver of New York, former chair of NAACP, to lead the Housing and Home Finance Agency, "the highest position ever held by a negro [sic]," according to the *Sunday News*.¹⁰³

These national news stories focused on themes that NAACP Lancaster strongly addressed through the early 1960s. For a small, but active, branch, the work must have been intense. Four topics required persistent

attention. Foremost was the need for well-built and maintained housing and the desegregation of Lancaster's housing stock, especially in the face of urban renewal plans made possible by federal and state programs. The leaders worked on employment and tried to move Black applicants into job opportunities beyond the menial positions to which they had long been funneled. There was the need to open recreational facilities, especially swimming pools, to Black people who had long been excluded. Finally, police-community relations and the treatment of Black students in city schools needed to be addressed. The local branch also had to respond to the shocking national events of civil rights demonstrations and assassinations, and to do the constant work of fund raising and keeping the branch active.

Luckily, the Lancaster Branch benefited from strong leaders during this crucial period. The names Ashley Dudley, Jr., the Rev. Alexander Stephans, Kenneth Bost, Kenneth Abernathy, Herbert A. Cooper, Nelson Polite, Sr., and the Rev. Ernest Christian appear repeatedly in the record. At times, the person who held the presidency is not clear, due to lack of agreement between a branch list and newspaper records, confusion between dates of election and installation, and incomplete two-year terms. Despite official titles, these leaders all made strong contributions during the 1960s.

Housing

As political and civic attention in the post-World War II years returned to domestic problems, housing inadequacy was at the top of the list. In 1944, a Housing Committee study in Lancaster identified lack of interior plumbing, electricity, and sanitary facilities, as well as a high ratio of renters to owners as problems. The study identified 85 percent of the residences of the city's African American people as unfit. And, because Lancaster was a highly segregated city, many of these houses were in its southeast quadrant. Thirty years of residential redevelopment efforts ensued, led by the city Redevelopment Authority, well-documented in *A City Transformed* by David Schuyler. The buildings and streetscapes in major portions of the Seventh Ward were demolished without adequate planning for re-housing the dislocated residents. Patterns of community interaction through religious, retail, and civic establishments were not able to survive or revive. But through all the changes, the old pattern of residential segregation continued



Members of the Lancaster City Council and the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority toured areas scheduled for clearing in the 1960s. This image probably pre-dates 1967, when the first Black person was appointed to the Redevelopment Authority. Lancaster Branch members often met with city representatives and urged them to include the voices of people most affected. LancasterHistory 2-05-01-19

and was preserved by policy decisions and political exigency.¹⁰⁴ Through these trying times, NAACP Lancaster worked persistently and effectively, first, to give voice to those most affected and, second, to work on small, local projects that improved the community where many members lived.

The residential urban renewal consisted of two contiguous projects in the Southeast, the Adams-Musser Towns project and the Church-Musser project. The Adams-Musser Towns project was authorized by City Council in 1958. Its boundaries were from South Queen Street at Vine, East King, South Ann, South Duke, Chesapeake, and Strawberry Streets. Work continued on this project for about ten years. Hundreds of residential units

were demolished without adequate homes for the displaced residents to relocate. It was not simply that there were too few units of substitute low- and moderate-income housing. Segregation meant that residents trying to find housing outside the renewal areas had difficulties. Additionally, the Lancaster Housing Authority rejected applications for public housing from people who had inconsistencies in their marital records, credit history problems, or police records. These residents had to seek limited alternatives in areas surrounding the renewal neighborhood, where segregation prevented their renting or buying. In November 1965, newly-elected Lancaster Branch President Kenneth Abernathy criticized the Lancaster Housing Authority for a narrow interpretation of its rules in rejecting twenty families who applied to live in the Susquehanna Court public housing. These families had already been housed temporarily once in the Higbee and Duke Street redevelopment areas.¹⁰⁵ The NAACP urged the Redevelopment Authority and the Lancaster Housing Authority to work the two problems of demolition and relocation in tandem. This effort was not successful and resulted in the double hardship of inadequate housing and multiple moves for some residents.

From the early days of the urban renewal projects, NAACP Lancaster worked to bring city and Development Authority leaders together with people most affected by the work and to keep the problems of displaced families in front of the community. In February 1961, the NAACP sponsored a public forum, including Mayor Thomas Monaghan (D) and Robert M. Going, executive director of the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority. Going said that the Authority would help relocate families by appraising houses, paying for them, and assisting families to acquire new housing where they could live until they could return to new public housing in the area. He said that residents could move back to their neighborhood or into another area if they chose. As the years passed, two flaws in this plan became clear: public housing construction did not proceed as quickly as necessary and Black families had difficulty finding housing in areas outside the Seventh Ward. The following years brought more meetings, with the NAACP continually trying to keep urban renewal issues in the forefront.¹⁰⁶

In 1962, the Housing Committee of the NAACP, headed by Spencer Wilkerson, conducted a survey of the three hundred Black families, out



Herbert A. Cooper, left, and Nelson M. Polite, right, of the Lancaster Branch's housing committee, present a proposal to Lancaster City Council. NAACP members tried persistently to meet with leaders about housing, employment, and access to places of public accommodation, before considering direct action. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, *Intelligencer Journal*, July 23, 1964.

of a total of five hundred seventeen families, who would be displaced by the Adams-Musser Towns Project 2. It was bounded by Howard, Duke, Dauphin, Ann, Lime and Susquehanna Streets. The survey aimed to discover how many families planned to buy or rent within the area and how many planned to move outside the area, a potential problem in a highly segregated residential area. Black families had encountered discrimination in trying to seek homes outside the Seventh Ward as a result of Adams-Musser Towns Project 1. (Project 1 covered an area of thirty-three acres in which ninety-seven of one hundred eighty-seven families had to move.) NAACP President H. A. Cooper said, "If the pattern

is the same as Project One, it will be a very, very big problem. There just isn't room to put them in the Seventh Ward anymore." The survey aimed not only to provide useful information for the redevelopment project, but also to educate other city residents about problems in the urban renewal areas.¹⁰⁷

In another community education effort, the NAACP Housing Committee planned to develop a program to show that Black families were good neighbors. NAACP and renewal officials agreed "that Negro families attempting to buy houses outside the Seventh Ward have faced considerable difficulty."¹⁰⁸

By 1964, the NAACP added two more approaches, in addition to continuing to meet with city officials and to lobby for city action on derelict properties. They set up a housing bureau to match home-seekers with property owners who would rent or sell on a non-discriminatory basis. They razed some nuisance buildings on their own. These efforts were small, but effective and speedy, a contrast to the large urban renewal projects.

In 1964, NAACP Lancaster established a Fair Housing Office, staffed by volunteers, and operating in space donated by the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority at 349 Dauphin Street. It planned to open every weekday for morning and evening hours. The listing office intended to serve not only the practical aim of matching housing-seekers with non-discriminatory sales and rentals but also a public relations aim of focusing attention on housing discrimination and encouraging community support of desegregation. The committee was led by Mrs. Thomas J. Hopkins, with the aid of a professor of sociology and anthropology from Franklin & Marshall College, the Rev. Lee Roy Mapp of Ebenezer Baptist Church, the Rev. David Mark of Faith Evangelical and Reformed Church, and Nelson Polite, Sr.¹⁰⁹ A year earlier, a Lancaster Housing Committee of the Freedoms Committee, an organization supported by the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the NAACP, the Inter-Racial Committee, and the Lancaster County Council of Churches (LCCC), gathered six hundred signatures on a petition for fair housing. They aimed to help Black residents removed from urban renewal areas to find housing. Pennsylvania Senator and former Philadelphia mayor Joseph Clark (D) signed and returned a petition. The Fair Housing Office planned to ask religious congregations and petition signers to find owners willing to rent or sell to minority residents.¹¹⁰

The NAACP continued to contact city officials. President Ashley Dudley invited city officials to a meeting on April 7, 1964. The invitation was countered by Mayor George Coe (R), who asked NAACP leaders to meet at the Municipal Building. They asked the city to take more aggressive action to remove derelict buildings in their neighborhood. City Solicitor Roberts announced that the city would use court action against such buildings, and he was named the contact with NAACP leadership. Another meeting was planned for the NAACP representatives to meet with staff from the city building, health, police, and fire departments.¹¹¹

NAACP leaders continued to work through the government channels open to them. In July, NAACP Housing Committee Chair Nelson Polite, Sr., and Vice-Chair Herbert Cooper attended City Council to urge speedier work on the derelict housing in the Seventh Ward. They presented maps, photographs, and a four-point plan, which included taking stronger action with landlords and property owners of unsound structures and establishing schedules for the work.¹¹²

The NAACP eventually progressed toward their goal of eliminating derelict properties in the Seventh Ward by taking responsibility for at least two projects. These were small, compared to the large, government-led renewal plans, but they were locally administered and drew resources from the community. In July 1964, NAACP received donations of two buildings at 409 and 411 North Street from landlords. The Rev. A. L. Stephans led a group of volunteer young people to clean up trash and overgrown plantings. Then, Nelson Polite, Clyde Brown, and David Spring, with the help of a volunteer wrecker, demolished the properties to make way for a children's park.¹¹³

The success of this project led to the headline "Housing Technique Successful for NAACP—They Try It Again," and more work by the NAACP Housing Committee with the city and the Redevelopment Authority. In August 1964, Polite and Cooper worked to move four families from inadequate housing that could be demolished. They found places for the families in the Higbee renewal area, while they waited for public housing to be finished. The families qualified for public housing. Housing Committee leaders advocated for the city to raze derelict structures. On August 12, Cooper commented that he was disappointed in the delay in city plans

to raze nineteen structures in the Higbee project. Polite pointed out that conditions were deteriorating due to the slow progress of urban renewal.¹¹⁴

NAACP kept up pressure through 1964 and 1965. Following an appearance by Herbert A. Cooper at City Council in 1964, Nelson Polite and Mrs. Lee Roy Mapp, whose husband pastored Ebenezer Baptist Church, spoke at City Council in August 1965. On August 26, the Rev. A. L. Stephans spoke to a rally to urge the city to reach its housing goals, with another planned for early September. On his installation as NAACP Lancaster president in January 1965, Stephans said, "We will take indirect action whenever and wherever possible, but we will take direct action when and if we must."¹¹⁵

In 1967, there was hopeful news. Finally, a Black person was appointed to the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority. Lionel E. Cunningham of 425 Green Street, in the Church-Musser Renewal area, served until June 1971. Later in that year, he ran for a school board seat in Lancaster city. The NAACP held a rally to support him, but he was not successful.¹¹⁶

For the people displaced by urban renewal, there was not enough housing, unaffected by discriminatory practices, with adequate space, at a price they could afford. For example, in 1968, the chair of the Lancaster Fair Housing Committee remarked that people came to them needing three- and four-bedroom homes who were able to pay only \$60 per month. That type of housing was simply not available, nor were subsidies.¹¹⁷ Added to these problems were the standards of the Lancaster Housing Authority regarding financial and family stability and the absence of any kind of police record.

In early 1967, city officials, the Housing Authority, and social agencies met to try to solve the problem. The meeting generated ideas such as developing a counseling advisory board for the authority, using social agencies for financial responsibility, and providing counselors to work directly with tenants. Attorney Daniel Shretzer, from the American Civil Liberties Union, noted that the families seemed caught between two warring agencies, the Housing Authority, responsible for providing homes, and the Redevelopment Authority, responsible for razing homes.¹¹⁸

Later that year, former NAACP president Kenneth Bost voiced his frustration at a September NAACP meeting about housing, attended

by Richard Filling, the president of Lancaster City Council, and Lionel Cunningham. Bost pointed out that he had been asking for seven years, since 1960, about what the plans were for the people displaced by urban renewal. He wanted to know how houses were going to be constructed so that people could pay for them. He said that this long wait made people want to begin “throwing bricks and stones.”¹¹⁹

There were discussions at the NAACP general meeting about ambitious plans to buy properties, renovate and rent them, but such projects probably were beyond the capacity of the group. Long-time member and treasurer Ulrica Cook, 73 South Duke Street, expressed the burdensome uncertainty, when she received a plaque, honoring her years of service, at the March 1968, annual banquet. She said, “It breaks my heart, but I have to move from my home I’ve been told. I’ve lived in this house for over 20 years, and there’s nothing wrong with it. But the city wants to tear it down, along with all the other houses along this block.”¹²⁰

Advocating for Fair Employment

At the same time that NAACP Lancaster leaders were deeply involved in fair housing issues, they addressed unfair employment practices. A Labor and Industry Committee was formed in 1961.

The 1960s was a period of firsts with the first Black person elected or appointed to various positions. Unfortunately, the period of firsts extended for at least two decades. NAACP tried to set the stage in 1961 by screening a short government-produced film, called “The New Girl,” about the first woman to work in a white-collar position in a manufacturing plant.

Leaders met with staff at Watt and Shand and Hager’s Department stores from 1961 to 1963 to urge them to reduce racial barriers in hiring. They asked that the stores hire two Black sales personnel, hire Black applicants for holiday rush seasons, and train two high-school students.¹²¹

In the summer of 1963, NAACP Lancaster, under President Kenneth Bost, the Rev. Alexander Stephans, and Ashley Dudley, chair of the demonstration committee, addressed the issue of job opportunities for Black people in the major downtown Lancaster department stores. Although Black people were hired for positions such as janitor or elevator operator, but the front-line, front-of-house positions of sales clerks were closed to them. On July 20,

1963, NAACP members and friends carefully planned and implemented a demonstration at the Watt and Shand and Hager stores, labeled “the first of its kind ever held here.” Undeterred by rain, marchers left Bethel AME church in the morning and walked downtown. Seventy-two people walked for an hour and a half in front of Watt and Shand, and then in front of Hager’s, with another group taking up the march in the afternoon. The march followed eleven days of meetings with store representatives. NAACP members did not demonstrate at Garvin’s Department Store because the store administrators were willing to hire Black sales personnel. Before the march, Kenneth Bost met with Lancaster’s chief of police, who communicated with all the stores’ owners. At a planning meeting the day before the march, Bost and Stephans urged non-violence and also asked all members and friends to boycott the stores.¹²² Robert L. Pfannebecker, a lawyer who also led the litigation against the Lancaster-area swimming pools, supported the NAACP with pro bono legal services for the department store negotiations.¹²³

The published statements of both the department store leaders and the NAACP leaders suggest the resistance to fair employment practices encountered by the Black citizens. James Shand issued a statement that said, “We have always had Negro employes [sic] over the past 20 years and will put any qualified person, . . . on our payroll when there is an opening.” John R. Hager of Hager’s stated that the store employed five Negro persons, including one executive. Herbert Cooper of the NAACP responded, showing that the department store leaders were not getting the point:

But the stores failed to mention in their release to the press that Negroes have worked in capacities such as maids, elevator operators, etc., not as sales personnel.

. . .

The Negro executive that is supposed to be working for Hager’s is actually working under contract with the company that operates and leases the Pigeon Hole Parking Garage.

. . .

The NAACP is willing, and will continue, to negotiate with the management of these stores to have qualified Negroes hired as salespersons.”¹²⁴



Members of the NAACP met with leaders of Watt and Shand and Hager's department store for two years, to encourage hiring minority workers in sales. With little progress, they marched in front of the stores on July 20 and 23, 1963. This image shows Hager's store. A sales clerk was hired at Hager's in September 1963. LancasterHistory 2-22-02-01

A second demonstration, held on Tuesday evening, July 23, 1963, drew one hundred forty-six people. The march and the help of Mayor Coe prompted department store leaders to meet on Friday, July 26. At that meeting, they reached an agreement and demonstrations set for the following day were cancelled.¹²⁵

Gwendolyn Stanley was reported to be the first Black person hired as a sales clerk by Hager's department store in September 1963. A Lancaster newspaper reported that Stanley was a member of NAACP Lancaster who did not take part in the demonstrations in front of Hager's or Watt and Shand. This newspaper statement was typical of the majority expectation

that Black people should represent inequality and injustice only in very measured ways that did not cause discomfort to those who had the power to change the injustice. One year later, on the anniversary of Lancaster's first civil rights demonstration, Milton Stanley, chair of the NAACP Labor and Industry Committee, reported that twelve people had jobs that had been closed to Blacks previously. Milton Stanley was Gwendolyn Stanley's husband. He and other NAACP members would undoubtedly have monitored her employment at the department store and supported her through any possible adverse reaction from staff or shoppers.¹²⁶

In September 1964, three professors from the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University in Philadelphia, under the direction of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, released a report about job opportunities for Black people in Lancaster. They had spent seven months interviewing Black community members. They reported that minority applicants needed practical training and education and that "there is undoubtedly some discrimination in the hiring of Negroes in Lancaster." Milton Stanley said that the report was an important step and that the NAACP leaders would review it carefully. He said that Black people knew the report's findings and that it would be an educational tool for others. The report influenced city and county officials to move forward on a local human relations committee.¹²⁷

NAACP Lancaster kept an eye on local institutions and their welcoming Black job applicants. In 1965, they noted that no Black people were involved in the urban renewal administration, which had such a profound effect on the Seventh Ward. Eventually, Lionel Cunningham was appointed in 1967, as mentioned above.¹²⁸

Judge Louise Williams reported that NAACP Lancaster encouraged her to apply for work at F&M as an administrative assistant. Judge Williams did not share the year in which she started work at the college. However, it could have been in the 1960s, as she was employed as secretary to District Justice Walter H. Harrison in January 1970, succeeded him, and continued a long career in local politics and public service. Black people were employed at the college, but not in white-collar positions. Williams worked for several years, for the Dean's Office, the departments of Anthropology and Sociology, and the college chaplain. She remembers that NAACP members,



Members and friends of the Lancaster Branch marched at Rocky Springs Park in July 1963, to open the swimming pool to all. This image shows, from left, Kenneth Bost, president of the Branch, Chuck Cooper, Nelson M. Polite, Sr., Elizabeth Ford, and three unidentified women. The issue at Rocky Springs and at Brookside and Maple Grove pools was not successfully resolved, a good eventual outcome was the public pool at Lancaster County Park. LancasterHistory 2-05-01-18

including Betty Tompkins, would visit her at lunchtime to inquire how she was doing and to make sure she had a lunch companion.¹²⁹

Desegregating Public Facilities

The name “Rocky Springs” conjures up civil rights protests for many Lancastrians. The issue of a segregated swimming pool at the popular park still evokes varying community memories. It is linked to the continuing interest in the historic carousel from the park and its possible reinstallation somewhere in the city. In 2006, Ron Ford, the first Black person to be elected as a Lancaster City Council member and as a Lancaster County Commissioner, spoke about the carousel, “I never felt excited about that,” he said. “Maybe it’s because it was a reminder [of the segregated pool.]”¹³⁰ In the summer of 1963, when NAACP leaders were organizing the first civil rights protests downtown, the NAACP again

used the tool of an orderly, well-planned demonstration at the swimming pool at Rocky Springs Park to end segregation. In the words of NAACP Lancaster President Kenneth Bost, “in this silent, segregated city, there is now a great deal of unrest.”¹³¹

The segregated pool, in a park often used for annual picnic outings by civic and employment or union group with large minority membership, had been a sore point for decades. As mentioned above, NAACP Secretary Harriet Stewart reported a complaint of segregation at a Congress of Industrial Organizations picnic at a local park swimming pool in 1950. The park was Rocky Springs.¹³²

Because the Rocky Springs swimming pool was closed to Black people, NAACP Lancaster President Herbert A. Cooper announced a boycott of the concessions at Rocky Springs Park in June 1961. He reasoned that the owner “avails all his facilities to Negroes with the exception of the swimming pool.” Support for this move came from Pennsylvania NAACP branches in Harrisburg, York, Reading, Ardmore, Coatesville, and in communities in Maryland, since people in these areas also frequented the park.¹³³

In the same year, on Sunday, June 11, a small group of Black people, supported by the local NAACP, tried to gain admission to swimming pools at Rocky Springs, Maple Grove Park (just west of Lancaster on Columbia Avenue), Brookside Park (along Harrisburg Pike), and Skyline Park (on Oregon Pike). At Rocky Springs Park, Lisa E. Smith, 547 North Street, and Emory Coleman, Green Street, were denied admission to the pool on June 11, 1960. Both Smith and Green identified as Black, while Franklin Shenk, who was white and also a member of the Freedoms Committee, and his family gained admission. The Freedoms Committee formed to promote civil rights and equality of opportunity in the city. Members included faculty from F&M, Lancaster Theological Seminary, and members of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Society of Friends.¹³⁴

The Freedoms Committee asked Robert L. Pfannebecker to take on the litigation requesting Rocky Springs Park, Inc., to halt the alleged banning of Black people from the swimming pool. The two plaintiffs in the Rocky Spring Case, Lisa E. Smith and Emory Coleman, as well as other members of the Freedoms Committee and investigators from the Pennsylvania Department of Justice testified. The court delayed a request for a preliminary injunction,

and the litigation continued through 1960. Pfannebecker also brought suits against the two other privately owned pools, Brookside and Maple Grove. Two court actions were filed against the owners of the swimming pools at Rocky Springs and at Maple Grove Amusement Park and Swimming Pool.¹³⁵ Preliminary court hearings addressed Rocky Springs pool and attempted to seek an out-of-court solution.¹³⁶

At the July meeting of NAACP Lancaster, a speaker pressed for direct action, the term used by the NAACP to describe public protests. In the same month, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's staff invited the swimming pool operators to meet with the young Black people who wanted to swim and their attorney. Only Brookside's pool owner attended. The Deputy Attorney General said, "The state seeks some sort of action toward at least a gradual integration this summer at the three county pools in question The state would like to see this matter handled out of court if possible. We are willing to offer the parties involved any assistance . . . as is the NAACP."¹³⁷

A local court found that the allegations of racial bias against Rocky Springs Park and Maple Grove Park were valid. The decision was upheld by the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court in October 1962.¹³⁸

Years passed after the denial of entrance to the two young people in 1960. It was reported that the NAACP would discuss demonstrations at Rocky Springs at their July 1963 meeting. The group decided to postpone demonstrations indefinitely, as the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission was called in to meet with the park owner.¹³⁹ Although continuing to support the Commission, Ashley Dudley, chair of the demonstration committee, planned protests at Rocky Springs on Saturday and Sunday, August 3–4. Fifty-six people marched on Sunday afternoon, and the usual five-hundred person attendance at the pool dropped to one hundred twenty-five that day. Similar protests were held on the following two weekends. Leroy Hopkins, then a junior at Millersville State College, joined the protest on Sunday, August 11, and told an *Intelligencer Journal* reporter: "I just feel that it is a sort of challenge to me to do the best I can for the movement, the main goal of which is equal opportunity for all."¹⁴⁰

In developments that served no one, Maple Grove Park was sold to become a private club, no longer open to the public, in 1963, after the State Supreme Court decision. Rocky Springs Park closed in 1966, one year after



The Conestoga Pines pool, the city's first public swimming pool, opened in August 1966. The issue of public access to the three privately owned pools at Rocky Springs, Brookside, and Maple Grove was not resolved. A positive result, eventually, was building the public pool at Lancaster County Park. LancasterHistory LR-01-02-18

the death of the owner. There was a brief unsuccessful attempt to re-open the park in 1979–80.¹⁴¹

In 1966, the NAACP sent a letter to Lancaster Mayor Thomas Monaghan (D) and the Lancaster County Commissioners noting the lack of planning for swimming facilities.¹⁴² Luckily, the next month the city announced that it would build a pool for public use by the summer. The city's first public swimming pool, Conestoga Pines, opened in August 1966, on the site of the Lancaster Water Department near the intersection of Walnut Street (Route 23) and Route 30. Kenneth Abernathy, who was president of NAACP Lancaster at the time, brought eight children to the pool on opening day. He said, "It gives me a feeling deep within me that Lancaster is really beginning to take its rightful place as a truly democratic society." He added, "The children are really overwhelmed. They couldn't believe it."¹⁴³ A lasting result of this long contention was the swimming pool at Lancaster County Central Park, which opened to all in 1967 and is accessible to many city and county residents. To this day it continues to welcome swimmers.¹⁴⁴

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and a Local Human Relations Committee

The NAACP leaders chose to work primarily and persistently through the channels of government and civic organizations. When local negotiations

reached roadblocks, they looked to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, a non-partisan commission in the governor's office, for the enforcement of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955 (Act No. 222). The act documents a right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, age, or national origin, and ability in employment, housing, and the use of places of public accommodation.¹⁴⁵ At the same time that they were leading demonstrations in downtown Lancaster for fair hiring, NAACP leaders asked members of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to come to Lancaster to discuss the Rocky Springs swimming pool issue.¹⁴⁶ They also looked to the Commission in two more situations. NAACP leaders were concerned when the School District of Lancaster met and prepared a report about Black students without involving the NAACP. Leaders involved the Commission when the group marched in protest of race-related incidents at a roller rink at Malta Temple, 235 East King Street. After the march, further action was called off when a meeting was arranged with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, NAACP representatives, and the owner of the Malta Temple.¹⁴⁷

On November 27, 1964, the chair of the Lancaster County Commission announced that a seven-member human relations committee for the city and county would be formed for research and advisory purposes. It would rely on the state commission for enforcement. County staff had been studying the move since March, when a recommendation was presented by the Lancaster County Community Council, supported by the Lancaster County Council of Churches (LCCC). They had already made overtures to potential members. Betty Tompkins, publicity chair speaking on behalf of the NAACP, expressed surprise. The group had received no update since March. Two months before, in January 1964, President Ashley Dudley, Vice-President Rev. Alexander L. Stephans, Publicity Chair Betty Tompkins, and two members of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission met with Mayor Coe. Stephans reminded the group that "non-whites wish to be consulted in the planning of anything that affects them. Rather than having a program planned for them."¹⁴⁸ This admonition was being ignored by city and county officials.

The NAACP leaders met with the County Commissioners and gave them a list of possible members for the committee. Of the final nine members,

two were Black, but only one was from the NAACP's list, the Reverend Lee Roy Mapp, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church since 1955. Patrick Kenney, Jr., active in the Chamber of Commerce and past president of the Lions Club in Marietta, was the other Black member. The chair was Louis G. Milan, a vice-president of Home Fashions, a furniture store on Queen Street, and an active member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Red Cross. The Human Relations Committee was appointed on December 9, 1964, observed by four members of the NAACP, including Ashley Dudley, the Rev. A. L. Stephans, Betty Tompkins, and President Herbert A. Cooper. The first meeting of the City and County Human Relations Committee was January 7, 1965, in the County Commissioners' office.¹⁴⁹

Toward the end of the decade, the Human Relations Committee several times cooled off heated situations. In July 1967, they offered to intervene in an altercation between NAACP President Ernest Christian and Mayor Monaghan about abandoned junkyards—one had been the scene of a fire. The head of the Human Relations Committee, Patrick Kenney, Jr., was appointed liaison with the local NAACP to attend branch meetings.¹⁵⁰ There were limits to the NAACP's trust in the committee. Members acted as observers at a hearing by the School District of Lancaster School Board about a controversial and violent incident between a teacher and a student at J. P. McCaskey High School in 1969. As explained below, the NAACP President Ernest Christian did not agree that the presence of Human Relations Committee members should exclude other community observers.

Police Community Relations

The NAACP sponsored a forum about police-community relations in March 1966, an issue that the branch continues to address today. Police Chief Al Farkas, Captain David Rineer, Juvenile Bureau Sergeant David Brown, and Community Liaison Officer Calvin Duncan attended an NAACP meeting at Conestoga Lodge of Elks 140, 452 South Duke Street. Young people from the community were invited to question the officers. One asked why they are “run of[f] street corners” in the Seventh Ward. One told of an incident of disrespectful talk from an officer who told him to “get back in your hole.” Chief Farkas urged the youths to leave the scene immediately without

provoking the officer and ask an adult to make a complaint. The officer would have been disciplined. The following year, the NAACP sponsored another forum after an incident in the Southeast quadrant of the city when a police officer was beaten.¹⁵¹

Lancaster NAACP Responds to National Events

Lancaster NAACP and members of other religious and civic organizations called on the community to recognize national civil rights landmark events during the turbulent 1960s. On March 15, 1965, the local NAACP called for a demonstration in Penn Square in support of the Selma-to-Montgomery, Alabama, marches, protesting state laws barring voting by Black people. “Bloody Sunday” had occurred on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on March 7. Clergy and staff members from Franklin & Marshall College urged strong federal legislation for voting rights. They gathered signatures on a letter to President Lyndon B. Johnson supporting voting rights and announced a bus trip to Selma to participate in the marches. The NAACP’s second annual banquet, planned for the following Saturday, would focus on voting rights. Mayor Coe expressed a hope that the marchers in Alabama would teach the 75,000 unregistered citizens of Lancaster County about the value of the right to register and vote. Rabbi Samson A. Shain of Temple Shaarai Shomayim led the invocation.¹⁵²

In 1967, the Lancaster County Courthouse was the scene of a demonstration resulting from news of the murder of a Black truck driver in Mississippi. One hundred people walked from the Conestoga Lodge of Elks 140 to the courthouse. The Rev. A. J. Simmons of Bethel AME Church and the Rev. Dr. Wallace Fisher of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church led prayers.¹⁵³

A much larger crowd gathered on the courthouse steps on April 8, 1968, for a public memorial service for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., organized by NAACP. Estimates vary, from 400 to 700 people, but there is agreement that the service drew an integrated crowd. Two months later, an all-day “Day of Concern” silent vigil was organized at Penn Square by the NAACP, the LCCC, and the Interfaith Clergymen’s Committee. Betty Tompkins of the NAACP organized the event. She said that the vigil was planned out of “concern about the violence in our nation which caused the

deaths of Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, the Bombed Birmingham Sunday School Children, Mrs. Violet Luizo, and Robert Kennedy.”¹⁵⁴

“One of the Greatest Weeks Lancaster Ever Had”

January and February 1967, were landmark months for NAACP Lancaster. With the help of Philip Savage, NAACP Field Secretary for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, leaders codified their concerns and met with church and government leaders. The visibility of the organization and their concerns were significantly heightened. One result, an answer to a specific NAACP question, was the opening of a youth gathering place at Encounter, 120 South Queen Street.

The tipping point came from an incident that involved teenagers. Black people, who held 1966–67 membership cards, were denied entrance to a private club, the Panther Social Club, operated by Richard E. Gingrich, first at Rocky Springs and then at the Guernsey Sales Barn. Nelson Polite filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania State Human Relations Commission on behalf of his daughter Deborah.¹⁵⁵

On Sunday, January 22, representatives of about fifty NAACP branches met in Harrisburg. Past President Ashley Dudley later said that Lancaster representatives “presented the whole picture here in Lancaster.” After the meeting, Philip Savage announced that Lancaster would be the focus of an anti-discrimination drive planned for three months and supported by the national organization. He announced a visit to Lancaster in mid-February, with the possibility of a mass demonstration in the downtown area, which “symbolizes whiteness.” He said, “Lancaster County is a cesspool of bigotry.”¹⁵⁶

Savage’s statement got attention. The *Lancaster New Era* editorialized that “We’re Not A ‘Cesspool.’” and that “The Negro’s situation has been bettered in numerous ways.” The statement calls into question whether any Black perspective is included. As mentioned above, Black Lancasterians had consistently found their voices eliminated from discussions directly involving their experiences. Louis Milan, recently retired chair of the City-County Human Rights Commission, stated that Lancaster was not as bad as Savage stated. Ashley Dudley, past NAACP president, said, “Mr. Savage was

presenting the image of the NAACP—I'm willing to back him all the way." NAACP Lancaster had invited him to the city.¹⁵⁷

Philip Savage visited Lancaster from Monday to Wednesday, February 13–15. His schedule of activities was impressive.¹⁵⁸ He and the local leaders identified the powerful potential allies and challengers, then scheduled meetings with them. An exchange at the meeting with city officials and the county commissioners in the Municipal Building suggests the prejudicial attitudes then current in Lancaster, which probably pervaded housing, employment, education . . . all the issues that NAACP had been addressing for decades. In answer to questions about Black people employed in city and county jobs, Commissioner Bernard Santaniello described "two colored boys in the police department, both excellent officers, doing an excellent job, and a colored boy in the fire department. He is an officer." Ashley Dudley replied that he was "utterly insulted to sit in this room with grown men and hear someone refer to [Juvenile officer] Sgt. [Calvin] Duncan (one of the policemen) as a boy. We're men."¹⁵⁹

On Monday, February 13, after a general membership NAACP meeting, the group made their most dramatic action of the three days. They marched a few blocks from the Conestoga Lodge of Elks to Crispus Attucks Center, singing "We Shall Overcome." Then Branch President Richard A. Wilson, joined by Philip Savage, posted a list of grievances on the door of the Center "for all Lancaster to see." The list was also to be given to the LCCC. Later in commenting on the response of the LCCC, Richard Wilson said hopefully, "I believe we've broken some of the barriers to understanding."¹⁶⁰

The NAACP list of grievances acknowledged that some progress had been made, but listed the following concerns: lack of Negroes in "any administrative capacity in County government" and lack of Negro appointees to city government commissions; dearth of non-white people in responsible positions in local industries, such as Armstrong, Schick, Hamilton Watch; the take-over of the Crispus Attucks Center by the City Recreation Commission with resulting lack of places for young people to socialize; continuing segregation and prejudice in suburban and rural areas; de facto segregation in elementary schools and latent bigotry in junior high schools; lack of Black teachers and non-biased textbooks. Finally, the big

problem of housing was expressed. With 3,500 Negroes living in the city, only thirty-nine families lived outside the Southeast or the so-called ghetto of southeast Lancaster.¹⁶¹

NAACP Youth Division

The most immediate result of Philip Savage's visit to Lancaster was giving the young people a place to socialize. A newly organized NAACP youth division planned to hold meetings at a "Freedom House" located in Encounter at 120 South Queen Street. The five-year-old organization, supported by local churches, offered dramatic programs and study help and tutoring through Franklin & Marshall College's Pre-College Enrichment Program.¹⁶² The Eastern State Youth Task Force of the NAACP, meeting in Reading in May 1967, visited Lancaster's Freedom House at the Encounter site.¹⁶³

A new NAACP youth division elected officers, including Chester Stewart as president, Albert Brown as vice-president, Deborah Williams as secretary, and James Hyson as treasurer.¹⁶⁴ Stewart had already shown leadership ability by creating an integrated doo-wop band, the Tranells, mostly from J. P. McCaskey High School students. In May 1967, Chester Stewart was elected to the NAACP Eastern State Youth Task Force at its conference in Reading.¹⁶⁵

Branch Activities

Many NAACP Lancaster activities during the 1960s were not as dramatic as posting lists of grievances. Members ran bi-annual elections. They organized annual banquets and festivals for celebration and fund-raising. In September 1966, the NAACP sponsored a concert at J. P. McCaskey High School by Pearl Williams-Jones, a vocalist and pianist with a resume that included performances in New York and Europe.¹⁶⁶

In 1967, members elected Richard Allen Wilson as president. Having served through the controversy of Philip Savage's visit to Lancaster, Wilson resigned in June, to be replaced by the Reverend Ernest Christian, an ordained deacon at Bethel AME Church.¹⁶⁷ The Rev. Christian was re-elected in 1969, with Nelson Polite as vice-president, Dr. William H. Cooper as treasurer, Mary McCowin as secretary, and Hazel Jackson as a member of the Education Committee.¹⁶⁸



The Reverend Ernest Christian served as Lancaster Branch's president from 1943 to 1945, and again from 1967 to 1971. He worked hard on the contentious issues of the 1960s and continually advocated that minority voices be recognized and heard. Photo courtesy of Teresa Green.

NAACP Lancaster held its first annual banquet in 1964.¹⁶⁹ In 1967, Dr. Charles V. Hamilton, chair of the political science department at Lincoln University, spoke at the fourth annual banquet, planned for March 18. Random House was about to release his book, written with co-author Stokely Carmichael, entitled *Black Power and Political Consciousness*. Awards were presented to City Councilman T. Roberts Appel II, past NAACP President Kenneth Abernathy, Janice Johnson, a student at Edward Hand Junior High, and Dr. Gabriel Fackre of Lancaster Theological Seminary, who had worked with the Encounter Program and the Youth Division as chair of the NAACP Education Committee.¹⁷⁰

The 1968 annual banquet made front-page news. William Booth, chair of the Human Rights Committee of New York City spoke. He urged getting involved in the community rather than worrying about what was going to happen on the streets in the next summer. Even his mention of the possibility showed how tense the situation was. An award was presented to long-time treasurer Ulrica Cook, as mentioned above. President Ernest Christian said, "When I took office, I said that demonstrations would be the last measure to which I would resort, but as other methods continue to fail, I'll do anything to break down these doors."¹⁷¹ He would find, in the next year, that a demonstration was needed at J. P. McCaskey High School.

Situations in the Schools

The treatment of Black students in the schools and the need for Black teachers, role models and culturally appropriate study materials was addressed by the NAACP, but, based on newspaper reporting, somewhat less often than housing and employment. In 1966, a group of parents associated with Reigart School organized as the Concerned Parents of Children of Reigart School to oppose racially prejudiced teachers. A kindergarten teacher was especially problematic. Lancaster NAACP President Kenneth H. Abernathy visited the classroom, and stated that the teacher was outdated and not appropriate for a kindergarten class. One parent described segregation by race within the classroom. The Reigart School building stands at 512 Strawberry Street and is now the Bethel AME Church Cultural Center.¹⁷²

In early 1969, Patrick Kenney of the City-County Human Relations Committee, NAACP President the Rev. Ernest E. Christian, and Urban League Executive Director Edward W. Allen were planning to meet regularly with administrators of the Lancaster City Schools. Later that year, in September, NAACP used the grounds of Higbee School to hold their first fund-raising bazaar on Friday and Saturday, September 5 and 6.¹⁷³ However, within two months the interactions with the schools and the School Board was much more contentious than these reported activities.

It apparently all started when a student, Scott Griffen, objected to his placement in a photograph for the yearbook. He was situated in the back row, and, as he said later, "the way a picture is developed, a black person standing in the back row looks like a black blotch, and the only way you can tell who it is by reading the name at the bottom."¹⁷⁴ Later, he and several friends were talking loudly in the hallway, on their way to the principal's office to discuss the photography situation. An assistant principal asked them to move on. Next a world cultures teacher, not one of Griffen's teachers, G. Allen Eckert, allegedly used profanity to Griffen, grabbed him, pushed him toward lockers, and attempted to strike him. Griffen ducked and returned the strike. This is Griffen's description of the situation, as Eckert declined to state his version publicly, and few witnesses came forward.



NAACP Lancaster organized a protest at J. P. McCaskey High School on November 13, 1969, for a fair resolution to an altercation between a student and a teacher. Members of the city-county human relations commission, founded in 1964, observed the resulting meeting. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, Lancaster New Era, November 13, 1969.

The next day, November 13, Black students boycotted classes at McCaskey, asking that the suspension of Scott Griffen be lifted. Many students joined both Black and white adults to march in front of the school in support of Griffen. A delegation of students and adults met with Superintendent. Don S. Glass to ask that the teacher be disciplined, as well as the student. NAACP Lancaster President, the Rev. Ernest Christian, led the meeting. He said,

After hearing the student's side and hearing all the details, our concern is equal justice for both black and white students.

We're dealing with 1969 instead of 1929. Then you could manhandle students. They'd take it and wouldn't say a word. These days, young people are more mature. If this student is to be suspended the teacher ought to be suspended, too.¹⁷⁵

The incident at McCaskey sparked incidents at other schools. On the morning of Friday, November 14, Lancastrians read headlines about the Apollo 12 spacecraft heading for the moon and participants in “The March Against Death” speaking the names of American soldiers killed in southeast Asia in front of the White House. The same newspapers carried stories of fights between Black and white students occurring at Edward Hand Junior High School and of two hundred white McCaskey students meeting Thursday night at Lancaster Township Junior High. The students agreed to support the McCaskey administration and not to provoke any issues with Black students. At the Conestoga Lodge of Elks, Black parents, students, and community members met.¹⁷⁶

The School Board scheduled a series of hearings. They were open only to the people involved and observers from the City-County Human Relations Committee. The Rev. Christian pushed for observers from the Black community, leading to an argument with John E. Hambright, board president. He testily said that the Rev. Christian had lobbied for a Human Relations Committee for years, and “You have one now, it is inside to represent you and the rest of the city and there will be no more talk.” The Rev. Christian replied that the committee observers were the choice of the school board and that “it is unfortunate that we were not permitted to have observers who would observe from our point of view. We should have a voice.”¹⁷⁷ This is another example of local leaders seeming oblivious to the denial of participation to those most affected by a situation, as was evident in the lack of Black representation in the urban renewal efforts.

The school board decided to expel Scott Griffen. The board vice-president said that the school administrators were responsible for any action regarding the teacher’s behavior. The press reported that “no such action is under consideration.”¹⁷⁸ Fortunately, Griffen found other opportunities. By the summer of 1970, he was working in a four-year carpenter’s apprentice program for contractor Joseph S. LaMonaca, earning a wage better than the \$3.00 hourly minimum and attending classes two nights a week. Griffen continued to be active in the NAACP, as did LaMonaca, who was elected to the executive committee of the Lancaster branch in 1974.¹⁷⁹

NAACP Lancaster in the 1960s became an organization with promise in the Lancaster community. The members came to the table with business, civic, and governmental leaders. They learned how to use this process effectively and to push for results with carefully planned direct action. They insisted that they be included in discussions that affected their constituencies. The years of the 1960s were filled with stress and accomplishment. A quieter period followed.



A Quiet Period of Growth: The 1970s

The stress and difficulties of the 1960s did not continue into the next decade. Two reasons emerge from the easily available source, the local newspaper, one positive, and one less so. First, the minority community in Lancaster appears to have made the point to the governmental and civic power structures and to the majority community. As the Rev. A. J. Stephans said, it was necessary that community members be involved in deciding issues that affected them. Instances of Black professionals serving in local organizations were reported, as were reports of achievements and awards made to Black leaders and families. NAACP continued to meet through the decade, responding to calls for fund raising from the national office and to reporters' requests for comments on national and local issues. Even obituaries mentioned affiliation with NAACP.¹⁸⁰

On the other hand, the contentious issues of urban renewal and racism in the schools made almost untenable demands on the leaders. The Rev. Ernest Christian, active through the 1960s and president in 1967 and 1969–70, resigned. He was replaced by Milton B. Stanley, president until the end of the Bicentennial year, 1976.

Throughout the 1970s, the newspaper readers of Lancaster city and County continually were reminded of the work of the NAACP on a national level and of the importance of minority participation in United States history. The issue of school desegregation and how to achieve it in the various states, especially regarding busing students, was often reported.¹⁸¹ In 1975, the appointment of Margaret Bush Wilson, the first Black woman to chair the national NAACP, was reported. No woman had chaired the organization since Mary White Ovington, a white founder of the NAACP, held that office from

1917 until 1932.¹⁸² On February 18, 1979, the *Sunday News* printed a special newspaper supplement entitled “The Black Experience in America 1619-1979,” produced by the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith and the National Council of Social Studies. The editor thanked the Lancaster Branch, Lancaster B’nai B’rith, the Urban League of Lancaster County, Inc., the LCCC, and the Human Relations Committee of Lancaster County for “furthering racial understanding and racial harmony in the community.”¹⁸³

Minority Representatives Gain Leadership Posts

Gradually, through the 1970s, members of minority populations found some positive response to requests for representation in government and community groups that directly impacted their lives. In January 1970, Dr. Jack B. Metzger, president of Lancaster City Council, spoke at the NAACP general membership meeting. He said that he would speak to the mayor about the fact that no members of minority groups were considered for the proposed Police Review Board.

Two members of NAACP, the Rev. Ernest Christian, president, and Martin Dees, Jr., served as discussion leaders for the second annual Police-Community Relations Institute for the Mideastern United States, at Millersville University in May 1970.¹⁸⁴ In July, Ashley Dudley, who served as president of the Lancaster Branch and, several times, of the Urban League, was appointed by United States Senator Hugh Scott to the Community Advisory Council of the Small Business Administration. Two years later, Ronald E. Ford, the first Black member of Lancaster City Council and of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, was named by Governor Milton J. Shapp as the first Black trustee of Millersville State College.¹⁸⁵

Changes in the NAACP Presidency

The Reverend Ernest E. Christian, who had been branch president for five years, ably leading the branch through the difficulties of the late 1960s, resigned on August 10, 1971. He mentioned his own health problems and a lack of time to do the necessary work. He was fifty years old. He had also been president of the branch, 1943–45. At the time of his resignation, he was employed in the Community Relations Office of the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority.¹⁸⁶

The Rev. Christian's employment and resignation focuses on an issue that is structural in the NAACP model of volunteer-led local branches and the avoidance of any public or community-raised general funds. Active leadership must depend on persons who are able to commit time and energy to the organization at the same time that they are often handling demanding employment and family responsibilities. For a time, the Rev. Christian's paid employment blended with his NAACP responsibilities, but that changed in summer, 1970.

A team from the Office of Economic Opportunity, in Washington, DC, presented an evaluation report on the Manpower Program of the Lancaster Community Action Program. The Rev. Christian was the Outreach Recruiter Services Coordinator, following up on workers placed through the Manpower Program. The local press reported that the Rev. Christian was fired from his job, along with two other staff members. (Rev. Christian's obituary, in December 1970, reported that he resigned from the Community Action Program.) The report described the interrelationship between the Rev. Christian's work and his leadership of NAACP Lancaster:

the Board of Directors should investigate the effectiveness of housing one of the Manpower aides (the Rev. Mr. Christian) in the office of the NAACP . . . The advantages arising from the central location were somewhat out-weighed by the disadvantages of identification and involvement of the staff person in non-Manpower activities.¹⁸⁷

The report also stated that none of the employees wanted to be working for the Manpower Program and objected to their transfer to the program. The Personnel Committee of CAP apparently planned to hear grievances.

By the autumn of 1970, the newspapers headlined that the Lancaster branch was struggling for lack of funds. The Rev. Christian stated that the branch was "in the red" and not able to meet its annual budget of \$8,300. He gave several reasons, including the diversion of member attention to other organizations like the Urban League, the Community Action Program, and the Human Relations Committee, the doubling of annual dues to \$4, the lack of a program, and the NAACP commitment to non-violence.

The Rev. Christian's statement showed that the local branch was facing the same pressure as the national organization to move toward a more insistent militancy. He suggested that the branch needed a full-time executive director and secretary, whose salaries would have increased the budget three-fold. This suggestion appears to be unrealistic, in light of the NAACP's commitment to fund-raising only through membership dues and activities, without reliance on public funds. The Rev. Christian said, "The NAACP is not tied to city or county government and is not receiving money from the state or federal governments. We don't even want money from the Community Chest The reason for this is to give us freedom from pressure and freedom to act. It is important for the NAACP to retain the respect of the black community and to be able to speak out on behalf of black interests."¹⁸⁸

Milton B. Stanley was installed as president in January 1972. Kenneth Bost, who had been president in 1962, served as vice president. Still active in the branch were Ashley Dudley and Betty Tompkins. The Rev. A. J. Simmons continued the support from Bethel AME Church by serving as membership chair.¹⁸⁹ In 1974, Stanley was again elected president in a competitive election with Kenneth Bost. Nelson Polite served on the election supervisory committee, a committee required by the national By-Laws for Branches, along with Karen Dixon, who became the long-time NAACP Lancaster secretary in the early 2000s.¹⁹⁰

Milton Stanley connected the Lancaster branch more strongly to the national organization. He was a delegate to the NAACP national convention in Washington, DC, in the summer of 1975. Although it would have been a burdensome commitment of time and funds for a local delegate to attend the national convention over the years, as it still is today, it is notable that this is the first documented attendance from a Lancaster officer since Marianna Gibbons Brubaker attended the 13th Annual Conference in Philadelphia in 1922. At that time, she reported, "This convention is one of the wonder experiences of M.'s life; such culture[d], courteous, elegant people, such enthusiasm!"¹⁹¹

Twice during the decade, Milton Stanley rallied local members and friends to support the national NAACP in financial straits. In November 1975, an article from the *New York Times* News Service warned that the

national NAACP was nearly unable to meet payroll. The article also noted that the organization, in some areas, was bearing the load of providing community services when declining federal dollars closed other social services. And the NAACP “for the most part has steadfastly refused federal dollars.”¹⁹² The local branch apparently had already received a solicitation from the national office and undertook a special campaign. The goal, \$300, was not yet reached, and contributions sent to the secretary, Elaine J. Washington were still welcome.¹⁹³ Stanley said, “None of us can afford the loss of the NAACP and the influence it has on the conscience of our nation.” He reminded readers that the NAACP depends on memberships, branch assessments, and voluntary contributions.¹⁹⁴

The local branch helped in a second financial emergency facing the national NAACP in 1976. A court judgment in Mississippi awarded damages of over \$1.2 million to a group of merchants who argued that an NAACP boycott caused them to lose business. The Lancaster Branch sent \$600 to the national office. But small branch contributions were not enough. In the end, it took another national organization, the AFL-CIO, the labor organization, to guarantee a bond of \$1.5 million, which allowed the NAACP to appeal the court ruling. The issue was finally settled in 1980 when the Supreme Court refused to force the NAACP to pay the damages.¹⁹⁵

The Mississippi court judgment appeared to be part of a state-level strategy, often in the South, to use laws, court judgments, and state administrative rules to hamper NAACP activities. The strategy dates back at least to 1919, when Texas tried to close all NAACP branches because “the Association was not chartered to do business in Texas.” The national office advised the Austin branch to state that the NAACP was not a business. It was a membership organization. A representative sent to investigate was beaten to unconsciousness and never fully returned to NAACP work. His disability, as well as the NAACP’s failing to find a willing, experienced local lawyer, prevented prosecution of this attack. During the 1960s, states tried to disturb NAACP activity by requiring local branches to reveal lists of members.¹⁹⁶

On a more positive note, the local branch celebrated the 65th anniversary of the founding of the national NAACP at a meeting on February 11, 1974. The occasion also marked Black History Week, which is still honored today

during the month of February. Milton Stanley reminded members and friends that the annual membership drive, to occur in March 1974, was part of a national campaign for 100,000 new members. The local branch had about 100 members, with a goal, set by the national office, of achieving 200 members.¹⁹⁷

In 1977, the Lancaster branch elected, for the first time, a president who identified as white. Robert E. Epler, then employed by the Office of Equal Rights, Pennsylvania Department of Education, was elected, with Louise B. Williams as first vice president and Hazel I. Jackson as second vice president.¹⁹⁸ Epler was also volunteering with the Human Relations Committee and the Spanish American Civic Association.

Epler resigned at the end of June 1977, due to his new duties with the School District of Lancaster as supervisor for a program to encourage work experience and school retention for McCaskey students. Louise Williams, first vice president, took over his duties, another landmark for the branch, as she was the first woman to lead Lancaster NAACP since Laura Carter was the founding president from 1923 to 1931 and Annie Williams, from 1931 to 1933.¹⁹⁹ During his short tenure, Epler was a conscientious leader and a voice against class stereotyping.²⁰⁰

Issues of the 1970s

NAACP Lancaster remained active in the issue of housing in the urban renewal area in Lancaster City and began to take the message of affordable housing outside the city limits. Voter registration was also a key effort in this decade.

In March 1970, the NAACP, the Urban League, the Lancaster City-County Human Relations Committee, and the Conestoga Elks supported a proposal to the Lancaster Housing Authority to seat a panel to hear grievances of public housing tenants. In June, the NAACP sponsored a housing seminar about advances in low-cost housing. While an architect looked to the future and predicted greater use of pre-fabricated components or complete buildings, another speaker, Arthur Miron, pointed out the immediate problem, after years of urban renewal. He had compiled a survey of metropolitan housing for the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority. His research found substandard conditions in 37 percent of city residences, some so deteriorated as to

warrant replacements. He counted 400 residential units in the southeast as removed and not replaced, with the need of an additional 500 to fill the needs of low-income residents.²⁰¹

At the beginning of the decade, Betty Tompkins of the NAACP Housing Committee began to take the affordable housing message outside the city limits. She addressed the Lititz Borough Council and new Lititz-Manheim Area Council of Governments, urging them to support a county-wide housing authority. This was undoubtedly an effort toward a scattered-site affordable housing solution, which, sadly, never achieved the needed support. As David Schuyler concluded in *A City Transformed*:

As the minority population moved outward from the small area that traditionally had been home to the city's African American residents, the dominant community's long-standing hostility toward citizens of color precluded a rational discussion of scattered-site low-income housing or other measures that might have resulted in an orderly end of segregation and of the emergence, over time, of a fully integrated community.²⁰²

NAACP Lancaster raised its voice in support of Bhar Builders, a minority-owned company that had been hired to rehabilitate and sell houses in the Southeast. In May 1975, owners and tenants complained of shoddy workmanship in Bhar-renovated homes. An NAACP committee investigated with the hope that repairs could be completed in a matter of weeks. The NAACP leaders issued a statement expressing support for the company and its owner Eugene Howard. They said that minority-owned businesses gave apprenticeship opportunities to workers in the building trades, that some of the problems related to subcontractors, and that Bhar was being singled out for a larger problem. But time passed and in December, Bhar was prevented from purchasing any new properties for rehabilitation until repairs were addressed. The problem with for-profit rehabilitation of affordable housing was larger than the Bhar Builders problem, according to Schuyler. Bhar may not have had the capital to finance new work while completing existing projects, and the Redevelopment Authority and inspectors may not have provided adequate oversight or counseled new homeowners on

maintenance. However, the underlying problem was that the for-profit construction sector could not rehabilitate homes that would be within the reach of people who needed affordable housing.²⁰³

The second issue that drove NAACP Lancaster during the decade, according to the local press, was registering voters and getting out the vote, a priority that continues to this day. In 1974, the branch supported voter registration activities, looking toward the primary and November elections. Characteristically, President Milton Stanley framed the work in a national NAACP perspective. He credited the registration work by NAACP branches across the nation with “aiding the election of 2,800 blacks to public offices throughout the United States, including 94 black mayors.[sic]”²⁰⁴ In 1975, the branch sponsored a voter education meeting at the Spanish-American Community Center, with the president of the Lancaster League of Women Voters as speaker.²⁰⁵

Activities of the Branch

The Lancaster Branch announced or reported on meetings fairly regularly in the local newspapers through 1978. There may have been more meetings than were publicized; biennial elections and interesting speakers naturally seemed to warrant space in the papers. Some meetings may have been cancelled for lack of attendance, as the Rev. Christian noted in 1971.²⁰⁶ The members of the branch met about issues such as housing and voting, they developed activities to raise funds for local needs and national assessments, and they sponsored social events.

Notable in January of 1970 was the second documented commemoration of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., co-sponsored by the Lancaster Branch and Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. The service was held at 2:30 pm on Thursday afternoon, January 15. City employees were excused to attend the service, as were public school students, with the permission of their parents. Attendees represented organizations including Ebenezer Baptist Church, St. Ann's Church, First Presbyterian Church, Hellenic Orthodox Church, Temple Shaarai Shomayim, and Bethel AME Church. LCCC and Millersville State College officials also attended. Three hundred fifty people attended the service, according to the news reports, compared with thirty-five the previous year, just nine months after Dr.

King's death in April 1968. The annual observance of Dr. King's birthday has become an important activity of NAACP Lancaster and Holy Trinity, usually on the Sunday evening prior to Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.²⁰⁷

The NAACP sponsored a Miss NAACP contest in 1970 as both a publicity and fund-raising effort. Seven contestants were sponsored by various civic groups, including the Urban League, the Lancaster Redevelopment Authority, the Spanish Center, and the Conestoga Lodge of Elks No. 140, long a strong supporter of the NAACP and a hub of the community near its lodge on South Duke Street. The contestants demonstrated their talents and also their popularity. Carmen Sanchez, sponsored by the Spanish Center, presented in Spanish as translated by Febes Rivera.

Dontina Jones, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Albert L. Jones of 231 Green Street and a freshman at Millersville, was named "Miss NAACP 1970" in April. Her award was a trip to the national NAACP Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. She also rode in the Lancaster Loyalty Day parade on May 1, with "many of the County's Beauty Queens." The female-centered popularity contest was a traditional NAACP fund-raising activity, reminiscent of the "Miss Pennsylvania" contest of 1931.²⁰⁸

One of the contest judges was Hazel I. Jackson, who, with Madelyn P. Nix, staff attorney at Sperry New Holland, and C. DeLores Tucker, Secretary of State for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and vice president of the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference, were beginning to present publicly a more expansive image of women's accomplishments. Both Nix and Tucker spoke at NAACP Lancaster meetings in the 1970s.²⁰⁹

A Freedom Fund banquet to celebrate the year's accomplishments and, as importantly, raise money for the annual national assessment, became an annual event in most years. At the seventh annual banquet in 1970 the guest speaker was Judge Henry R. Smith, Common Pleas Judge of Allegheny County, who had served for thirteen years as president of the Pennsylvania State Conference of the NAACP.²¹⁰

A memorable social event was the "Dinner Theater–Bicentennial Style" on April 24, 1976, at the Faith United Church of Christ. Members presented characterizations of thirteen Black Americans, including Crispus Attucks portrayed by Earl "Bumper" Stewart; Phillis Wheatley, poet and published author, portrayed by Charlotte Scott; and Richard Allen, founder of the

African Methodist Episcopal Church, portrayed by William White. Robert Epler introduced the dramatic presentation, with Hazel I. Jackson and Martin Dees, Jr., providing narration.²¹¹

In the preceding October, the branch invited Mrs. Josine C. Osborne, assistant field director of the Bicentennial Commission of Pennsylvania, to speak at a monthly meeting. She told the group that celebrations or discussions featuring minority and ethnic viewpoints were under-emphasized on the state and national levels. President Milton Stanley said that any NAACP Lancaster event would supplement, not compete with, other organizations' plans and that the NAACP would support the Afro-Hispanic Cultural Committee.²¹²

The NAACP sponsored a roller-skating festival in June 1973 at the Rollway in Overlook Park on Lititz Pike. The event was one of the first examples of a branch activity beyond the traditional boundaries of southeast Lancaster.²¹³ And in April 1975, a spring bazaar and auction at the Spanish-American Civic Center on Pershing Avenue raised money for the Freedom Fund. This fund supported the local branch assessment for the national office.²¹⁴

At the end of the decade a newly formed NAACP college chapter at F & M assisted with an annual "Bing" Conlin Southeast Area Christmas Party on Saturday, December 15. The organizers were concerned citizens of the Southeast, led by Ruth Hurdle, and the local chapters of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. They provided seasonal gifts and treats to local children. The college chapter had been formed a month previously by Debbie Cruel, an F & M student from Harrisburg. She had been active in both the Youth and College Conference of the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference and the College Taskforce at the national level.²¹⁵ It is interesting that the F & M chapter and not the local branch assisted with this activity and that there was no meeting publicized in 1979, as noted above. Its absence suggests that the local branch was inactive for a few years as the decade of the 1980s began.



Retreat Followed by Greater Activity: The 1980s

From 1978 or 1979 until 1984, the Lancaster Branch was quiet. It is probable that the branch lost its charter from the national NAACP. The Unit



Leaders rejuvenated the Lancaster Branch in the mid-1980s, marked by this installation of the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro (right) as president. The Rev. Alexander Stephans (center), who had been a pastor of Bethel AME Church and a crucial leader in the 1960s, observes. In the background is probably the new charter which was granted by the national NAACP. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, *Intelligencer Journal*, March 18, 1985. Photograph by Barry Zecher.

By-laws require that a chartered branch maintain a minimum number of members and pay an annual assessment.

Nevertheless, a noteworthy event took place. On April 19, 1980, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Plaza was dedicated on South Duke and North Streets. The ceremony was attended by Mayor Arthur Morris (R) and former Mayor Albert B. Wohlsen, Jr. (R), the president of the Reading NAACP branch, and representatives from the Urban League of Harrisburg and Lancaster. Debbie Cruel, the junior vice-president of the Harrisburg NAACP branch, also attended. As mentioned, she was a leader of the chapter at F & M, which kept a local NAACP in the news through the early

years of the 1980s. Earl “Bumper” Stewart was the main force behind fund-raising for the plaza to meet a city challenge grant.²¹⁶

The Lancaster Branch re-organized in January 1984, when close to one hundred people met at Bethel AME Church, under the leadership of the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, associate minister of Bright Side Baptist Church. With the assistance of Barton Fields, NAACP field director for the region, they sought a new charter from the national office, and installed officers. In addition to the Rev. Taliaferro as president, Clara Desmangles was elected secretary and Eugene Burgess as treasurer. Later, other officers and members of the Executive Committee joined the effort, including Billie Jo Herr, first vice president; Robert Baber, second vice president; Karen Dunlap, recording and corresponding secretary; and Mary McCowin, financial secretary. Committee chairs included Juanita Wright, nominating committee; Hazel Jackson, education; the Rev. Alfred Johnson, religious affairs; Lionel Cunningham, political action; Gladys Mack, housing; Betty Ann Boyer, legal re-dress; Martha Johnson, public relations; Robert Baber, membership; the Rev. E. Carlton Brown and Mel Edwards, members at large.²¹⁷ The Rev. Taliaferro was re-elected president of the branch in 1985.²¹⁸

During this period, Dr. Rita Smith (later Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El) joined the branch, acting as chair of the membership drive in 1984. She continued for over thirty years as an influential member of the branch and was particularly involved in education issues.²¹⁹

In the beginning, the Rev. Taliaferro was careful to state that “Our main purpose is to be alert and vigilant to discrimination, if and when it arises. I can’t say Lancaster has a discrimination problem, but overall I don’t see minorities as active as possible.”²²⁰ Later, in an interview, he described that he and his wife thought they had experienced housing discrimination, when they moved to Lancaster with their family in spring, 1982:

What initially got me interested was that when my wife and I decide[d] to buy a home here in Lancaster, we felt that in certain sections of the city it was more difficult for minorities to buy a home than in others We were interested in a home on “The Hill”—East Strawberry Street, . . . —it seemed like nothing came of it, but when we came on this side, the Seventh Ward, we had no trouble getting a

house. We had been renting a house but when it came down to buying a house, it seemed like the situation changed.

I have no way of proving we could not have [bought] the house on “The Hill” but I noticed that the day after we moved, the house was sold.²²¹

The Taliaferro family lived at 439 East End Avenue.

The Rev. Taliaferro had studied communications in college, worked in radio during college and at the local WLAN radio station in Lancaster. He made sure that NAACP activities were well-publicized, holding press conferences and issuing press releases.²²²

The Rev. Taliaferro led the Lancaster Branch until July 1987, when he resigned. His family moved to York, where he took up the pastorate of Mount Calvary Baptist Church. He was succeeded by the First Vice President, the Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman III, pastor of Bethel AME Church. The Rev. Sparkman would lead the branch until the end of the decade.²²³

Issues

The NAACP addressed significant issues of the 1980s at the local, national, and global levels. The foundational work of the NAACP in supporting legal justice was a consistent issue through the decade. The branch worked hard to support appropriate observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday in Lancaster and the county. The January date was made a federal holiday in 1986. NAACP officials contended with a nationwide resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and that resulted in some demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in Lancaster. And the branch actively supported the world-wide movement against apartheid in South Africa.

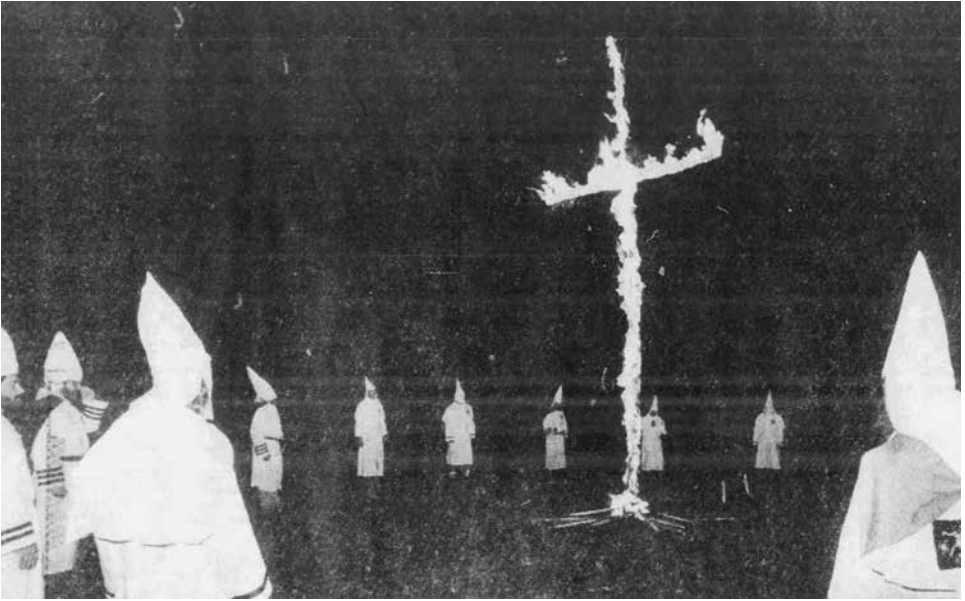
Many people in Lancaster perceived discrimination in employment and in housing. Complaints surfaced in various ways, to the City-County Human Relations Committee, to the NAACP branch, and probably through less formal communications. In 1984, the Lancaster City-County Human Relations Commission (as it was called at the time) received 1,200 inquiries about incidents of employment discrimination.²²⁴

These complaints and inquiries were not covered in the press, possibly to respect the privacy of complainants and employers. The extent of this

crucial work of receiving alleged discrimination complaints and counseling complainants is often more important, yet more difficult to document, than reports of candidate forums or awards banquets. The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro remembered that the NAACP received numerous complaints from minority workers, including Latinx people, whose community was expanding locally. He remembers open discrimination at some local work places that impelled legal requirements to give jobs to applicants who were denied them. For example, discrimination was proven at R. R. Donnelley, Inc.²²⁵ NAACP Lancaster supported member Clara Desmangles in her suit against the City of Lancaster for her firing in 1983 after she raised a complaint of discrimination.²²⁶

Groups representing minority residents collaborated to lobby the School District of Lancaster to close schools in recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. The Rev. Louis A. Butcher, Jr., then executive director of the local Human Relations Commission; Milton J. Bondurant, executive director of the Urban League; and the Rev. Taliaferro received recognition at the 1985 banquet for these efforts. They reported that the school district would look carefully at their holiday list in 1987 and that year, the district closed schools in honor of Dr. King. In October 1988, Mayor Morris signed an executive order making Dr. King's birthday a city holiday. He thanked NAACP President the Rev. Harvey Sparkman for his advocacy for the city's recognition.²²⁷ The Rev. Sparkman continued to lobby for county-wide recognition of the King holiday, by calling out Penn Manor and Hempfield School Districts, which did not close for the federal holiday.²²⁸ During January 1989, the Lancaster Branch, under the leadership of Executive Committee member Sandra Squire Fluck, presented panel discussions and films in eighteen county schools, to generate knowledge and discussion about Dr. King, the civil rights movement, and non-violent resistance.²²⁹

The dawn of the 1980s saw the resurgence of white supremacy under the banner of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). In 1979, the Klan was a major topic at the NAACP's 70th annual national convention in Louisville, Kentucky.²³⁰ In 1986, a KKK rally south of Pittsburgh, allegedly to attract people from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, was countered by an NAACP rally.²³¹ In late 1986, Klan activity came closer to Lancaster with the



During this Ku Klux Klan rally on private property near Ephrata in October 1987, NAACP Lancaster President the Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman III collaborated with other civic organizations to hold vigils countering the event. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, *Sunday News*, October 4, 1987. Photograph by Jack Leonard.

chalking, then painting, of the “KKK” initials on 1721 Conard Road near a Seventh Day Adventist school attended by two Black children. NAACP President Taliaferro brought the issue to the press.²³²

A year later, the community learned that a KKK rally was planned for Saturday, October 3, on a private property on Ridge Avenue in Ephrata. About one hundred people “more than half of them police officers and reporters,” gathered to hear speeches, listen to “The Old Rugged Cross,” and conduct a ritualistic cross-burning. One of the speakers was Imperial Wizard James W. Farrands of Shelton, Connecticut.

Civic and government groups, including the Ephrata Township supervisors and the Lancaster County Commissioners, strongly urged residents to avoid the KKK rally. NAACP Lancaster President Sparkman collaborated with members of the City-County Human Relations Committee, the Jewish Community Center, the Urban League, the Spanish American Civic Association, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the YMCA,

the YWCA, the LCCC, and representatives from the Harrisburg Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church to plan vigils in Ephrata and Lancaster countering the Klan rally.²³³

The Rev. Taliaferro remembers that the Klan presence in the area lasted for about ten years from 1983 to 1993. He and the Rev. Sparkman coordinated closely with national NAACP headquarters on appropriate responses, including holding counter-rallies in different locations, to avoid the possibility of violence. In October 1987, in Harrisburg, a KKK note was left on the Taliaferro home and one of the Rev. Taliaferro's sons was accosted on his way to school by the person claiming to have left the note.²³⁴

The Rev. Sparkman remembered that Betty Tompkins, who continued to be active in the NAACP, characteristically decided that something had to be done. She arranged for the Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan to meet privately with the Rev. Sparkman in his office at Bethel AME Church. The media were not invited to attend. [The meeting might have been with James Farrand at the time of the Ephrata rally in 1988, or with Charles J. Juba, a local person, who requested permission to hold a KKK march in 1991, as described below, but it is not clear from Rev. Sparkman's remarks.] In response to the Rev. Sparkman's question about why he was a member of the Klan, the Grand Wizard spoke about Scripture. "That lit me up," the Rev. Sparkman said. Both examined Biblical references. "We had a mutual understanding and an added enlightenment by both parties," the Rev. Sparkman remembered. A week later, the Rev. Sparkman was in downtown Lancaster entering a bank building. He ran into the same KKK official, who said, "Good afternoon, Reverend Sparkman" and held the door open for him to enter the bank. The Rev. Sparkman never saw him again and believed and hoped that God had made an impact through the interaction.²³⁵

At this time, NAACP Lancaster was interested in issues beyond the boundaries of Lancaster City, something that was only hinted at prior to the 1980s. For example, in laying out plans for the new decade in 1970, NAACP leaders mentioned "very serious conditions involving labor, industry, and schools" in Columbia. But little more was heard on this issue.²³⁶ As mentioned, by the 1980s, leaders involved the branch in responding to the KKK rally and advocated for celebration of the Martin

Luther King, Jr., holiday, planning to send a letter to every school district in the county.²³⁷

The issue of apartheid in South Africa encouraged the Lancaster Branch to comment on global issues, following the lead of the national NAACP office. In March 1985, the general membership meeting included a film *South Africa Belongs To Us* about a Black woman's experience in South Africa.²³⁸ Betty Tompkins chaired the Lancaster Branch's South Africa Response. In September 1985, the branch issued a statement and plan of action at a press conference at Bethel AME church. They advocated ending investments in South Africa, banning the sale of kruggerands (gold coins) in the United States, communicating messages of support to Bishop Desmond Tutu, requesting special prayers for people in South Africa and requesting that Lancastrians turn on their car lights from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, October 13, in a show of solidarity.²³⁹ Two general meetings in March 1986 focused on the continuing problems in South Africa.²⁴⁰ Lancaster NAACP, Lancaster YWCA and Bethel AME Church sponsored an advertisement in the *Sunday News* on March 30, 1986, calling for the end of apartheid, the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, and the end of the banishment of Winnie Mandela.²⁴¹

The Lancaster Branch of the NAACP and the Urban League of Lancaster
NAACP Lancaster worked closely with the Urban League of Lancaster, Inc., from its founding in 1965. The two organizations had different core missions, different origins, and different funding sources. Activists like Ashley Dudley and Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El, who established a literacy program through the Urban League Guild, contributed time to both.²⁴²

The national NAACP and the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes (Urban League) were founded in the same era—the NAACP in 1909 and the Urban League in 1910. From the beginning the Urban League was committed to the economic improvement of Black people. The NAACP and those who founded it, on the other hand, focused on civil and political rights of Black people. The NAACP was primarily concerned with the ways in which legal structures encourage discrimination and with using the justice system to prevent discrimination. Legal redress became their

chief tactic, followed by active protest, if necessary. The early victories of the NAACP were in the courts, leading up to the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by the Supreme Court in 1954. Still today, the NAACP is active in the judicial system, as seen by the Pennsylvania Conference of the NAACP serving as a plaintiff in challenging Pennsylvania's voter ID law in the early 2010s and as a plaintiff in the recent challenge to state school funding processes, decided in February 2023.

At least one of the NAACP's early and active white leaders, Joel Spingarn, believed that economic development would follow as racial and color discrimination, and its legal apparatus, disappeared. In his later years, after serving as president of the NAACP until 1939, he was less optimistic. These differing tactics of the two organizations solidified after 1911, in an understanding to work in their specific roles.²⁴³ However, early NAACP officials collaborated with Urban League staff on issues that affected both organizations, such as discrimination against Black workers by labor unions.²⁴⁴

In 1975, the Urban League of Lancaster, Inc., celebrated ten years, an opportunity to reflect on its founding and growth. It was founded by the Lancaster business community, through the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, in May 1965. A 1963 study of employment of Black people in Lancaster, submitted to the Chamber, recommended that an Urban League chapter could serve as a platform for communication among community groups.²⁴⁵ In the late 1960s, it did serve that purpose by offering "Living Room Seminars" for discussion of problems. Nevertheless, the League focused on job opportunities for young Black residents as well as career guidance.

Unlike the NAACP, the Urban League was not volunteer-run, and it accepted funds from community organizations. At the time of the tenth anniversary, the League employed a staff of eight. Ninety-six percent of its budget came from the United Way, with additional project funds coming from state and federal programs. By contrast, the NAACP operated on membership dues from individuals and organizations and donations. The Urban League leaders shared their space with NAACP Lancaster, offering office and meeting space as needed. In the 1980s, this was at 502 South Duke Street. The Urban League and the NAACP branch cooperated to provide emergency relief in the wake of flooding from Hurricane Agnes in 1972.²⁴⁶



At Freedom Fund events, NAACP Lancaster raises money for programs, and often honors dedicated volunteers and supporters. In 1985, Barbara Little of the *Intelligencer Journal*, the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, The Rev. Louis Butcher, Milton Bondurant of the Urban League, and Betty Tompkins were honored. Mrs. Tompkins was a dedicated member of NAACP Lancaster and an inveterate supporter. Photo credit: LNP Media Group, *Intelligencer Journal*, November 9, 1985

Like their parent organizations, the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP and the Urban League of Lancaster, Inc., crafted a mutually reinforcing movement against discrimination of minority workers. The League built on its roots in the business community, its funding from government and community sources, and its focus on jobs, and the NAACP focused on legal redress. The League developed a reputation for working within the business community and the NAACP for growing from within the Black community and applying sometimes confrontational tactics. Both organizations faced insurmountable barriers to the key Lancaster City and County problem of that era, affordable housing.²⁴⁷

Activities

Through the 1980s, the Lancaster Branch continued to hold general membership meetings, candidate nights, and fund-raising efforts. The

major annual fund-raiser was the Freedom Fund Banquet. Two banquets brought people of regional and national importance to Lancaster.

In 1985, Mayor W. Wilson Goode of Philadelphia spoke at the Freedom Fund Banquet on Friday, November 8. He addressed the tragic bombing, by the Philadelphia police, of a community in West Philadelphia, on the previous May 13, during an altercation with a communal organization called MOVE. Eleven people died and sixty-one homes were burned. Mayor Goode said that “a sense of community fell apart,” that it was a mistake, and that it was necessary to find out what happened.

Five people received awards, including Barbara Little, for her coverage of civil rights issues in the *Intelligencer Journal*, Betty Tompkins, long-time Lancaster Branch member, the Rev. Ronald L. Taliaferro, former branch president, the Rev. Louis A. Butcher Jr., executive director of the City-County Human Relations Committee, and Milton J. Bondurant, executive director of the Urban League of Lancaster, Inc. The last three received community service awards in recognition of their advocacy of the observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday in the School District of Lancaster.²⁴⁸

The 1988 banquet guest speaker was the Rev. Benjamin L. Hooks, executive director of the national NAACP since 1977, a lawyer, businessman, and former judge. Mayor Morris was honorary chair of the banquet, attended by about 325 people. Mayor Morris, assisted by Barney Ewell, a gold and silver medalist in track events in the 1948 Olympics, presented the Rev. Hooks with the key to the city. Awards were presented to Gladys Mack, to Loretta Harris, NAACP Lancaster corresponding secretary, and to Leon “Buddy” Glover, principal of the Edward Hand Junior High School, now the Hazel I. Jackson Middle School. Patricia Hopson-Shelton served on the banquet planning committee.²⁴⁹

The decade of the 1980s was a time of strength for NAACP Lancaster. The Rev. Taliaferro received, for the branch, the national NAACP's Thalheimer Award at the 1986 annual convention. The award recognizes branches for outstanding achievements. Some of the Lancaster programs were an education guidebook for high school students and those who planned to enter college and a contest in the School District of Lancaster for an essay about Black history, as well as art and poetry.²⁵⁰



National Disarray and Local Achievement: The 1990s

NAACP Lancaster became, by the 1990s, clearly a watchdog for discrimination not only in the City of Lancaster but also in the county. Lancaster NAACP leaders became involved in discrimination complaints in Columbia. They continued to protest against overt demonstrations of white supremacy by affiliates of the KKK and other such organizations. They kept up this strength even as the national NAACP officers made local headlines for poor financial management and for drawing the NAACP unsuccessfully towards a separatist philosophy.

Through this decade, the NAACP continued its tradition of commemorating the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, birth in cooperation with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. The fund-raising Freedom Fund banquet occurred in most years, and the NAACP continued with educational forums and candidate nights.



Leadership

In 1991, the incumbent, the Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman III, pastor of Bethel AME Church, was re-elected as president. He had a strong supporting cast of officers, including Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El as vice president, and Loretta M. Harris as corresponding secretary. Mrs. Harris was a member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, a highly organized member who contributed to the branch, her church, and her community. One important assistance to the branch is that she recruited the Rev. Sparkman's successor, the Rev. Roland Forbes, as president.²⁵¹

The Rev. Sparkman continued in his role as president until mid-1993, when his bishop assigned him to an AME church in Morristown, New Jersey.²⁵² After he and his family left Lancaster, having lived here since 1986, the Branch officers organized nominations and elections. Sometime in 1994, the Branch elected the Rev. Roland Forbes, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Rev. Forbes remembers Loretta Harris as a "great lady" and a "tenacious record keeper." He credits her with pushing him toward

the NAACP. Mrs. Harris told him that it was a great way to get involved in the community. He served through 1996.²⁵³

The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro and his family returned to Lancaster, where he took up a position with the School District of Lancaster as outreach coordinator, motivating students to do well and prepare for college. He was installed as branch president in March 1997. Nelson Polite, Sr., served as vice-president. The Rev. Forbes continued on the executive committee. Karen Dixon served as financial secretary.²⁵⁴ The Rev. Taliaferro arranged for the branch to set up an office and a telephone at 404 South Duke Street, thanks to the Crispus Attucks Community Center. In 1999, the Rev. Taliaferro was elected to the executive board of the Pennsylvania State Conference of NAACP Branches.²⁵⁵

Impact of Difficulties in the National Organization

From 1994 to 1996, the national NAACP experienced well-publicized changes in the board chairman and executive director. After the fifteen-year tenure of Benjamin L. Hooks, Benjamin Chavis served only sixteen months as executive director. The organization was operating at a deficit, there were personnel issues, and Chavis was working closely with Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. There was concern that he was moving the NAACP toward the Nation's separatist policy.²⁵⁶ When Myrlie Evers-Williams became chair of the board in February 1995, and Kweisi Mfume became chief executive officer a year later, \$4 million in debt was retired, and the difficult period ended. Williams, whose first husband, Medgar Evers, was murdered near Jackson, Mississippi, on June 12, 1963, upon his returning home from an NAACP meeting, and Mfume, who resigned his position as five-term United States representative from Maryland to take up his new role, put the NAACP on a solid footing.²⁵⁷

But damage was done. In a highly unusual move, in 1994, the presidents of all Pennsylvania NAACP branches voted, in principle, to withhold funds from the national office. The Harrisburg NAACP actually did so. In October 1995, the Lancaster branch held a membership meeting entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" The question did not pertain to the aftermath of the Million Man March in the same month, which Lancastrians supported with three busloads to Washington, DC, despite the event's connection to



Hazel I. Jackson greeted Kweisi Mfume, national NAACP president, in 2002 when he lectured at Millersville University. Ms. Jackson served the Lancaster Branch for decades from at least 1969, often as officer or education chair. Courtesy of Archives & Special Collections, Millersville University Library, Millersville University.

the Nation of Islam. The question pertained to the turmoil in the national NAACP.²⁵⁸

Membership waned in the branch in these years, as it must have across the country, but rebounded after all was settled. In 1999, the national NAACP established a country-wide “Knock Across America” membership campaign, asking each member to knock on a friend’s door and encourage joining. The yearly membership dues were \$30, as they still are in 2023.²⁵⁹

Kweisi Mfume visited Lancaster in February 1997, to lecture at F & M College, as part of the recognition of Black History Month. Lancaster Branch president the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro met and spoke with the national president, a relationship which proved useful to the branch in later years.²⁶⁰

Countering White Supremacist Groups and Racist Incidents

NAACP Lancaster and other community groups launched counter protests to white supremacist demonstrations. They often chose to hold the events far distant from Klan activity to avoid confrontation.

In July 1991, Charles J. Juba, a nineteen-year-old Great Titan of the Klan, who lived and worked in Lancaster, applied for permission for the Klavern of the Invisible Knights of the Ku Klux Klan to march in the city. Mayor Janice C. Stork (D) saw no way for her administration to deny the application. The Klan marched on August 24. NAACP President, the Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman, III, committed to protest the march “tooth and nail.” On the same day, 1,500 people gathered in Lancaster County Central Park for “Unity Day.” The preceding evening saw 2,000 people gather in Lancaster Square. The Rev. Sparkman addressed the crowd.²⁶¹

On August 11, 1992, the Rev. Sparkman led a demonstration of about forty members of the Lancaster branch at Café 111 on East King Street. They sat at tables, were willing to purchase meals, but were not approached for service. They were also photographed and videographed by police officers in a way that was perceived as disrespectful.

A week before, one of the owners of the café, Dave Huber, had crossed King Street to speak to young members of Lancaster Employment and Training Agency's Clean and Green Team. The argument ended with Huber's slapping nineteen-year-old Shaki Wilson. The NAACP protest supported Wilson. Huber did not meet with the protestor nor apologize to Wilson.

The treatment of the Rev. Sparkman and the protestors sparked complaints to the City Council. Betty London, who was at Café 111, reported, “I was truly appalled at how one lieutenant treated the Rev. Sparkman,” she said. “He was nasty and very rude. Most pastors get respect, but he didn't respect the Rev. Sparkman.” This treatment, the Rev. Sparkman told Council, was typical of the disrespect minorities encounter. An editorial in the *Sunday News* called the police actions questionable. Two county commissioners met with Shaki Wilson, and community leaders to try to understand what happened.²⁶²

The Lancaster Branch carefully watched two incidents that resulted in the death of young Black men. One occurred in the Columbia jail. The other in Lancaster County Central Park.

On January 20, 1996, John “Dijon” Mutunga II died by hanging in a jail cell in Columbia. The Rev. Roland Forbes, branch president, the Rev. Louis Butcher, Jr., pastor of Bright Side Baptist Church and executive director of the City-County Human Relations Commission, and nearly a dozen other pastors said at a press conference that they would watch for the coroner’s report. The Rev. Forbes said that the NAACP had fielded complaints from Columbia for about six years. The Rev. Edward Bailey of Bethel AME Church said, “We’re not there to protect drug addicts, drug dealers We definitely want police to be able to do their jobs The main issue is that when anybody’s child is taken into custody, they are safe.”²⁶³

On September 21, 1998, several joggers in Lancaster County Central Park found the body of forty-seven-year-old Harry White of Union Street, hanging by his own shoelaces. The West Lampeter Police concluded that the death was a suicide. Family members, familiar with White’s personality and behavior on that date, questioned the verdict. NAACP Lancaster leaders assisted the family in meeting with the police and in clearing up their concerns. The death was discussed by the Pennsylvania State Conference of the NAACP, and President Ronald Taliaferro stated that he had briefed national NAACP President Kweisi Mfume.²⁶⁴

Lancaster Branch’s attention was on Columbia throughout 1997, stimulated by Gerald Mauer’s complaints to the school board about the treatment of his bi-racial son by a sports coach and about the lack of teachers or administrators who were members of minorities. Mauer filed a complaint with the City-County Human Relations Committee, which dismissed the complaint. Mauer filed with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. NAACP Vice-President Nelson Polite, Sr., spoke for the branch when he said to the Columbia School Board, “Negative publicity will increase if you do not actively recruit African Americans and Latinos We are willing to help you recruit minorities.”²⁶⁵

In October, the branch was able to congratulate the school board on the hiring of Valerie Perry as Columbia’s first Black assistant high school principal. The Columbia School Board president stated that parent complaints had nothing to do with Perry’s hiring and that she was hired on her own merits. Valerie Perry’s very careful response may indicate that she did not fully agree with the board president. As a new employee, it would

not have been in her interest to be explicit. She said, "I have known all along that I got the job on my own merits, but people have different opinions of things. I thank the board for hiring me based solely on my qualifications."²⁶⁶

When the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro was re-elected NAACP Lancaster president in 1997, he told his members that they were "to eradicate any discrimination in your community," as he displayed a stack of complaints from only the past month. This was a tall order in a county where, according to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, in 1999 six hate groups were known to operate, and forty-two such groups in the state.²⁶⁷

Activities

The Lancaster branch, in cooperation with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, continued to organize a commemoration of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the Sunday evening prior to the Monday holiday nearest his birth date. He was born on January 15, 1929.

The Lancaster newspapers annually announced the event, and reporters and photographers documented it on the following days. The guest speaker was distinguished in religious, political, civic, or academic circles; often, but not always, a Black person. In 1991, three former Lancaster Theological Seminary faculty members, Professor Robert W. Duke, Dr. Paul E. Irion, and Professor Allen E. Kroehler, who had marched with Dr. King in Selma, Alabama, and Washington, DC, shared reminiscences. By contrast, in 1993, the speakers were, intentionally, all born after the assassination of Dr. King. Ron Ford spoke in 1991, weeks after he had taken his seat as the first Black Lancaster County Commissioner. Tom Hyson, president of the board for the School District of Lancaster and executive director of the Crispus Attucks Community Center, spoke in 1995. Lieutenant Governor Mark Schweiker attended in 1998. Often Jean Frazier, a local writer, read her work, including one poem, dedicated to the Rev. Ernest Christian, NAACP president in the 1960s. At times, a responsive reading entitled "The Man Came Speaking" by Sandra Squires Fluck was presented. Several hundred people usually attended, with an especially large group of 500 in 1997. The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro led the congregation in singing "We Shall Overcome" each year.²⁶⁸

By 1996, Martin Luther King Day also became a day of service, with 200 volunteers from numerous civic groups, including NAACP,

working on twenty projects. Cheryl Holland-Jones, long active in NAACP Lancaster and, in 2022–24, branch vice president, and Cobbie Burns, who would become branch president, organized the efforts, under the banner of the Positive Image Action Group of the Southeast Area Neighborhood Council.²⁶⁹

In April 1990, the Penn Manor School District board voted to close on Martin Luther King Day, following the decision of Hempfield School District to do the same. These closures meant that the holiday would be celebrated by all county school districts, a goal of the NAACP branch.²⁷⁰

The Martin Luther King School Project continued into the first years of the 1990s. Black and white representatives from the NAACP and other civic groups presented Dr. King's testament of non-violence to school children at all levels, during the weeks surrounding Martin Luther King Day. In 1991, at the annual Freedom Fund banquet, NAACP Lancaster honored Sandra Fluck, who had joined the executive committee in 1985 and coordinated the project in her role as education chair. Fluck counted thirty-five to forty speakers per year, visiting eighteen schools. In 1993, the Lancaster Peace Education Project and the Racial Justice Committee of the YWCA took over management of the program, using student speakers to teach fellow students.²⁷¹

Several Freedom Fund banquets were held through the decade. They raised funds for local programs and for the national NAACP assessment. The events were social gatherings, moments to extend NAACP's community reach by naming honorary chairs, committees, and keynote speakers, and opportunities to recognize important volunteers through awards and newspaper coverage.

Unusually young, but very appropriate, honorees in 1997 were the eight students who were graduating from Millersville University as members of the Lancaster Partnership Program. They had entered the program in ninth grade at J. P. McCaskey High School. By maintaining required grades and persisting, they were awarded free college tuition. Millersville University, the School District of Lancaster, and eleven area businesses and organizations, also honored, made the program possible.²⁷²

Young people also shared the stage in 1999. A group of students, who had recently formed the Millersville University college chapter of the NAACP,

under the guidance of the Lancaster Branch, were also congratulated. Education was the focus for this banquet, with awards going to two pioneer minority representatives in education, Hazel I. Jackson and Iris Stella MacRae.²⁷³

As shown throughout this essay, reaching back before the Lancaster branch was founded in 1923, Black people and other minority groups persisted in organizing for goals of equal justice, educational, and economic opportunity. They consistently showed that they were skilled in organizing and reaching their goals. This was the case with two other Lancaster groups in the 1990s, with which NAACP Lancaster collaborated. NAACP on a national and a local level is careful about collaborations, guarding against possible drift from the goal of legal challenges to discrimination.²⁷⁴

One collaboration was with the Rainbow Coalition, dating to 1984, to support the presidential campaign of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The Lancaster group was headed by Chester Stewart. It was focused on social, political, and economic projects, such as helping neighborhoods clean up the streets. The Rainbow Coalition was honored by the NAACP in 1990 with an award at that year's Freedom Fund Banquet.²⁷⁵

The NAACP also supported a true grass roots effort in the city called DADDs (Demonstrators Against Drug Dealers.) In 1990, a few neighbors and officials gathered with Captain Calvin Duncan, a retired Lancaster City police officer, and Carlos Graupera, director of the Spanish American Civic Association, serving as leaders. They identified buildings and areas in the Seventh Ward, such as the 100 block of Green Street, which were then hubs of drug dealing. They mounted weekly neighborhood protests and demonstrations. From about twenty participants, the group grew to several hundred. Duncan and Graupera traveled to Pittsburgh where they joined in an effort to develop a similar group. They protested in the City's Hill District, joined by Pennsylvania Governor Robert P. Casey. Duncan stated that, in Lancaster, his effort had the support of the NAACP, the Urban League, the Lancaster City administration, and the Bureau of Police.²⁷⁶

An unusual activity in 1997 was supporting Jason Porter of Manor Township in his Eagle Scout project to restore the gravestones of Civil War veterans in Lancaster Cemetery. Three of the twenty-four stones honored men who were attached to the unit called the United States Colored

Troops (USCT). They were Charles Wilson of the 45th USCT, J. Johnson of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry USCT, and the Rev. J. Thornton, of the 3rd USCT. Sherylette Allen-Caldwell was a key connector in this project, which was a collaboration of Porter's Explorer Post 2001, which focused on Civil War history and met at the Lancaster County Historical Society (now LancasterHistory), the NAACP, and the United States Army Reserves. Allen-Caldwell was first vice-president of Lancaster's U.S. Army Reserve's 1185th Transportation Terminal Brigade. From 1994 until at least 1997, she was also NAACP Lancaster's first vice-president.²⁷⁷

Issues

The NAACP continued to field complaints of alleged discrimination and advise the filers about taking issues to the city-county or the state human relations groups. The scope and effect of this legal redress work, core to the mission of NAACP, is not easy to research. It was often confidential and did not result in formal filings. The Lancaster NAACP did not have a process for archiving files, a common difficulty of a volunteer organization without a permanent office. These discrimination complaints would have offered a more complete history of racial and ethnic discrimination in Lancaster.

For example, the Rev. Roland Forbes shared an experience related to the building of the Lancaster County Convention Center. He served as NAACP Lancaster president from about 1993 until 1996. Work on the convention center was beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Although there were efforts to include minority-owned businesses in the convention center work, progress was apparently slow. The NAACP and other community voices were raised in favor of improved access to contracts for minority-owned businesses. The Rev. Forbes remembers two instances of conversations, one with a Black congregant, who suggested that he "stay out of it," with the implication that his church would benefit.²⁷⁸

The NAACP, through the decade, offered meetings, forums, and candidate nights to educate members and the public about issues of concern. In contrast to the dearth of documentation for the legal redress work, this activity is well-covered in the press. In 1990, a staff member from the City-County Human Relations Commission spoke about fair housing, and a Lancaster city staffer spoke about litter, graffiti, and abandoned cars.

Fair housing came up again in 1998, in a forum based on a Lancaster City and County study of impediments to fair housing. A year earlier, the City-County Human Relations Commission had published a study about housing segregation. Three of the recommendations were to raise public awareness of the benefits of integrated communities, to remove zoning barriers to constructing affordable housing, and to increase subsidies for affordable housing. The scattered site approach to affordable housing had been discussed since the urban renewal period of the 1960s. Yet a University of Michigan study placed Reading, Lancaster, Allentown, and Philadelphia within the top ten most segregated of three hundred fifty urban areas studied nationwide. About housing segregation and encountering racism in areas outside the city, NAACP President Ronald Taliaferro said, "This area is known for that."²⁷⁹

Lancaster NAACP leaders commented and acted on national and global issues, sometimes on their own, sometimes at the behest of news reporters. Both the Rev. Harvey H. B Sparkman, III, president, and Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El, vice president of the Lancaster branch, expressed concern to reporters about the conservatism of Supreme Court Justice nominee Clarence Thomas in September 1991. They echoed the national NAACP's opposition to his nomination. In May 1992, the NAACP, the Urban League, and other groups organized a vigil in Penn Square in response to the acquittal of police officers involved in the beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles, and the resulting rioting. And the NAACP officers continued to keep the situation in South Africa in public view with a letter to the editor in support of the 1994 inclusive elections there, signed by the Rev. Sparkman and Betty Tompkins.²⁸⁰

The topic of the last educational forum of the 1990s seemed to emphasize this challenging decade. The topic was "How to File a Discrimination Complaint," led by NAACP Lancaster President, Ronald Taliaferro, and Leslie Hyson, director of the City-County Human Relations Commission. Earlier in the year, the NAACP had received a complaint from the family of Joshua Edwards, a young Black man jailed for the death of one white neighbor and the injury of a second at a Drumore apartment house the previous September. The family alleged racist motivation in the behavior of the neighbors towards Edwards and his white girlfriend. The injured

man used a racial slur in describing the encounter to the police, and his wallet contained information about the Adolph Hitler Free Corps, based in Holtwood, and the Ku Klux Klan. Joshua Edwards pled guilty to manslaughter in the death of the neighbor. Lancaster NAACP had filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania State Conference, alleging that Joshua Edwards acted in self-defense in the face of racial intimidation.²⁸¹

The end to the decade was sobering. In the thirty years since the 1960s, members of the Black community had become, on the surface, more integrated into the community. A Black man, Ron Ford, had led City Council and served as County Commissioner. Black men and women were teaching and administering in the School District of Lancaster and at Millersville University. NAACP events received solid coverage in the local press. But close to the surface was the intractable housing discrimination and the organizing of white supremacist groups that continued to hinder the development of an inclusive Lancaster.



Persistence in a New Century: NAACP Lancaster from 2000 until the Present

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Lancaster Branch achieved a strong presence in the community, recognized as representing the interests of minority communities. The annual the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., commemoration in January became an expected public event. In addition, from 2004 to 2006, the Lancaster Branch was listed in the legal notice of community organizations that received copies of Lancaster County's draft 2005–2030 Long Range Transportation Plan and the draft 2005–2008 Transportation Improvement Program during the public comment period. NAACP was part of a long list of libraries and organizations where members of minority communities could read and react to the plans, evidence of a solid place in the community.²⁸²

The new century began with a NAACP tradition, the commemoration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in collaboration with Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Kerry L. Kirkland keynoted the January 2000, celebration. Kirkland led interracial dialogue in York, Pennsylvania, organizing the

City of York Town Meeting on Race Relations. The meetings were held in response to President Bill Clinton's call for a national dialogue about race.²⁸³

In 2004, the annual commemoration was an opportunity for NAACP Lancaster to embrace publicly a mandate that included Latinx people. The keynote speaker was Secretary of the Commonwealth Pedro A. Cortes, the first Latinx person to serve as a cabinet member in Pennsylvania history. NAACP President Rev. Ronald Taliaferro said that "This is following a movement in the national office of the NAACP to reach Latinos because they suffer the same discrimination as African Americans. We've received numerous complaints in our office from Latinos." Mr. Cortes agreed, telling the 200 attendees, "When I hear the acronym, 'NAACP'—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—I would argue that we're all colored people."²⁸⁴

The collaborative celebrations of Dr. King by NAACP Lancaster and Holy Trinity Church continue. The year 2023 marked the forty-third continuous year of the celebration. On January 15, 2023, Joanna McClinton, Esq., ordained minister and member of the Pennsylvania State House of Representatives, spoke at the event. A month later she was elected the first female speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. She is only the second Black person to serve in this role.²⁸⁵

The Lancaster Branch focused major fund-raising efforts on a Freedom Fund event, often held in the autumn. In 2007, NAACP Lancaster President, the Rev. Robert O. Bailey, announced that United States Representative James Clyburn (D, South Carolina) would speak. Clyburn was involved in the NAACP since his teens in Sumter, South Carolina, and was, at that time, the House Majority Whip. He was able to predict 2008 as a hopeful year of inclusion in the Democratic Party with the first woman to lead the United States House of Representatives, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and a woman, an Hispanic person, and a Black person vying for the Democratic presidential nominee (Hillary Clinton, New Mexico's Governor Bill Richardson, and Barack Obama.)²⁸⁶ Both Richardson and Obama made campaign stops in Lancaster.²⁸⁷ The 2023 Freedom Fund event, on September 21, celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the Lancaster Branch's founding. Blanding Watson, president, led the event, with Deborah Addo, president and chief operating officer of Penn State



Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El was an active and influential member of the Lancaster Branch from at least 1984 until her death in 2018. She served as membership chair, vice president, and education chair, and connected the branch strongly with Millersville University. Courtesy of Archives & Special Collections, Millersville University Library, Millersville University.

Health, serving as keynote speaker.

NAACP Lancaster continued to support, in the new century, basic NAACP initiatives, including encouraging voting and developing the next generation of leaders. The Lancaster Branch helped to establish college chapters at Millersville University in 1999 and at Elizabethtown College in 2021.²⁸⁸ In the NAACP, college organizations are called chapters, and they form under the aegis and mentorship of the local branch.

Especially during the years when Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El was an officer and on the executive committee, a commitment to education and linkages with Millersville University were strong. She made sure that NAACP Lancaster supported events and speakers at the university. In 2005, the Lancaster Branch and the Millersville University student chapter joined to provide an in-school program for elementary and middle-school students, led by college students. The program honored the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, birthday and featured the biography of Rosa Parks. In that same year, the Lancaster Branch co-sponsored a lecture by Keith Beauchamp, a young film

maker whose research and documentary film about the murder of Emmett Till caused the United States Department of Justice to re-open that case.²⁸⁹

Dr. Smith-Wade-El managed several scholarship award opportunities through these decades. She was known for focusing on the needs and interests of students, both at branch meetings and at the university. NAACP Lancaster recognized students' achievements by bringing them forward for awards at the annual Freedom Fund events. Dr. Smith-Wade-El's influence was probably critical in this effort, as well, so that young achievers of color knew that their academic accomplishments were seen and valued. In 2004, three college students received awards. The next year, NAACP Lancaster was able to help award six scholarships, with values up to \$5,000. In 2005, two Millersville students received academic excellence awards that included cash awards. They were either members of the Honors College or active in the university NAACP chapter. Four scholarships were awarded in 2008, for \$500 each, during the Freedom Fund event keynoted by Pedro A. Rivera, then superintendent of the School District of Lancaster, and Lancaster City Police Chief Keith R. Sadler. Both had arrived in Lancaster earlier in the year from Philadelphia, to take up their important positions. In 2009, a recent immigrant from Ethiopia, who graduated with honors from McCaskey High School, was honored. In 2011, a cash award went to a Penn State Harrisburg freshman. In the newspaper announcements of the scholarship competitions, Dr. Smith-Wade-El's name was the contact for more information. It seems clear that she did the basic work of collecting applications, reviewing them, and managing the award announcements.²⁹⁰

Sadly, the century began, too, with continued complaints about interactions with police officers. On September 22, 2000, in the evening, Police Officer Klete Griffin halted Frances Morant of 306 Conestoga Boulevard at the corner of Conestoga and Landis Drives, for making a wrong turn from East King Street onto Conestoga Drive. Ms. Morant apparently had not pulled over immediately and was driving slowly to find a well-lit stopping place. When the officer encountered her, he was aggressive and swore at her. She was taken to jail, strip-searched, finger-printed, photographed, and held for four hours.

NAACP Lancaster supported Morant in her complaints to the Bureau of

Police. Eventually she was ticketed for a traffic violation. All other charges, including eluding a police officer, were dropped. Mayor Charles Smithgall (R) apologized to Morant for the officer's use of profanity, and Officer Griffin was disciplined. Although the police union also requested an apology from Morant, she refused. She said, "Because of my being black, I think, aggravated it more than it would have been otherwise I think if I was a white female I would not have been disrespected as much as I was." An editorial in *The Sunday News* supported her. This and other incidents led the local press and Mayor Smithgall to call for a citizen review board. The community relations officer and the police union denied that there was any racial component to the incident.²⁹¹

Lancaster NAACP, under the leadership of President Taliaferro, joined in another police matter in 2001, this time in Warwick Township, north of Lancaster. This incident made clear that the branch identified as a social justice organization for the entire county, not just Lancaster City. Ronald Simril, a Black Warwick Township resident, was allegedly not hired as a township police officer due to his race. He, with Warwick Township Police Chief Al Olsen and Sgt. Gary Hutchinson, filed suit in United States district court. Olsen and Hutchinson were immediately placed on administrative leave and later fired.²⁹²

President Taliaferro took the matter to the NAACP Pennsylvania state conference legal redress committee, using his contacts on the state level to assist with Lancaster County matters. In October 2001, he was elected third vice-president of the state conference. He was elected to his sixth term as president of the Lancaster Branch in January 2003.²⁹³

The Rev. Taliaferro stepped down as president in September 2004, succeeded by First Vice President Louise Williams, who served until the regular biennial elections were held in November. The Rev. Taliaferro had taken on duties as pastor of Rose of Sharon Baptist Church in Harrisburg. He continued to work for the School District of Lancaster. Williams, in turn, stepped down from the presidency in 2006, when she was elected to Lancaster City Council. The Rev. Robert O. Bailey succeeded her. He had come to Lancaster in 2000, as a district supervisor for the African Methodist Episcopal Church.²⁹⁴ Cobbie Burns served as president from 2009 until 2011.²⁹⁵ Blanding Watson was elected president of the Lancaster Branch in

November 2010, taking office the following January. He has continued as the branch president to 2023.²⁹⁶

When the Rev. Taliaferro resigned, he noted that NAACP Lancaster did not have an office. In a few months, that was rectified when the branch acquired space at 630 Rockland Street, where several community agencies also worked. Although it was a small room, the Branch planned to offer youth services, such as Scholastic Aptitude Test preparation courses and sessions, in cooperation with Millersville University, about Black history. The branch maintained the office for several years, but it became unavailable sometime between 2008 and 2009. The Branch continued to make use of space courtesy of the Crispus Attucks Community Center, as it does today, where it had headquartered prior to moving to the Rockland Street building.²⁹⁷

NAACP responsiveness to issues of community-police relations continued. In 2003, President Taliaferro complimented Lancaster City's process for handling complaints about the police at a press briefing, with Mayor Smithgall and Police Chief William Heim. If officers fail to reconcile written or verbal complaints, the police chief can order an investigation, followed by City Council ordering an investigation. Chief Heim said that of 75 complaints in 2002, seven were processed, and, in three cases, the officer was found to be at fault, resulting in counseling, reprimands, suspension, or even termination.²⁹⁸

The limitations of this process were soon evident when an out-of-state arbitrator reinstated a city police officer David K. Hershiser. He had been fired by City Council for kicking a handcuffed suspect in the face several times. The arbitrator's report stated, "On the whole we give no weight to the decision of the City Council and shall render our decision based on the facts presented at the hearing." Nelson Polite, Sr., said that it was a slap in the face to Council, and the President of City Council asked residents to continue to rely on the complaint system that had worked in the past.²⁹⁹

Racist Incidents and the Continued Presence of Ku Klux Klan

In August 2001, the Ku Klux Klan announced a rally planned for Lancaster, on the courthouse steps on King Street on September 8. Both city officials and civic groups responded. "I don't want the KKK in our city, and I do not

stand alone,” stated Mayor Smithgall. NAACP President Ronald Taliaferro concurred, “Lancaster County ranks second in the state in the number of hate crimes, and they are on the rise. The Lancaster Branch . . . cites, at this time, that we are in a state of emergency.”³⁰⁰

Anti-Klan activists responded, following the guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission for responding to hate groups. They scheduled a Unity Day rally at the Alumni Sports & Fitness Center at F & M College, far from the intended site of the Klan rally. Religious and civic groups collaborated, including the Alliance for Tolerance and Freedom, Bright Side Baptist Church, United Way, Spanish American Civic Association, Lancaster Recreation Commission, Puerto Rican Committee, National Organization for Women, and the LCCC.³⁰¹ The NAACP encouraged people to register their disapproval of the Klan by attending, and about 3,000 people did so.³⁰²

About two hundred Black men, dressed formally in business suits, mounted a smaller but more pointed response to the planned Klan rally. Led by the Rev. Edward Bailey, pastor of Bethel AME Church, and Nelson Polite, Sr., president of the Lancaster City Council, they stood on the courthouse steps on King Street on Saturday, September 8. The Klan had announced the previous day that their rally would not take place. The Rev. Bailey responded: “It’s not about the Klan anymore—it is a statement that black men in this community will not allow other folks to speak for us. There are other issues in this community, and we want the community to know we are here and will have a voice on those issues.”³⁰³

In 2017, the Lancaster Branch organized to strategically present an alternative to white supremacist plans. The Branch leaders announced a gathering on the steps of the courthouse for Saturday, May 20. It was intentionally not mentioned in the event promotion that a group related to the Ku Klux Klan was organizing an event on the same day near Quarryville in southern Lancaster County. A cross-burning was planned on private property.

A diverse group of political, community, and religious leaders spoke to the crowd of hundreds at the “Rise! Embrace, Envision, Empower” event. Lancaster Mayor Rick Gray, Rabbi Jack Paskoff of Congregation Shaarai Shomayim, and the Reverend David Peck of St. James Episcopal Church spoke. The Rev. Willie Shell told of growing up seeing cross burnings in

Alabama, but also seeing examples of racism in Lancaster County. The Reverend Randy Riggs of the LCCC also spoke.³⁰⁴

Discrimination

The discriminatory issues in the community ranged from institutional to individual confrontations. In October 2002, seven former employees of R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., Inc., at that time, the world's largest commercial printer and the county's second largest employer with more than 3,000 employees, filed complaints with the Lancaster Branch. They alleged that they had been fired or laid off unfairly. The group included five people who identified as Black, one as Hispanic, and one as white.

NAACP President Taliaferro had tried, months previously, to communicate with R. R. Donnelly staff about the complaints, with no success. The complainants made their issues public on Sunday, October 6, followed by a NAACP effort to discuss the issue at an October 9 meeting. The Rev. Taliaferro transmitted the complaints to the R. R. Donnelly corporate office in Chicago and considered sharing them with the national NAACP. He offered several recommendations to the company, including reinstating the former employees or compensating them for lost work time. He urged the company to develop diversity training and a grievance review process and to offer job training so that new hires could work toward promotion.

A press release from R. R. Donnelly stated, "We would be more than happy to meet with Rev. Ronald Taliaferro to obtain the specifics of the complaints . . . R. R. Donnelley is committed to diversity and inclusion. We are committed to resolving workplace issues promptly and have numerous processes in place to address them." This incident showed a discrepancy between the experiences of workers and the processes and public statements of those who managed a workplace where discriminatory practices were alleged to have occurred.³⁰⁵

An example of an individual racial incident was the July 2002 accusation by a woman staff member of the YWCA that Warren Overly shouted racial slurs at her and a friend as they walked on North Queen Street. The Rev. Taliaferro called for an NAACP meeting and announced, "The NAACP will assist and help people who go through this kind of incident whether they be black, white, Hispanic or Asian."³⁰⁶ Overly was eventually fined for his

conduct, and the incident generated discussion about whether rude and harassing speech was covered by the Pennsylvania criminal code.³⁰⁷

A few years later, a local incident proved that racism was far from dead in Lancaster County. In 2007, the Warwick School District endured racial harassment incidents, and NAACP Lancaster offered its help. On Wednesday morning, October 3, in the parking lot of Warwick High School, a few white students waving a Confederate flag threw trash and hurled racial slurs at several Black students. Three students were charged with disorderly conduct in the district where, at that time, 96.3 percent of the students were white. The next morning, school staff received warnings of similar incidents.³⁰⁸ On October 5, a student was charged after harassing a parent in the Lititz Elementary School. NAACP President Richard O. Bailey and the Lancaster Branch executive committee published a letter to the editor, calling on Lancaster County public schools to develop strongly enforceable racial harassment prevention policies. The group met with the officials at the Warwick School District to offer help in developing anti-bias curricula for students, faculty, and staff.

On that same day, the Lancaster press reported another incident in Warwick School District. At a football game between J. P. McCaskey High School and Warwick High School, some students, at least one wearing a bandanna with the Confederate flag, taunted a group at the McCaskey bleachers. A member of the School District of Lancaster School Board and an Assistant Superintendent were standing at the bleachers with a front-row view of the incident. The School Board member stated that she was proud of the behavior of the McCaskey fans in the face of the taunts.

The Warwick District hired a local anti-racism trainer to speak to community members and students on November 2, 2007. His name was Quay Hanna. Based on recent photographs, it appears that he identifies as white.³⁰⁹ The Rev. K. M. Brown, Sr., at that time, senior pastor of Ray's Temple Church of God in Christ, asked, in a letter to the editor, why representatives from the NAACP or the YWCA or African-American and Hispanic clergy were not consulted to work toward better relations. He raised the issue that the NAACP leaders have stated since the 1960s: "For too long, people of color have been forced to accept whatever justice-oriented or judicial alternatives authorities provide without any consultation from those who

have been victimized and affected the most.” In his letter to the editor, NAACP Lancaster President Bailey said, “in Lancaster in 2007 progress toward racial unity has slowed to a standstill, and in some respects gone in reverse.” This incident had a long life in community memory. In 2013, Rabbi Jack Paskoff remembered that “a group of mostly white clergy and a reformed white supremacist were called in to help defuse the situation instead of engaging the African-American community.”³¹⁰

At least one newspaper account shows that attitudes of superiority based on skin color were not limited to public demonstrations. In 2008, a newspaper reporter asked some early morning shoppers at Central Market about their perception of the NAACP. A young white man returned, “Is it that Negro association? They take small issues and make them big.” This comment seems to confirm a perception, shared by the Rev. Robert O. Bailey, then NAACP Lancaster president, that the average person in Lancaster County did not look favorably on the NAACP. But another Central Market shopper’s comment showed the mistaken perception that injustice is a small issue. Like the other informants, he acknowledged that inequality exists and gave the example that his friend would not rent apartments to Black people. He implied that this example of discrimination was a small issue, not worthy of any effort to change.³¹¹

Residents brought housing discrimination and service complaints to the local NAACP branch. In 2004, two hundred residents of the Meadow Green Estates apartment complex near Park City Center signed a petition claiming poor service on issues such as rent overcharges, cleanliness and mold issues, rodent infestation, and snow removal. The NAACP called a meeting on April 28, 2004, to hear complaints. President Taliaferro said that the residents believed they experienced discrimination. Many tenants were Black or Latinx and received federal housing assistance. He counseled them about making complaints within the scope of their rental agreements and offered to ask for a meeting with the management staff. He said, “The NAACP is not the total solution to this problem, but we can be the vehicle for these issues to be resolved.” Meadow Green Estates was owned at that time by the Kushner Company of Florham Park, New Jersey, which had purchased the property in 2000.³¹²

The Human Relations Commission

The major issue of the 2010s centered around the Lancaster County Human Relations Commission. Since the mid-1960s, when a City-County Human Relations Committee (HRC) was established to collect and act on complaints of discrimination, there had been a process in the county to document and address discrimination. In July 2010, the County Commissioners, led by Scott Martin (R), publicized their wish to repeal a 1991 ordinance that gave the local commission enforcement powers. The move would eliminate the employment of nine staff members, leading to a savings of \$470,000 annually, according to the Commissioners. Martin wished to funnel complaints to the state Human Relations Commission.

NAACP Lancaster President Cobbie Burns released a statement opposing the move, just days after the plans to dismantle the commission were reported. The Lancaster Branch joined the LCCC, the county Democratic Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce in objecting. They countered the Commissioners' plan by pointing out procedural issues, including that the HRC was not part of the planned efficiency reviews budgeted in 2010, as well as economic impact, that the perception of Lancaster County as discriminatory would negatively impact business and the new convention center.³¹³ The Rev. Louis A. Butcher, Jr., pastor of Bright Side Baptist Church, and executive director of the HRC for fifteen years, noted the advantage of a swift review and settlement of any complaint. He counted 2,400 consultations handled by the HRC in 2009, and 150 formal cases, almost a quarter handled by mediation, resulting in good service to both sides. Training and information about relevant laws were provided to businesses.³¹⁴

The Lancaster Branch led community support for the HRC. The branch sponsored a unity rally in Binns Park on July 24. On July 27, Lancaster City Council passed a resolution in favor of the HRC, with a four-to-three majority also asking to extend investigations to discrimination based on sexual orientation. This issue, some speakers contended, along with cost, influenced the County Commissioners to eliminate the HRC. Despite a proposal by the chairman of the HRC to cut the budget by 21 percent in 2011, the County Commissioners voted to disband it in November 2010. The Commissioners then needed to vote to find a new way to assure compliance with the 1968 United States Fair Housing Act that had been a

duty of the HRC.³¹⁵ Cobbie Burns, Lancaster Branch president at the time, remembers the sorrow at losing the HRC: "So we just felt that it was needed in the community because there was a significant amount of discrimination that takes place in the workforce. And people don't have anywhere to turn to unless they go to Harrisburg or Philadelphia, in order to be able to file some legitimate complaint."³¹⁶

Three years later, the number of complaints from Lancaster County to the state HRC was 83, significantly lower than the 155 complaints in the county HRC's last year of operation. It is difficult to conceive that the reduced number actually documented a sudden decrease in perceived discrimination. County HRC supporters had contended that the inconvenience and delay of lodging a complaint of discrimination in Harrisburg would discourage complainants. The numbers can support this contention. At a forum held by the Lancaster Branch, attendees mentioned discrimination regarding jobs and, in education, disparate services for students with disabilities. But the most common issues centered on encounters with the justice system, both with police departments and with the courts.³¹⁷

The Voter ID Controversy

The Lancaster Branch entered a statewide controversy against the Pennsylvania voter ID law in 2012. On March 14, Governor Thomas W. Corbett, Jr. (R) signed Act 18 of 2012, which required a valid form of identification with a photograph in order to vote. Those unable to produce the identification were required to submit a provisional ballot, with a limit of six additional days to produce the ID. Groups who were concerned about disenfranchisement, especially of those who were elderly, poor, or homeless, contested the law. Developments in both the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court and the State Supreme Court enjoined election officials from enforcing the procedures for provisional ballots and from preventing voting by those who did not produce an ID.³¹⁸ In 2014, Commonwealth Court permanently stopped the enforcement of the law. The Pennsylvania State Conference of the NAACP joined the plaintiffs against a possible appeal by the state. Currently, Pennsylvania voters must show a form of identification, either with a photograph or with various documents, including a utility bill, a paycheck, or a bank



NAACP Lancaster members gathered at Crispus Attucks Community Center in October 2020, before going door-to-door to encourage voting. President Blanding Watson is standing at center rear, wearing a cap. Courtesy of the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP and Louis C. McKinney's Photographic Memories.

statement that includes a name and address.³¹⁹

The rollout of the law and the supporting public service educational material were negatively impacted by several comments, suggesting a political motivation. The expressed motivation for the law was to eliminate voter fraud. Opponents of the law questioned if there were any proven instances of fraud. Pennsylvania House Republican leader Mike Turzai stated that the new law would allow the Republican presidential candidate, Governor Mitt Romney, to win the state. This thought was corroborated in August 2013, after the 2012 presidential contest between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney, by the chair of the Pennsylvania Republican Party Rob Gleason. He pointed out that “we cut Obama by 5 percent which was big He beat McCain by 10 percent [in the 2008 presidential election], he only beat Romney by 5 percent. I think that probably photo ID helped a bit in that.”³²⁰

NAACP Lancaster responded by concentrating on a core activity, encouraging registration and voting. The branch planned “Registration Sundays” at churches with predominantly minority congregants, including Ebenezer Baptist Church, Faith Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, Bright Side Baptist Church, and In

The Light Ministries. Members planned door-to-door campaigns in concert with the YWCA and the League of Women Voters.³²¹

The Lancaster Branch weighed in on an issue that gained unwelcome national attention for the School District of Lancaster in 2011. CNN, CBS, and Fox News commented on an *Intelligencer Journal/Lancaster New Era* story about a voluntary mentoring program for upper-level students. Three of nineteen homerooms were designated for Black students, leading to the accusation of segregation. Black teachers at J. P. McCaskey High School had organized mentoring sessions for Black students, consisting of six-minute daily sessions, followed by two twenty-minute sessions monthly. A New York civil rights activist suggested that the national NAACP “repudiate” the local branch, but the national office backed the Lancaster Branch. President Blanding Watson had called the national office for consultation, in the face of this accusation. He said, in a statement, “Let us pull together and recognize hope, achievement and the values that keep us together Let us recognize the role of the mentoring program.” The School District planned to remove any homeroom assignments by race.³²²

Recent Developments

Blanding Watson, president from 2011 until the present, is leading important initiatives in the area of health equity.³²³ Following the guidance of the NAACP national office, Lancaster Branch leaders encouraged widening access to the newly available vaccines against COVID 19 disease. In spring 2021, during the difficult days of the COVID 19 pandemic, as vaccines were just becoming available, Watson and NAACP volunteers helped to organize clinics convenient to those who might not have had other access. The first clinics were held at Faith Tabernacle Church of God in Christ on South Ann Street in February 2021, with the help of Pastor Gerald Simmons, long an NAACP supporter, in cooperation with Lancaster EMT and Patients R Waiting. The NAACP helped organize a clinic at Bright Side Baptist Church, with Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, and later, including Patients R Waiting. Blanding Watson facilitated a connection between Bethel AME Church and Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, which resulted in a clinic. By May of that year, NAACP was still working on clinics in cooperation with the South Asian Association of Lancaster,

Penn State Health, Faith Tabernacle Church, The Links, and Highmark. NAACP volunteers helped with telephone reservations and confirmations to people seeking the vaccine. One patient, when contacted to confirm an appointment for Friday, April 9, complimented the NAACP volunteers, for a process that provided a better experience than other vaccination processes that she had tried to access.³²⁴

Through 2020 and 2021, when the pandemic severely limited in-person programs, NAACP Lancaster made good use of the internet and video discussion platforms to present town hall meetings. Many addressed COVID 19 information. Other topics included lead abatement in residences, Black history in Lancaster, and the contributions of women, like Hazel I. Jackson. The 41st Annual Commemoration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was made public via video conferencing.³²⁵

Blanding Watson successfully attempted to increase the visibility of the local branch with the result that he and other leaders are included in city and county policy-making groups. This is a major change from previous decades when Black leaders were not at the table. Over the past ten years, the Lancaster Branch hosted numerous informational town halls both in person and remotely. Topics included health and vaccine information, political candidate forums, history, art, and culture. Watson and other NAACP leaders joined such efforts as the community advisory board for Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the School District of Lancaster, and the City of Lancaster planning process for a new comprehensive plan. Watson joined a working group at Penn State Health which established a Diversity and Inclusion Playbook for its 18,000 employees.³²⁶

NAACP Lancaster has had a continuing presence on the Lancaster City Police-Community Working Group. Patricia Hopson-Shelton, criminal justice chair for the Lancaster Branch, is the designated representative to the group. Delia Sanchez, also a member of the Executive Committee, attends the Working Group.

In the summer of 2019, the branch collaborated with the Lancaster City Bureau of Police, the School District of Lancaster, and the Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology to present a prep course for potential applicants for the police recruitment test. The course met for five weeks to cover reading,

math, and test-taking skills. The immediate goal was to assist and prepare test takers, but the over-arching goal was to develop an inclusive applicant pool and a more diverse police force. Blanding Watson said, "It is the desire of the Lancaster NAACP to provide ongoing, collaborative support to the City of Lancaster, in order to increase diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process for the Bureau of Police. The branch is committed to continual monitoring and modification of the initiative in order to meet the needs of all partners."³²⁷

A major symbolic move was the campaign to raise the Juneteenth flag at Lancaster City Hall on June 18, 2021. The day itself is the anniversary of the public announcement of the end of slavery in the state of Texas, on June 19, 1865. Six months later, on December 6, 1865, chattel slavery was ended throughout the United States with the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. Juneteenth began as a regional celebration in Galveston, Texas, but its meaning has now been embraced nationwide. On June 18, 2021, President Biden signed legislation declaring Juneteenth National Independence Day.

As of June 2020, forty-seven states and the District of Columbia recognized Juneteenth as a holiday or a day worthy of official recognition.³²⁸ The first was Texas in 1980. In 2001, Pennsylvania first officially recognized the third Saturday in June as Juneteenth National Freedom Day by House Resolution 236.³²⁹ In 2019, June 19 was designated Juneteenth National Freedom Day by law in Pennsylvania, with the date being designated a holiday for state employees by Governor Tom Wolf (D) the following year.³³⁰



Toward the next 100 years: Doing the Work, Encouraged by Themes from History

While we celebrate the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP's persistence over 100 years, the anniversary is cause for reflection. NAACP Lancaster resurged each time social and economic factors showed that an anti-discrimination organization was needed in this community. From the anti-lynching bill support in the 1920s, to the push for equal access to war-time jobs in the 1940s, the pressure for access to replacement



Two long-serving Lancaster Branch presidents celebrated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Lancaster Branch at a Freedom Fund event on September 21, 2023. Blanding Watson (left) has been president since 2011, and the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, from 1984 to 1987 and again from 1997 to 2004. Courtesy of the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP and Louis C. McKinney's Photographic Memories.

housing during the urban renewal projects, the documentation of discriminatory employment practices at downtown retailers and other employers, the continuing issues with inequitable treatment in the criminal justice system, progress has been made, and the need for diligence continues.

As NAACP Lancaster continues to embrace the role of building community by focusing on justice. President Blanding Watson is known for the mantra, “No justice, no peace,” spoken as a call and response at any direct-action event. The phrase captures, in a few words, the vision of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People of an “inclusive

community . . . where all persons can exercise their civil and human rights without discrimination.”³³¹ Anyone who embraces this vision, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity, is welcomed as a member.

The contribution of the Lancaster Branch to our county and our city is the work to create a more just and inclusive community. Like so many other civic, charitable and social justice organizations among us, the officers, executive committee members, and other members of NAACP Lancaster strive to make Lancaster the best it can be. All the people named in this essay and so many more worked persistently and effectively in Lancaster County, toward a more welcoming, inclusive, and just community. We are all in their debt.

The history of NAACP Lancaster reveals several themes to guide future work. The first may seem obvious, but it must be stated until it is no longer true. Lancaster City and County have been and remain a segregated community. This is, sadly, a tradition as long and deep as other more positive traits. Residents must face this characteristic of our home and question our place in it. Whether as the target of questionable practices or as the beneficiary—even if unwitting—of inequitable treatment, we must see discrimination clearly, question it, and work to change it.

A second theme that runs through this essay is the need for diversity in housing options. A linked, but not exactly similar, issue is the need for affordable housing in various areas of the county that are close to employment, transportation, and services. It is easy to conclude that only minority residents need affordable housing. People of every demographic need affordable homes, especially young people and elderly people. The disruptions of Lancaster urban renewal in the 1960s are the most egregious example of this need. NAACP Lancaster's volunteers advocated for scattered-site affordable housing in the 1960s and 1970s. The need persists today.

A third theme in this essay is the work for employment opportunities for all. We have seen the underutilization of the energy, skills, and contributions of Lancaster's minority workers through the earlier years of this history. NAACP Lancaster's Legal Redress Committee continues to receive employment discrimination complaints to this day.

Calculating the economic benefit to our county of the effective use of our

workforce is well beyond the scope of this essay. “An Equity Profile of Lancaster County,” published by the YWCA of Lancaster and a coalition of civic groups expressed the cost of this inequity to all county residents. Their disturbing finding was that Lancaster County “misses out on an estimated \$1.9 billion in economic activity per year because of racial economic exclusion.”³³² Some may criticize the size of this number and want to question the methodology that generated it. Nevertheless, even a fraction of this total is a heavy price for our community to pay. Community economic development can be the pay-back to all residents for anti-discrimination work.

In the past few years NAACP Lancaster has added health equity as a top priority effort. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic clearly has pushed the Branch on this issue, to bring vaccination and other wellness opportunities and education to the community. Local faith congregations have strongly aided this effort. Health equity joins housing, employment, and education as a strong focus of the branch.

Another theme of this study is the varied tactics employed by NAACP leaders and members to achieve goals. The NAACP is noted for the ability to mount a direct action or a public demonstration.³³³ The demonstrations of the 1960s at Rocky Springs Park and outside the downtown department stores, as well as the rallies after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and countering Ku Klux Klan actions are well-remembered. But NAACP leaders advocated in council chambers and board rooms long before they took to sidewalks. Their advocacy to City Council and city officials about housing needs during urban renewal and their meetings with department store owners before the downtown marches are two examples. As mentioned, Lancaster Branch members serve on Lancaster’s Police-Community Working Group. The direct relationships of the current president, Blanding Watson, with city, county, state, and business leaders show how this tactic remains current. Branch leaders have been astute observers of leadership and power structures in the national NAACP, and in regional and state government, and in businesses. They have used this knowledge to advance the local cause of social justice.

Through periods of strength and weakness, NAACP Lancaster persisted. The impulse toward social justice has continued in Lancaster County for over 100 years in spite of depression, war, and community resistance. On

the 100th anniversary of the founding of the national NAACP in 2009, newspaper columnist Leonard Pitts acknowledged the importance of “The Work that is bigger than one person and longer than one life.” It is incremental and sometimes tedious. It is registering another voter, filing another request for legal redress, joining in a lawsuit about a voter ID law or a school funding formula, writing another press release, sponsoring another vaccination or health screening clinic, and, if necessary, joining another unity rally or protest against injustice. As Cobbie Burns, president of NAACP Lancaster from 2009 until 2011, said, “We still try to forge ahead, no matter what.”³³⁴



Appendix 1: Presidents of the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP

This list of presidents is reconstructed mainly from identifications in the NAACP Papers at the Library of Congress, LNP newspaper records, and a list of presidents compiled in 2016 by Karen Dixon, member and officer of the Lancaster Branch for many years. There are some inconsistencies among the sources, especially in dates. NAACP biennial elections for all branches are usually held in November with installation in the following year, resulting in some possible discrepancies in the presidential year. This is, nevertheless, a list of people who dedicated significant time and energy to the Lancaster Branch and its initiatives.

1923-1931	Mrs. John C. (Laura) Carter ³³⁵
1924	Mr. A. L. Polite ³³⁶
1931-1933	Mrs. Annie Williams ³³⁷
1935	Mr. Harry Smith ³³⁸
1943-1945	The Rev. Ernest Christian ³³⁹
1945-1946	Mr. A. L. Polite ³⁴⁰
1946	Mr. Eli L. Hart ³⁴¹
c.1946-1960	Period of inactivity
1960	The Rev. Philip Accooe ³⁴²
1960	Mr. Ashley S. Dudley, Jr. ³⁴³
1961-1963	Mr. Herbert A. Cooper ³⁴⁴
1963	Mr. Kenneth Bost ³⁴⁵
1963-1964	Mr. Ashley Dudley, Jr. ³⁴⁶
January-June, 1965	The Rev. Alexander L. Stephans ³⁴⁷
1965-1966	Mr. Kenneth H. Abernathy ³⁴⁸
January-June, 1967	Mr. Richard Allen Wilson ³⁴⁹
1967-1971	The Rev. Ernest Christian ³⁵⁰
1972-1976	Mr. Milton B. Stanley ³⁵¹
January-June, 1977	Mr. Robert E. Epler ³⁵²
1977	The Honorable Louise B. Williams ³⁵³
1977-1983	Period of inactivity
1984-July, 1987	The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro ³⁵⁴
1987-1993	The Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman, III ³⁵⁵
1993-1996	The Rev. Roland P. Forbes ³⁵⁶
1997-September, 2004	The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro ³⁵⁷
September, 2004-2006	The Honorable Louise B. Williams ³⁵⁸
2006-2009	The Reverend Robert O. Bailey ³⁵⁹
2009-2011	Mr. Cobbie Burns ³⁶⁰
2011-Present	Mr. Blanding P. Watson ³⁶¹

Appendix 2: Biographical Information

This appendix contains additional information about some Lancaster Branch officers and members who are mentioned in this article. Many other Lancastrians also served the Branch.

The Rev. Philip A. Accooe, involved in the rebirth of the Lancaster Branch in 1960, was pastor of Bethel AME Church in 1955, and probably served until the early 1960s. Later, he served at Murphy AME Church, Chester, Pennsylvania, in the 1970s.³⁶²

Sherylette Allen-Caldwell was first vice president on the Lancaster Branch in 1994, and installed again in 1997. Ms. Allen-Caldwell was also first vice president of the United States Army 1185th Transportation Terminal Brigade in Lancaster.³⁶³

The Rev. Robert Bailey (1929–2019) arrived in Lancaster in 2000, after serving as pastor for eight AME churches and developing a lengthy career as an entrepreneur in various fields. He became the Presiding Elder of the Harrisburg District of the AME Philadelphia Conference and held many leadership positions in church and ecumenical groups.³⁶⁴

Ashley S. Dudley, Jr., (1920–2008), a dental technician, served as a leader of the Lancaster Branch during the difficult times of the 1960s. He was an active member of Bethel AME Church.³⁶⁵

Ulrica K. Cook was born in 1888 in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and moved to New York City, before coming to Lancaster in 1917. She served the Lancaster Branch, often as treasurer, for over twenty-six years. She was a member of Bethel AME Church. Mrs. Cook worked for thirty-three years in the home of Dr. Wilhelmina S. Scott, 1262 Lititz Pike, where she helped raise the Scott children.³⁶⁶

The Rev. Ernest Ellsworth Christian (c. 1909–1984) was born in Frederick, Maryland, and moved to Lancaster in 1928. He served churches in Chambersburg, Mercersburg, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and was also a leader at Bethel AME Church. He first served as president of the Lancaster Branch from 1943-45 before joining the Air Force and then again from 1967 to 1971. He was a strong advocate for the inclusion of Black voices in the urban renewal effort and in education.³⁶⁷

Martin Dees, Jr., came to Lancaster in 1965, after receiving a master's degree from Fisk University and teaching chemistry. He has been consistently active in the Lancaster Branch, serving on the Executive Committee and as chair of the Legal Redress Committee for many years. He was the first Black chemist/principal scientist at Armstrong World Industries, where he signed fourteen patents.³⁶⁸

Karen G. Dixon has been a member of the Lancaster Branch since at least 1972. She

served for over fifty years in various roles including secretary-treasurer, first vice president, executive committee member, and Freedom Fund banquet chair. Her long involvement with the branch and with Bethel AME church, and her retention of records greatly aided this historical project.³⁶⁹

Patricia Hopson-Shelton is an emerita staff member of Millersville University, working from 1987 to 2010 as assistant to the president for affirmative action, later expanding her role to include social equity and diversity issues. Her numerous community service roles include past chair of the Pennsylvania Advisory Committee for the United States Office of Civil Rights. She served the Lancaster Branch at least since 1988, when she planned the annual banquet. She continues as a member of the NAACP Lancaster Executive Committee in 2023.³⁷⁰

Hazel I. Jackson moved to Lancaster in 1952, and, after persistent effort, was the first Black woman to teach in the School District of Lancaster in 1961. In 1970, she became the first Black professor at Millersville University, where she taught until 1994. She served the Lancaster Branch in numerous ways, including as education chair. Hazel I. Jackson Middle School, South Ann Street, bears her name.³⁷¹

Robert L. Pfannebecker, (b. 1933), was the son of German immigrants who identified as white and established their bakery on Manor Street, reputed to bake the “best light pastries in town.”³⁷² He attended Reynolds School, J. P. McCaskey High School, and Franklin & Marshall College, class of 1955. At law school, many classmates were involved in local politics at a time when the city was changing from decades of Republican control under the mayoral term (1956-1962) of Richardson Dilworth (D), a liberal reformer. This experience enlarged his perspective to see that racism in local organizations could be altered by the work of dedicated people.

Mr. Pfannebecker returned to Lancaster in 1958 and was hired by Jacques H. Geisenberger, whose son, Jacques H. Geisenberger, Jr., also attended Franklin & Marshall and the University of Pennsylvania. Together the three established a law firm for a time. The elder Mr. Geisenberger supported his young associate’s work for social justice.

Bob Pfannebecker connected to the Freedoms Committee at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster. He worked for the Freedoms Committee at a “modest hourly rate” on the litigation involving Rocky Springs Park in 1960s. He continued to provide legal services to the NAACP, but as a volunteer, notably in negotiations with the owners of local department stores in 1963 regarding hiring Black people in sales positions.

Later, Mr. Pfannebecker became managing partner of the law firm Zimmerman, Pfannebecker, Nuffort & Albert. The legal community in Lancaster benefitted from his social justice concerns. He presented a resolution to the Lancaster Bar Association against dining or holding meetings at the Hamilton Club or the Lancaster County Club because they did not welcome Jewish people. The resolution did not address whether private clubs

did or did not allow certain people to join, but that the Bar Association would only do business with “places of public accommodation.” By law in Pennsylvania after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1939 and, subsequently, the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, discrimination in “places of public accommodation” was illegal. The Bar Association passed the resolution. Mr. Pfannebecker remembers another lawyer in the hallway of the Court House, saying to him, “I didn’t know you were Jewish.” The lawyer expressed the fallacy that one must be a member of a group to work against injustices to that group. The entire history of the NAACP on the national and local level discredits that belief.³⁷³

Nelson Polite, Sr., (1922–2016), was the son of NAACP Lancaster founder A. L. Polite and his wife, Blanche. A member of the class of 1941 at J. P. McCaskey High School, he also graduated from the Lancaster Business College, studying accounting and business administration. Mr. Polite served for eighteen years at the Marietta Air Force Depot, and then was transferred to New Cumberland Army Depot, where he was assistant property disposal officer. He retired after forty-two years of service as a marketing and sales manager for the United States government. He was a life-long member of Bethel AME Church. His membership and board service in many community organizations included Crispus Attucks Center, the Urban League, LancasterHistory, and the Community Action Program. He was a member of Lancaster City Council for twelve years, serving as both president and vice-president. Mr. Polite was a member of Mt. Horeb Masonic Blue Lodge for sixty-nine years, an officer in local and state-wide Masonic organizations, and a 33rd degree Mason. He made significant contributions to NAACP Lancaster during the stressful urban renewal years, serving as chair of branch Housing Committee and vice-president. He was a member of the subcommittee on housing of the Lancaster City and County Human Relations Commission and the Adams-Musser Towns Citizens Committee. He continued as an active branch member for decades.³⁷⁴

Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El (October 1, 1948–December 29, 2018), a native of Washington, DC, earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Barnard College and a Ph. D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She taught at Temple University for ten years and at Millersville University (MU) for thirty-five years. She was admired by generations of students in the psychology department, in the African American studies program which she directed, and in the American Studies minor program which she founded, as an tireless and generous teacher. Dr. Smith-Wade-El brought that same energy to her community activism. She served as chair of membership drives, education initiatives, and scholarship opportunities for the Lancaster Branch. She advised and strengthened the college chapter at MU, making sure that the resources of both MU and NAACP were mutually supportive. For example, she collaborated with Lancaster Branch President Ronald Taliaferro to bring the national NAACP President Kweisi Mfume to lecture at MU on February 27, 2002.³⁷⁵

Milton B. Stanley, 629 South Lime Street, was installed as Lancaster Branch president in January 1972. He was supervising sanitarian at the State Health Center, 916 Columbia

Avenue. Mr. Stanley received his undergraduate degree from Morgan State College and his master's degree in public health from Columbia University. In 1974, Mr. Stanley was again elected president in a competitive election with Kenneth Bost, and continued to lead the branch until 1977.³⁷⁶

The Reverend Alexander L. Stephans (1928–2022) served as pastor of Bethel AME Church for only a few years, from 1963 to 1966, but his influence on NAACP Lancaster was strong. Bethel AME Church was the site of his marriage to Freda Jean Stewart, a fellow student from Wilberforce University in Ohio, on March 21, 1964. He was elected president of the branch in December 1964.³⁷⁷

A native of Newark, New Jersey, the Rev. Stephans grew up in the AME church. He graduated from Wilberforce University, an historically Black institution founded by the AME church. After military service, he attended Paine Theological Seminary at Wilberforce, and the Boston University School of Theology. He received a master of science degree in social policy from the University of Pennsylvania in 1972.

The Rev. Stephans was a leader of the NAACP-sponsored protests in downtown Lancaster during the summer of 1963 for fair job opportunities for Blacks. He organized buses from Bethel AME church to the August 28, 1963, March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. By March of 1966, he was pastoring in Devon, Pennsylvania. He returned to Lancaster in March to offer the invocation at the NAACP third annual banquet, where he received the “Human Dignity Award,” “In appreciation for the humane leadership so unselfishly devoted to the cause of human dignity.”³⁷⁸

The Rev. Stephans served for twenty-five years in the Department of Human Services for the City of Philadelphia, while pastoring or leading AME churches in Delaware, New Jersey, and southeast and central Pennsylvania. He died on August 13, 2022.³⁷⁹

Chester Stewart contributed his leadership skills not only to the NAACP Lancaster Youth Division in the late 1960s, but also to a local band, The Tranells. The band recorded its biggest hit “Come On and Tell Me” at the Sound Plus Studio in Philadelphia. Still well-received, Charles Stewart performed on August 26-29, 2022, at the Seventh Ward Reunion and Homecoming Celebration.³⁸⁰

The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro came to Lancaster in 1982 with his family. He graduated from Jones College, Jacksonville, Florida, majoring in communications, and received his preaching license at the 19th Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia in 1977. He led the revival of the Lancaster Branch in 1984. He served as president from 1984 to 1987 and again from 1997 to 2004. At the same time, he worked as a pastor and in the School District of Lancaster to support students staying in school. He currently serves as pastor of Spring Branch Missionary Baptist Church, Wagram, South Carolina.³⁸¹

Betty Tompkins (July 29, 1917–April 7, 2001) was a staunch supporter of social justice causes for decades. She was born in England and served in the Royal Air Force during

World War II, refueling bombers. She met her husband, Battalion Sergeant Major Samuel B. Tompkins, married, and moved with him to Lancaster, where the segregation in this country shocked her. During the 1960s, Mrs. Tompkins tirelessly volunteered for the Urban League, the Crispus Attucks Center, NAACP Lancaster, and the Lancaster YWCA. She held many posts in the NAACP, including publicity chair. She helped organize the Susquehanna Valley Alliance in 1979 to oppose the re-opening of the Three Mile Island (TMI) nuclear power plant. In 1983, she was arrested for blocking the entrance to TMI, but her actions were found justified by a judge. The Urban League awarded her the Elaine J. Washington Memorial Equal Opportunity Award in 1996. Mrs. Tompkins was a member of Bethel AME Church and a former member of St. James Episcopal Church. She owned the Duke Cut Rate Store, 424 South Duke Street.³⁸²

Blanding P. Watson, president of NAACP Lancaster from 2009 to the present, graduated from J. P. McCaskey High School in 1990 and in 2023 was named a Distinguished Alumni by the J. P. McCaskey Alumni Association. He attended both Lebanon Valley College and the National Labor College, Silver Spring, Maryland. In 2021, he was appointed president of the Pennsylvania State Conference by the NAACP national office.

Mr. Watson followed his father to activism in union and labor affairs and his mother to youth advocacy. From 1990 until 1997, Mr. Watson served as the president of the Lancaster Steelworkers local at Tenneco. He was one of the youngest local presidents in the history of that union.

Mr. Watson joined NAACP Lancaster in 1996, at the age of twenty-four, mentored by John E. "Gene" Burgess, Sr., a member of Bethel AME Church and treasurer of NAACP Lancaster. The Rev. Ronald L. Taliaferro was also an important mentor.

From his early years in the organization, Mr. Watson took on leadership roles. He served on the Executive Committee and as youth and college coordinator. He helped found college chapters at Millersville University and Elizabethtown College in 2005–06. He served as vice-president. In November 2010, he was elected president of NAACP Lancaster for a two-year term and has been re-elected regularly.

Mr. Watson has consulted on diversity, equity, and inclusion for the School District of Lancaster and other school districts, employers, and police departments. He has assisted the community engagement offices at both Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health and the Penn State Health Lancaster Medical Center. He ensured that the NAACP was consistently represented on the Police Community Working Group of the City of Lancaster. He has often represented the NAACP at meetings of Lancaster City Council and the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Watson has been an active attendee and volunteer at Christian churches.³⁸³

The Honorable Louise Williams served twice as president of NAACP Lancaster. She moved to the city from her birthplace of Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, in 1962 and started

attending NAACP meetings within the next year or two. She worked for Alderman (later called District Justice) Walter H. Harrison. Governor Milton J. Shapp (D) appointed her to serve the unexpired term when Alderman Harrison died in 1973. In 1975, Judge Williams won election and served twenty-seven years in the post. Judge Williams became the administrator of the five-judge city district justice system in the 1980s, supervising scheduling and a seventeen-person office. She served fourteen years on the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons. She remembers that she was the first person on the Board to represent victims, as she lost her son to murder in 1994. Judge Williams was a member of the City Council for Lancaster for fourteen years and on the board of the Urban League and the YWCA. She received the YWCA's Citizen of the Year Award in 1985.³⁸⁴

Richard Allen Wilson served as Lancaster Branch president from January to June 1967. Employed by Raub Supply Company, he also was a talented baritone. He appeared on television and the Broadway stage. In 1958, he spent a year in Europe touring with a United States State Department cultural exchange program. He lived in Willow Street with his family of four children.³⁸⁵



Endnotes

1. Diary of Marianna Gibbons Brubaker, June 8, 1923, 159, LancasterHistory, Lancaster, PA, MG 0846. (Hereafter, Brubaker diary.) Brubaker's name appears variously as Marian and Marianna. This essay uses Marianna Gibbons Brubaker (1848-1929), as stated by her step-great-grandson Jack Brubaker in "Three Generations on the Underground Railroad: The Gibbons Family of Lancaster County," *Pennsylvania Heritage* (Fall, 2019), <https://paheritage.wpengine.com/article/generations-underground-railroad/>.
2. "Bylaws for Units," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Section 3, b, 1: Maintaining a Branch Charter, <https://naacp.org/resources/bylaws-units>, (accessed November 7, 2022).
3. "Application for Charter of Lancaster, PA, Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Received at National Office June 16, 1923," Folder 13, Box 1: G183, Lancaster 1923-39, Part I: Branch Files, 1910-47, Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Manuscript Division, (hereafter, NAACP Papers), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
4. "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Minutes of the Meetings of the Board of Directors, 1923, NAACP Papers, 942-943.
5. The founding year was given as 1962 in 2008, *Sunday News*, October 19, 2008, 22. In an opinion column about the hundredth anniversary of the national NAACP, the Rev. Louis Butcher, a long-time NAACP and social justice supporter, listed 1963 as the beginning of the branch, *Sunday News*, October 11, 2009, 89. Because the Branch was quieter in the 1970s than in the previous decade, the 1980s is sometimes given as the period of growth and revival, "25 Years Ago," *Intelligencer Journal/LancasterNewEra*, January 19, 2009, 32. By 2013, when the Branch celebrated the 90th anniversary of its founding, the founding date was recognized as 1923. Susan Cassidy, "Looking back—and ahead; Gala marks anniversary of Crispus Attucks Center, NAACP chapter," *Sunday News*, May 26, 2013, 51, 60. Note: All references to Lancaster newspapers were searched on the LNP/Lancaster Online Archives, <https://lancasteronline.com/archives/>.
6. "Constitution of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," <https://>

naacp.org/resources/naacp-constitution, (accessed November 7, 2022).

7. Dr. Leroy Hopkins, comment at a meeting of the NAACP Lancaster 100th Anniversary History Committee.

8. For biographical information about Mr. Burns and some of the other Lancaster Branch officers and members mentioned, please see Appendix 1.

9. Cobbie Burns, interviewed by author via video conferencing, August 16, 2022.

10. "NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom, 1909-2009," a digital exhibition by the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/prelude.html>, and <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/founding-and-early-years.html>, (accessed November 8, 2022).

11. Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 124, 301-305.

12. "Our History," <https://naacp.org/about/our-history>, (accessed November 8, 2022).

13. Leroy Hopkins, "Bethel African Methodist Church in Lancaster: Prolegomenon to a Social History," *The Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* (hereafter, *JLCHS*), 90, no. 4 (1986): 205-236, 226.

14. "Historical African American Churches in Lancaster County," compiled from A. Hunter Rineer, *Churches and Cemeteries of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania: A Complete Guide* (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster County Historical Society, 1993), <https://lititzlibrary.org/historical-african-american-churches-in-lancaster-county/>, (accessed November 12, 2022); "Mount Zion A. M. E. Church in Columbia," <https://purehistory.org/mt-zion-a-m-e-church-1817-columbia-pa/>, (accessed November 12, 2022); Earle Cornelius, "Bethel A.M.E. Church, a rock for generations of Lancaster African Americans, to celebrate its 200th anniversary," LancasterOnline, September 2, 2017, https://lancasteronline.com/features/faith_values/bethel-a-m-e-church-a-rock-for-generations-of-lancaster-african-americans-is-set/article_b5ac323e-8e8d-11e7-a004-abf9fd1ec5b2.html.

15. John Kern, "Ebenezer Baptist Church moves into new home," LancasterOnline, September 13, 2013, https://lancasteronline.com/features/faith_values/ebenezer-baptist-church-moves-into-new-home/article_93c659e7-d2ec-5b92-a5f4-5ad1d617261d.html, (accessed October 24, 2023).

16. "Program for the first annual meeting of the Negro Civic League (Lancaster County, PA), 3-4 October 1918," LancasterHistory, Lancaster, PA. For more about the Negro Civic League, see Leroy Hopkins, "Holding Back the Night," *JLCHS*, 122, no. 1/2 (Summer/Fall 2021): 20-24.

17. *The News-Journal*, March 29, 1923, 20; *Lancaster New Era* (hereafter *LNE*), March 30, 1923, 29; *LNE*, April 5, 1923, 3; Richard J. Gerz, Jr., "Urban Reform and the Musser Coalition in the City of Lancaster, 1921-1930," *JLCHS*, vol. 78, no. 2 (1974): 49-109, https://collections.lancasterhistory.org/media/library/docs/edit_vol78no2pp49_109.pdf, (accessed December 19, 2023).

18. For Health Week, see *The News Journal*, April 13, 1923, 9; *LNE*, June 6, 1923, 6; *LNE*, November 10, 1923, 7. Names of those active in NAACP Lancaster appear often in the local press. For examples, see *LNE*, June 6, 1923; November 10, 1923; and February 18, 1925, 3; *Intelligencer Journal* (hereafter *Intelligencer*), March 18, 1925, 16. For Beulah Beaubian, see *Intelligencer*, April 9, 1925, 3, and *LNE*, April 29, 1925, 10. For more about the Hallie Q. Brown Civic Club, see Hopkins, "Holding Back the Night," 21-24.

19. *LNE*, February 6, 1924, 2. Carrie Foster served in various roles in NAACP Lancaster, including member of the Executive Committee and vice-president (*LNE*, November 13, 1931; *Intelligencer*, December 17, 1930), as well as in leadership roles in Bethel AME Church (President of the Missionary Society, *Intelligencer*, April 11, 1928, 5), and in the City of Lancaster related to the experiences of its Black residents. (*LNE*, June 24, 1925, 3).

20. *Intelligencer*, April 8, 1925, 20. For more about Maude B. Coleman, see <https://digitalharrisburg.com/maude-b-coleman/>, (accessed December 17, 2023).

21. *LNE*, September 30, 1922, 1; *The News-Journal*, October 28, 1922, 13.

22. *LNE*, July 1, 1925, 11.

23. See "History of the WCTU," <https://www.wctu.org/history>, (accessed November 12, 2022). For Brubaker's involvement see Brubaker diary, Wednesday, August 26, 1925, 238. For Brubaker's

friendship with the Griest family, see Brubaker diary, Tuesday, April 3, 1923, 93. For the WCTU chapter for Black women, see *LNE*, June 21, 1923, 18. Organizers were Mrs. Laura Brown, state organizer; Miss Manda Landes, county president and state vice president; Mrs. Elizabeth Griest, county treasurer. Called the Nannie H. Burroughs WCTU of Lancaster, officers were president, Mrs. Fannie Thompson, 311 Locust; secretary, Mrs. Ada Jones, 729 1/2 North Street; treasurer, Mrs. Dora Ewell, 444 Christian Street. See also *LNE*, July 23, 1923, 28, for a WCTU organization for colored women, in Columbia, with officers Mrs. Mary E. Taylor, Mrs. Clara Elliott, Mrs. Anna White. For information about Pastor Mark Thompson, see *LNE*, March 18, 1925, 16; June 24, 1925, 11; and July 1, 1925, 11.

24. For the organizational meeting, see *LNE*, January 19, 1926, 16; *Intelligencer*, February 5, 1926, 1; and *LNE*, January 30, 1926, 15. For the community meeting at Bethel AME church, see *LNE*, January 30, 1926. For a description of the first party, see *LNE*, February 19, 1926, 25. For Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Saunders, see *LNE*, December 14, 1931. Harry Smith was a member of NAACP Executive Committee in 1926, as reported in the *Intelligencer*, April 29, 1926. Mildred Michaels and Mary Mortimer had been local correspondents for the PA State Department of Welfare survey of conditions in the Black community in 1925, as reported in *Intelligencer*, April 8, 1925. For the subsequent parties, see *LNE*, March 24, 1926, 2; April 15, 1926, 3; and *Intelligencer*, December 15, 1928, 20.

25. A. L. Polite's obituary, *Intelligencer*, January 15, 1968, 2.

26. Conversation, Nelson Polite, Jr., and the author, September 19, 2022; information about A. L. Polite's employment from Leroy Hopkins, email to the author, September 11, 2022, and from *Intelligencer*, April 17, 1937, 2. The date of his arrival in Lancaster is based on the fact that, at his death in 1968 at age 94, he had been a member of Bethel AME Church for 67 years according to his obituary. For details on the Stevens House, see Tom Mekeel, "Stevens House high-rise getting a makeover, March 22, 2020, https://lancasteronline.com/alwayslancaster/stevens-house-high-rise-getting-a-makeover/article_d226170e-6aa4-11ea-a002-fb7b0380cc12.html, (accessed November 12, 2022); Obituary of E. Naomi Jones, daughter of A. L. and Blanche Polite, *LNP Always Lancaster*, 26 August 26, 2015, 15.

27. *Intelligencer*, August 21, 1936, 2; *Sunday News*, May 16, 1937, 13,17. For A. L. Polite's offices in NAACP Lancaster, see *Intelligencer*, April 29, 1926, and December 17, 1930; *LNE*, November 13, 1931, and January 4, 1945. His offices are also documented in letter of Miss Ida M. Fairfax, 210 Howard Ave., to Director of Branches, June 12, 1923; "In a day or two you will receive our application for Charter as we have the required member [sic] and over." Signed in Miss Fairfax's writing: "Mrs. J. C. Carter Pres. Abraham Polite Treas. Ida M. Fairfax, Sec." See Financial Statement for the Year Ending December 31, 1928, signed by Abraham L. Polite, treasurer, and Ada S. Hopkins, secretary, Folder 13, Box I: G183, Lancaster 1923-39, Part I: Branch Files, 1910-47, NAACP Papers. The early records of the Lancaster Branch in the NAACP papers are in Folders 13-17 of the Branch Files, as noted here. In subsequent notes, only the folder and box number is given. For A. L. Polite's involvement in Health Week, see *LNE*, March 30, 1923, 29 and April 5, 1923, 3. For examples of A. L. Polite's political activity, see *The News-Journal*, September 10, 1923, 7, regarding a large meeting of Black voters league with A. L. Polite speaking. An example of his leadership in Bethel AME Church is his organization, along with the pastor, of an excursion to Mount Gretna, *LNE*, July 19, 1922, 2.

28. Conversation Nelson Polite, Jr., with the author, September 11, 2022, Lancaster, PA.

29. Jack Brubaker, "Three Generations on the Underground Railroad."

30. Brubaker diary, Monday, November 27, 1922, 331.

31. From Monday, May 15, to Thursday, May 18, 1922, Brubaker attended the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, Brubaker Diary, 1922, 135-138. On June 2, 1922, Brubaker and her husband attended the Longwood Yearly Meeting "to hear Mr. William Pickens, Field Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. . . ." Brubaker Diary, 1922, 153. From June 19 to 22, 1922, Brubaker attended the annual meeting of the NAACP in New York City, Brubaker diary, 1922, 170-173. From June 25 to July 2, 1924, Brubaker attended the annual meeting of the NAACP in Philadelphia, Brubaker diary, 1924, 177-183. For more about Robert W. Bagnall and William

Pickens, see "NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom, 1909-2009", <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/the-new-negro-movement.html>, (accessed November 14, 2022).

32. Brubaker diary, Wednesday, November 1, 1922, 305.

33. Brubaker diary, Tuesday, April 3, 1923, 93.

34. Brubaker diary, January 17, 1923, 17: "A little after 1 P. M. Oram and M. start to hunt up Dr. Williams, who last year was president of the Tampa Branch of the N. A. C. P. [sic]He is not in his office nor does he [come]. So they go to the printing office of Rev. J. D. Potter, whose wife is treasurer. . . . they meet Dr. Beattie, dentist, & his wife, the latter being president of the Tampa Urban League, with whom they have some interesting conversation." On the following day, Brubaker had an appointment and a long talk with Mrs. Beattie, Brubaker diary, January 18, 1923, 18. For her visit to Houston, see Brubaker diary, February 15, 1924, 45-46.

35. Brubaker diary, June 3, 1925, 154, [Re: a trip to Lancaster] "M. does shopping and collects a number of National Association dues, in which she is very successful." A description of Brubaker speaking at an NAACP meeting is given in the Brubaker diary, October 20, 1925, 293: "She goes. . . to the A. M. E. Church, to the regular meeting of the Lancaster Branch of the N. A. A. C. P About a dozen people are present! Those that are there seem glad to see M. and to enjoy her talk. Mrs. Laura J. Carter, president," Jack Brubaker, "Three Generations of the Underground Railroad."

36. *LNE*, May 21, 1923, 4; Brubaker diary, May 27, 1923, 123.

37. Brubaker diary, June 8, 1923, 159: "A telephone message from Mr. A. L. Polite this afternoon. They have the required number, fifty—for organizing a Branch of the N. A. A. C. P., will meet on the third Tuesday in each month and have made [M.] a member of the Executive Committee."

38. "Application for Charter," Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

39. *LNE*, June 6, 1923, 18.

40. Letter of Director of Branches to Miss Ida M. Fairfax, 410 Howard Avenue, June 16, 1923, Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. See also Letter of Director of Branches to Mrs. Ida M. Fairfax, Secretary, Lancaster Branch, 210 Howard Avenue, July 27, 1923: "The charter of the Lancaster Branch has been sent to you by registered mail. This completes the organization of your branch as a full member of the Association. The National Office is gratified to welcome you into the ranks of full-fledged branches." Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers; *LNE*, July 7, 1923, 9."

41. See *The News-Journal*, July 9, 1923, 16, for names of founding officers.

42. Brubaker diary, Thursday, August 2, 1923, 214.

43. Election of Laura Carter as NAACP president, *LNE*, November 10, 1923, 7; notice of resignation as president, *LNE*, November 13, 1931; activity with the Colored Republican Club, *LNE*, October 28, 1924, 2; obituary, *LNE*, January 9, 1940, 3.

44. Brubaker diary, Tuesday, July 15, 1924, 197: "M. makes her report of the recent Conference to the regular meeting of the Lancaster Branch of the N. A. A. C. P. Then a Mr. Hurdelle, [sic] a colored, who was at the Conference part of the time tells several things that M. omitted! Mrs. Ellen Griest and a Mr. Pyott, son of M's old acquaintance "Joe" Pyott are beside M., the only white people present. Other business detains the meeting till nearly midnight."

45. Hurdle family information, some from Ancestry.com, was kindly shared by Leroy Hopkins in a series of emails to the author, August 28-September 3, 2022. Evidence of working in food service from an autograph note signed Mr. James Hurdle, on February 1, 1925, on letterhead "Penn Square Restaurant/Neal McConomy/Lancaster, Pennsylvania," Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers: "Stevens Lies almost forgotten in Shriners cemetery the only one who would Permet colored to Bury there[.]He is to Be Remembered as a Co worker of Sumner Garrison Brown and others who at that time gave their very Lives For Freedom of the slaves."

During the organization of the branch in May-July 1923, Ida Fairfax identified as secretary, see, for example, Letter of Miss Ida M. Fairfax, 210 Howard Ave. to Director of Branches, June 12, 1923; Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. However, a letter was addressed to James Hurdle on September 22, 1923, from the national office, addressing him as secretary: Letter of Assistant Secretary [of NAACP] to Mr. James Hurdle, Secretary, Lancaster Branch, 536 North St., Folder 13,

Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. James Hurdle was also secretary in 1925. In that year, he wrote to the national office, signing himself as secretary. See Letter of James Hurdle, Secretary, 536 North St., to Mr. Robert W. Bagnall, Director of Branches, January 14, 1925, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. See also letter of Assistant Secretary to Mr. James Hurdle, Secretary, Lancaster Branch, 536 North St., September 22, 1923, Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers, regarding the victory in the Johnstown [PA] deportation case,

46. Brubaker diary, Wednesday, September 19, 1923, 262: "This morning's paper brings a singular story: because of Race Riot, in which two or three policemen and probably one colored man were killed, the mayor of Johnstown PA, ordered all the colored people who had lived in the town less than seven years to be deported! This coming to the ears of the N. A. A. C. P., they appealed to Gov Pinchot, who immediately sent to the mayor asking him the cause of his action. A governor, indeed!" See also *The News-Journal*, September 19, 1923, 1, and the *LNE*, September 19, 1923, 2.

47. Letter of Assistant Secretary to Mr. James Hurdle, Secretary, Lancaster Branch, 536 North St., September 19, 1923, Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers: "An Associated Press dispatch in today's New York papers declares that as a direct result of the mayor's action and the protest of the N. A. A. C. P., Mayor [Joseph] Cauffiel was eliminated in yesterday's primaries for re-election. . . . This case offers your branch an excellent opportunity to capitalize this great victory. We urge that you immediately arrange a meeting. . . . Not only does this victory mean a great deal to the colored citizens of Johnstown but it affects every community in the North to which Negro migrants from the South are coming."

48. *The News-Journal*, September 17, 1924, 16. For the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, see <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/legislative-milestones/dyer-anti-lynching-bill>, (accessed October 23, 2023).

49. For more about the Houston Riot of 1917, see Robert B. Haynes, "Houston Riot of 1917," <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/houston-riot-of-1917>, (accessed December 17, 2023) and the chapter about the Leavenworth prisoners in Sara M. Benson, *The Prison of Democracy: Race, Leavenworth, and the Culture of Law* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019) [https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr7fd45.9#metadata_info_tab_contents]; See also Hopkins, "Holding Back the Night," 10-11. For the overturning of the convictions, see "Group seeks clemency for 110 Black soldiers convicted in 1917 Houston Riot," *The Guardian*, December 20, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/dec/20/clemency-110-black-soldiers-1917-houston-mutiny>, and "A Century Later, Army overturns convictions of 110 Black soldiers," <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/century-later-us-army-overturns-convictions-110-black-soldiers-rcna125048>, (accessed December 17, 2023). Local support of the Leavenworth prisoners was reported in the *LNE*, November 19, 1923, 3; November 21, 1923, 7, and December 3, 1923, 9, which identified Mr. John C. Carter, 540 North Street, as the chair of the group. The number of petition signatures was reported in the *Intelligencer*, December 7, 1923, 20. Brubaker was active in raising awareness of the Leavenworth prisoners, speaking for the cause at the local Friends Meeting, Brubaker diary, November 4, 1923, 308.

50. For background on the Scottsboro case, see <https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/scottsboro-boys>, (accessed October 23, 2023). For local activity, see Letter of Robert W. Bagnall, Director of Branches, to Mrs. Ada H. Sanders, Secretary, August 5, 1931, Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers: "We need funds for the defense of the boys in the Scottsboro Cases and I am sure the people of your community will help if given an opportunity, even in spite of the economic depression. I . . . shall be glad to speak for your Branch if it will arrange a Scottsboro Defense meeting on Sunday, August 23," and Letter of Laura J. Carter, Pres., to Mr. Robert Bagnall, Director of Branches, 143 So. Duke St., August 12, 1931: "We find it inadvisable to try to arrange a Defense meeting in the interest of the Scottsboro case, as we must depend upon interest being aroused through the churches and on that Sunday a special Church Rally is being held. We would be glad to arrange a meeting for a later date."

51. Letter of James Hurdle, Secretary, 536 North St., to Mr. Robert W. Bagnall, Director of Branches, January 14, 1925, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

52. Letter of Director of Branches to Mr. James Hurdle, 536 North Street, January 20, 1925, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

53. *The News-Journal*, September 17, 1924, 16.

54. *LNE*, May 3, 1924, 8.

55. Email from Leroy Hopkins to the author, September 11, 2022; Note signed Mr. James Hurdle, February 1, 1925, on letterhead "Penn Square Restaurant/Neal McConomy/Lancaster, Pennsylvania," Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers; Obituary of A. L. Polite, *LNE*, January 15, 1968, 3; Obituary of John C. Carter, *LNE*, March 24, 1958, 9. See also Hopkins, "Holding Back the Night," 8.

56. Letter of Director of Branches to Mrs. Ida M. Fairfax, 210 Howard Avenue, July 11, 1923, and letter of Director of Branches to Mrs. Laura Wilson, 421 North Street, June 2, 1923. See Folder 13, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

57. "Bylaws for Units, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," 11-13; <https://naacp.org/resources/bylaws-units>, (accessed November 15, 2022).

58. Brubaker diary, July 1, 1924, 183. See *The News-Journal*, May 29, 1924, 5, and *LNE*, June 2, 1924. For detailed notes about the 1924 NAACP Annual Convention, see Brubaker diary, June 25 to July 1, 1924, 177-183.

59. Letter of Director of Branches to Mrs. Laura J. Carter, President, 143 South Duke Street, February 13, 1929, and letter of Laura J. Carter, Pres, Lan. Branch, 143 So Duke St, to Mr. Jas Weldon Johnson, Secy N.A.A.C.P., 69 Fifth Ave, New York City, March 21, 1929, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

60. Membership report, stamped June 25, 1931, included 25 names/entities including Mt. Horeb Lodge, Mrs. Laura Carter, Mrs. Ada Sanders, Mr. Abraham L. Polite, Mrs. Nellie Ewell, and Mrs. Ruby Bohee, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

61. See series of letters in Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers, between Laura Carter, president, and Ada H. Sanders, secretary, of Branch 2302 and staff in the national office about the "Miss Pennsylvania Contest," January 31, 1931, to June 29, 1931. Miss Marybelle Millen's address was 416 South Duke Street, and Miss Ethel Brown's, 353 College Avenue. Leroy Hopkins pointed out that the address of Ethel Brown on College Avenue probably indicates that she was a domestic worker who lived in her employer's house, as few Black people lived outside the 7th Ward, email from Leroy Hopkins to the author, April 13, 2023.

62. See July 1933, re: first meeting of PA State Conference, August 1933, Harrisburg, Folder 3, Pennsylvania State Conference, 1927-32, Box G-177, [Part I], Branch files, NAACP Papers, and Minutes of first meeting of PA State Conference, Folder 4, Box G-177, NAACP Papers.

63. Letter of Laura J. Carter, Pres, 143 So. Duke St., to Mr. William Pickens, Field Secretary, November 1, 1931, Folder 14, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. The signature or initials at end are indecipherable. For more about Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP from 1931-1955, and William Pickens, a founder of NAACP and field secretary, 1920-1942, see <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/the-new-negro-movement.html>.

64. This revival effort is documented in letter of Mrs. S. Washington, 1001 Marietta Ave., Jan 19, [1935], to Mr. Walter White: "I received [sic] the Claude Neal literature, [sic] and feel that if such outrages are to be stopped, now is the time." Folder 15, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers. The literature from the NAACP about the lynching of Claude Neal may well have been this article, published by the national NAACP on November 30, 1924. <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/10834044>, (accessed October 23, 2023). Claude Neal was twenty-three years old, murdered on October 26, 1934, in Greenwood, FL, after a mob stormed the jail in Brewton, AL. For more on the crime, see <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/claude-neal-notice-close-file>, (accessed October 23, 2023). Further correspondence between William Pickens, Field Secretary, and Mrs. S. Washington in the same file is dated February 1, February 5, February 11, and March 3, 1935. On March 3, Washington wrote: "No doubt you are expecting some report concerning the reorganizing of a branch in Lancaster After waiting two weeks for a date to use the community center, our meeting on Feb 20th was doubled up with a card party. It was advertised in the papers white and colored. I made several calls, phoned fully a dozen people, and sent out about two dozen post-cards. With all that we

hadn't more than a dozen people, but enough for a start. On Feb 28th we had another meeting, and plans were made to try and get the Rep. of the Legislature to come down, the end of this month and have a mass meeting. I'm selling the N.A.A.C.P. and do not think they could bring a message strong enough on the work to have the results I hope for, however."

65. Letter, The Department of Branches to Mr. H. T. Smith, 517 East Orange Street, April 17, 1935, Folder 15, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers

66. This reorganization effort is documented in letter of William Pickens to Mrs. S. Washington, 1313 North 57th Street, Philadelphia, January 17, 1936; letter of S. Washington to W. Pickens, January 28, [1936]; letter of W. Pickens to Mrs. Washington, February 6, 1936; letter of W. Pickens to Rev. Mr. Matthews, Locust Street, February 6, 1936, marked "letter returned;" letter of W. Pickens to Mrs. Margaret Wright, 534 East Fulton Street, Lancaster, September 10, 1936; letter of M. Wright, 534 Fulton, to Walter White, September 5, [1936]; postcard of Catherine Wright to NAACP, 69 Fifth Avenue, NY, postmarked November 14, 1939; letter of Jho P. Scott, Harrisburg, PA., to E. Frederic Marrow, Branch Coordinator, April 13, 1939; letter of W. Pickens to Miss Catherine Wright, 434 East Fulton St., Lancaster PA; letter of Catherine Wright, 28 October 28, 1939, to NAACP; and form letter to former Branch Officers from Walter White, October 23, 1939, regarding revocation of charter. On the reverse of this form, Sara Munson to Mr. Walter White, stamped November 10, 1939. Folder 17, Box I: G183, NAACP Papers.

67. The Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, "Our Documentary Heritage, The Great Depression–1934," <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1865-1945/great-depression.html>, (accessed December 18, 2023).

68. *LNE*, May 16, 1941, 19; *Intelligencer*, July 11, 1941, 1; *LNE*, July 23, 1942, 9.

69. Letter of A. William Hill, Jr., 317 ½ Chester Street, [Lancaster], to NAACP, September 7, 1943, and letter of Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, to Mr. A. William Hill, Jr., September 14, 1943, Folder 12, Lancaster, PA, 1943-55, Box c 164, Group II, NAACP Papers; *Intelligencer*, May 3, 1941, 2.

70. Letter of LeRoy S. Campbell, Sec., 415 North St., Lancaster, PA, to National Office, September 24, 1943, Folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers; *LNE*, November 29, 1943, 14.

71. Letters of Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, to Mr. Ernest Christian, President, Lancaster Branch, 434 South Christian Street, Lancaster, October 7 and 21, 1943, Folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers: "The Charter of the Lancaster Branch is being mailed to you. This completes the organization of your Branch as a full member of the Association."

72. Letter of LeRoy S. Campbell, Executive Secretary, 415 North Street, to Miss Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, December 13, 1943, on printed letterhead of branch with a list of officers and executive committee members, including Rev. E. S. Dennis, Elain J. Craig, Anice Travis, Merle C. Wilson, Rev. M. F. Matthews, E. Naomi Polite, Ruby M. Payne, Howard Stewart, A. William Hill, Jr., Ulrica K. Cooke, and Eli Hart, Folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers; *LNE*, November 11, 1943, 14.

73. The housing survey was reported in *LNE*, October 22, 1943, 7, and *Intelligencer*, October 22, 1943, 4.

74. Flyer for Wartime Labor and Industry Conference, Nov. 21 [1943]; printed signature of Mr. Merle Wilson, Chairman, Labor & Industry Committee, Lancaster Branch, N.A.A.C.P., 413 North Street, Folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers; *LNE*, November 19, 1943, 20; *LNE*, November 19, 1943, 20, and November 20, 1943, 10.

75. Letter of Harriet L. Stewart, 503 North Street, to [NAACP, 1945,] and two letters of Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, to Miss Harriet Stewart, Exec. Sec., Lancaster Branch, 503 North Street, one dated August 31, 1945, Folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers; "President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice," Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries Social Welfare History Project, <https://socialwelfare.libraryvcu.edu/federal/presidents-committee-fair-employment-practice-fepc/>, (accessed December 18, 2023).

76. Letter of LeRoy S. Campbell, Secretary, 415 North Street, to Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, October 10, 1944, and Report of Legal Redress & Legislation Committee to the Local

Branch NAACP of Lancaster City and County, from Rev. E. S. Dennis, chairman, January 10, 1945, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers.

77. Alison Kibler and Shanni Davidowitz, "Our Color Won't Wash Off: The Desegregation of Swimming in Lancaster, Pennsylvania," *Journal of Civil and Human Rights*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 7 and note 8.

78. Letter of Harriett Stewart, North Street [number crossed out], to Miss Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, February 26, 1946, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers. Hart's address was 433 Green Street, and Stewart's was 503 North Street.

79. Letter of Harriett Stewart, Sec'y, 503 North St. to Miss Black, stamped as rec'd July 1, 1946; letter of Harriet Stewart, Sec'y, 503 North St. to Mr. Gloster B. Current, Director of Branches, February 24, 1947; letter of Miss Harriett Stewart, Secretary, 444 S. Christian Street, Lancaster, to Lucille Black, Membership Secretary, March 24, 1947; letter of Lucille Black, membership secretary, to Mrs. Harriet Stewart, Creek Lane and S. Duke St., Apt. 4, July 8, 1949, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers.

80. Letter of Miss Harriett Stewart, Secretary, Apt. #4, Creek Lane and So. Duke Street, to Lucille Black, membership secretary, NAACP, May 16, 1949, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers.

81. Letter of Lucille Black, Membership Secretary, to "Mrs. Stewart," [May 4, 1949]. "I suppose it would be best to return the charter and whatever funds remain in the treasury in the name of the Association." Date of letter is reported as May 4, 1949, in a letter of Miss Harriett Stewart, Secretary, Creek Lane and So. Duke Street, to Lucille Black, Membership Secretary, May 16, 1949, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers

82. Letter of Harriett Stewart, Secretary, Apt. #4, Creek Lane & S. Duke St., to Miss Lucille Black, 20 West 40th St., New York, November 26, 1949, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers; see also Kibler and Davidowitz, "Our Color Won't Wash Off": 7.

83. *LNE*, June 24, 1940, 1, 14

84. For more about Congressman Martin Dies, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Dies-Jr>, (accessed October 24, 2022); *LNE*, June 24, 1940, 1, 14.

85. Nelson Polite, Jr., conversation with the author, September 19, 2022, Lancaster, PA; *LNE*, May 6, 1937, 12; Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Polite and Mr. and Mrs. Reuben A. Carr listed as patrons and patronesses of May 18 concert by "Negro soprano" Florence Cole-Talbert, *LNE*, September 27, 1937, 9. *Intelligencer*, Tuesday, September 1, 1941, 1: "City [Draft] Board No. 1 said that it would order the prosecution of Reuben Abner Carr for failure to report for a physical examination unless he turned up within the next few days. The last address which the registrant gave was, care of Abraham Polite, 540 North St. Notices from the board have been returned from that address as 'not there.'"

86. *LNE*, September 27, 1937, 9; *LNE*, September 29, 1937, 2; *Intelligencer*, October 12, 1937, 2; *LNE*, October 12, 1937, 7; *Intelligencer*, September 28, 1937, 6: "The Local branch of the National Negro Congress will meet tomorrow evening in the Colored Odd Fellows hall, 525 Chester street. . . .The sponsors for the meeting are Reuben Carr, Dr. J. V. Sterett, John H. Hill, Nathaniel Sprouell [sic], Miss Dorothy Scott, Mrs. Ruby Payne, Albert Curtis, Eugene Dunson, Mrs. Mary Mortimer, Luther Beatle, Ray Carter, Miss Ella Henry, Abram Polite, Michael Clark, George Hunter, Alfred Wilson, and William Brown."

87. *Intelligencer*, October 12, 1937, 2; *LNE*, October 12, 1937, 7.

88. For information about National Negro Congress, see Daren Salter, "National Negro Congress (1935-40s)," January 18, 2007, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/national-negro-congress/>, (accessed October 24, 2023).

89. See *LNE*, June 24, 1940, 1, 14; *LNE*, June 25, 1940, 1, 16; *LNE*, June 26, 1940, 1, 4.

90. *LNE*, June 26, 1940, 1, 4, and for printed comments by Ruby Payne and A. L. Polite; See *LNE*, June 27, 1940, 1, 24, for comments by others who signed.

91. *Intelligencer*, June 25, 1940, 10.

92. *LNE*, June 6, 1950, 1; *Intelligencer*, October 2, 1953, 24; *LNE*, December 7, 1953, 1; *LNE*, March 12, 1954, 10.

93. *LNE*, July 7, 1953, 26, and the *Intelligencer*, same date, 21, re: The Conference on Colonialism and Nationalism in Africa planned for late July-early August 1953, at which Walter White was scheduled to speak about "America's Interest in Africa's Crisis." *The Intelligencer Journal* reported on May 28, 1954, 33, that he testified to the loyalty of Ralph Bunche, ambassador to the United National and Nobel laureate before a United States loyalty board. Mention of White's opposition to the appointment of a former South Carolina governor as ambassador to the UN appeared in *LNE*, June 28, 1953, 20. See *The Sunday News*, February 22, 1953, 14, for Drew Pearson's comment about his influence. Eleanor Roosevelt's eulogy appeared in *Intelligencer*, April 22, 1955, 20. The *LNE* reported his death and the appointment of Roy Wilkins as NAACP Executive Secretary on April 12, 1955, 2.

94. *LNE* reported on June 28, 1954, p. 3, that Thurgood Marshall commented at the NAACP annual meeting that "schools are most important to me." Marshall had received the alumni award at his alma mater earlier that year, as reported in *LNE*, February 13, 1954, 3. For local report of the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Intelligencer*, May 18, 1954, 6.

95. See *LNE*, January 18, 1950, 1, 12, for reports of protests near Lincoln University, PA.

96. Letter of Harriett Stewart, Secretary, Apt. #4, Creek Lane & S. Duke St., to Lucille Black, November 26, 1949, and reply of Lucille Black, membership secretary, 3 January 3, 1950, folder 12, Box c 164, NAACP Papers.

97. The *LNE* reported that the NAACP planned to eliminate branches found to be Communist influenced, June 24, 1950, 12. The same paper carried a column about the loyalty controversy surrounding Paul Robeson and Ralph Bunche, October 4, 1950, 14. Howard Whitman's column in the *Intelligencer*, November 27, 1950, 8, listed ten actions that every citizen could take to stop Communism, including fighting the race problem.

98. For founding of Pennsylvania State Conference, see clipping from the *Afro American*, August 12, 1933: "Representatives of seventeen branch associations of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People met here . . . and formed a statewide association." Folder 2, Box G-177, NAACP Papers. The Conference included 23 branches, including Lancaster. See "Officers of the Pennsylvania Branches, February 6, 1933" in the same folder. Williams's address is 425 North Street. Rev. R. W. Bagnall, rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, was elected president. As director of branches at the national office at the time of the organization of the Lancaster Branch, he had corresponded with the officers. See Bagnall biography in "NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom, 1909-2009," <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naACP/the-new-negro-movement.html>. "Program, 22nd Annual Meeting Pennsylvania State Conference, October 26-28, 1956, Hotel Lawrence, 10th and Peach Street, Erie, PA; "Pennsylvania State Conference 1956 Branch Survey;" Press Release, October 17, 1957: "Robinson, Wright, Hill, to Speak at Pennsylvania State NAACP Meeting;" folder 2, Box III, C 140, NAACP Papers.

99. *LNE*, April 23, 1960, 7; Ashley S. Dudley, Jr., lived at 435 ½ North Street. Obituary of Ashley S. Dudley, Jr., January 4, 2008, https://lancasteronline.com/obituaries/ashley-s-dudley-jr/article_7f6b27e6-1230-5fce-8f07-5b61e9cc6b4f.html; "Charter to the Members of the Lancaster City, Pennsylvania Branch . . . June 13, 1960," collection of Karen Dixon.

100. Pennsylvania State Conference 1961-64: Memorandum to Pennsylvania Officer and Leaders, State Conference Meeting—Nov 4-5, 1961. Re: Your Freedom Fund Contributions – 1961; Lancaster listed with a goal of \$300.00. This listing within the Pennsylvania State Conference papers of a Lancaster branch corroborates the date of the new Charter. Report: Total 1961 Memberships and Freedom Fund Contributions Received, Pennsylvania Branches; Lancaster- 127 members, folder 4, Box III: C-140, Branch Department, 1956-65, Geographical Filed, NAACP Papers. "Study of Membership Enrollment in Pennsylvania Area Branches and Suggested Quotas for 1964": Lancaster's membership, 1961-106, 1962-41, 1963-150, Quota-200, folder 5, Pennsylvania State Conference 1964-65, Box III: C-140, Branch Department, 1956-65, Geographical File, NAACP Papers.

101. *Intelligencer*, February 2, 1960, 7, and January 10, 1961, 1, 6; *LNE*, February 23, 1960, 1; *Intelligencer*, February 24, 1960, 30.

102. Column by Marlow, "Students in South Show Impatience," *LNE*, March 21, 1960, 12.

103. *LNE*, March 17, 1960, 24; Eleanor Roosevelt's column appeared in the *Intelligencer*, on March 22, 1960, 6; Former President Truman's statement in the *LNE*, March 25, 1960, 2; the appointment of Robert C. Weaver, in *Sunday News*, January 1, 1961, 1.
104. David Schuyler, *A City Transformed: Redevelopment, Race, and Suburbanization in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1940-1980* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 14; Introduction, Chapters 5 and 6.
105. Schuyler, *A City Transformed*, 146-150; Comments by Kenneth Abernathy in *LNE*, November 23, 1965, 6.
106. *LNE*, February 17, 22, and May 16, 1961, 1; *Intelligencer*, February 6, 1962, 7.
107. *LNE*, February 26, 1962, 18. For statistics about Adams- Musser Project One, Jerry Sapienza, "7th Warders Want Slums Cleared, But Ask "Why Raze Good Homes?" *LNE*, May 16, 1961, 1.
108. *LNE*, February 14, 1962, 24.
109. *LNE*, March 7, 1964, 16.
110. *LNE*, May 28, 1963, 2; *Intelligencer*, May 28, 1963, 8.
111. See *LNE*, March 17, 1964, 1, for the meeting between Mayor Coe and NAACP leaders. See *LNE*, April 1, 1964, 1, 2, for City Council meeting.
112. *LNE*, July 22, 1964, 60.
113. *Intelligencer*, July 28, 1964, 1.
114. *Intelligencer*, August 6, 1964, 36; *LNE*, August 12, 1964, 1, 5. The Higbee project was part of Adams-Musser Project 2, including the site of and area around the old Higbee School at Dauphin and Rockland Streets. There were also 149 residences and 17 commercial structures. A new Higbee School, now the Martin Luther King, Jr., School, was completed and dedicated in January 1968. Schuyler, *A City Transformed*, 131, 141-142.
115. City Council appearance detailed in *LNE*, August 25, 1965, 1; housing rally described in *Intelligencer*, August 20, 1965, and *LNE*, August 27, 9, and September 10, 1965, 30; installation of officers, *Intelligencer*, January 12, 1965, p. 24.
116. *Intelligencer*, March 15, 1967, 1, 6; *Intelligencer*, May 12, 1967, 12; *LNE*, November 8, 1967, 2.
117. *Intelligencer*, January 24, 1968, 21.
118. *Intelligencer*, August 26, 1967, 1, 5.
119. *Intelligencer*, September 12, 1967, 1, 4.
120. For discussion of NAACP-managed projects, see *Intelligencer*, October 17, 1967, 1, 8. For profile of Ulrica Cook, see *Sunday News*, March 17, 1968, 1, 8, and *LNE*, 18 March 18, 1968, 38.
121. See *LNE*, January 2, 1961, 26; see a synopsis of this 1960 government-sponsored film at https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8249150/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl; film is available for viewing at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jp6ZKSX_nk, (accessed September 10, 2022). "Drama about the hiring of the first white-collar African American worker at a manufacturing plant. Produced by President's Committee on Government Contracts." For meetings with store staff, see *Sunday News*, July 21, 1963, 4, 40; Rev. Roland A. Forbes, interview with the author via video conferencing, November 7, 2022.
122. *LNE*, July 20, 1963, 1, 2; *Intelligencer*, July 20, 1963, 8, 20.
123. Robert L. Pfannebecker, interview with the author, Elizabethtown, PA, February 15, 2023.
124. *Sunday News*, July 21, 1963, 4.
125. *LNE*, July 25, 1963, 1, and July 27, 1963, 1, 2.
126. *Intelligencer*, July 31, 1964, 1, 18; *Intelligencer Journal /LNE*, 9 September 9, 2013, 13. Gerald Wilson, email to the author, March 18, 2023, confirmation that Gwendolyn and Milton Stanley were spouses.
127. *Intelligencer*, September 19, 1964, 1, and November 28, 1964, 8.

128. *LNE*, September 22, 1965, 21.
129. Louise Williams, interview with the author via video conferencing, August 18, 2022; *Sunday News*, January 25, 1970, 27; *LNE*, November 3, 1990, 1, 5.
130. A cogent statement of the varying community memories elicited by Rocky Springs and the carousel is stated in Schuyler, *A City Transformed*, 10. Ron Ford's comment is reported in *Sunday News*, April 9, 2006, 7. Groups supporting the memory of the amusement park and the carousel continue today. https://lancasteronline.com/opinion/columnists/rocky-springs-carousel-is-our-hidden-treasure/article_a759a3ea-4cc5-11e9-b54e-a70fca896e24.html, (accessed November 30, 2022).
131. NAACP President Kenneth Bost's comment, *LNE*, July 27, 1963, 1.
132. Letter of Harriett Stewart, Secretary, Apt. #4, Creek Lane & S. Duke St., to Miss Lucille Black, 20 West 40th St., New York, November 26, 1949, folder 12, Lancaster, PA, 1943-55, Box c 164, Group II, NAACP Papers; see also Kibler and Davidowitz, "Our Color Won't Wash Off," 6-7.
133. *Intelligencer*, June 6, 1961, 10. The president of the Lancaster Branch is mistakenly identified as Robert A. Cooper. Herbert A. Cooper was the president, Leroy Hopkins, email to the author, August 9, 2023.
134. Kibler and Davidowitz "Our Color Won't Wash Off," 10.
135. *Intelligencer*, June 12, 1961, 20, 24; *LNE*, June 19, 1961, 22; Jed Reinert, "From swimming to wrestling, roller coasters to concerts: 77 years of Maple Grove Park history," October 8, 2022, https://lancasteronline.com/features/yesteryear/history/from-swimming-to-wrestling-roller-coasters-to-concerts-77-years-of-maple-grove-park-history/article_1b65b6ec-3b6b-11ed-abf2-0353999f4e4.html, (accessed November 30, 2022).
136. *LNE*, June 19, 1961, 22; *Intelligencer*, July 29, 1961, 8.
137. *Sunday News*, July 16, 1961, 40; *LNE*, July 26, 1961, 66; *Intelligencer*, July 29, 1961, 8.
138. *Intelligencer*, October 27, 1962, 15.
139. *Intelligencer*, December 7, 1963, 34; *Intelligencer*, July 13, 1963, 20.
140. *Intelligencer*, July 30, 1963, 1-4; *LNE*, August 5, 1963, 24; *Intelligencer*, August 17, 1964, 5; *Intelligencer*, August 12, 1963, 1, 9. For description of two self-proclaimed members of the Nazi Party, one from Reading, PA., who handed out literature in Lancaster and said that they planned to go to Rocky Springs to counter-demonstrate, see *Intelligencer*, August 15, 1963, 1-4.
141. *Intelligencer*, June 8, 1963, 1; <https://www.rockyspringsbnb.com/about/rocky-springs-park>, (accessed October 29, 2023).
142. *Intelligencer*, April 22, 1966, 50.
143. *Intelligencer*, May 23, 1966, 1, 10; *LNE*, August 8, 1966, 1.
144. Kibler and Davidowitz, "Our Color Won't Wash Off," 25-26; Pfannebecker interview.
145. Information on Act No. 222 from https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/CH/Public/ucons_pivot_pge.cfm?session=1955&session_ind=0&act_nbr=0222, (accessed November 29, 2022).
146. *Intelligencer*, July 24, 1963, 24.
147. *Intelligencer*, April 3, 1964, 21, 44; *LNE*, April 3, 1964, 15, 38. The Malta Temple incidents were reported in *Intelligencer*, April 14, 1964, 12; April 15, 1964, 4, and April 16, 26; and in *LNE*, April 15, 1964, 40.
148. *Sunday News*, January 12, 1964, 3.
149. *Intelligencer*, November 28, 1964, 1, 8; *LNE*, December 2, 46, and December 4, 1964, 5; *Intelligencer*, December 10, p. 1 and December 28, 1964, 1, 7. Biographies of the nine appointees to the City and County Human Relations Committee are in *LNE*, December 9, 1964, 2. Betty Tompkins is sometimes identified as Mrs. Samuel B. Tompkins, especially prior to her husband's death on April 23, 1969, *LNE*, April 24, 1969, 3, 54.
150. *Intelligencer*, July 21, 1967, 20.
151. *LNE*, March 11, 1966, 2; Barbara A. Little, "Negro youth, police talk over their disagreements," *Intelligencer*, March 15, 1966, 1, 6; *Intelligencer*, April 19, 1967, 1, 6.
152. "Selma Marches," African American Heritage, National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/>

research/african-americans/vote/selma-marches, (accessed December 5, 2022).

153. *Intelligencer*, March 13, 1967, 1, 4.
154. *LNE*, April 5, 1968, 2; *Intelligencer*, April 8, 1968, 1, 7; *LNE*, June 12, 1968, 52; *LNE*, June 12, 52, and June 14, 1968, 1, 2.
155. *Intelligencer*, January 24, 1967, 4.
156. R. Zane Wilson, "NAACP Picks County as Top 'Target Area,'" *LNE*, January 24, 1967, 1, 2. Ashley Dudley's comments from *LNE*, January 15, 1967, 1, 2.
157. *LNE*, January 25, 1967, 1, 2.
158. *Intelligencer*, February 11, 1967, 2.
159. Barbara A. Little, "NAACP Asks Co. Rights Commission," *Intelligencer*, February 16, 1967, 1, 9.
160. *Intelligencer*, February 14, 1967, 1, 4; Sam Taylor, "City NAACP Nails Grievance To Door: Complaints Against Lancaster Approved with Rally," *LNE*, February 14, 1967, 1. For NAACP response to LCCC statements, see *Intelligencer*, February 15, 1967, 1, 4.
161. *Intelligencer*, February 14, 1967, 1, 4.
162. *Intelligencer*, February 17, 1967, 1, 20; *Intelligencer*, February 17, 1967, 44.
163. *Intelligencer*, May 19, 1967, 12.
164. *LNE*, February 16, 1967, 28, 22.
165. *LNP*, August 13, 2022, A3, A9; *Intelligencer*, May 19, 1967, 12.
166. *Intelligencer*, September 27, 1966, 6.
167. *Intelligencer*, January 10, 1967, 30; *Intelligencer*, June 6, 1967, 1.
168. *Intelligencer*, January 20, 1969, 15; *LNE*, January 20, 1969, 4.
169. *Intelligencer*, February 25, 1964, 18.
170. *Intelligencer*, February 3, 1967, 13; *Intelligencer*, March 15, 1967, 1; *LNE*, February 17, 1967, 28, 22.
171. *Sunday News*, March 17, 1968, 1, 8.
172. *Intelligencer*, December 6, 1966, 1 & 8; Jennifer Kopf, "Then & Now: Bethel AME Cultural Center has its roots in The Strawberry Street/Reigart School," September 17, 2015, https://lancasteronline.com/features/home_garden/then-now-bethel-ame-cultural-center-has-its-roots-in-the-strawberry-street-reigart-school/article_2c1adc66-5c9c-11e5-818b-9f5f53dc886b.html, (accessed December 5, 2022).
173. *LNE*, January 17, 1969, 18; *Intelligencer*, September 3, 1969, 6.
174. *LNE*, November 13, 1969, 1, 2.
175. *Ibid.*
176. *LNE*, November 14, 1969, 2.
177. *Sunday News*, November 16, 1969, 1, 6.
178. *LNE*, November 28, 1969, 1, 2; *Intelligencer*, November 27, 1969, 1.
179. *Intelligencer*, August 22, 1970, 16; *LNE*, December 10, 1974, 8; Joseph LaMonaca was a self-employed builder and partner in Air Supply & Sales, Inc. He served on the executive committee of the Lancaster Branch, as a member of the Lancaster City-County Human Relations Commission, and as a director of the Spanish-American Civic Association. He died in March 1989. *LNE*, March 17, 1989, 10.
180. For example, the obituary of Susie H. Butcher, wife of the Rev. Louis A. Butcher, Sr., *LNE*, June 23, 1973, 3; the obituary of Mrs. Willetta E. Stewart, whose mother, Carrie C. Foster, had been active in the Lancaster branch in the 1920s, *Sunday News*, August 26, 1973, 2; the obituary of Clarence H. Dorsey, *Intelligencer*, March 3, 1975, 4.
181. *LNE*, May 21, 1973, 2, reported on a Supreme Court decision involving a Richmond, VA, court decision to combine students from a predominantly Black Richmond school district with students from neighboring Henrico and Chesterfield Counties. The case reached the Supreme Court on appeals from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. See also *LNE*, July 26, 1974, 1, for the headline,

“NAACP Plans Detroit School Busing Fight.”

182. *LNE*, July 14, 1975, 2.

183. *Sunday News*, February 18, 1979, 169-184.

184. *LNE*, January 23, 1970, 9; *LNE*, January 27, 1970, 18, 24; *LNE*, May 12, 1970, 30.

185. *LNE*, July 14, 1970, 21; *Intelligencer*, January 1, 1972, 1; *LNE*, April 18, 1975, 36, 19. For Ronald Ford's reminiscences, see Kyle Gamble, “Former City Councilman, county commissioner looks back: A Q&A with Ron Ford,” February 22, 2022, <https://oneunitedlanaster.com/community-voices-coronavirus/former-city-councilman-county-commissioner-looks-back-a-qa-with-ron-ford/>, (accessed January 7, 2023).

186. *Intelligencer*, Wednesday, August 11, 1971, p. 21.

187. Bill Fisher, “U. S. Raps CAP Manpower Project,” *LNE*, July 27, 1970, 1. The Rev. Christian's obituary, *Intelligencer Journal* on December 26, 1984, 4, states that he “resigned from the Community Action Program in 1970 over youth work goals.” The Rev. Christian died on December 25, 1984, after a long illness.

188. Bill Fisher, “NAACP Here Struggling to Survive Against Lack of Interest, Funds,” *LNE*, November 7, 1970, 1, 2. For the national NAACP's stand on non-violence, see *LNE*, December 3, 1970, 8.

189. *LNE*, January 1, 1972, 13.

190. *LNE*, November 14, 1974, 40.

191. *LNE*, June 9, 1975, 7; Brubaker diary, Wednesday, June 21, 1922, 172.

192. *Intelligencer*, November 6, 1975, 9.

193. *Intelligencer*, October 14, 1975, 21.

194. *Intelligencer*, December 10, 1975, 4.

195. *Intelligencer*, September 10, 1976, 26; October 2, 30; and October 16, 1976, 1; *LNE*, February 19, 1980, 30; *Intelligencer*, July 3, 1982, 1, 2.

196. Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, Volume I: 1909-1920, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 239-241, with thanks to Jack Brubaker for identifying this source; *LNE*, February 23, 1960, 1; see *Intelligencer*, February 24, 1960, 30, for this effort in Arkansas, which ended in a United States Supreme Court decision striking down fines imposed on the Little Rock and North Little Rock branches.

197. *Intelligencer*, February 8, 20, and March 7, 1974, 3.

198. *LNE*, January 15, 1977, 9. Mr. Epler lived at 455 N. Prince St.

199. *Intelligencer*, June 28, 1977, 28; *The News-Journal*, September 9, 1923; *LNE*, November 13, 1931; see also “List of Pennsylvania Branch Presidents,” February 6, 1933, folder 2, Box G-177, NAACP Papers.

200. Email, Leroy Hopkins to the author, December 22, 2022. At a panel on the value of public education at the Manheim Township Middle School on February 17, 1977, Epler challenged keynote speaker Jack W. W. Loose for implying that students were being trained to collect public assistance. *Intelligencer*, February 17, 1977, 1, 48.

201. *LNE*, March 3, 1970, 16; *Intelligencer*, June 11, 1970, 64; *LNE*, 17 June 58, and June 18, 1970, 60.

202. *LNE*, July 1, 1970, 6; *LNE*, September 10, 1970, 43; Schuyler, 9. See also 146, 150, 165, and 170.

203. *LNE*, May 16, 1975, 30; *LNE*, December 16, 1975, 38; Schuyler, 173-176.

204. *Intelligencer*, April 5, 1974, 34.

205. *Intelligencer*, April 14, 1975, 23.

206. Meetings were either announced or reported in *LNE*, January 23, 1970, 9; May 11, 1974, 4; November 14, 1974, 40; December 10, 1974, 8; June 9, 1975, 7; January 15, 1976, 10; January 25, 1977, 9; and January 25, 1978, 16. In *Intelligencer*, meetings were announced or reported on

- November 22, 1970, 23; December 17, 1971, 17; December 31, 1971, 4; February 8, 1974, 20; June 6, 1974, 13; October 11, 1974, 27; April 14, 1975, 23; October 4, 1975, 4; October 16, 1976, 5; and June 28, 1977, 28; and in *Sunday News* on August 23, 1970, 14. The Rev. Christian's comments are in *LNE*, November 7, 1970, 1, 2.
207. *Intelligencer*, January 12, 4, and January 15, 1970, 44; Jack Moore, "350 Here Pay Tribute To Memory of Dr. King," *LNE*, January 16, 1970, 20.
208. *LNE*, March 21, 7, and March 26, 1970, 23; *Intelligencer*, April 2, 10; 4 April 4, 3, and April 18, 1970, 11.
209. For Madelyn P. Nix, see *Intelligencer*, October 11, 1974, 27; for C. Delores Tucker, see *Intelligencer*, October 10, 1974, 16, and *Sunday News*, March 16, 1975, 72.
210. *LNE*, April 22, 1970, 32; for the founding of the Pennsylvania State Conference, see folder 2, Box G-177, NAACP Papers.
211. *LNE*, April 23, 1976, 8; *Intelligencer*, April 1, 1976, 76.
212. *Intelligencer*, October 4, and October 8, 1975, 18; *LNE*, 15 January 15, 1976, 10.
213. *Sunday News*, June 24, 1973, 17.
214. *LNE*, March 27, 1975, 13.
215. Fran Pennock, "NAACP Youth Chapter Is Formed At F&M," *Intelligencer*, November 3, 1979, 28; *LNE*, December 13, 1979, 40.
216. *LNE*, April 19, 1980, 2; *Intelligencer*, April 19, 1980, 2; *Sunday News*, 20 April 20, 1980, 35.
217. *LNE*, March 23, 1984, 20.
218. *LNE*, January 22, 1985, 12. A profile of Gladys Mack and her work at the Urban League, helping clients find employment, is in Charlene Duroni, "Mrs. Mack is mortar that keeps the community together," *Intelligencer*, February 23, 1990, 5.
219. Elaine Ugolnik, "NAACP Returns, Sees Struggles," *Sunday News*, September 9, 1984, 1, 4; obituary of Dr. Rita Smith-Wade-El, <https://www.snyderfuneralhome.com/obituary/rita-smith-wade-el/>, (accessed January 76, 2023).
220. Ernest Schreiber, "Local NAACP Re-Forms With New Generation of Black Community Leaders," *LNE*, January 23, 1984, 32, 23.
221. Barbara Little, "Why NAACP Is Needed Here," *Intelligencer*, June 18, 1984, 1, 16.
222. *Intelligencer*, January 24, 1984, 7; the Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, interview with the author by telephone, September 27, 2022.
223. Jon Sweigart, "Sparkman Named to Lead Local NAACP," *LNE*, July 23, 1987, 4.
224. *Intelligencer*, August 4, 1985, 48, 28.
225. The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, interview with the author by telephone, September 27, 2022; Editorial, *Intelligencer*, February 28, 1997, 6.
226. *LNE*, June 18, 1985, 5.
227. Eugene Kraybill, "Goode Remorseful Over MOVE Deaths," *Intelligencer*, November 9, 1985, 32; Jon Sweigart, "Sparkman Named to Lead Local NAACP," *LNE*, July 23, 1987, 4; *LNE*, October 4, 1988, 34.
228. *LNE*, January 25, 1989, 1.
229. *LNE*, January 9, 1989, 13; Tim Buckwalter, "Lesson for the young: the fight for civil rights," *LNE*, January 10, 1989, 13, 14; *Intelligencer*, January 14, 1989, 14.
230. *LNE*, June 25, 1979, 6.
231. *Intelligencer*, July 21, 1986, 3.
232. Ernest Schreiber, "NAACP Pleased with Reaction; Schools Change Bus Stop Of Harassed Black Pupils," *LNE*, October 16, 1986, 62.
233. For the harassment of Seventh Day Adventist school students, see *LNE*, October 14, 36, and October 16, 1986, 62. For the Ku Klux Klan rally in Ephrata, see Gil Delaney, "Protest Vigils Set Against Klan Rally," *Intelligencer*, September 30, 1987, 42; Jo-Anne Greene, "Klan Burns Cross at

- Ephrata; Protests bring on 6 arrests,” and Mary Jane Lane, “Peaceful, violent face Klan,” *Sunday News*, October 4, 1987, 1, 4; *The Ephrata Review*, 7 October 7, 1987, 1, 3; and *Intelligencer*, October 15, 1987, 36.
234. The Rev. Ronald Taliaferro, interview with the author by telephone, September 27, 2022; *Intelligencer*, Saturday, October 17, 1987, 19.
235. The Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman, III, interview with the author via video conferencing, October 3, 2022.
236. *LNE*, January 27, 1970, 18, 24.
237. *Intelligencer*, March 23, 1985, 1.
238. *Intelligencer*, March 22, 1985, 4.
239. Ed Klimuska, “Car Light Protest Planned in October; Local NAACP Asks for Help to End Apartheid,” *LNE*, September 16, 1985, 34.
240. *Intelligencer*, March 3, 18, and March 24, 1986, 28.
241. *Sunday News*, March 30, 1986, 18.
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337. *LNE*, November 13, 1931, 3; see also "List of Pennsylvania Branch Presidents," February 6, 1933, folder 2, Box G-177, NAACP Papers.

338. *Intelligencer*, February 22, 1935, 7.

339. Letter of Ella J. Baker, Director of Branches, to Mr. Ernest Christian, President, Lancaster Branch, October 21, 1943, folder 12, Box c 164, Group II, NAACP Papers; *LNE*, November 29, 1943, 14; *Intelligencer Journal/LNE*, December 12, 2009, 13-14.

340. *LNE*, January 4, 1945, 22; conversation with Dr. Leroy Hopkins, November 15, 2021.

341. *Intelligencer*, February 25, 1946, 6.

342. Karen Dixon's list, 2016 (hereafter, Dixon list).

343. Email from Leroy Hopkins, September 22, 2021; *LNE*, April 4, 1960, 2; *Intelligencer*, August 2, 1960, 18.

344. Robert A. Cooper is identified as the president of the Lancaster Branch in an article about a call for banning use of concessions in Rocky Springs Park, *Intelligencer*, June 6, 1961, 10. This was probably a misidentification of Herbert A. Cooper, who was, according to Leroy Hopkins, president in 1961, email, August 9, 2023. Herbert A. Cooper listed as president, *LNE*, February 14, 1962, 24; *LNE*, December 9, 1964, 2.

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346. *Sunday News*, January 12, 1964, 3; *LNE*, March 17, 1964, 1, and December 15, 1964, 5; Dixon list.

347. Dixon list; *LNE*, December 15, 1964, 30, elected; *Intelligencer*, January 12, 1965, 24; *LNE*, June 24, 1965, 30.

348. *Intelligencer*, November 9, 1965, 32, elected, and March 14, 1966, 26; *Intelligencer*, February 22, 2002, 13, obituary.

349. *Intelligencer*, January 10, 1967, 30, elected, and June 6, 1967, 1, resigned.

350. Dixon list; *Intelligencer*, June 6, 1967, 1, appointed president; *LNE*, December 10, 1968, 1, re-elected; *LNE*, November 7, 1970, 1,2, resigned.
351. Dixon list, no dates; *Intelligencer*, December 31, 1971, 4, installed; 1974-12-10, *LNE*, December 10, 1974, 8, re-elected to two-year term.
352. *LNE*, January 25, 1977, 9, elected; 1977-06-28, *Intelligencer*, June 28, 1977, resigned.
353. *Ibid.*, assumed presidency upon resignation of predecessor.
354. Dixon list; *LNE*, January 22, 1985, 12, acting president in 1984; *Intelligencer*, January 29, 1985, 34, elected; *Intelligencer*, March 18, 1985, 10, installed; *LNE*, July 23, 1987, 4, resigned.
355. Dixon list; *LNE*, January 1, 1989, 4, re-installed; *Intelligencer*, April 9, 1993, 1, assigned to a New Jersey church; Resume of the Rev. Harvey H. B. Sparkman, III, October 3, 2022.
356. Dixon list; *LNE*, January 16, 1997, 14, identifies the Rev. Forbes as past president.
357. Dixon list; *LNE*, January 16, 1997, 14, identified as president. *LNE*, January 18, 2003, 4, identified as president-elect for 2003; *LNE*, July 24, 2004, 1, 5, The Rev. Taliaferro to step down in Sept., 2004.
358. Dixon list; *LNE*, February 9, 2008, 1, 5, resigned in 2006 after election to City Council.
359. Dixon list; *LNE*, February 3, 2006, 17, and *Sunday News*, January 13, 2008, 18, identified as current branch president; *LNE*, February 9, 2008, 1, 5, recruited to presidency after former president, Louise Williams, was elected to Lancaster City Council and passed on her role.
360. Dixon list; *Sunday News*, October 11, 2009, 89, 92, and *Sunday News*, July 4, 2010, 1, 7.
361. Dixon list; *Intelligencer Journal/LNE*, November 16, 2010, 15, elected; Blanding P. Watson resume, August 24, 2022.
362. Hopkins, "Prolegomenon," *JLCHA*, vol. 90, no. 4 (1986): 222; *The African Methodist Episcopal Church: One Hundred Eighty Years of Progress*, [1976], 16, https://centerforurbanstudies.ap.buffalo.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2020/02/BAME_1976-01-01_Books_The_African_Methodist_Episcopal_Church_Our_Beginning.pdf, (accessed December 20, 2023); *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, PA, June 6, 1975, <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/20684240/>, (accessed December 20, 2023); email, Leroy Hopkins to Rosemary T. Krill, December 20, 2023.
363. Thomas L. Flanner, "Speaker Urges, 'Begin to care'/Speech among tributes to King," *Intelligencer*, January 17, 1994, 9; *LNE*, March 21, 1997, 13, 14, and August 8, 1997, 16.
364. Anya Litvak, "Fighting for Equality," *LNE*, February 9, 2008, 1, 5; Obituary, <https://www.bouldingmortuaryinc.com/obituaries/Rev-Robert-L-Bailey?obId=7775407#/celebrationWall>, (accessed December 20, 2023).
365. Obituary of Ashley S. Dudley, Jr., January 4, 2008, https://lancasteronline.com/obituaries/ashley-s-dudley-jr/article_7f6b27e6-1230-5fce-8f07-5b61e9cc6b4f.html, (accessed December 20, 2023).
366. *Sunday News*, March 17, 1968, 8, and *LNE*, March 18, 1968, 38.
367. Obituary of the Rev. Ernest Christian, *Intelligencer*, December 26, 1984, 4.
368. Program, "NAACP 100th Anniversary Freedom Fund Gala Ball," (hereafter, 2023 Freedom Fund Program), September 21, 2023, 23.
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About the Author

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January 2019. She also has served LancasterHistory as a board member, an executive committee member, and a collections committee member. Blanding Watson appointed her chair of NAACP Lancaster's Ad Hoc 100th Anniversary History Committee, and she thanks him and the members for their advice and support, including Karen Dixon, Erica Mae Gordon, Dr. Leroy Hopkins, Patricia Hopson-Shelton, and Dr. Marilyn Parrish. Thanks also to the staff and volunteers of LancasterHistory and its Publications Committee and to John Krill.



THE LANCASTER COMMUNITY

TRUST—an agency for the care and distribution of bequests so that under no conditions can they fail to be used for a worthy purpose; an agency pledged to furnish financial support, insofar as possible, to all endeavor for the welfare of the community.

OUT of the community's need for an efficient agency perpetually to oversee and administer funds devoted to charitable and benevolent purposes The Lancaster Community Trust was born.

The great danger in making a gift or bequest to a particular charity is that as time passes the need of this particular charity ends, or the institution for whose benefit the bequest is made passes out of existence, or may obtain all of its support from the public taxes. As a result of these changing conditions hundreds of bequests to charity have become useless, and the real purpose of the donors has been defeated.

Community Trust Perpetually Safeguards All Gifts

To cite only one famous instance of this kind: Benjamin Franklin, for all his wisdom, left by will a fund in Philadelphia for loans to "such young artificers as have served an apprenticeship and faithfully fulfilled the duties in their indentures." Apprenticeship and indenture being now non-existent, not a loan has been made from the fund for a third of a century.

Under the plan of The Lancaster Community Trust this miscarriage of the donor's intentions cannot occur. Bequests can be made or trust funds established for the benefit of any charitable, benevolent or educational causes or institutions the donor may prefer. The gifts are placed with any one

of the associated Banks or Trust Companies as Trustee, and the funds arising out of the amounts entrusted to the various trustees are distributed periodically by seven disinterested persons, carefully chosen according to strict rules.

The Community Trust furnishes a medium for gifts both large and small. It furnishes a means whereby every gift, whatever its size, may be perpetually safeguarded and used for the benefit of the Community.

"Schaeffer Memorial Fund" Uses the Community Trust

The "Nathan C. Schaeffer Memorial Fund" now being administered through The Lancaster Community Trust is an example of how this agency can perpetuate the intentions of the donor. This Fund will stand as a living, effective and enduring memorial to Dr. Schaeffer, for it will be used in carrying out the benevolent intentions of the donors according to the needs of each succeeding generation. Changing conditions cannot stultify the ideals expressed in the creation of this Memorial. It will be forever useful to the community, forever fulfilling the purpose of the donors.

Thirty cities in the United States have Community Trusts which are administering funds in excess of \$14,500,000.00. The idea is sound in theory, it is equally sound in operation. It has a definite appeal and a practical application for both the large giver and the small.

Detailed information on The Lancaster Community Trust will gladly be furnished by any of the undersigned Trustees, or by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce. Write for an interesting booklet, "The Lancaster Community Trust," or call in person.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The Agricultural Trust & Savings Co. | The Guaranty Trust Company |
| Farmers Trust Company of Lancaster | The Lancaster County National Bank |
| The Fulton Nat'l. Bank of Lanc., Pa. | The Lancaster Trust Company |
| Northern Trust and Savings Company | |

LANCASTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

100th Anniversary of the Lancaster County Community Foundation

Honoring a Century of Commitment to our Community

Steven J. Geisenberger

Board Chair Lancaster County Community Foundation, 2018–2019



Through slow but steady growth since its founding in 1924, the Lancaster County Community Foundation became a household name. Over those 100 years the community's endowment distributed more than \$60 million to local causes and the organization's signature event, the ExtraGive, introduced in 2012, generated more than \$100 million in donations to support the Lancaster community. In 2023, with \$200 million in community assets, created from 560 individual funds, the Community Foundation continued its mission—stewarding the assets that build resilience and possibility for Lancaster County.



A Groundbreaking Idea—the Community Foundation and Trust Movement in America

The community foundation movement began in 1914 with the creation of the Cleveland Foundation by the Cleveland Trust Company, led by an esteemed Cleveland attorney turned bank president, Frederick H. Goff. The goal was to create a new way for any individual to leave a charitable legacy supporting their community. Until Goff created the Cleveland model, charitable endeavors and foundations, in particular, were the purview of wealthy individuals like the Rockefellers or the Carnegies. Charitable trust

At left: Ad for The Community Trust, *Intelligencer Journal*, July 27, 1928.

documents were created for the benefit of specific persons or organizations rather than the community as a whole.¹

Goff not only spent considerable efforts growing the movement in Cleveland but advocated the concept to other communities as well through numerous speeches and booklets. In October 1913, he was elected as president of the Trust Bank Section of the American Bar Association. Until his death in 1923, Goff spoke to lawyers, trust officers, and community leaders around the country, promoting the benefits of a community foundation.² By the mid-1920s, about fifty communities had formed foundations or community trusts. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was one of those communities.

There were a number of key benefits Goff promoted that convinced local attorney Martin M. Harnish and other local legal, financial, and business leaders to form the Lancaster Community Trust (LCT) through a committee of the Chamber of Commerce in the spring of 1924.³ Initially, the Trust was only a Lancaster City organization with seven trustee banks.⁴ As required, the banks approved the plan and on July 3rd of that year, Willis B. Morey (the Chamber secretary) announced the creation of the Lancaster Community Trust.⁵

The key selling points were:

1. Wills would name local trust departments as trustees, with the LCT as the beneficiary of the funds invested.

2. Based on the Goff model, there would be a distribution committee of "citizens selected for their knowledge and interest of charitable, benevolent, and educational needs." The mayor of Lancaster, the Chamber of Commerce, and two judicial appointments would, if necessary, have a majority in the decision-making process over the three members appointed by the trust committee.

3. It included a mechanism to allow smaller estates to benefit the community as a whole.

4. A provision was added to lessen the problem of the so called "Dead Hand,"⁶ which arose when a beneficiary or a class of beneficiaries no longer existed.

5. The funds would provide resources for the community which otherwise would not be available in perpetuity.

Although some organizational structures in the last 100 years have changed and funding mechanisms have been enhanced, the general reasons to have a community foundation have been proven as timeless as Goff's vision.

***Lancaster Community Trust Begins—
The Martin M. Harnish, Esq. Era***

From formation in 1924 through his death at age eighty-three in January of 1959,⁷ Attorney Martin M. Harnish served as legal counsel, chairman of the distribution committee, and chief advocate of the LCT and then the Lancaster County Foundation (LCF) after a 1952 name change.

The story surrounding the first fund held by the LCT is interesting. Nathan Schaeffer was a well-respected superintendent of public instruction for the state of Pennsylvania for twenty-six years prior to his death in 1919.⁸ The original plan to honor him was to raise \$60,000 from teachers throughout the Commonwealth to build a School of Education at Franklin & Marshall College (F&M).⁹ The efforts fell far short of the goal and, because the efforts centered around F&M and Lancaster County, the LCT eventually became the steward of the funds. Had the LCT not existed, there probably would not have been a local organization which qualified to administer the funds, which amounted to just under \$20,000.

In 1928 The Nathan C. Schaeffer Memorial fund, the only fund administered by the LCT in the 1920s, distributed a \$600 scholarship to Erna Grassmuck; a teacher at the Indiana State Teacher's College.¹⁰ Grassmuck's career was distinguished, as memorialized in her 1974



Martin M. Harnish, *Lancaster New Era*, Tuesday, December 15, 1928

obituary.¹¹ Interestingly, the Council of Education decided the grants from this fund, but with other funds moving forward, grants were recommended by the LCT distribution committee.

In 1930, Miss Mary Musser left her entire estate to the Lancaster Trust Company for the “poor and poverty stricken” with distributions through the LCT. This is the first discretionary trust in which the distribution committee would have input.¹²

By the early 1930s, almost a decade had passed and the LCT had only the Schaeffer and Musser funds, which were distributing less than \$1,000 per year. On November 2, 1933, Christian Umble passed away and one of the beneficiaries named in his will, “The Eden Community Fire Company,” did not exist. The backup beneficiary was the LCT and through Harnish’s legal skills and a court fight, (which was not resolved until 1935), more than \$65,000 went to the LCT, bringing the total funds to about \$100,000. In 1935, thanks to the Umble estate, distributions increased to \$4,000. The funds for Schaeffer (\$23,000 in assets), Musser (\$22,000 in assets) and Umble (\$390,000 in assets) all still exist today.

Despite the groundwork laid by Harnish, the distribution committee, and the bank trustees, the number of funds (about a dozen) which came under the control of the LCT/LCF still amounted to under \$150,000 at the time of Harnish’s death in 1959. Distributions were \$5,695 in 1958.¹³ Distributions during this period were primarily to the Lancaster County Library and community trust agencies. One special allocation stood out during these lean years. In 1941, the LCT committed \$2,000 to help build the original Crispus Attucks Center.¹⁴

Harnish practiced what he preached, and when his life was over, the financial impact of his legacy meant the value of the Trust more than doubled. Not only did he provide current funding, but he also provided for a trust which benefited his wife Frances during her lifetime. When she died thirty years later in 1989, the funds from the Martin M. and Frances E. Harnish Trusts exceeded \$1 million.¹⁵ The Harnish funds today exceed \$2 million.

Joining Harnish to champion the movement during this formative period, William Shand was an advocate of the community foundation concept for

more than forty-five years and served as chair of the distribution committee from 1959–1970.

An Evolving Organization—The John Rengier Esq. Era

After Harnish's death, John B. Rengier became the lead attorney in the group. First appointed to the distribution committee in 1959, he replaced Shand as chairman of the LCF in January 1970 and remained as chair until 1984. He passed away in 1985.¹⁶

Rengier was the attorney for the Lancaster Heart Association (LHA), previously incorporated and operated as Heart Haven. The organization treated over 750 children who suffered from rheumatic fever from 1947 to 1970¹⁷ and had accumulated significant assets. In 1971, the organization's real estate and \$300,000 was donated to Lancaster General Hospital for a new cardiovascular center. Rengier took the lead in petitioning the courts and the Internal Revenue Service to transfer the remaining funds from their existing private foundation to the LCF.

It was not until 1980 that the court approved the transfer and reached an agreement to create the Lancaster Heart Association Trust (administered by Fulton Bank) to benefit the American Heart Association Lancaster Chapter. At the time the trust was setup, it had approximately \$1 million in assets.¹⁸

In 1979, both the Edgar Ellmaker estate and Paul Hires estate were placed in trust for the benefit of the foundation. With each of these estates valued at more than \$200,000 in assets, the distribution committee distributed \$100,000 for the first time in 1980. Under Rengier's leadership and service, distributions from the Foundation went from just over \$10,000 in 1960 to more than \$250,000 in the mid-1980s. Funds benefiting the community now exceeded \$2.7 million.

Securing a commitment to Lancaster County—The Donald Hostteter Era

After Rengier retired in 1984, Donald B. Hostteter, at age sixty-eight, became the head of the distribution committee. Like his predecessors, he was an F&M alumnus, well-connected in the community, and dedicated to the mission. He remained in the position until the year 2000. Other changes in the organization were also in motion as Gerald Molloy, (a long-term Chamber president) who had served for thirty

years as secretary and executive director of the organization, retired. For the first time, the Foundation had their own offices at 29 East King Street in Lancaster.

In 1988, the Courts approved a subtle change in administration which ultimately became a driver for growth. The distribution committee was replaced with a governing committee and the Foundation was permitted to accept gifts directly. The change was made initially because the banks could not profitably manage trusts below a certain threshold and the Foundation was getting requests for direct gifts.¹⁹

In an extensive 1988 Q&A interview with Hostetter in the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal, Hostetter outlined the criteria for grants by the distribution committee, which for 1987 was \$359,000. “We give preference to meeting human needs; the health and welfare of citizens throughout Lancaster County. We try to balance new concepts with the old established organizations, and we try to see if we can save a little bit of money for the arts and cultural organizations.” Much of the work was done on a volunteer basis, as the operating overhead was only \$6,000. At this point there was \$5.1 million of trust funds from “about three dozen trusts.”²⁰

In 1986, upon the death of his wife Anne, C. Frank Summy Jr. left \$2.5 million in trust to the Foundation (\$4.3 million as of 2023), which was the largest single amount as of that time.²¹ Based on the leadership of Hostetter and the governing committee, the legal community, and the trust departments of local banks, the overall portfolio grew to \$35 million in funds (a tenfold increase from when Rengier retired) by the time Hostetter retired at the end of 1999. In total, he had contributed thirty years of service, including sixteen as chairman of the governing committee.²² Grants had grown to an impressive \$756,521, distributed to seventy-nine groups and organizations.

As funding opportunities increased, so did LCF's stature and presence in the community. One of the more newsworthy highlights included a \$39,000 grant²³ to the LCT from the final distribution of the trust created under Benjamin Franklin's will.²⁴ A 1925 *Sunday News* account reported “Benjamin Franklin, for all his wisdom, by will, left a fund in Philadelphia for loans to such young artificers as have served an apprenticeship and faithfully fulfilled the duties in their indentures. Apprenticeships and

indentures being now non-existent, not a loan has been made from this increasing and shackled fund for over a third of a century.”

With this grant, Franklin’s intention to support young people was able to be realized and continued to be relevant. Thanks to the community foundation structure, the grants from Franklin’s will to LCT and other community foundations across Pennsylvania, enabled impact to continue even after the original beneficiary was gone.

During this same period, the Foundation, for the first time, funded studies and projects in addition to direct funding of organizations. In 1993, \$40,000 was granted to study the need for a Lancaster County Community College.²⁵ In 1994, the LCF contributed \$30,000 to the initial Enola Rail Trail Study.²⁶

The largest study grant was announced by Hostetter on April 22, 1999, for \$125,000 to the Lancaster Campaign to explore potential uses for the former Watt & Shand Department Store building.²⁷ In November of 1999, the Foundation held its 75-year anniversary celebration with over 400 attending in the former Watt & Shand building,²⁸ a fitting goodbye to the twentieth century and the Hostetter era.

Hostetter’s spouse Nancy died in 1980. He had no children, so when he died in 2007,²⁹ he left a substantial sum, (about \$3.5 million) in the name of the Nancy and Donald B. Hostetter Trust to what had by 2004 become the Lancaster County Community Foundation. The Hostetter Trust was valued at \$4.7 million as of October 2023.

The Dawn of the Twenty-first Century

In February 2000, Reverend John Baldwin, who had served on the governing board for fifteen years, became the board chair.³⁰ He was the first in a series of board chairs which led to significant changes in the way that grants were determined, the new role of professional full-time staff, and how governance occurred at the Foundation.

In 2001 a much larger group of community leaders took on the role of the grant review team, which during the Hostetter era was primarily the purview of the distribution committee which also acted as the governing board. The first paid staff was led by Deborah Schattgen, who served as executive director from 2001–2007, and Doug Levering who became the

organization's first program director. A full-time accountant and other staff positions were also added. The organization continued to solicit and accept grant applications from qualified charitable organizations at least once a year.

With a full-time executive director and new Board Leadership there was an effort to seek out examples of high-performing community foundations from across the nation. The intent was to identify best practices of these grant making institutions. This search led the Community Foundation to join the Council on Foundations, a national membership organization with the purposes of sharing best practices, innovative approaches and advocating for the philanthropic sector at the national level. Membership in the Council set the stage for the evolution of the Community Foundation over the next twenty years.

On the governance front, based on information obtained through the Council on Foundations, the Board took the lead in an entire rewrite of the by-laws, which occurred shortly after the Lancaster County Community Foundation (LCCF) was formed in 2003.³¹ Since that time, the LCF continues to exist for assets held in trusts, however, from a governance perspective, the LCCF is the sole governing body. Under the new by-laws the number of maximum directors increased from 9 to 15, with most directors appointed by the board. This change diluted the impact of the trustees' committee which disbanded shortly thereafter.

S. Dale High, of High Companies, who had served on the distribution committee/governing board since 1985 served as board chair in 2004–2005. His leadership sparked interest in the possibility of a modern community foundation that not only distributed grants, but also invited donors, and engaged in the broader community. In conjunction with the governance changes, six new members joined the board. In reminiscing on his role as board chair, High took little credit for the changes and believed his contribution was bringing on new board members to advance the organization to fulfill its mission of benefitting the community. This group included Phillip R. Wenger, president and CEO of the Isaac's Deli restaurant franchise, who would ascend quickly to board chair in 2007.

The growth of the organization was positively impacted through the acceptance of donor-advised funds and area-of-interest funds. In addition,

the organization was the beneficiary through trust of Merle Selfon's estate which currently holds \$6.5 million in trust. With the growth of funds and the positive market conditions, by 2007, asset values were just under \$70 million and grant distributions were in the \$1.5 million range.

It was during this time that the leadership of the organization held a common belief that the arts had a major role to play, especially in the city, but also throughout the County at venues such as The Ephrata Performing Arts Center (EPAC). The Foundation's leadership invested early in initiatives like LancasterARTS.³² Other key initiatives included Lancaster Living, which promoted city housing and the urban lifestyle,³³ a \$247,800 grant for Lancaster City schools,³⁴ significant funding for the East King Street Improvement District,³⁵ and funding to support recommendations of the City of Lancaster Crime Commission, which was prominent during this period.³⁶

The Modern Era

By looking at other communities across the nation the Community Foundation's board confirmed that the Foundation had tremendous potential, beyond the act of making grants. The CEO Search Committee led by Wenger, recognized the opportunity to hire a leader to help actualize their vision.

On February 25th, 2008, Samuel J. Bressi started his tenure as chief executive officer of the Foundation.

By late 2008, the national economy plunged into recession and the Community Foundation Board approved a grant investment of \$750,000 from reserve funds for Family Aid. Dollars were deployed through a small group of nonprofit providers for food, shelter, and heating support for families in need. Board member Barry Huber said at the time, "Why are we here, if not to support people in the time of our community's greatest need?"

Even as the economic crisis continued, the Foundation was helping the community look forward. In partnership with the Lancaster Chamber and United Way of Lancaster County, the Foundation hosted "Lancaster 2020—Shaping Our Future" engaging hundreds of local leaders and taking a significant step towards the community engagement approach that expanded in the next decade.

Internal work ramped up to expand the role of the Community Foundation from a behind-the-scenes grant making organization to a fully engaged community leadership organization. Expansion of the staff both in numbers and in talent level was a major focus from 2008 into 2012 and beyond. This period is marked by deepening staff training and engagement with the community.

In 2011, the Foundation launched a bold initiative that had been in the planning stages for nearly a year. The Ah-Ha Project, Creative Solutions to Real Problems, invited the community benefit (nonprofit) sector to consider new and innovative initiatives and business models, take thoughtful risks, and to learn and grow from failure. The initiative challenged Foundation leadership to rethink how and why grants were made, moving the organization towards a social venture capital model. This era started to demonstrate how the Community Foundation could invite community change, inspire bigger thinking, and have an influence on community dialogue.

The innovation of the Ah-Ha Project launched the Community Foundation to a new level. The Board recognized that embracing internal innovation was a key to continued success. In 2012, they choose to adopt innovation as an organizational value.

Encouraged by innovation and inspired by initiatives in Pittsburgh and Seattle, the Community Foundation launched a signature event, the Extraordinary Give in 2012. The intention was to inspire generosity by inviting the entire community to give on one day in November. In doing so, leaders hoped that the event would raise the profile and awareness of the Community Foundation and further its ability to positively impact the community. That first year, 192 organizations participated, raising a stunning \$1.6 million from thousands of Lancastrians.

In subsequent years, the Foundation team invited corporate partners to help sponsor the event, and built media, promotional, and event partnerships that helped amplify the invitation to give. At its peak in 2021, more than 30,000 donors gave \$15.8 million to 516 organizations through ExtraGive. As the Foundation prepared to enter its 100th year, the 12th Annual ExtraGive raised \$8.9 million bringing the cumulative total to over \$100 million since November 2012.

In 2016, in partnership with the Lancaster Chamber and New American Economy, the Community Foundation funded and helped shape an economic study of the impact of immigrants and refugees in Lancaster County. The report's top-line finding was that immigrants contributed a positive \$1.3 billion to the annual GDP of Lancaster County.

Another Council on Foundation's inspired initiative, Forever Lancaster, found its first director and launched in 2018. The effort was modeled after similar work at the Chicago Community Trust and was designed to create a community movement around the idea of legacy giving and endowment-building to support Lancaster County.

In March of 2020, the Community Foundation along with everyone else, was forced to shutter its office and learn how to work remotely due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. As it had done in 2008, the Foundation's board and staff leadership felt a deep sense of obligation to those who were suffering most acutely from the effects of pandemic-related closures. Rather than going it alone, this time the extensive networks of partners and funders was a resource that could be deployed to help those in need in our community. The Foundation partnered with United Way of Lancaster County to launch Lancaster Cares. The effort would raise over \$1.2 million in funds for housing, food, and basic needs in our community.

As the calendar turned to 2022, the Community Foundation partnered with High Foundation and several local nonprofits working with Policy Link to develop the first-of-its-kind Racial Equity Profile for Lancaster County. The report confirmed what many in our community already knew—our Black and Latino neighbors experienced life in Lancaster County that is quite different from our white neighbors. The data pointed our community to real issues and challenges and started to shape the work on the Community Foundation and other vital community organizations moving forward.

In 2024, as the Community Foundation looked toward its next 100 years, it continued to build on the innovative and inclusive spirit that drove the community foundation movement in the 1920s; always asking the question: how do we create opportunities for everyone to play a role in contributing to a thriving Lancaster County for future generations?



Endnotes

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2. www.clevelandfoundation100.org/foundation-of-change/invention/frederick-goff/
3. "The Dead Hand and the Lancaster Foundation" was a paper written in 1969 by David Bucher, a trust officer at Commonwealth National Bank detailing the history of the first 35 years of the LCF. It was also written as an effort to promote the Foundation going forward. The paper is available upon request from the Foundation and was used extensively as background in combination with press accounts of the Foundation's activities through 1969.
4. In the fall of 1965, the Lancaster County banks were asked to join the trustees committee. *Lancaster New Era*, January 16, 1966, page 52. As a point reference in 1965 (41 years after inception) only \$12,817 was distributed.
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About the Author

Steve Geisenberger is a CPA and served as board chair of the Lancaster County Community Foundation from 2018–2019 as part of his years of service through volunteer and committee work. In other parts of our community, he supported the Lancaster Chamber as a volunteer for thirty-eight years starting when he graduated from the initial Leadership Lancaster Class of 1984, served many roles, including board chair, and was recognized with Exemplar award at the 2022 Chamber Dinner. He also is a past chair of the Lancaster Estate Planning Council, the Manheim Township Planning Commission, and HDC MidAtlantic. He is married to Christine Sable and they have two children, Nicole and Justin.



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