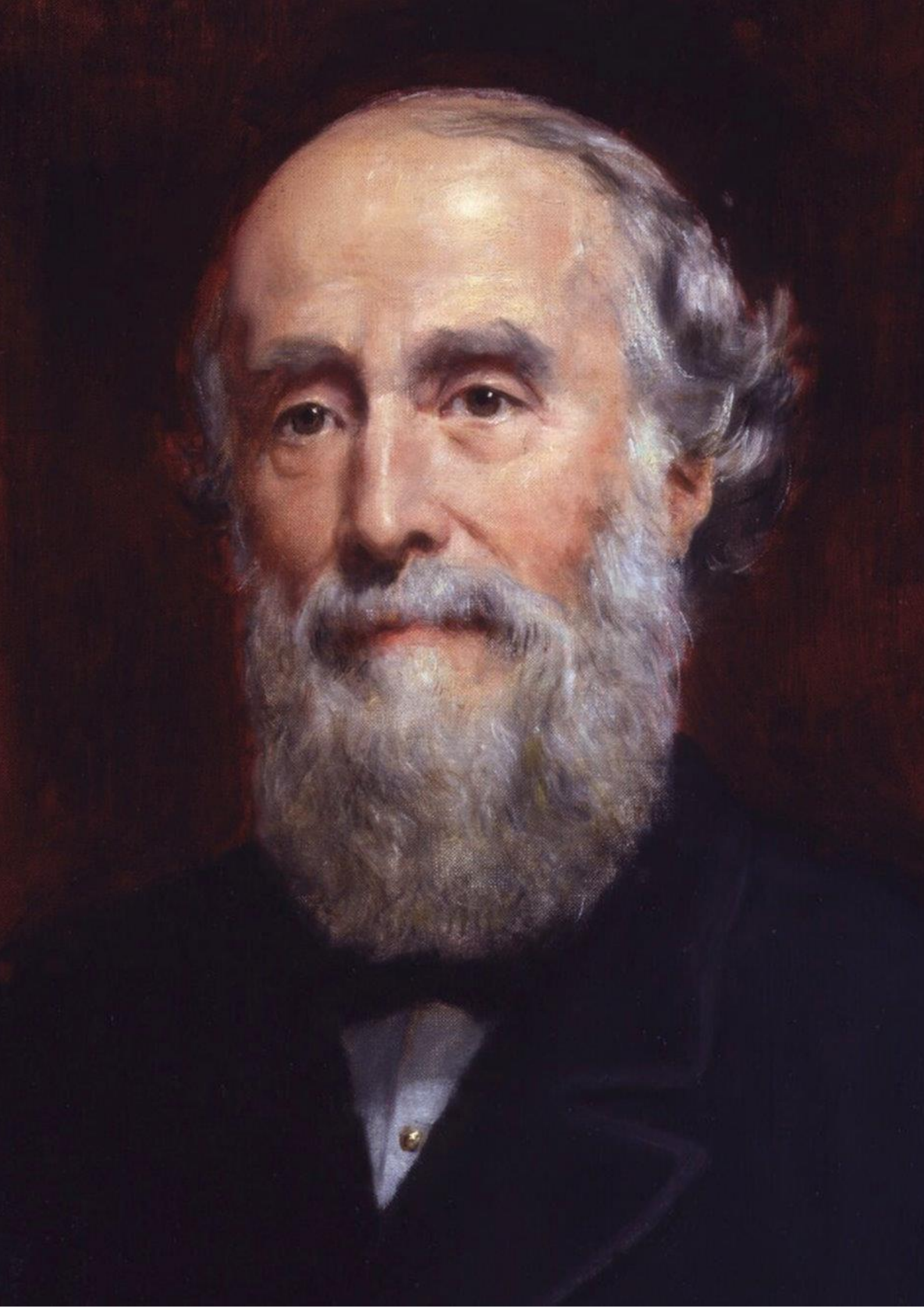

YMCA and the development of informal and youth work education

Tony Jeffs

Cover: George Williams (1821-1905), founder of the YMCA – by John Collier. National Portrait Gallery | ccby4

YMCA and the development of informal and youth work education

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Introduction

YMCA George Williams College (London) looked like closing at the end of 2020. Final year degree programmes, for the tiny residue of students yet to graduate, were taught out through *Coventry University*, whilst the further education department simply closed. Come 2021 all that remained was to tie up the administrative loose ends. Bizarrely the extant web page still proclaimed the College to be "the leading provider of Youth and Community training and qualifications across the UK". This vain glorious boast underscores how precipitously thriving institutions can be brought to their knees. Sadly, the likely loss of an institution which made a valuable contribution to youth and community work education in Britain went unacknowledged. Equally, no recognition was forthcoming that its disappearance signified the end of the YMCA's 135-year engagement with the professional education of youth workers. Subsequently, in 2022, the residue of the College merged with the Centre for Youth Impact. The focus of the new entity is on outcomes, 'good data' and 'quality practice'. This marked a fundamental shift in emphasis away from the College's concern with the ever-changing experiences of relationships, processes, and growth within community learning and development, and youth work. It confirmed that teaching a new generation of practitioners has ceased to be a priority and the cessation of undergraduate and post-graduate level education. It thereby signified the dénouement of an honourable chapter.

Background

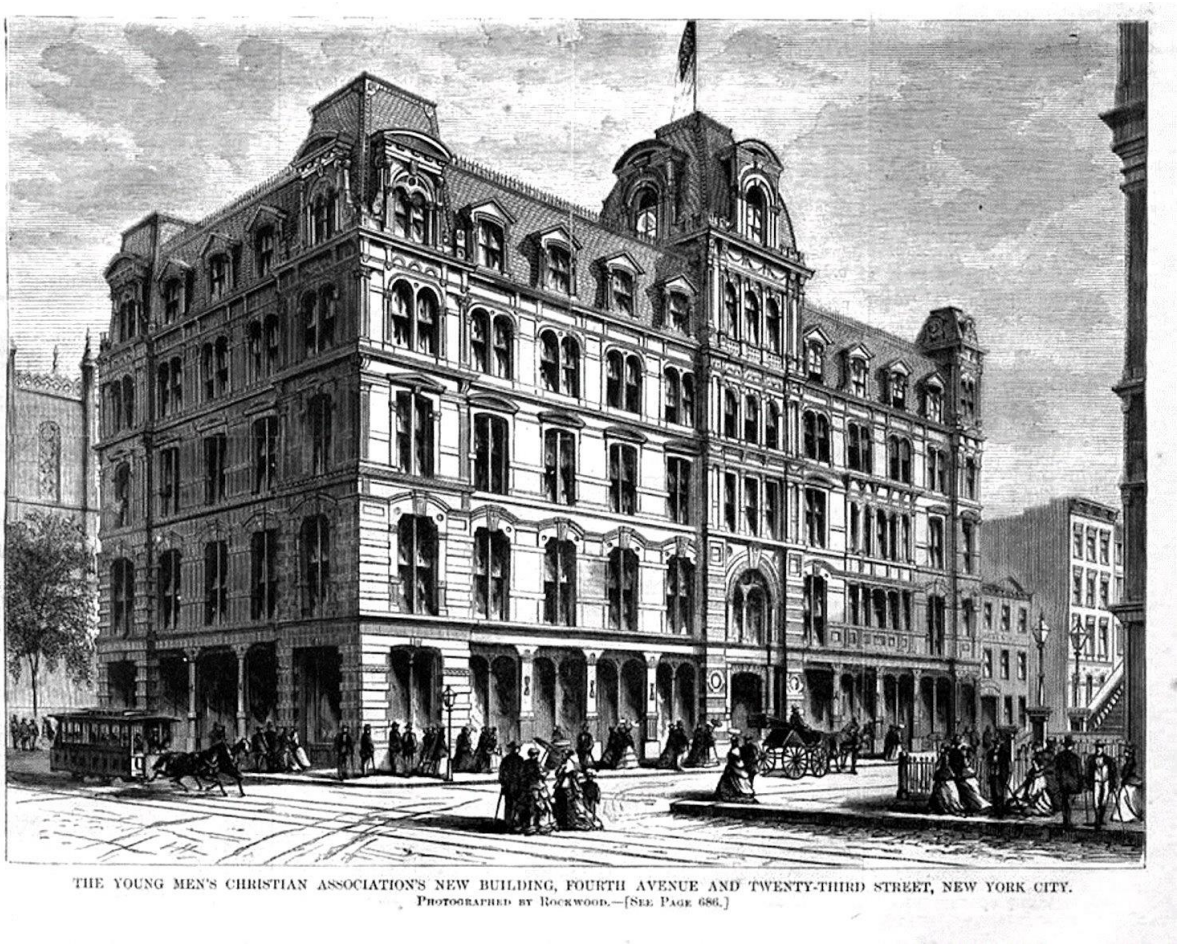
George Williams hosted the initial meeting in June 1844 that preceded the formation of the YMCA. Six years later, after it had become a flourishing movement in Great Britain, the YMCA crossed the Atlantic. America proved fertile ground. Within a decade the total membership there stood just short of double that of Great Britain's (Doggett, 1916: 172). Moreover, according to Doggett - who wrote the first history of the world-wide YMCA - the Associations in North America from the outset acquired a discrete persona. Overall, they were 'larger in membership, more aggressive, less spiritual, with a greater variety of activities' (ibid.: 171). Initially these operated out of shop fronts, church halls and private homes. As membership grew Associations aspired towards owning their own building. Chicago which opened its three storey Farwell Hall in 1867 was probably the first to achieve this ambition (Dedmon, 1957; Lupkin, 2010).

Primarily designed in line with guidance furnished by its' foremost member the evangelist Dwight Moody, it was dominated by an auditorium capable of seating over 3,500 people. In addition, there were a number of large prayer rooms, and offices for staff and sympathetic religious organisations plus a frontage of shops which furnished a rental income. Farwell Hall fulfilled the expectations of its founders by becoming 'the scene of a constant round of religious meetings, all carried on with revivalistic fervour' (Dunn, 1944: 349). Both the YMCA and it's building consciously played a pivotal role in launching or sustaining in the city the 'cause of temperance, and for the suppression of obscene literature, against "Sabbath desecration", smoking, theatergoing,

dancing and billiards' (*ibid.*: 350).

Given its function as a revivalist centre it made sense for Chicago, unlike most Associations, to welcome women into membership (Lupkin, 2010: 78). Over time this policy attracted mounting criticism within the Movement. Primarily orchestrated by Robert McBurney, Secretary of the New York YMCA, this disapproval eventually culminated in the passing of a National Convention resolution stating that the YMCA's 'chief object is to reach young men'. This effectively mandated Chicago to forthwith exclude women from membership (Dedmon, 1957: 81). Farwell Hall burnt down in 1869. One year later a smaller replacement was operating but this in turn was destroyed in the 1871 Great Fire of Chicago. Within three years a third, constructed on the original site, was up and running. Although they led the charge, the design of these three Chicago buildings were outliers. Few Associations replicated them. Indeed in 1893 Chicago fell into line with what had become the dominant template when it constructed a new thirteen storey headquarters which eclipsed the New York model it emulated.

Two years after the original Farwell Hall opened, New York's 23rd Street YMCA was completed. It was adopted as the blueprint for all but a few of the thousand or so YMCA buildings constructed during the 'Building Movement'. This ran from the mid-1870s through to the onset of the First World War (Lupkin, 2010). Five storeys and costing the equivalent of $15,000,000 (in 2021), 23rd Street "Y" incorporated: residential accommodation for 400 members, a 'Grand Hall' seating 1,500, a large gymnasium, bowling alley, reading rooms, a 20,000-volume library, baths, parlours, canteens and restaurants. It also had teaching and lecture rooms, an art gallery, artist studios, a penthouse apartment for the General Secretary and a flat for the janitor and their family. Crucially it also had discrete premises for a 200-member club for boys aged 14 to 17, and a frontage comprising retail units to provide rental income.



THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION'S NEW BUILDING, FOURTH AVENUE AND TWENTY-THIRD STREET, NEW YORK CITY.
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROCKWOOD.—[SEE PAGE 686.]

No. 52 E. 23rd Street - A Blueprint for many early YMCAs, Harper's Weekly, October 1869 (copyright expired)

No vanity project, this edifice was painstakingly designed to dispense the 'fourfold model' of practice devised by Robert McBurney. It was formulated to enhance member's 'spiritual, mental, social and physical' well-being. This building would, according to McBurney, would personify the essence of what the YMCA was created to achieve:

> The idea that if a building could be erected answering to a club house for young men, with everything in it calculated to exert a cheering and brotherly influence, where they could grasp a friendly hand when they came in, and where gymnasiums and music and classes for study were to be found as well as religious and Bible meetings, an influence would thus be exerted upon these young men that would hold and gradually mould them

until their habits were fixed in the right direction. (1899: 1)

North America in 1866 had just three full-time secretaries. Come 1873 the total was 53, by 1881 it was 210 and four years later it exceeded 400 (Bowne, 1885: 5). Only six Associations operated from purpose-built premises in 1869 (Morse, 1918: 79). When McBurney died in 1898 New York alone had 15 purpose-built branches employing 149 full-time staff. At the close of four decades of expansion over 3,600 general and assistant secretaries were in post (Morse, 1913: 156). Scarcely a town or city of note by then lacked a main street YMCA - a 'Christian Clubhouse' or what President Theodore Roosevelt dubbed a 'factory of manhood' (quoted Lupkin, 2010: xvi). Inevitably these buildings re-aligned the Movement's ethos transforming it, as a sympathetic historian remarked, 'into a business concern' wherein 'the executive function came to the fore' (Hopkins, 1951: 162).

Most required a platoon of paid workers and a regiment of volunteers to keep them ticking over. Notably this included a general secretary to oversee the building, manage the 'fourfold' programme and supervise the specialist staff who often included:

- instructors competent to coach and administer the gymnastic and sports programmes and facilities;
- educationalists to organize and teach classes;
- librarians;
- leaders to manage the boys' club;
- caterers, housekeepers and janitors to superintend the restaurant, accommodation and building; and
- pastors to undertake evangelical work within and without the premises.

In addition the YMCA, locally and nationally, was dependent upon a legion of men capable of developing the hundreds of college-based

branches; managing the network of buildings catering for railway workers; functioning as travelling secretaries initiating new and sustaining existing Associations; and undertaking missionary and Secretarial work overseas.

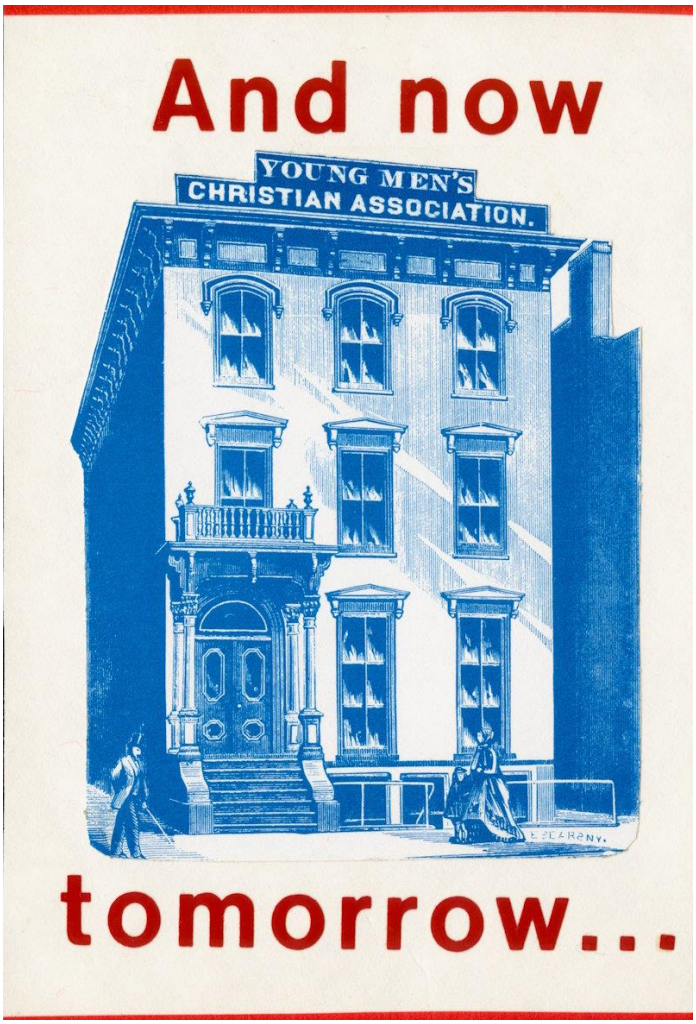
Expectations that senior members, college graduates, qualified professionals and businessmen would transition to fill these vacancies had, by 1880, proved erroneous. Moreover, staff turn-over remained alarmingly high. During the 1870s, for example, approximately a fifth of all general secretaries left the organisation annually (Hopkins, 1951: 172). Jacob Bowne, Secretary to the YMCA International Committee during the early 1880s, undertook research into this staff turnover. He discovered that in a twenty-month period prior to the end of 1884, forty per cent of the 649 who joined the workforce in that timespan departed it within little over a year (Bowne, 1885). Bowne was now convinced that only entry subsequent to a period of full-time professional training would curtail this excessive rate of turnover. The initial remedy, however, was a 'training by contact' or 'apprenticeship' initiative centrally managed by Bowne. Recruits spent a year learning alongside experienced secretaries and via attendance at summer camps and conventions. Sixty-four men completed the 'apprenticeship' between 1881 and 1882, of these 52 entered YMCA employment (Morse, 1913: 157). Bowne, and others who shared his viewpoint, held that the 'apprenticeship' model was at best an interim solution. They pressed for the formation of dedicated YMCA training schools. Eventually their pressure paid off and the first opened in Springfield (Massachusetts) in 1885, trailed by a second in Chicago five years later.

Bowne proved to be correct in his analysis. At the turn of the century James McCurdy, who taught at the *School for Christian Workers (Springfield)* with a short break from 1895 to 1926, and whose son subsequently served as President of *George Williams College (Chicago)* from 1953 to 1961, undertook a study as to the comparative length of service undertaken by secretaries. This found those who trained at *Springfield* or *Chicago* stayed in post three times longer than colleagues recruited from business or after completing a 'mainstream' degree at

another college (Doggett, 1943: 124). This finding was subsequently confirmed by research undertaken by the International Committee of the American YMCA. It showed that between 1902 and 1907 a total of 2,175 entered the employee of the Movement as officers; of these, 1,517 left, and amongst the remainder there were 1,720 changes of position. Notably, just a fifth of 'training school' graduates departed compared with 70 per cent of those from other backgrounds (*The Training School Bulletin* December 1908: 1). The evidence appeared incontrovertible – a sustainable future for the YMCA would in part rely upon the creation of a graduate level training programme.

The campaign to establish training schools had begun in earnest at the 1872 Lovell YMCA National Conference. Robert Weidensall urged delegates to accept that these would be the surest route to creating a cadre of professional secretaries willing to embrace YMCA work as a life-long 'calling' (Doggett, 1943: 27). Initially this proposal attracted widespread disapproval amongst members. Opponents feared that a professional secretariate would commandeer the Movement and wrest control away from the lay membership. This perceived threat was usually labelled 'secretarialism' (Morse, 1918: 80-81). Qualms regarding 'professionalization' faded when the acute shortage of suitable candidates for secretarial posts threatened to curtail further expansion. However, they never fully evaporated. The statistics spoke loud and clear. Between 1880 and 1885 the number of employed officers tripled and then tripled again during the following seven years (Gustav-Wrathall, 1998: 81). In 1892 there were over 1,100 full-time staff in post, but worryingly nearly one in seven posts remained unfilled (Ninde, Bowne and Uhl, 1892: 55). By the onset of the 1880s a clear majority within the Movement's leadership were, to varying degrees, disposed to lend moral, if not financial, assistance to bringing about the formation of one or more YMCA training schools to address this issue (Morse, 1918: 188).

Commencement



A postcard from Springfield College Archives and Special Collections – Available in the Digital Commonwealth ccbyncsa

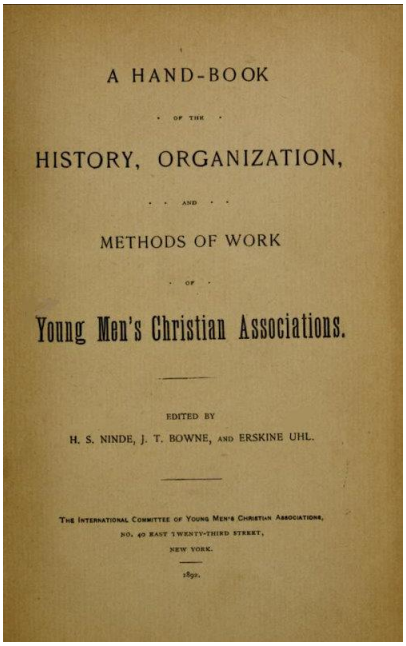
Professional youth work education originated in Springfield Massachusetts. David Allen Reed, a Congregational Minister based in the town resolved to open a *School for Christian Workers* to train a future workforce. He had been unable to recruit sufficient men and women to

undertake parish and Sunday School work - the latter having a weekly attendance exceeding 800. Reed, long an active supporter of the YMCA, from the outset envisaged that the S*chool* would train men to serve as Association secretaries. Hence amongst those he invited to help plan this venture was Robert McBurney, who remained a Trustee until his death in 1898. Such was McBurney's commitment to the College that he left it a quarter of his not insubstantial estate (Doggett, 1902: 248). Reed quickly secured funding to construct a three-storey building complete with a gymnasium, 16 lecture and meeting rooms, and residential accommodation for more than 20 students. The development was designed to furnish a home for both the *School for Christian Workers* and the newly formed Armory Hill YMCA. It is an indication of the pivotal role played by the YMCA in many American communities during this time that when Armory Hill opened - Springfield, a town with 44,000 inhabitants, already possessed three active YMCA branches. One, established in 1855, was the third oldest in the United States (Doggett, 1916: 128).

The *School for Christian Workers* opened January 1, 1885, with five students enrolled on the year-long course. Twenty-three freshmen attended at the outset of the next academic year (Bowne, 1885: 15). By September 1888 58 (including 11 from overseas) were studying on the newly extended two-year programme; plus four on a one-year post-graduate route (Garvey and Ziemba, 2010). Irrespective of the grave shortfall in the number of suitable general secretaries, a policy of accepting 'all-comers' was vetoed. All applicants, besides having to submit a letter of recommendation from an approved Christian Minister, had first to successfully complete a written academic examination; second, pass a demanding gymnasium test designed to weed out the physically unfit; and third, pass a swimming and diving test conducted in the nearby lake. Despite these obstacles the competition for places was such that only one in six applicants secured admittance. During the first decade a significant proportion of the intake applied after completing a degree or study programme elsewhere. For example, during 1891 46 per cent of those completing the Secretarial course and 20 per cent of those

finishing the Physical Education programme were graduates of other colleges and universities. To accommodate this, students could carry forward 'credits' based on relevant prior learning. Partly as a consequence of this flexibility, the average age of entry was 23; and the majority of students prior to 1892 finished the two-year programme in a single year.

Initially the *School* comprised two 'Training Schools'. One for "Sunday School Workers and Pastors' Helpers"; another for "YMCA Secretaries". Of the pair, the latter was always a far more popular option, usually by a ratio of four or five to one. Jacob Bowne accepted the invitation to be the Head of the *YMCA Secretaries Training School* in 1885. During the 35 years that followed he served variously as President of the College, Head of Department, lecturer and librarian. Bowne's career trajectory - high school - business – and then General Secretary of Newburgh (New York State) YMCA was followed by a series of senior administrative roles within the Movement. He attended neither a college nor university. Almost certainly this mattered little, for he was an authentic autodidact, an organic intellectual with a 'scientific reverence for facts' (Burr, 1932: 12). Bowne instinctively adjusted to college life, research, and teaching. An intuitive scholar it was his painstakingly accrued collection of YMCA publications and internal documentation gathered over a lifetime which was to serve as 'the basis for the University of Minnesota YMCA archive' (Katz, 2001: 33).


A HAND-BOOK
OF THE
HISTORY, ORGANIZATION,
AND
METHODS OF WORK
OF
Young Men's Christian Associations.
EDITED BY
H. S. NINDE, J. T. BOWNE, AND ERSKINE UHL.
THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS,
NO. 40 EAST TWENTY-THIRD STREET,
NEW YORK.
1892.

Besides amassing the earliest youth work archive, Bowne was principally responsible for the production of the first youth work textbook. Written, in collaboration with Henry Summerfield Ninde and Erskine Uhl, who had worked alongside Bowne at the YMCA International Committee based in New York, the *Handbook of the History, Organization, and Methods of Work of the Young Men's Christian Association* appeared in 1892. As the Preface confirms this text was written specifically for students attending the two existing Training Schools and all those affiliated to *Springfield's* Correspondence Course. Comprising more than 500 pages it meticulously addresses virtually every aspect of YMCA work. Little wonder then that it became 'a professional bible' (Burr, 1932: 18). Certainly regarding its attention to detail and breadth of coverage Bowne's *Handbook* has probably never been equalled by any subsequent youth work student text.

Bowne was in so many ways a faultless appointment for a new institution striving to clarify its role and identity. For a start his distinguished YMCA career and high standing deflected much potential criticism within the Movement. His intellectual gifts meant he grasped, from the outset, that if *Springfield* was to prosper it must mature into something more than a narrowly specialist training school. William Ballantine, a long-serving colleague, wrote an obituary which captures in part Bowne's singular talents and distinctive contribution:

> It seems a matter of course now that Association officers should have a professional education. It did not seem so to many Association leaders forty years ago. One remarkable thing is that although Mr. Bowne was not himself a college graduate he always had the university point of view. He saw, what so many religious workers fail to see even today, that intellectual and spiritual life should go on together, each contributing to the other. How intellectual a man he was appears from the fact that

> in a life of long hours devoted to the details of service he found time to study the antiquities of the American Indian and to collect stone implements. In this, which was to him recreation, he became an explorer and an authority.
>
> This breadth of intellectual life saved Mr Bowne from the narrow theological dogmatism which was characteristic of most early Association leaders. He was a warm personal admirer and trusted friend of all these leaders. It gave him pain to differ with them, but he could not share their narrowness. This quality was absolutely vital as the College grew and was constantly attacked by good and sincere, but narrow-minded Association secretaries because here students were encouraged to think for themselves and to read the works of scientific thinkers. (1925: 12)

Bowne, Reed and five local clergymen initially undertook the bulk of the teaching aided by six visiting lecturers, amongst whom were two celebrated evangelists who had held senior positions within the YMCA - Dwight Moody and S. M. Sayford. In addition to courses delivered by the specialist schools they were attached to every student had to successfully complete a mandatory "General Course". Spread over two years this comprised: Bible History and Exegesis; The History of Evangelical Christianity; Christian Evidences; Old and New Testament Canon; Fundamental Doctrines of the Bible; Books of the Bible; Christian Ethics; Outline Study of Man; Practical Methods of Christian Work; Rules for Deliberative Bodies; Rhetoric and Logic; and Vocal Music.

Besides the academic demands placed upon them students were required to comply with an almost monastic "Approved Division of Time":

Approved Division of Time:

6.00 am Rising Bell

6.15 to 7.00	Private devotion and preparation for the day's work
7.00 to 7.30	Breakfast
7.30 to 8.00	Walking in the open air
8.00 to 8.15	Put room in order
8.15 to 11.00	Study
11.00 to 12.00	Recitations
12.00 to 12.45	Instruction in gymnasium
1.00 to 1.30 pm	Dinner
1.30 to 3.00	Study
3.00 to 5.00	Recitation
5.00 to 5.15	Evening prayer
5.15 to 6.00	Walking in open air or instruction in gymnasium
6.00 to 6.30	Supper
6.30 to 7.00	Rest
7.00 to 9.30	Study, reading and practical Christian work
10.30	Building closes and lights out.

Suggestions:

1. Get eight full hours sleep;
2. Saturday should be devoted to recreation;
3. Avoid more than four engagements on the Sabbath;
4. In all things observe I Corinthians x:13 [There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with

> the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.] (The King James Version of the Bible).

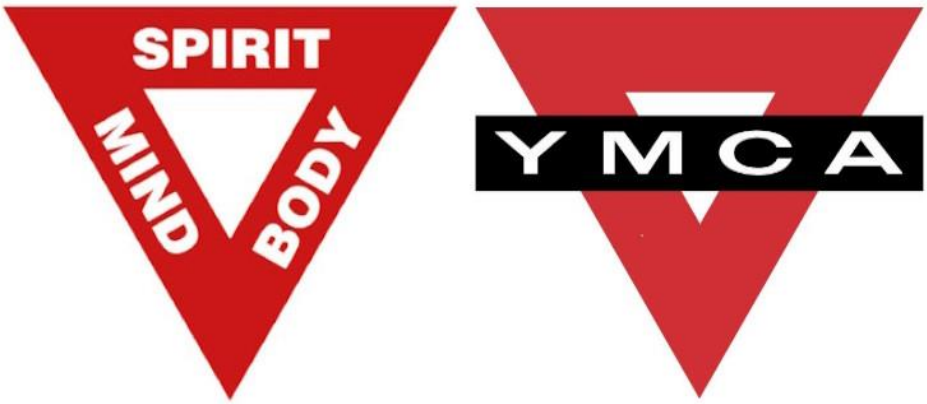
The recitations referred to in the "Division of Time" were what contemporary students would deem a mix of lecture and seminar for which papers might be prepared and pre-reading undertaken. Each and every recitation commenced with a prayer. On Sunday students were required to attend an approved church of their choice and 'take part in church work'. The academic year comprised 40 weeks; in addition, those training to be a general secretary had to attend a minimum of two off-campus YMCA conventions (conferences) annually. By contemporary standards this amounted to a punishing academic regime.

In 1887 the *School* transferred to a lakeside location a mile or so distant from the Armory Hill YMCA. The first new building to be completed was a gymnasium, soon classrooms, a library, playing fields and dormitories followed. The expense entailed in creating a functioning campus meant that despite the best efforts of those who undertook the task of fund-raising, staff during these early years received 'low salaries … often in arrears' (Burr, 1932: 14). Acquisition of gymnasia to which students had exclusive access allowed for the formation of a new "Physical Department for the Training of YMCA Physical Directors".

Luther Halsey Gulick

Luther Gulick arrived in September 1887 to take charge of this assisted by Robert J. Roberts. Roberts as the Physical Education Director of Boston YMCA had pioneered the use of gymnasiums within the YMCA. He also, incidentally, conjured up the now familiar term 'bodybuilding' (Brink, 1916). Gulick remained in post until 1900; Roberts departed after barely two years. The new course embraced anatomy, physiology, hygiene, physical diagnosis, elementary physics, the physiology of exercise and the use and management of gymnasia. To a significant degree the inauguration of the programme signified the beginnings of physical education as a profession in the United States.

Gulick firmly believed the students were not being first and foremost trained to teach fitness and sports, rather he held that the prime task of the 'gymnasium instructor' was to 'be an earnest soul winner' (1888: 15). To illustrate this primacy Gulick devised the inverted equilateral triangle with 'spirit' supported on one side by 'mind' and on the other by 'body'. A few years later, in 1897, the classic YMCA red triangle was publicly released.



As Gulick explained:

> The triangle stands not for body, mind, or spirit, but for the man as a whole. It does not aim to express distinct divisions between body, mind, and spirit, but to indicate that the individual, while he may have different aspects is a unit .... Thus, the man who gives his time and attention largely to the education of his physical nature is violating the triangle idea, no less than the man who gives his time entirely to the intellectual, ignoring the spiritual and physical. (Gulick, 1894: 2)

Springfield students inspired in those early days by Gulick's advocacy of this ideal adopted the triangle as their emblem in 1889; two years later the *Training School* followed in their wake. Gulick and others thereafter energetically set about trying to persuade the wider Movement to do likewise.

In Britain Arthur Yapp, then National Secretary of the British YMCA, during the first month of the First World War selected the red triangle as the means by which the movement's activities within the compass of the British Empire was to be distinguished (Yapp, 1919). Thereafter, every one of the thousands of huts, tents, tea bars and rest rooms run by the YMCA for military personnel and civilian war workers could be readily identified by the large red triangle displayed above its entrance and often

painted on the roof and sides of huts or tents. In addition, all the hundreds of thousands of YMCA workers and volunteers wore a distinctive red triangle badge or armband when on duty; and all stationary, bulletins, crockery, gifts and the like incorporated the distinguishing red triangle. Not long afterwards the British YWCA followed suite by adopting in similar fashion a distinctive blue triangle. When the United States entered the war in April 1917 the American YMCA immediately replicated the British use of the red triangle as their emblem (Hopkins 1951: 487). Fittingly Gulick served under the red triangle with the US Army YMCA in France during 1917 and the early part of 1918. Shortly after returning from France, he died at Lake Sebago (Maine) during a visit to the camp, where in 1910, he and his wife Charlotte Gulick had launched a new national youth organisation the Camp Fire Girls of America – now known as Camp Fire (Miller, 2007).

As Head of the Physical Education Department, Gulick urged his colleague James Naismith to invent an indoor game that might be played by young men in halls of varying dimensions with minimal equipment and outlay. One that would, unlike most gymnastic pursuits and endeavours, foster collaboration, teamwork, and self-instruction (Ladd and Mathisen, 1999: 71). Naismith obliged by crafting 'basket ball' the first game of which was played at the *YMCA Training School* Springfield in December 1891. In addition to this 'first', it was William G. Morgan, an alumnus of *Springfield*, who in 1895, having observed that basketball was unduly energetic for many of the businessmen attending his evening sessions, embarked upon fashioning a less arduous alternative which he called 'mintonette'. Gulick invited Morgan to bring some of his Hoyoke (Massachusetts) YMCA members to *Springfield* to demonstrate this new game in the same gymnasium where Naismith had first organised a game of basketball. Alfred Halstead, a member of the *Springfield* faculty, after the display helpfully advised that a more appropriate name for 'mintonette' might be 'volleyball' (Hopkins, 1951: 263). A third noteworthy *Springfield* sporting 'first' was that achieved by James Huff McCurdy, who arrived as an assistant to Gulick in 1896 and remained until 1916 (Karpovich, 1960). McCurdy introduced field hockey to the

United States with the earliest recorded game to be played on American soil taking place at the College. Subsequently, McCurdy codified the rules in 1900. As an aside it should be noted that a staff team led by Naismith also formulated a game called 'Team Ball' designed to be a less full-bodied and costly version of American Football. Unlike Basketball it never caught-on and soon vanished without trace (Boyne, 1910).

Postcard of Springfield College published by Boston Public Library Flickr - CC by 2.0 Deed

During those early days Gulick may well have done more than anyone to put what later became known as *Springfield College* on the map (Putney, 2011). However, as a colleague remarked he soon 'tired of classroom work' (Burr, 1932: 12). The humble, but essential, task of teaching students it seems was not for him. Like many before, and since, for Gulick the college or university was primarily perceived to be a launching pad for personal ambition. Hence, by leaving swathes of teaching and administrative work to be shouldered by colleagues, Gulick retained the reserves of energy and time needed to devote himself to wider pursuits.

Or, as he rather arrogantly put it, this enabled him to 'lay eggs for other people to hatch' (Nash, 1960: 60). Besides the achievements already mentioned, Gulick was, according to Chudacoff, the leading spokesman of the play movement in North America - ceaselessly promoting the development of facilities in urban localities (2007: 72). Undeniably he was also a key player in the movement to extend outdoor educational provision (Ford, 1989) and the drive to create new national youth-serving organisations such as the American Boy Scouts unveiled in 1910 (Macleod, 1983) and the Camp Fire Girls of America. Within the "Y" his influence was such that, according to Clifford Putney a historian of the Movement, he rose to become 'the greatest of YMCA philosophers' (2003: 69); the man who did more than any other to re-orientate its focus. As Putney goes on to explain 'before Gulick, the "Y" had kept gymnastics subordinate to evangelism. After him, it held physical fitness, no less than religious conviction, responsible for leading men to Glory' (op cit.: 72).

Following Reed's departure in 1891, the designation *YMCA Training School* was adopted. During the same year a Correspondence Course was introduced along with a one-year post-graduate programme. The former grew apace and within twelve months enrolled over a hundred students. Most were resident in the USA or Canada, but a number were based in the United Kingdom, France, Denmark, Japan, and Switzerland. Four years later the *Sunday School Workers and Pastors' Helpers School* was re-designated *The Bible Normal College*. Not long afterwards it became the first American seminary to admit women as students. Then, in 1902, it physically departed Springfield to merge with *Hartford Seminary* to create *The Hartford School of Religious Pedagogy*. Following a number of amalgamations and title changes in 2021 it became the *Hartford International University for Religion and Peace*.

Separation heralded a relaxing of the disciplinary regime imposed on students. Rules were dropped but, much to the annoyance of some, smoking, on and off campus, remained prohibited. Yet again the name changed in 1912 - this time to the *International YMCA Training School*. Staff believed the title better reflected the increasing number of overseas

students in attendance – approximately a sixth then came from abroad (Doggett, 1943: 155). Overseas recruitment was aided by the funding, gifted by supporters, which enabled foreign candidates endorsed by their national Association to access scholarships which covered all or part of their tuition and board.

Prior to the creation of the Physical Education Department the curriculum of the *School for Christian Workers* had been dominated by religious subject matter of a 'fundamentalist' bent (Doggett 1943: 29). Clearly, if the new department was to supply competent practitioners capable of teaching physical education and managing diverse activity programmes, then a recalibration of course structures was needed to generate the space for the essential specialist elements. Gulick and his colleagues, who in part or whole, shared his reforming zeal set about creating a reworked cross-cutting curriculum. This was based on a belief that 'the religious life' included 'everything there is in man – body, mind and spirit in complete whole' (Gulick, 1918: 775). This focus led to both programmes shifting towards 'the study of man'. The emergence of the additional route predictably precipitated a gradual change in the pattern of recruitment. Within a decade the two courses were approximately equal in size. Thereafter, the numbers joining the Physical Education Department year-on-year out-stripped those who came with the intention of becoming general secretaries' post-graduation. In part this was because McCurdy undertook a vigorous recruitment campaign which stressed that the new degree was not exclusively designed to prepare men for entry into YMCA employment. By 1907 a fifth of those graduating opted for employment outside of the YMCA. More than a quarter of all *Springfield* alumni were by that date employed in 'allied fields' (Hall, 1964: 95). With each passing year this percentage increased as the demand for qualified physical educators equipped to work in other spheres such as schools, colleges and universities, and boys' clubs grew (Doggett, 1943: 159).

In 1896 the two courses were extended in length to three years. Nine years later the State of Massachusetts granted the *YMCA Training School* independent authority to award degrees. Initially three-year BAs

and one-year master's degrees were offered in Humanics and Physical Education. Undergraduates on both completed a common core which had been introduced in 1901. This encompassed the study of: (a) the whole person – spirit, mind and body; and (b) 'cultural' areas – Biology, Psychology, Sociology and Religion. During 1896 a year-long Access Course for those lacking a High School Diploma was initiated. Subsequently in 1917 all under-graduate degrees were extended to four-years which allowed for new specialist routes including those on boys', rural and industrial work to be incorporated into the programmes.

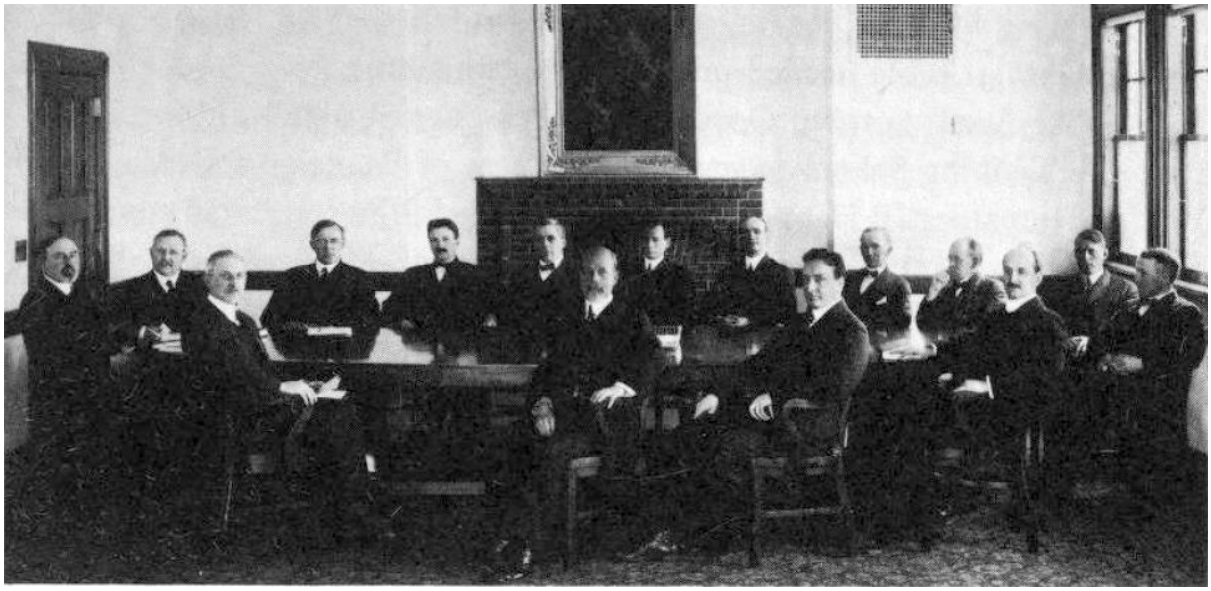
Humanics

Lawrence Doggett was appointed President of the *YMCA Training School* in 1896 and remained in post until 1936. Prior experience as the State Secretary of the Ohio YMCA convinced Doggett that secretaries were best recruited from amongst men who enjoyed a rich intellectual life and possessed a thirst for knowledge and a critical mind. Colleagues lacking those qualities, Doggett noted, usually 'ran dry or became hack workers' (Hall, 1964: 88). *Springfield*, he argued, if it was to eschew an analogous fate needed to circumvent becoming a training school priming students for 'tasks already defined, goals already set' (*ibid*., 87). Hence the importance he placed upon developing a suite of core cultural courses on, for instance, classical European literature, philosophy and singing. Implementing this was an audacious decision. Because as Hanford Burr, a teacher at *Springfield* from 1892 through to 1932, reminds us at the time it was generally assumed within the Movement that the college's role was to afford training in an array of functional skills and 'drill the students in the doctrines of the most conservative churches' (1932: 78).

Doggett and Burr selected the name 'Humanics' to describe the approach embodied within the revised Secretarial and Common Core courses. The term Humanics which, up to this point in time had never been accorded widespread usage, was encountered in certain confined circles from the mid-nineteenth century onwards to depict a branch of knowledge relating to the study of human affairs. Probably it was first utilised by T. Wharton Collins who taught political philosophy at the *University of Louisiana*. Collins authored a text, published in 1860, entitled *Humanics*. This designated Humanics to be:

> … the science of man …. It singles out man from the Zoological reign and makes him the subject of especial study. Which it analyses every detail of his organisation and essence, it attaches itself principally to his distinguishing characteristics, and seeks to find their synthesis. (Collins, 1860: 9 -10)

Doggett and Burr do not concede any familiarity with the work of Collins. Indeed, the former in his biography recalls how, after unsuccessfully trying to unearth an appropriate title for their revised Secretarial Course, Burr took down a dictionary and from it selected 'Humanics' as a term that might best serve to capture the essence of the new degree (Doggett, 1943). The proposed programme focussed on the study of human nature, affairs, and relations as well as practical administrative skills. Curiously they summarised the focus of Humanics by turning to the same quotation from Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man Epistle II* that Collins had utilised forty years earlier as the starting point for his text – 'The proper study of mankind is Man'.



Lawrence Doggett (left end of the table) and the Springfield faculty circa 1915 (believed to be out of copyright)

Springfield's was the first Humanics degree and its introduction led to 'an organised attack on the College and an attempt to drive out "the

upsetters of the faith"' (Burr, 1932: 78). Whether by design or not it created a permanent rift with the recently established Chicago *Training School of the YMCA* who had, following preliminary discussions, assumed that a common shared syllabus might be adopted by both. After discovering via a published notice, with no forewarning, that *Springfield* was heading down the Humanics route those hopes on the part of the *Training School of the YMCA* were dashed (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013). Given a text jointly written by Doggett and John Hansel President of the *Chicago Training School of the YMCA* (in conjunction with W. D. Murray) – *Studies in Association Work: History, Principles, Business Management* - had appeared a year earlier in 1905 it seems bizarre that Doggett did not see fit to alert his co-author as to *Springfield's* intentions. Little wonder then that Hansel felt ill-used. Their text was devised to serve as a basic practice guide for students attending the two training schools and newly appointed YMCA staff. Formulated to be read by an individual to familiarise themselves with the workings of the Movement it was also structured so that it might be used as a 'study-pack'. One which an established staff member might use as the basis of an introductory programme for colleagues and volunteers (see Doggett, Murray and Hansel, 1905).

The *Springfield* Humanics model was based on core topic areas or 'aspects' – the physical, social, philosophical, religious, psychological and the scientific (Burr, 1932: 74-75). The outlines below convey something of the broad reach of the syllabus:

- **Physical Aspects**: Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, Hygiene, Physical Diagnosis, Physical Education Methods.

- **Psychological Aspects**: General Psychology, Adolescent Psychology, Educational Psychology, Mental Hygiene, Pedagogy, Principles and Methods of Teaching.

- **Religious Aspects**: Bible, History and Philosophy of Religion, Comparative Religion, History of Christianity, Religious Education Principles and Methods.

- **Social Aspects**: Sociology, Economics, Social Ethics, History, Government, International Relations.
- **Philosophical Aspects**: Problems of Philosophy, History of Philosophy, Literature, Art, Drama, Music.
- **Scientific Aspects**: Chemistry, Physics, Natural Sciences (Geology, Botany, etc.).

In addition to taking the courses dedicated to teaching the 'aspects', students also completed specialist units relating either to physical education or secretarial work in order to secure a degree.

Springfield was the first college to conceive of a Humanics degree. Equally it was, in all probability, also the first to close down a Humanics programme when it did so in 1927. According to Hall the decision was arrived at because a growing number of students 'who wished to teach academic subjects in schools or who were proceeding to graduate work' found it difficult to get this degree recognised (Hall, 1964: 148).

Other American universities and colleges tracked *Springfield's* lead and developed their own Humanics programmes. By the late 1980s in excess of 70 taught degree programmes accredited by the national co-ordinating body *American Humanics* (Ashcraft, 2001). *Springfield* having closed their free-standing Humanics degree nevertheless retained the subject as a one semester freshman option and employed the concept as a vague ill-defined organizing ideal. Today Humanics has all but vanished from the academic map. *American Humanics* dissolved itself in 2011 to be promptly re-born as the *Nonprofit Leadership Alliance.* Affiliated institutions followed in lockstep by re-naming and re-calibrating their courses which henceforth focused on management, administration and leadership with a 'non-profit' gloss. Except that may not signify the final chapter in the story. Joseph Aoun, President of *Northeastern University*, in a text published in 2017 pressed the case for a 'new discipline - "Humanics"- the goal of which is to nurture in our species' unique traits of creativity and flexibility' (2017: xviii). Aoun advocates the introduction of a supplementary university Humanics

programme designed to teach and stimulate the 'new literacies' related to a deep understanding of technology, data and human relationships which he argues will help to make students 'robot-proof' (*ibid*.: 62). Oddly, like others before him, Aoun fails to acknowledge the existence of an earlier Humanics tradition. However, he, by a bizarre coincidence, quotes exactly same the line from Alexander Pope that T. Wharton Collins took as his point of departure in 1860; as did Doggett and Burr in 1906.

Chicago – beginnings

As the nation pressed westward so the YMCA followed. Come 1880 one in three Associations were located in states that either bordered the Mississippi or lay to the west of it. Robert Weidensall, once described as 'the best loved man in the Brotherhood' (Hopkins, 1951: 122), was responsible for a great deal of that growth. Weidensall adjudged it was a shortage of well-trained and educated secretaries which seriously mired further expansion. So, in 1884, he and two close associates - Isaac Brown and William Lewis, planned an innovative training initiative to address this hindrance. They invited 57 colleagues to a meeting held besides Lake Geneva (Wisconsin) to inaugurate the *Western Secretarial Institute* (usually referred to within the Movement as simply the *Institute*). Brown, who in 1871 had established one of the earliest campus "YMCAs" at what was then the *Illinois State Normal University* and now *Illinois State University* (Ogren, 2005: 166), was at the time Illinois State Secretary. The *Institute,* which ran each year from May through to September, was formulated to offer current secretaries and members week-long training events and conferences. Land was purchased on what was subsequently designated Williams Bay and an extensive building programme commenced. Weidensall in 1889 outlined his ambitions for the *Institute* as follows:

> What a law school is to a young man who aims to enter the profession of law, or what a medical school is to such a one as desires to practice medicine, so should this Institute be a place where young men could best study the work of the Association and especially of a General Secretary. (quoted Hopkins, 1951: 173-4)

The *Institute* sought to accomplish a range of outcomes. At the forefront was the training of secretaries, those already in post as well as perspective recruits. Each attendee was offered week-long taught courses relating to Associational work and Bible Study supplemented by open lectures, camp-fire meetings, entertainments, and leisure activities. Experienced secretaries and academics drafted in from Higher Education institutions were enlisted to act as tutors. Second came the provision of discrete study programmes and sporting activities for members of the 700 plus College YMCAs then spread across the nation. The College "Y" proved extraordinarily popular, so much so that between the 1880s and 1920s approximately 25 to 30 per cent of all male college and university students were to varying degrees involved in their activities (Setran, 2007: 4). Third it was assumed these gatherings - by drawing Association men together - would facilitate the dissemination of good practice amongst serving secretaries, physical directors, boys' club workers and education tutors. Finally the camp setting was intended to foster 'association' and a sense of corporate identity. To this end, staff were encouraged to bring along their families who were offered an assortment of social and recreational activities.

Lake Geneva and the *Institute* were for almost half-a-century an unalloyed success. Attendances grew year-on-year until they peaked at 42,000 paying guests per annum during the early 1920s (Canady, 2016: 264). Predictably the concept was soon replicated. First by Dwight Moody, who served first as a Missionary then President of the Chicago YMCA between 1861 to 1869 prior to becoming a full-time evangelist. In 1886 Moody launched a YMCA 'College Student's Summer School' held in Northfield Massachusetts. It was so popular that it created a turning point in American evangelism as a consequence of the number of missionaries and evangelists enlisted from amongst attendees (Stratton, 2016). Others quickly followed. According to Richard C. Morse, in 1912 over a third of all YMCA employees attended one or more annual YMCA summer institutes and schools, and steps had by then been taken to promote 'uniformity in the courses of study' provided (1913: 161). Six welcomed white and black members but the seventh located at Blue

Ridge (North Carolina) in the Deep South was 'whites' only. Black YMCA secretaries working in the South, who could not afford to travel 'north', were therefore excluded until they established in 1908 their own annual summer training school at Asheville (North Carolina). Three years later this transferred to Chesapeake Bay (Maryland). Unlike the other summer events this initiative was not underwritten by a network of local Associations but was a national YMCA venture. Unfortunately, the Black Associations and branches, which post-1900 numbered approximately a 100, lacked the resources to fund a permanent site akin to Lake Geneva. Therefore, what became known as the Chesapeake Summer School met in borrowed or rented accommodation (Mjagkij, 1994).

Digital Commonwealth CCbyNCSA

Weidensall, Brown and colleagues in 1890 took what was surely the next logical step by establishing a permanent year-round *Training School of the YMCA*. Brown, who remained Illinois State Secretary, initially undertook the key leadership role. From the outset the programme and syllabi were 'built around the practical work of the YMCA' (Yerkes and

Miranda, 2013: 50). This meant it was formulated to furnish workers schooled to cultivate the 'foursquare man'. The 'founding fathers' had no intention of allowing the sort of criticisms already being voiced in the Movement regarding the ethos of *Springfield* to be directed at them. Therefore, for example, they did not admit those who from the outset expressed a desire to pursue a career outside the YMCA in the wider charitable, education and social service fields. A practice that was widely held within sectors of the YMCA to have devalued the importance of Associational work at *Springfield*. Isaac 'Eddy' Brown, who had recently rebuffed the offer of a teaching post at *Springfield*, was appointed President of the *Training School of the YMCA* (Bowman, 1926: 46). An office he occupied whilst continuing to serve as State Secretary. John Hansel, initially recruited by Weidensall to manage and develop the Lake Geneva site, now added the *Training School* to his portfolio. Hansel was given the title of General Secretary but subsequently, after the amalgamation of the two entities, he in turn became President. To confuse matters Brown remained President of the College Board which took ultimate responsibility for the *Training School* and the *Institute* (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 70). Besides his two administrative posts Brown taught classes on the Bible, logic, philosophy, Association administration and church history (Bowman, 1926: 110). Hansel proved a capable organiser and adroit fund-raiser. But as Yerkes and Miranda note the boundaries between the respective roles of Brown and Hansel during this era was 'never clear cut' (2013: 76). In 1909 Brown resigned as Illinois State Secretary to become a full-time faculty member, serving as Dean of the Associational Department - a post he retained until his death in 1917. Previously Hansel had retired as President in 1905 to be replaced by Frank Burt. Burt remained in post until 1926. A graduate of *Knox College*, Burt had from the onset played a prominent role in the management of the Lake Geneva *Institute*. After graduating he had been a High School Principal prior to occupying a series of managerial roles within the YMCA. This included serving for eleven years as an area organiser for campus branches. Before becoming President, he had been in charge of the *Institute and Training School's* Department of Secretarial Training (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 84). Like Hansel before

him Burt was a skilled and effective fund-raiser.

The official opening of the Chicago *Training School* was 10th September 1890. Later that day Isaac Brown wrote to Charles K. Ober, head of the 'Student Work' Department within the International Committee, recounting that:

> The first session of the Training School was held here this morning and was marked by a spirit of prayer and earnestness. Five students entered at the beginning, one or two others are expected at once. These five come from three states and five different churches. Three of them enter the Physical Department and two the Secretarial. Two of them are high school graduates; two others, I think, have had a partial high school course. Three of them are men of experience in Association work and the fourth comes from a Board of Directors. The average age of the five is twenty-four years. We shall need to be much in communion with our Great Teacher if this work is the success we want it to be. (Ober, 1890)

The initial intake was 15 and the course comprised three terms plus attendance at the Lake Geneva summer school. Instruction in the early days was primarily provided by serving Secretaries. After merging with the *Western Secretarial Institute* in 1896 it became the *Institute and Training School of the YMCA,* a name retained until 1913 when it became the *YMCA College*. In 1896 the programme extended to two years by which time the annual intakes were *circa* 30. Around the same time an agreement was made with *Northwestern University* (Evanston) and the *University of Chicago* permitting *Institute and Training School* graduates to transfer with credits onto their Liberal Arts degrees.

Brown and Hansel coordinated the unification of the *Training School* and the Lake Geneva *Institute* to form the *Institute and Training School of the YMCA*. This allowed the financially successful *Institute* to subsidise the *Training School*. Soon Brown added to Lake Geneva's roster of week-long courses and conferences an intensive four-week

educational programme taught by visiting academics and senior YMCA staff. Devoted to topics such as County Work, Physical Education, and Boys' Work, these units were incorporated within the academic year for the full-time students which now comprised three terms at Chicago and a fourth at Lake Geneva (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 72). Integration meant those contemplating enrolment on the full-time training programme could attend the Lake Geneva segment to appraise the content, learn alongside current students and acquire credits. In 1911 two three-year Batchelor degrees were launched, one in Physical Work and another in Secretarial Administration. Henceforth, the minimum entry qualification became the possession of a high school diploma (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 116).

Originally it was intended to house the full-time course in the new Chicago Central YMCA modelled on the McBurney design. Unfortunately, this remained unfinished in 1890 so for the initial three years the course was accommodated in the Maddison Street YMCA, the largest of the five outreach branches then operating in the city. In 1893 staff and students transferred to a suite of classrooms and offices located on the eighth floor of the new 13 storey Central "Y" building; then the largest and most expensive Associational building in the USA.

From the outset the *Training School* was overshadowed by the educational programme administered by the Central "Y" whose "Association College" was already running 24 evening classes and four University extension programmes (Dedmon, 1957: 119). Barely a decade later it was, in addition to the array of taught courses, dispensing over sixty-three English classes for various immigrant groups. By comparison the *Training School* was always a small-time enterprise.

There the *Training School* remained until 1915 when, following a vigorous three-year fund-raising campaign orchestrated by the astute Burt, the $500,000 needed to construct a new independent campus became available (Dedmon, 1957: 209). Being based in the Central "Y" offered tangible benefits. It provided students with cheap but first-rate accommodation, access to a well-equipped library, the personal use of

sports and leisure facilities, and on-site part-time employment. Chicago Central YMCA from the onset pledged to support the *Training School* with funds drawn from their endowment income, on condition that the new institution did not canvass for donations and legacy income within the boundaries of the city. However, those benefits were outweighed by serious disadvantages. First, prior to the early 1940s, Chicago Central YMCA operated a 'whites only' membership policy, although it did run a separate 'blacks only' branch elsewhere in the city. This made it problematical for Jewish and Black students to attend classes. Although they were entitled do so they could hardly have felt either welcomed or at ease within the overall setting. Second, the gymnasium and the indoor running track were shared with YMCA members so that access for teaching purposes was restricted to those times when the Central "Y" did not require exclusive usage. Even when the *Institute and Training School* did hold classes in the former it was obliged to do so in the presence of other users (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 94). Third, the swimming pool besides being primarily reserved for members, operated according to specific rules which denied access to either Jews or Negroes (Alcorn, 2007:97). Finally, the *Institute and Training School* lacked ready access to playing fields. These obstacles coalesced to make it impossible for it to replicate *Springfield's* Physical Education programme. This, in part, may explain why the *Institute and Training School* programme from the outset had a dissimilar focus. It placed, for example, heightened emphasis upon familiarity with biological sciences and the management of facilities.

The first Director of Physical Work at the *Institute and Training School* was Henry F. Kallenberg - a *Springfield* alumni taught by Gulick and Naismith. Post graduation he became a YMCA Physical Director attached to the *University of Iowa*. Kallenberg earned himself a footnote in the history of basketball first by suggesting to Naismith that he cut a hole in the bottom of the net so the ball might fall through of its own accord after each successful shot. Second, because in 1896 he organised the first inter-collegiate basketball game (between the Universities of Iowa and Chicago). Before the game commenced Kallenberg also fixed the size of

the teams to five thereby, it is claimed, creating the game's modern format. Later in the same year Kallenberg relocated to Chicago where he became an Assistant Physical Director at the Central "Y" and simultaneously studied medicine at *Northwestern University*. Whilst working at the Central "Y" he commenced teaching sessions at the *Institute and Training School* on a part-time basis. Shortly after graduating as an MD he was appointed full-time Director of Physical Education at the *Institute and Training School*.

Initially Kallenberg faced almost insurmountable challenges not merely with regards securing access to facilities but in acquiring teaching apparatus. With no laboratories of his own he was obliged to borrow on an almost daily basis basic equipment from his *alma mater*. However constrained the course might have been by the lack of facilities and equipment, it inevitably obliged the College to restructure the core programme to accommodate it. No longer was it feasible for the teaching to disproportionately focus upon the training of general secretaries. Kallenberg and his colleagues - notably Arthur Steinhaus who was to play a prominent role in researching links between lifestyle and health status - were committed to creating their own discrete model of tuition. It embraced group work, health promotion and the 'broad' foundations of Associational work as well as physical education. Crucially, it sought to fuse them in a distinctive way. As Steinhaus explained to his students:

> You become physical educators when you use activities as means towards greater ends. As long as we are thinking of activities as ends in themselves, we are nothing but peddlers of physical activity.... You are here in this institution, in an environment that has always recognized this basically. (quoted Alcorn, 2007: 49)

Full degree awarding powers were conferred in 1911. Initially, under-graduate degrees in Association Science and Physical Education, and post-graduate degrees in Physical Education and Secretarial Education were offered. Association Science focussed on YMCA practice. However, it was not narrowly fixated with manufacturing YMCA secretaries.

Indeed Mordecai Lee (2010), with some justification, views it as the proto not-for-profit management degree. It paid attention to the effective administration and governance of an organisation that did not ultimately have a singular fiscal measure whereby success or failure was to be assessed. Breadth was added, and horizons widened, via placements with settlement houses such as Hull House (founded by Jane Addams in 1889), Chicago Commons Settlement House (founded in 1894 by Graham Taylor then Professor of Applied Christianity at *Chicago Theological Seminary* and an early Trustee of the Springfield *School for Christian Workers*) as well as an array of boys' clubs, adult education institutes and outreach projects working with neighbourhood gangs.

Whereas *Springfield* was situated in a small New England industrial town, the *Institute and Training School of the YMCA* was located at the heart of the second most populated city in North America. A metropolis of contrasting wealth and poverty, it was a melting pot riven by political, racial, religious and ethnic tensions, and ruled over by notoriously corrupt politicians. The resultant social tensions helped foster a maelstrom of reform activity, political radicalism, and religious evangelism. Perhaps it was, therefore, no accident that it was in Chicago, during decades which stretched from 1860 to the start of Great War, that we witness, for example, the appearance of the first YMCA building and the opening of the earliest settlement house in America. We also find the origins of juvenile justice reform and the emergence of the *University of Chicago* as a pioneering centre for social work education, urban sociology and school reform. The YMCA, from the onset, had been pre-eminently a city-based organisation. Essentially it beheld the urban environment as dangerous and corrupting, antipathetic to religious beliefs, and healthy bodies and minds. City life was perceived as overflowing with temptation and sin against which young men needed to be protected from. The evangelicals who dominated the YMCA during the first half-century of its existence fervently believed the solution lay in conversion, one person at a time. The social problems which threatened to engulf the populace would, they held, be conquered via personal

redemption not by the reform programmes advocated by progressives, political campaigners and radicals. Consequently, the YMCA as an

> organisation held itself aloof from any and all legislative causes, and while it encouraged civic engagement in its secretaries and its membership, the Associations themselves took no public position on any public issue. (Hodges, 2017: 55)

That position became increasingly difficult to sustain in the face of the rapid growth of what was known as the 'social gospel' or 'social Christianity' movement which gathered momentum post-1870 (Evans, 2017). The 'social gospel' urged Christians to actively engage with those social movements seeking to tackle the problems of urban deprivation. As Henry Emerson Fosdick, who during the Great War served as a YMCA worker, and wrote three popular religious texts published by the YMCA's Association Press (1915, 1917, 1918) put it:

> … any church that pretends to care for the souls of people but is not interested in the slums that damn them … [promotes] a dry, passive, do nothing religion in need of new blood (1933: 25).

Amongst numerous social gospel texts, pamphlets, and articles one, more than any other emerged from the throng. This was Charles Sheldon's 1896 novel *In his Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* Wildly successful, with excess of 100,000 copies sold during the first month of publication and over 50,000,000 editions purchased in the following decade, the novel's final third is set in Chicago with much of the action occurring in a settlement. Chapter nine even contains an oblique attack on the YMCA for seeking to produce temperate, biddable, and obsequious employees who, as a consequence of their deference, were more easily exploited by unscrupulous employers. Graham Taylor, who briefly taught at *Hartford Seminary* before leaving for Chicago in 1892 (where he established the Chicago Commons Settlement whilst teaching full-time at the *Chicago Theological Seminary*) is another significant figure. He played a pioneering role in the development of the sociology of religion, and devoted considerable time and energy trying to coax the

YMCA into adopting the social gospel. At an international gathering held at the *YMCA Training School* (Springfield) in 1895 Taylor pleaded with his audience for a change of direction within the Movement:

> To make of ourselves and our buildings centers for the social unification of the mixed and disunited hosts of young men, especially in the down town wards of our cities; to make of our meetings and educational classes schools in which the young men of the nation may study and learn their social and civics rights and duties as a part of the citizenship and religion; to raise up an intelligent body of young men who will be too loyal to the commonwealth both of our country and of the kingdom of God to engage in the fratricidal strife of class warfare; to push the Association movement into lodging houses and labor unions, street life and recreative rendezvous of young men .... So only can we fulfil our supreme duty and opportunity in the "present crisis" to become "peace makers" and leaders of our common Christianity in saving the souls and the social relations of America's young manhood. (quoted Wade, 1964: 114)

Taylor's entreaty failed to secure the impact he and others hoped for. Within a decade he had to all intents and purposes given up on the YMCA and moved on. Others followed in his wake, but enough adherents to the social gospel remained for the tensions and debates to persist. Certainly, they did so within the Chicago *Institute and Training School* (Alcorn, 2007). Irrespective of, or perhaps in response to, these pressures, the YMCA nationally from the late 1890s set about extending the reach of its work. Consequently, if the degree programme was to remain germane it to was obliged to widen its range of options. Gradually it did so by adding specialisms to the programme such as Railroad, Industrial, Boys', Camp and Play Work.

This opening out into new areas, most of which were far more welfare-orientated than mainstream secretarial work, required a re-alignment in relation to programme content. A solution to this challenge was to shift the focus of the teaching from theological and religious topics towards

core elements of practice and the creation of new undergraduate routes. For Edward Jenkins, who was President of the Chicago *Institute and School* from 1926 to 1936 and who had served as a General Secretary in New York, this entailed an espousal of 'informal education' which he viewed as the common thread coursing through the various aspects of YMCA work, adult education and most, if not all, youth serving organisations.

One area of intense growth within the Movement during the decades spanning the First World War was boys' work with those aged 14 to 16. Eventually this led to the introduction by the *YMCA College* in 1928 of a Bachelor in Administration of Boys' Clubs. Almost certainly this was the earliest undergraduate degree in youth work offered anywhere in the world.

Besides the provision of activities, many YMCA practitioners and settlement workers in the fields of youth work, community organising,

and social work seized upon the idea that an effective and efficient means of intervention was via the creation or nurturing of groups. This involved the worker in seeking to pro-actively influence the collective for the better. As Burr noted as early as 1909 this approach was perhaps best 'described as group work rather than mass work or even individual work' (1909: 35). This *modus vivendi* had a long history but the label 'group work' did not emerge until the onset of the twentieth century (Smith, 2004). It was during the early years of YMCA boys' work we probably encounter the untheorized beginnings of 'group work'. Interventions overwhelmingly embarked upon by untrained staff or volunteers. Consequently, as Burr found:

> Some boys' work directors have had a bad case of "gangitis". They seem to think that, having gotten a lot of boys together in various groups, all they have to do is to let the pot boil. It usually does but the cooking is poor. (1909: 39)

It was to address failings such as this and related challenges that key members of the *YMCA College* staff team post-1920 developed

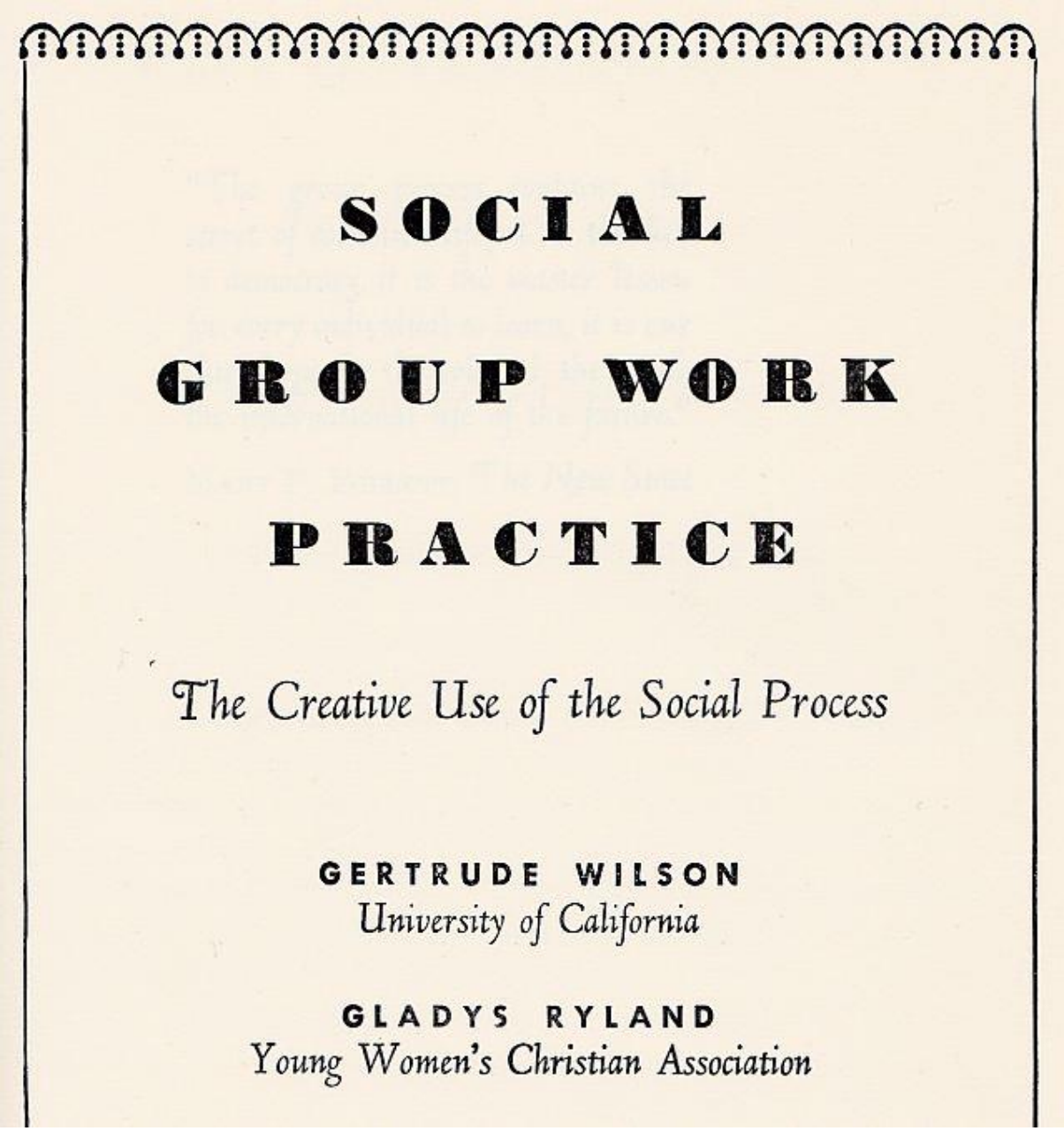
programmes linked to what they termed *social group work* (see Reid 1981). A substantial proportion of the key figures involved in the elaboration of *social group work* either taught at the college (Hedley Dimock, Charles E. Hendry, Everett Du Vall, and Harleigh B. Trecker) or worked closely with it. Notably the latter included Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland (Chicago YWCA), Neva Boyd (Hull House Settlement) and the doyen of group work theorists Grace Coyle who was employed by the YWCA, in various capacities from 1917 to 1934. The staff team's reasons for embracing this model was that:

> Informal education leaders entered their fields with the assumption that small group face-to-face encounters provided the best context within which people, including children, could solve their common problems or set new goals. A well-functioning small group was seen as a powerful agency for change. Consequently, under the guidance of a skilled guide, these groups and their members were fully equipped to establish and purse appropriate goals and/or solve problems encountered in their paths. With help, young people in particular, could be led to discover, intelligently respond to and better manage the challenges and opportunities they faced. (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 134)

The decision reflected a wish to equip graduates with a skill set that would enable them to thrive in demanding settings.

This was an era when youth-serving organisations frequently found themselves catering for numbers rarely, if ever, encountered today. For example, Chicago Central YMCA at the start of the 1930s recorded over six million attendances at its facilities in a single year, whilst the summer residential camps catered annually for almost six thousand boys (Dedmon, 1957: 250). Towards the end of the 1930s the annual membership of the Chicago YMCA was almost 38,000 (*ibid*. 284). The boys' club run by Hull House Settlement, close by the College, which furnished numerous student placements, had a membership of 1,500 whilst the weekly adult attendance was in excess of 9.000 (Alcorn 2007:

14). It was within organisations such as these that students were required to undertake placements and voluntary work and where a majority eventually found employment. *Social Group Work* flourished for approximately three decades up the mid-1950s. During that brief interval a rich array of texts emerged, the most significant of which was in all likelihood Wilson and Rylands' *Social Group Work Practice* published in 1949, which drew extensively upon the author's experiences as YWCA workers in Chicago.



SOCIAL

GROUP WORK

PRACTICE

The Creative Use of the Social Process

GERTRUDE WILSON
University of California

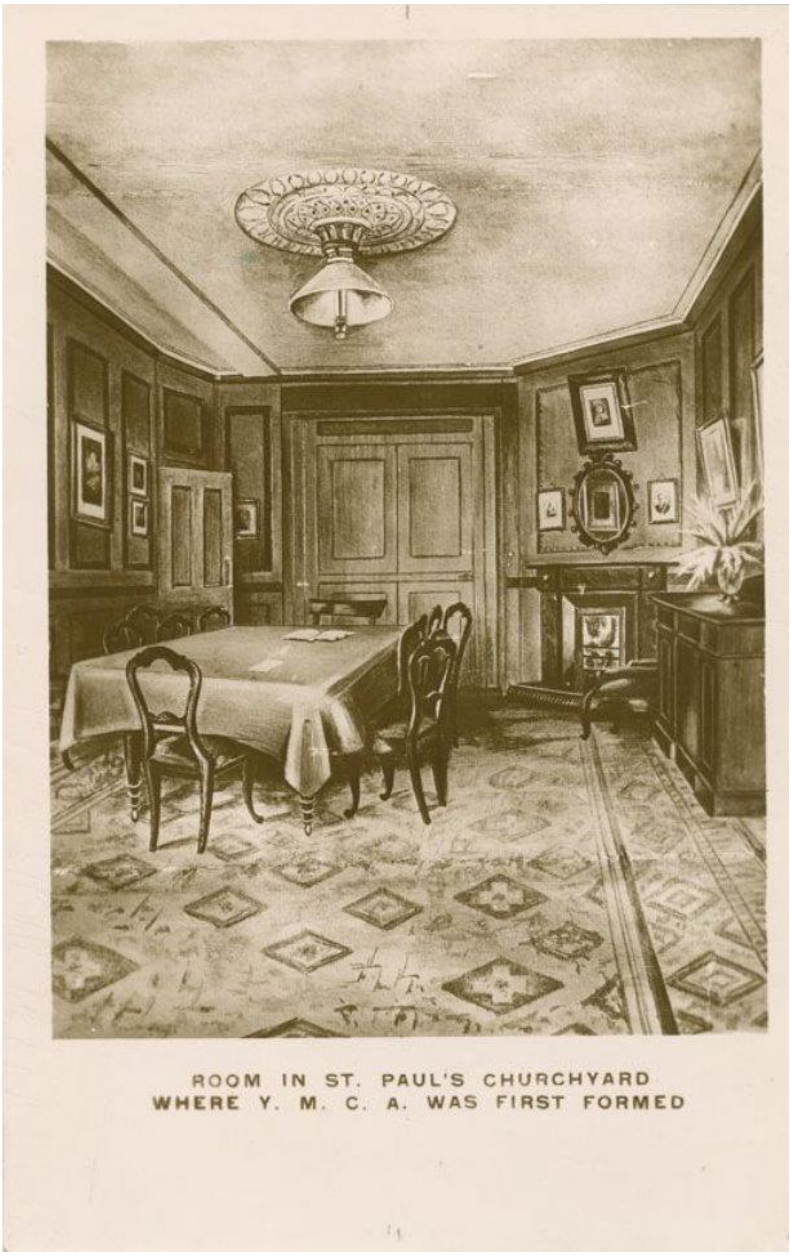
GLADYS RYLAND
Young Women's Christian Association

Many of the remaining texts were published by the YMCA's Association Press. During that thirty-year period *social group work* became not merely the core theoretical element within programmes designed for those intending to take up posts with youth serving organisations, settlements and adult education projects but a key element within over half of all American social work education programmes (Wilson, 1956). Such was the ascendent position of *George Williams College* in the field that it was frequently referred to as 'the group work school' (Alcorn, 2007: *ix*). As late as 1952 the then President Harold Coffman reiterated that 'Curriculum at *George Williams* is primarily centered around a group work orientation' (Coffman quoted Alcorn, 2007: 20).

The appearance during 1949 of the Wilson and Rylands' text was probably social group work's high-water mark for only one significant work on the subject appeared after that date - Gisela Konopka's *Social Group Work: A Helping Process* (1965). During the 1950s social group work endured a period of rapid and seemingly irreversible decline (Tropp, 1978; Andrews, 2001). It vanished from the syllabus of Social Work training programmes as they set aside group work to focus wholly on the individualistic case work model of intervention (Konopka, 1960). Whilst many youth serving organisations saw little need for social group work as they focussed their attention 'exclusively' on the provision of 'recreational' programmes and activities (Konopka, 1963: 182). This shift meant it was within that sector that resource management and, to a lesser extent, developmental psychology came to the scholarly fore.

The *YMCA College* in 1915 moved to new premises in the Hyde Park area of Chicago, close-by the *University of Chicago* and Hull House. Shortly afterwards the admission criteria were brought into line with those of the neighbouring universities. Relocation meant it became more realistic for Black and Jewish students to attend. The purpose-built, 84-acre campus contained a sports field, running track, two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, library, ample classrooms and residential accommodation for a hundred students. At the time of the transfer the *YMCA College* had 179 students, yet the cafeteria was designed to accommodate 1,000 at a sitting. Self-evidently, it was intended that the campus would serve as

home to a fast-growing institution. In 1921 a facsimile of the room located in 72 St Paul's Churchyard (London) where George Williams convened the inaugural meeting that resulted in the formation of the YMCA was installed within the new premises. Subsequently, the original was destroyed during an air-raid in 1944 which gave an added poignancy to this unique memorial. In 1965, when *George Williams College* moved again to new premises, the replica, accurate in almost every detail with duplicate furnishings, a carefully constructed uneven floor and appropriately sagging windows and doors, was transferred to the Lake Geneva site. There it remains safely intact within the Beasley Campus Center.



Postcard circa 1908 - courtesy of Springfield College, Archives and Special Collections

At the time of the relocation to Hyde Park the student body was taught by 17 staff who were augmented by tutors 'borrowed' from the *University of Chicago*. The *YMCA College* still retained ownership of the William's Bay site which continued to host the summer programme, which helpfully furnished a prized income stream. The name changed yet again in 1933 this time to *George Williams College*. Primarily to distinguish it

from the far larger *Chicago Central YMCA College* (founded in 1922) which concentrated on providing business and engineering courses. Chicago Central YMCA's decision, made around this time, to cease its financial support of the *YMCA College* and to no longer guaranteed students part-time employment essentially ended the long-running partnership.

Nashville

Between 1919 and 1936 there was in the United States a third YMCA training agency. This was based in Nashville (Tennessee). Originally launched as the *Southern College of the Young Men's Christian Association* it became the *YMCA Graduate School* in 1927. The *School* was principally the creation of Willis Duke Weatherford, an ordained Methodist minister, who from 1902 to 1919 was YMCA Supervising Secretary for the 200 plus affiliated college Associations in the South and Southwest. After visiting Lake Geneva in 1894 Weatherford set about creating a similar *Institute* for the South where all but a handful of the salaried 'Y' workers were not only untrained but tended to view their posts as transitory employment (Antone, 1973). Twelve years later Weatherford had procured sufficient funding to purchase 1,500 acres besides Blue Ridge Mountain (North Carolina) and commence building work. *Blue Ridge Summer Training School* opened in 1907. At its peak during the early 1920s Blue Ridge, dominated by its substantial residential and teaching centre Lee Hall, attracted up to 32,000 paying guests *per annum*.

This was a 'white's only' venue. First, the Jim Crow laws, dating from the 1860s and which survived in whole or part into the 1960s, enforced strict segregation in those states, including North Carolina, which once comprised the Confederacy. These laws which applied to all educational and social facilities effectively prevented any manifestation of racially mixed education. Second, irrespective of the laws themselves, it is unlikely that few, if any, Associations, secretaries, and college "Y" branches located in the old Confederacy would have lent their support if it had been otherwise. Third, it was not merely the legal system which

'administered' segregation, but a formal and informal network of vigilantes. An example here was the unknown individuals who, after Weatherford invited a Black speaker to address a conference at Blue Ridge, burnt down one of the buildings as a warning (Dykeman, 1966). Yet Weatherford, an opponent of segregation, was determined despite the odds against him to bring about lasting change via education and dialogue. For example, in 1917, during an exceptionally tense period when racial conflict and lynching appeared to be on the rise, Weatherford convened a conference at Blue Ridge attended by 48 educators, ministers, social workers, medics, church workers, judges, club workers, public officials and YMCA and YWCA personnel. Black and white, men and women drawn from nearly every Southern state were present. This was an audacious enterprise and at the time possibly a unique one (Combs, 2004: 107). Such events which regularly took place at Blue Ridge might nowadays seem low-key and modest, but in the context of their era they were extraordinary. As Canaday reminds us, this was indeed a special place:

> From 1912 to 1952 Blue Ridge was one of the very few southern places where the subject of race could be talked about in an open, tolerant, rational and intelligent context. Indeed, in the South of the 1910s and 1920s there were no other similar arenas of the size and scale of Blue Ridge where such radical conversations were held. (2016: 74)

Weatherford was a religious and political liberal who persistently strove to temper the harsh realities of a segregationist legal code. As the organiser of the first Southern Sociological Congress, Weatherford faced-down pressure from certain attendees, the local media, and the owners of the chosen venue to set apart or exclude Black delegates. His solution was to move the event to a nearby Methodist Church and bid those unwilling to sit alongside Black delegates to depart. At Blue Ridge, Weatherford regularly invited Black academics and theologians to address the secretaries and young students; he also included in the syllabus courses on race relations. In 1908 he met with a group of white and Afro-Americans to discuss a textbook for use on these courses and

by the two existing YMCA Training Schools. As a direct consequence of these gatherings *Negro Life in the South: Present conditions and needs* appeared in 1911 under the imprimatur of Association Press (Weatherford, 1911). In 1934 another major text grew out of this collaboration *Race Relations: Adjustment of Whites and Negroes in the United States*, jointly authored by Charles Spurgeon Johnson, a leading Black sociologist, and Weatherford.

Robert Russa Moton (Tuskegee Institute) and Dr. Willis Duke Weatherford, ca 1920. Photo courtesy of the Blue Ridge Assembly.

Willis Duke Weatherford resigned in 1919 as a Supervising Secretary to concentrate on establishing the *Southern College of the Young Men's Christian Association (Nashville)*. Located originally in rooms rented from *Vanderbilt University School of Religion,* and with students living

in accommodation managed by the same university, it commenced with five staff, two of whom were part-time, and 15 students. *Southern College* was positioned across the road from the main buildings of *Vanderbilt University* and flanked by *Scarritt College for Christian Workers* on one side and by the *George Peabody College for Teachers* on the other. The choice of location was not by happenstance. *Southern College* students were encouraged to devote up to half of their time-tabled hours completing graduate or post-graduate courses dispensed by those three adjacent institutions. *Vanderbilt* provided courses on all the mainstream branches of the social sciences and theology. *Peabody* taught the full spread of education topics, and the *Knapp School of Country Life*, which was attached to it, offered specialist teaching on rural education and economy. Finally, *Scarlitt* taught degrees in 'Community and Family Service', 'Social Work' and 'Religious Education' which afforded students entrée to yet more specialist units (Van West, 2018). *Southern College*, by way of recompense, provided students from the other institutions access to units relating to physical education and race relations which they did not teach. All the partners admitted only white applicants.

Initially two degrees were offered by *Southern College:* these were a Batchelor and a Master of Arts. Both were structured 'to prepare students to administer YMCA facilities, provide a thorough grounding in religious instruction and offer graduate level liberal arts courses' (Combs, 2004: 99). The BA, however, was merely a temporary component incorporated solely to facilitate the launch and help provide an initial throughput of post-graduate students. Once graduate applications rose, it was discarded thereby enabling the name to change in 1927 to *The YMCA Graduate School.* By this time Weatherford had raised the $500,000 needed to construct a new free-standing building to house *The YMCA Graduate School* close-by the pre-existing location. A third degree was added to the roster shortly after the launch. This was a doctorate in Physical Education. At that point in time *Southern College* was one of only three institutions offering this terminal degree (the others being *Columbia University* and *New York University*). During its

lifetime *The YMCA Graduate School* awarded five of these doctorates.

YMCA Graduate School, Nashville – Digital Commonwealth
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In essence Weatherford deemed only those possessing a four-year undergraduate degree to be intellectually equipped to serve as YMCA secretaries hence his reservations regarding the provision of under-graduate degrees. Weatherford explained this in the catalogue issued by *The YMCA Graduate School*:

> It goes on the assumption that while technique is absolutely essential to a successful secretary, technique alone will not make him a success. The school expects its graduates to do more than carry on in an approved way the approved activities of an Association. It expects them to be community leaders, to have that trained mind and vision which not only sees but comprehends community needs, and it expects them to possess the intelligence required to organize community forces to meet such needs. (quoted Dykeman, 1966, 150)

The master's programme was residential and ran for eight quarters or semesters. Autumn, Winter, and Spring were spent at Nashville then, in the fourth semester, staff and students transferred to Blue Ridge. This allowed attendees at the latter to take courses taught by *The YMCA Graduate School* staff and guest lecturers from other universities; and, if they wished, acquire course credits prior to entry. The programme was an arduous liberal arts education focussing on sociology, history, religion, and theology plus specialisms in YMCA leadership, athletics and physical education, and Association history and methods. In addition to the taught programme, students were required to undertake practical work (placements) in local projects. Perhaps unsurprisingly a student described the experience as 'skull-stretching' (Dykeman, 1966: 156).

Just as at Blue Ridge, Weatherford faced 'segregation laws that made it illegal to educate white and black students together' (Canaday, 2016: 122). However, he found ways to partially side-step those restrictions. Each year Weatherford took students on a study visit to *Tuskegee Institute*, a Black college in Alabama; and also arranged for them to 'sit in' on lectures at the nearby *Fisk University*, another exclusively Black institution. As Dykeman notes at this point in time 'few, if any other Southern schools were making such exchanges … The accepted pattern was for white and Negro colleges within blocks of each other, in the same city, to be completely unaware of the other's existence' (1966: 152). Students from the neighbouring Black universities similarly were invited to attend courses taught at *The YMCA Graduate School.* Because they neither paid fees nor officially graduated but 'quietly came and sat in on the classes' *The YMCA Graduate School* avoided legal sanctions (Weatherford quoted by Canaday, 2016: 123). Other Black students used *The YMCA Graduate School's* exceptionally well-stocked library unhindered. What made this access important was that, at the time, thanks to the generous grants secured by Weatherford from northern philanthropists, it contained possibly the largest collection of material on the Black experience in the Old South to be found anywhere (Combs, 2004: 105).

Weatherford, probably with justification, suggested that only one other university or college library in the South opened its doors to Black students and researchers at this time. From 1930 Black professors from *Fisk University* came each year to *The YMCA Graduate School* to deliver a series of lectures on their specialist fields such as African American folklore, music, literature, drama and art. In 1932 *Fisk* and *The YMCA Graduate School* signed a remarkable co-operative agreement whereby they would henceforth use each other's research facilities and work 'together to gather race-related material and works of African American history' (*ibid*.: 132). Finally, in collaboration with the *Chicago YMCA College* Weatherford wrote a correspondence course for students and in-post YMCA staff entitled 'Studies in Racial Understanding'.

The Depression precipitated a catastrophic decline in philanthropic support and student applications. The failure of YMCA Associations in the South to extend any sustained financial support, and the total absence of rich alumni, meant the *Graduate School,* apart from fee income, was forever reliant upon charitable donations. These fell away alarmingly after the Great Crash of 1929. All that could realistically be trimmed was the size of the teaching staff and their numbers declined calamitously from the post-1927 average of a dozen to two in 1934. But it was all to no avail. By 1936 the interest on a loan of $156,000 from *Vanderbilt University* fell due and could not be covered. The university foreclosed on the loan taken out to help pay for the new building. Unfortunately, the deeds for the building provided the security for the loan. This meant *Vanderbilt* acquired a property worth over $500,000 in lieu of a payment that amounted to a fraction of that sum. Unsurprisingly, Weatherford afterwards felt considerable bitterness towards James Kirkland - *Vanderbilt's* President - for his intransigence. Bankruptcy inevitably followed. *Vanderbilt* speedily moved into the premises and *The YMCA Graduate School* closed in the fall of 1936. During its' seventeen-year history just over a hundred students passed through its doors. Approximately one third exited with a BA, the remainder secured an MA - apart from the handful who left with a Doctorate in Physical Education. Six women were amongst those

awarded post-graduate degrees (Canaday, 2016: 122).

Weatherford continued to work with Blue Ridge, which remains active to this day. Incidentally Blue Ridge features as a footnote in the history of community work. It was the venue where Myles Horton, who was familiar with it from his days as a YMCA Field Secretary in rural Tennessee, met with Don West to plan the creation of Highlander School (which opened in 1932). Weatherford, after having previously turned down a tenured post at Yale out of loyalty to *The YMCA Graduate School* following closure, opted to stay in the South. His next post was Head of Religion and Humanities at nearby *Fisk University*. *Fisk* also purchased for a knock-down' price *The YMCA Graduate School's* unique and expansive library.

Overseas

India

In 1920 *Springfield* graduate Harry Crowe Buck, who in 1919 had joined Madras YMCA as a staff member, established in that city the *National YMCA College of Physical Education*. Buck was the founding Principal and remained in post until his death in 1943. Initially located within the Madras YMCA, it acquired its own premises in 1923 in nearby Royapettah, before moving once more to the more spacious 65-acre Saidapet campus in 1932 where it remains. The *National YMCA College of Physical Education* at no juncture involved itself in the training of secretaries. However, from the outset the syllabus was closely modelled on the *Springfield* programme formulated by Gulick for the 'scientific' education of physical directors of which Buck was a 'devotee' (Fischer-Tine, 2018: 27). Buck was thankfully not a narrow adherent and constantly sought to integrate within the syllabus indigenous sports and physical activities such as yoga (Vertinsky and Ramachandran, 2019). When the College opened there were only 12 operational YMCA gymnasia in the whole of India and Ceylon, five of which were managed by Americans. Consequently, many of the students who graduated secured employment as general secretaries, YMCA administrators and teachers, and instructors within the school system. During the 1930s the student body grew to over 400. A number came from overseas, notably Egypt and Thailand (Fischer-Tine, 2018: 31). In 1940 it became a mixed college by which time it had also acquired university status. Harry Buck died in harness, in 1943. According to Lawrence Hall he left:

> The first institution in all India to teach modern physical

> education and because of what he had begun and continued to direct through it, by the time of his death more than a thousand Y-trained men were teaching principles of health and recreation in schools, playgrounds, colleges and YMCAs. (1964:100)

The *National YMCA College of Physical Education* survives up until the present day, and currently offers degrees in Physical Education, Sports Sciences and Mobility Science. Links with the Indian YMCA have been retained. However, the College is now academically attached to *Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University*.

Uruguay

A similar institution was launched in Uruguay by *Springfield* alumni in 1927. Focussing exclusively on the training of physical directors it was funded with the intention that it would serve as the YMCA training institution for the whole of South America. Although the focus was on physical education, modules on group work and community organizing were offered for many years and taught by two graduates of *George Williams College (Chicago)* Bill and Mary Glenn (Alcorn, 2007: 204). Like *Springfield College* it lays claim to having 'invented' a new sport. Juan Carlos Ceriani a staff member and yet another *Springfield* alumni developed *Futsal* or five-a-side football (Tlusty, 2016). Initially the game was designed by Ceriani to be played in YMCA gymnasia and halls, but the rules he formulated in 1933 allowed for it to take place either inside or outdoors. The institution remains in operation as the *Instituto Universitaria Asociacion Cristiana de Jovenes*. Essentially, it is a private university offering programmes linked to the Arts and Humanities, Languages, Business and the Social Sciences, Medicine and Science and Engineering. Links to the YMCA remain but it does not any long specialise in training physical directors for the Movement.

Switzerland

Following the cessation of hostilities in 1918 discussions commenced within the World Alliance of YMCAs (formed in 1855 and based in Geneva from 1878 onwards) regarding the possibility of opening in that

city a school akin to *Springfield College*. From 1920 to 1922 a low-key version did operate in Geneva managed by the Reverend J. E. Siordet, then Secretary of the World Alliance. Just six students graduated before it closed (Shedd, 1955: 655). Lou Schroeder, a *Springfield* alumnus then working for the World Alliance in Geneva, was determined to keep the idea alive. So in 1924 he returned to *Springfield College* with the intention of coaxing Doggett and the *Springfield* Trustees into playing a direct role in reviving the *Geneva College*. Both agreed to pick up the baton and in 1926 Doggett went to Switzerland, at the invitation of the World Alliance, to put into place plans for a 1927 re-launch (Hall, 1964: 149). Courses on Secretarial Work, Boys' Club Work and Physical Education were devised but only the latter attracted any applicants. As a result, it became by default *The International YMCA School of Physical Education*. *Springfield* agreed an annual subsidy of up to $10,000 plus the secondment of Elmer Berry, Assistant Director of the Physical Education Department. Initially, it was determined Berry would serve as Interim Director of the new school and that *Springfield* would continue paying his salary as long as he remained in post. Berry who spoke German, having previously studied at the *University of Berlin,* had recently finished writing *The Philosophy of Athletics, Coaching and Character* (1927). This barely recalled text was one of the earliest publications that sought to link philosophy and sport. It pre-dated by a decade, Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens: A study of the play element in culture (*Huizinga, 1937) which is commonly cited as the pioneering modern text conjoining play and sport with philosophy to create a new field of philosophical activity (Devine and Frias, 2020; Ryall, 2016).

The World Alliance consented to release staff to act as tutors and to raise sufficient funding to permit the *Springfield College* subsidy to be steadily reduced. The *Rousseau Teacher's Institute*, located in the city, agreed to invite students from the *International YMCA School of Physical Education* to join their existing psychology and education programmes whilst the *University of Geneva,* founded by Calvin, offered access to specialist tutorial staff. Each autumn five *Springfield* Juniors received full scholarships to attend *The International YMCA School of*

Physical Education for a full academic year. The majority of European National Associations championed the project but there were exceptions. Some amongst their number unbendingly refused to partake in the programme on the grounds that they did not approve 'of the religious teaching at *Springfield*' (Doggett, 1943: 232). Another segment merely boycotted the Secretarial Course leading it to fail to attract a viable cohort. They were, however, happy to support students who enrolled on the Directors of Physical Education route. The German Association was especially strident in its antagonism refusing to send any students whatsoever, preferring - it said - to open their own training school. Hyper-inflation, the slump and political turmoil all combined, one assumes, to explain why that never came to pass.

The Depression that sealed the fate of the *Graduate School (Nashville)* and caused grave problems for *George Williams College (Chicago)*, did not spare *Springfield*. The latter also experienced an abrupt near fatal fall both in student numbers and endowment income. For each of the four financial years commencing between 1930 and 1934, *Springfield College* operated with a significant annual deficit (Doggett, 1943: 237). Eventually, the Trustees judged it necessary to cut 20 per cent from its salary bill in order to reduce the shortfall in tuition fees. At this point it became problematic, if not impossible, for Doggett to justify to colleagues the payment of an annual subsidy to *Geneva*. The subvention was equivalent to five per cent of the then current budget (Garvey and Ziemba, 2010: 68). Finally, in 1934, *Springfield* reluctantly ended all subsidies and scholarships relating to *The International YMCA School of Physical Education*, although it did agree to continuing paying Berry's salary. Up to this point the project had cost *Springfield* the not inconsiderable sum of $50,000 in direct subsidies, or the equivalent of a fifth of the College's annual budget for 1934 (Hall, 1964: 151).

The World Alliance, which displayed marked enthusiasm for the course as long as others picked-up the tab, declined to help. The result was that the School closed at the end of the 1934 academic year. The World Alliance, at the time the decision was arrived at, argued that it had no need to support the work because it had become 'increasingly clear that

the demand for the kind of undergraduate training which the School had been specially established to provide in the European area had greatly diminished' (Shedd, 1955: 655). This was an odd conclusion given that a year later the Executive Committee of the World Alliance was insisting that:

> There is evident everywhere a conviction that leaders of a larger ability and more thorough preparation are essential to Association progress. The problem of training appears more urgent in the light of the reports of chaotic conditions generally prevailing as a result of the breakdown of older plans of professional training. (quoted Shedd: 1955: 659)

A Committee on Leadership Training was then established which convened a conference held in Cassel (Germany) in 1936. This, like so many such gatherings, made a host of recommendations but nothing tangible emerged from the deliberations. So it came to pass that within a few years the *Geneva School* became a fast-fading memory. During its lifespan 83 students, from 21 countries, completed the two-year Diploma. Sixteen entered employment as general or assistant secretaries, only five became physical directors, and the remainder moved onto various non-specific posts within the YMCA. Elmer Berry, returned to *Springfield* where he became Professor of the Philosophy of Physical Education. There he remained until 1937 when he was asked to serve as Emergency Principal of the *National YMCA College of Physical Education* (Saidapet). Berry occupied that post until 1939 whereupon he returned to the USA and retired from *Springfield College*. During his time in Geneva Berry played the leading role in the creation of the International Basketball Federation, the sport's governing body, which is still based in Switzerland.

Australia

The YMCA in Australia launched two secretarial training courses. The first was incorporated within a programme initiated by the Australian Government in 1919 to provide de-mobbed members of the armed forces

an opportunity to train for a new occupation. Amongst the 200 plus careers for which training was offered was that of YMCA secretary. Lasting ten months the full-time course closed in 1920, after a solitary intake, following the withdrawal of government funding. A second opportunity arose towards the close of the Second World War. Government money was made available to run an emergency war-time government training scheme for youth workers. Launched in 1944 it closed in 1946 at which point the YMCA, which had been the main employer of its ex-students, stepped forward to inaugurate a replacement.

The new programme was a two-year professional youth leadership course based in Sydney which recruited its initial intake in 1947. Two tutors were employed, augmented by staff from the Extension Studies Department of *Sydney University*. A generous donation soon allowed the course to relocate to its own premises in nearby Homebush. The content comprised Christian faith, sociology, psychology, health education, and youth work practice (including group work, administration and outdoor activities). However, as one ex-student told a researcher, although considerable emphasis was placed upon the acquisition of practical skills 'Theology was our core topic' (Brooker, 2016: 48). Between 1947 and 1963 124 students enrolled on the programme of whom just 78 graduated. Most of the graduates obtained employment with the YMCA, which was then, by far and away, the nation's principal employer of youth workers (Maunders and Coney, 2014: 110). Attempts to negotiate close links with the *University of New South Wales* failed to come to fruition. As a result, the course relocated in 1964 to new premises in Melbourne where the YMCA National Offices and the Movement's in-service training programme were based. Now it was the *RMIT* (*Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology*) which taught those units not delivered by the full-time tutors. Two years later the *Institute of Social Welfare* based in the same city began offering a similar two-year Diploma in Youth Leadership, but students on this programme were, unlike those on the YMCA course, entitled to grants and bursaries if their employers did not pay them a full salary. The

uneven competition prompted the YMCA to negotiate an agreement with the *State College of Victoria Coburg* which led to the course, along with the existing students and both members of staff, transferring to it in 1976. Soon afterwards radical alterations to the course structure and content meant the YMCA programme in effect ceased to exist. *Coburg*, in 1982, introduced a BA in Youth Affairs and at the same time it amalgamated with a second college to form the *Phillip Institute of Technology*. A decade later the *Phillip Institute* was in turn incorporated within the *RMIT* who currently offer various youth work related courses including a Batchelor's in Youth Work and Youth Studies.

Drifting apart - Springfield

Although the YMCA marque lingered, *Springfield College* gradually disengaged from the former organisation. As early as 1910, a majority of staff and students petitioned the Trustees to remove YMCA from the college's title (Garvey and Ziemba, 2010: 32). They declined, at least visibly, to bow to this pressure but thereafter the connection steadily waned. Nine years later the institution became universally known as *Springfield College*, although YMCA remained part of the title on legal documentation. Eventually in 1954 the surviving legal remnants relating to any lingering historic ties were expunged.

Bonds weakened for various reasons but, first and foremost, because economic survival meant *Springfield College* needed to enhance recruitment by broadening its subject base. Invariably each time it did so the centrality of YMCA-linked programmes was diminished. As noted earlier, the YMCA's demand for workers escalated rapidly between 1870 and 1892. Thereafter, over the course of the following three decades, expansion slowly levelled off. Post-1919 the overall number of employees perceptively fell due to closures and amalgamations (Gustav-Wrathall, 1998: 80). Although, during this period, around a third of general secretaries opted to remain in post for five years or less, those who were recruited from *Springfield* and *Chicago* stayed far longer. This reduction in the number or size of Associations inevitably reduced the employment opportunities for new graduates (*ibid*.: 83). This combined to first slow then reverse the demand for secretarial training. From the outset no national qualifications structure was adopted, therefore Associations always retained the freedom to appoint whosoever they desired. Despite the emergence of professional training routes many Associations continued for various reasons, defensible or not, to select according to

traditional criteria such as ‘character’, religious fervour, local connections, and ‘experience’.

Fear of ‘secretarialism’ never fully evaporated, but gradually a diminishing number of Associations displayed a reluctance to appoint graduates of either *Springfield* or *Chicago*. Similar antipathy was never discernible regarding physical directors; indeed, their professional competence was prized not merely within the Movement but by a broad array of educational institutions and agencies. A combination of factors meant recruitment soon tilted towards the Physical Education courses (Morse, 1913: 157). Afterall, here was a programme which promised not only employment within the YMCA, but a whole gamut of other agencies. In addition, the First World War wrought significant changes that altered the prevailing ethos of the organisation. One was that YMCA secretaries increasingly ‘came to be viewed as professional service providers rather than the stewards of a religious movement’ (Gustav-Wrathall, 1998: 83). Accordingly, the skillset most valued by their employers gradually leant towards managerial attributes. It was a stance that incidentally aligned more closely to those valued by a majority of other youth-serving and welfare agencies.

Springfield College consistently elicited a disproportionate level of criticism from within the wider YMCA. First, it never discriminated against Black or Native American applicants. Indeed, its first recipient of a degree was Black. Accordingly, it attracted few white applicants from the Deep South. They instead opted for *Chicago* which, until 1915, was located within the all-white Chicago Central YMCA. When it acquired its own premises, these were in the Hyde Park area of the city. A district which, until the 1940s, was almost exclusively white as ‘racially restrictive covenants’ were attached to properties to prevent re-sale to non-white buyers.

Second, *Springfield* flouted the ‘evangelical test’ adopted by the 1868 Detroit Convention and clarified at the Portland (Maine) Convention the following year. Hence the “evangelical test” was also referred to as the “Portland basis”. This ‘test’ obliged North American Associations to only

accept into full membership or employment those 'who profess to love and publicly avow their faith in Jesus … and who testify their faith by becoming and remaining members of churches held to be evangelical'. *Springfield College* contravened this ruling by admitting applicants, including Roman Catholics, and employing staff who failed the 'test'. One outcome was that certain North American and overseas Associations refused to provide financial support to members attending *Springfield*. Another consequence was that it drove a heightened enthusiasm for the 'rival' college located in Chicago within sections of the Movement.

Finally, Doggett, who wrote a comprehensive two volume history of the development of the YMCA between 1844 and 1861 (1919, 1922), a biography of McBurney (1902) and the already mentioned student textbook in collaboration with William D. Murray and John Hansel (1905), was nevertheless viewed, with some justification, as first and foremost an academic rather than a down-the-line "Y" man. Doggett was a graduate of *Oberlin College* (established in 1835 it was the first co-educational college in the world and amongst the earliest to be racially integrated); the *Union Theological Seminary* (a progressive, liberal and non-denominational institution); and the *University of Leipzig*. It was at the latter that he completed his doctoral thesis on the history of the YMCA between 1844 and 1855. Doggett consistently acted in ways that reflected the liberal open values of those institutions. Moreover, he held fast to a theology that contrasted with that embraced by large segments of the YMCA membership. He described this as 'conservative, dogmatic and traditional' and aligned to a 'conception of personality implied in the doctrine of "total depravity"' (Doggett, 1919: 197). From the outset, he made it clear he was keen to create neither a 'training' or 'liberal arts' college but a university which combined the better characteristics of both. This liberality meant that many within the YMCA applied an unremittingly critical scrutiny towards what the staff taught. Burr, for example, found that his seemingly innocuous invitation to a Unitarian Minister to give a guest lecture provoked outrage in certain quarters of the YMCA and resulted in choleric letters being sent to Doggett

demanding Burr's dismissal.

Doggett's determination to attract exceptional scholars and teachers led to the appointment in 1897 of William G. Ballantine, previously President of *Oberlin College*, and prior to that Head of the Theology Department at the same institution. A prolific author, he was widely viewed to be an outstanding theologian and exceptional teacher. To an unbiased observer, Ballantine's recruitment would surely be interpreted as a remarkable coup on the part of Doggett. Unfortunately, Ballantine was a liberal theologian and loathed by many fundamentalists and literalists. His arrival prompted the resignation of the Treasurer, who happened to be the most senior YMCA representative on the Board of Trustees, plus a number of fellow Trustees. It also precipitated the loss of substantial donations and endowments. One donor even tendered a generous bequest on condition Ballantine was dismissed. Another withdrew a donation after Ballantine refused to respond to a series of questions regarding the nature of his religious beliefs. *Springfield College*'s official history goes so far as to suggest the sum lost as a consequence of Ballantine being retained amounted to 'millions of dollars' (Garvey and Ziemba, 2010: 48). Prominent YMCA figures over and over again denounced the appointment both at conferences and in print. Sixteen years after Ballantine's arrival, the hullabaloo still rumbled on to the extent that the 1913 Cincinnati Convention passed a resolution that included a requirement that the YMCA training schools must ensure all their staff complied with the Portland 'evangelical test' (Garvey and Ziemba, 2010: 52). Doggett, however, refused to yield, maintaining his belief that 'a college without academic freedom would not be worth having' (quoted Burr, 1932: 57). Holding fast to these principles, and retaining Ballantine, undoubtedly cost *Springfield College* dear. His presence resulted in it 'facing a bleak financial future' for almost two decades until the Rockefeller family provided substantial patronage during the early 1920s (Miller, 2013: 42).

Less than a decade after Ballantine's ingress Doggett was again challenged. This time an uproar arose within the Movement following the publication of an article by Hanford Burr on "The New Reformation".

This 'heresy' once more spawned calls for the dismissal of a faculty member, this time on the grounds that the offending article contained a quotation from a text written by another theologian who dared to describe Calvin as a 'Protestant Pope' (Burr, 1932: 51-57). Following Ballantine's arrival and the publication of Burr's article the YMCA undertook three investigations within a decade into 'Biblical' teaching at the *International YMCA Training School*. After one 'visitation' they concluded it was 'inappropriate'. In the wake of another, which contained criticisms regarding programme content, a clear majority of staff and students voted to end all official links with the YMCA. The Board refused to do so but without doubt this was a watershed moment.

Many years later, Doggett once again refused to capitulate to pressure from YMCA staff who called for the removal of Hartley Cross. Cross was a social sciences lecturer, who argued the case for demilitarisation, consumer co-operatives, and an increase in state intervention in the economy. Then, in 1935, a student who had recently returned from a placement in Germany and was shocked by the anti-Semitism he had witnessed, organised a campus demonstration in favour of a boycott of German products including items produced by a local German owned company. This firm had a long record of donating funds to *Springfield College*. Managers from the company approached Doggett and informed him that unless he expelled the student leading the protests they would withdraw their funding. Without faltering Doggett informed them that:

> Springfield College has been built upon the concept of the freedom of thought and I do not propose, as president, to condemn a student for carrying out Christian convictions although I may not approve of his methods. If this means the loss of your gift, then that is the way it must be. (Hall, 1964: 156)

Throughout Doggett proved resolute in his defence of academic freedom but it came at a high cost. First, in terms of diminished student applications from within the YMCA; second, lost endowments; and finally, a weakening of ties with the Movement. Many prominent

members unfortunately long looked upon *Springfield* with suspicion even disdain.

Although certain individual Associations might display scant enthusiasm for recruiting *Springfield College* graduates, other agencies were less hesitant. Already by the late 1890s a quarter of graduates found employment outside the YMCA notably with the Boy Scouts, settlements, social services, boys' clubs, leisure services, the burgeoning play sector, and schools and colleges. A survey of 3,500 alumni undertaken in the mid-1930s found just 12 per cent were employed by the YMCA. As this percentage fell, so the relationship inevitably weakened. This led to a re-alignment with regards to course content and focus which resulted in the creation of three undergraduate divisions in 1934. These were (a) the *Natural Science Division*, comprising physical education, the allied sciences, and premedical studies; (b) the *Social Science Division*, involving the training of students for professional positions with the YMCA, Boy Scouts, boys' clubs and allied social welfare agencies; and (c) the *Arts and Science Division*, for those not yet disposed to opt for a specific route. The last of the three was, in fact, 'a new name for the general course' which had not been taught for several years. The content now covered 'the humanics and a number of cultural courses that are offered in the usual arts and science college' (Doggett, 1943: 242).

Two years later, *Springfield College* finally admitted women applicants. The decision to do so was motivated in large part by the need for income rather than principle. Closure of the YWCA in-house training programmes, due to financial difficulties, had created a gap in the market which Doggett's successor as President Ernest Best was keen to exploit. That Fall eleven women enrolled but only two eventually graduated. It was not an auspicious start. Around the same time an agreement was reached with the Jewish Welfare Board and the Boy Scouts for *Springfield College* to train their staff. These changes resulted in the introduction of new courses relating to group work, counselling and guidance, and the administration of social welfare agencies (Hall, 1964: 152).

During the following decades symbolic attempts were made to re-ignite the relationship between *Springfield College* and the YMCA. However, after the onset of the 1930s these became less frequent and less substantial. The ship had slipped its moorings and was drifting away. The occasional high tide might momentarily halt the drift, but it could not be reversed. By the 1940s *Springfield College* had to all intents and purposes ceased to be a YMCA college.

Chicago – victim of circumstance

Chicago seems to have consciously sought from the outset to avoid any actions that might unsettle either the YMCA membership or leadership. Perhaps that helps to explain why, according to one ex-student, it emerged as the 'West Point of the YMCA' (Alcorn, 2007: 57). College Presidents and staff were, for much of its lifetime, solid safe and loyal "Y" men. The *Institute and Training School* did undergo during 1912 what might be described as its own 'Ballantine' moment. This arose out of it seeking to appoint a new Director of Psychology and Religious Education. The selection panel interviewed twenty candidates and found them all to some degree or another 'wanting' (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 99). Eventually, to forestall a stalemate, President Burt produced from the wings a candidate of his own Thomas H. Evans. An ordained Baptist minister with a master's degree in theology and a Ph.D. from *Chicago University School of Divinity*, Evans seemed a perfect fit for the post. Unfortunately, Seldon P. Spencer, a Trustee of the *Institute and Training School*, and an eminent figure within the Movement who was, at the time, Chair of the influential YMCA International Committee, was displeased with the appointment. Spencer was a hard-line religious fundamentalist, and an influential local politician. In 1918 he was elected a Senator for Missouri. Within the YMCA, Spencer had for over a decade played a conspicuous role in seeking the dismissal of Ballantine – indeed, it was he who moved a resolution at the previously mentioned 1913 Cincinnati National Convention requiring staff at the training schools to 'pass' the Portland Test. Now he smelt blood. Whilst Doggett was unwilling, whatever the cost, to back down in the face of Spencer's blustering interference, Burt did not display a similar resolve to protect

academic freedom and religious tolerance. Rather he meekly surrendered, and Evans was sent on his way. One suspects Evans may well have departed with a sigh of relief as he had by then been offered an alternative post as Chair of Religious Education at *Grinnell College* (Iowa). *Grinnell* was a progressive liberal arts institution where Evans benefited from an opportunity to work alongside Edward Steiner and other vocal advocates of the 'social gospel' (Evans, 2018).

Soon after the unhappy conclusion of this affair, Eduard Lindeman joined the staff. Perhaps he should have known better. Arriving at the onset of the 1918 academic year, Lindeman who had been an active member of the "Y" during his time as a student at *Michigan Agricultural College* (now *Michigan State University*), soon found, in his opinion, the *YMCA College* stultifyingly conservative. According to Lindeman, who one should note was persistently given to exaggeration and self-promotion, the talks he gave at the Lake Geneva Summer School, which focused on the potential for the YMCA to perform a 'social action' role, although popular with students caused considerable upset amongst colleagues. He recounted that the former were so impressed by the content they urged him to publish his talks as a pamphlet, but he responded that 'there's no hope of that' as the 'powers that be' would never allow it (Leonard, 1991: 28-29). After barely twelve months Lindeman departed the *YMCA College*. The official reason given by the administration for his leaving was 'ill-health' but David Stewart, one of Lindeman's biographers, suggests he was wilfully driven out by a reactionary administration who found his views unacceptably liberal (1987: 119). Whatever the truth of the matter, ill-health does seem a dubious explanation for his exit. Within weeks of leaving Chicago he and his family had re-located to Greensboro (North Carolina) and he was in post and teaching at *The North Carolina College for Women*. Lindeman's time there also proved equally problematic, and in 1924 he moved yet again. This time to the School of Social Work at *Columbia University*. Two years after his arrival there he published the ground-breaking text *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926).

Close links with the YMCA, YWCA, nearby settlements, and local youth

serving organisations undoubtedly stirred the *YMCA College* to develop programmes of tangible value to the field. For example, *YMCA College* was the first institution anywhere to take on board the concept of informal education and employ it as an organising idea that occupied a central role within play work, club work, liberal adult education, settlement work, community organising and social group work education. By the 1920s it was apparent that the *YMCA College,* as it was then known, was heading in a different direction from *Springfield College*. In particular, it was intent upon creating, in the words of Hedley Dimmock, a new discrete profession one developed from 'the function of informal and group work education as carried out by leisure time agencies in the community' (quoted by Alcorn, 2007: 18).

As with so many businesses and charities, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 had a serious impact on the YMCA. For example, from 1929 onwards the Chicago Central YMCA experienced four years during which their annual deficit grew year-on-on-year, until 1933 when it peaked at $300,000. Philanthropic donations dried up, residential accommodation went unoccupied, and over 1,000 unemployed members had to be helped with a remission of fees (Dedmon, 1957). These were desperate times and survival called for desperate measures. Chicago Central YMCA cut staff salaries by between 20 and 50 per cent. To help sustain numbers in 1931 it dropped the 'evangelical test' in relation to membership. Two years later it jettisoned the prohibition on women joining. These changes motivated by an urgent, if short-term, need to improve cash-flow resulted in the enactment of policies which fundamentally altered the ethos and culture of the organisation for the foreseeable future. For once enacted, these reforms could not be easily disassembled.

Inevitably *George Williams College* encountered similar financial problems. Student numbers tumbled, donations withered, and by 1932 bankruptcy loomed. To stave off closure, the College President Edward Jenkins - who had replaced Burt in 1926, set out to visit over a 100 YMCAs in the hope that they might provide a measure of financial support. He met with no success. The outcome was somewhat

predictable given that those Associations who previously supported the *YMCA College* were due to the 'Crash' themselves facing acute cashflow difficulties. Jenkins' trawl of philanthropic bodies similarly failed. Staff agreed to take a twenty per cent salary cut to prevent a financial implosion. Endorsement was now sought from leading young women's organisations - YWCA, Camp Fire Girls, and Girls' Clubs of America – in the hope of expanding the student base. Cash was not forthcoming, however they each agreed to henceforth collaborate more closely with the *George Williams College*. Accordingly, women were admitted in 1933. After just two mixed intakes they accounted for a fifth of the 200 students in attendance (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013).

Harold Coffman, who replaced Jenkins as President in the course of 1935 had, during the 1920s, served as an instructor at *YMCA College* as well as a boys' club worker. Later, he moved into academia and was described prior to his appointment as 'a leading representative of the Informal Education field' (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013). His doctoral supervisor at *Columbia University* had been Lindeman. Although Coffman had a YMCA connection and was determined to retain the *George Williams College's* Christian ethos, in the interests of long-term survival he rapidly set about promoting the development of courses in social work, holistic health, recreation, and group work. By 1945 these had proved to be a success, not only in terms of recruitment, but also in relation to providing the YMCA with graduates equipped to occupy the type of posts the organisation was now increasingly funding. Proof of the extent to which these programmes matched the needs of the changing market was reflected by the fact that between 1933 and 1950 65 per cent of all *George Williams College* students after graduation entered employment within the YMCA (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 215). In 1961 two-thirds of the 307 enrolled students still expected to work for the YMCA after they completed their studies.

Although links with the Movement remained strong, indeed the American YMCA designated *George Williams College* in 1962 as its sole 'professional preparation college', the institution was facing serious challenges (Yerkes and Miranda, 2013: 263). During the decade

spanning the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, the number of students hovered around 800. This was way short of the 1,000 hoped for when the cafeteria was constructed and reflected a worryingly low growth rate. During the 1950s in the United States, the numbers attending colleges and universities increased by 49 per cent and then during the following decade by a further 120 per cent (Snyder, 1993: 65). The student body at this time was evenly divided between those studying health, group work and physical education. Hopes of creating a new profession centred upon social group work and informal education catering for leisure time educators were by now a distant memory. The refusal of social work programmes to accept group work as an integral element meant that the subject which once gave the college a unique presence was in hasty retreat. Therefore, in terms of recruitment, it was in competition with the hundreds of rival institutions who also offered physical education, health and social work programmes.

To make matters worse, unlike many similarly small colleges, it lacked access to wealthy alumni. This was because ex-students tended to embark upon relatively low paid public service and charitable employment. To add to the woes of the management, the campus was getting old, tired and ill-suited for new course development. Indeed, it became disparagingly referred to by students 'as the old shoe factory' (Alcorn, 2007: 109). Plans were formulated to expand and re-build on the existing site, but these were blocked by city authorities. They had alternative plans which entailed redeveloping the whole locality which by then was acquiring an unhelpful reputation as being crime-prone and unsafe.

The solution, according to Richard Hamlin, another ex-student who was appointed President during 1962, and the Board, was to launch new courses and build new premises. Despite a measure of opposition from staff and students in 1965 *George Williams College* moved to a new larger campus situated in Downers Grove, a residential neighbourhood twenty-two miles from the centre of Chicago. The transfer was not devoid of tensions. In part this was because the student body by this point in time had become fifty per cent Black, and Downers Grove was a

predominately white 'village'. Despite the new programmes and a measure of growth *George Williams College* remained small and vulnerable.

In December 1985, yet another financial crisis arose; one so severe that the Board felt they had no alternative but to close *George Williams College* with immediate effect. Without warning students found themselves high and dry days before the end the first semester of the academic year. A majority - one way or another - found refuge in one of the numerous other higher education institutions teaching health, education and welfare programmes located elsewhere in and around Greater Chicago. The 165 students on the social work programme, however, with the support of their teachers took the amazing decision to carry on, whatever it took, in borrowed buildings and without financial backing. *Loyola University* eventually came to their rescue by offering a package of support measures that enabled the students to graduate. Their three year-long rearguard action subsequently enabled the social work course to be absorbed, relatively intact, by *Aurora University*. In the fire-sale that followed closure, *Midwestern University* purchased the Downers Grove campus. *The Master's University* - an evangelical Christian university based in Santa Clarita (California) - procured the contents of the *George Williams College* library. The rump of the administration retreated to the only remaining asset, the Lake Geneva campus. During the following months and years protracted negotiations took place between *George Williams College* Trustees and *Aurora University*, a small private not-for-profit university, located in the town of that name 55 miles west of Chicago. The eventual outcome was that *Aurora University* incorporated the social work and physical education programmes within their portfolio along with a number of *George Williams College* staff. *Aurora University* also acquired the Lake Geneva site. In 2000 the existing 'working agreement' was formalised with the signing of a legal merger. At this juncture it was decided that the Lake Geneva campus would henceforth be known as *George Williams College of Aurora University*. Thus, the name endures, albeit symbolically. President Tom Zarle signed the merger document on behalf of *Aurora*

University. Zarle just happened to be a graduate of *Springfield College*.

London

Walthamstow YMCA – sectretlondon123-flickr ccbaysa2. The college was behind the main YMCA building.

Unlike their American and Australian counterparts, the United Kingdom YMCAs exhibited no historic ambitions to sponsor or encourage full-time professional education until late in the day. Along with the boys' clubs, for over a century they held fast to a 'coming-up-through-the-ranks' recruitment strategy. However, this resistance weakened with the publication of the government-sponsored Albemarle Report (1960). It's advocacy of a professionally trained workforce for the youth service eventually precipitated the opening in 1965 of the state financed *National College for the Training of Youth Leaders* located in Leicester (Watkins, 1972). This signalled the arrival of a sustained governmental push to professionalize youth work. By 1970 there were, in addition to the Leicester-based programme, four youth leader courses linked to universities, including one run by *Liverpool University* in conjunction with the National Association of Boys' Clubs. There were also a dozen new College of Education programmes bestowing a dual qualification in youth work and school-teaching.

To avoid being left trailing in the sprint towards professionalisation, the YMCA needed to offer existing employees of the United Kingdom's 200 plus Associations an opportunity to secure a qualification comparable to that being awarded to new entrants emerging from other training agencies. Previously, YMCA training in the UK had been on an *ad hoc* basis with staff being taught on the job, often by spending a number of months with various Associations. The first tentative steps towards a more structured model commenced in the mid-1950s. A single term programme taught by senior YMCA staff and *Durham University* academics was inaugurated. Based at *St. John's College,* a constituent college of the University with strong links to the Church of England, the programme comprised a mix of management studies, youth work and theology (Barratt, 2008). After operating for less than a decade this programme was supplanted in the late 1960s. The English YMCA developed a programme for Association Secretaries run within the orbit of the National Council Training Department.

In 1970, the English YMCA took the plunge. Following the lead of the National Association of Boys' Clubs, who had created their own training programme based in Liverpool, established the *YMCA National College*. It offered a two-year full-time Certificate in Youth Work. A new building was erected, financed by the Department of Education and Science (DES), which comprised classrooms and a library. It was located adjacent to Walthamstow YMCA and next to the newly constructed headquarters of the National Council. Helpfully, the Walthamstow YMCA offered residential facilities for those who required them. The location also meant that during the crucial early days the *YMCA National College* was closely linked both to the National YMCA and to an active local Association.

M Joan Tash (YMCA National College)

The *YMCA National College* soon developed a distinctive character. An early Principal was Derek Shepherd, an individual with high standing within the Movement. He wisely focused both on keeping the movement onside and creating an environment that encouraged innovation, development, and flourishing. The latter, in significant part, was shaped by M. Joan Tash, the senior tutor. She had substantial experience of non-managerial supervision, group work, and field research, and had worked for the YWCA for many years. Her research with George Goetchius on

working with unattached youth is still one of the most important studies of youth work practice (Goetschius and Tash 1967). Its strength lay in its concern with relationships and process rather than an unhelpful focus on unknowable outcomes or impact which are currently popular with funders. This fed through into the core of the approach Tash pioneered at the College where there was an emphasis on the development of the whole person. This involved elements recognizable from the Humanics orientation pioneered by *Springfield College*. It required a strong focus on reflection and change supported by a mix of practice analysis, professional supervision, weekly individual tutorials, recording and group work (see Tash, 1967; also Smith, 2020 and Callender-Brown, 2005 for accounts of her life and work). In some important respects, this blend shared many characteristics with the approach taken by Josephine Klein - the driving force behind the new *Goldsmith's College* training programme launched in the early 1970s. However, there were also notable differences linked to their contrasting professional backgrounds (Klein's in sociological research and psychotherapy; Tash's in practice, non-managerial supervision, and fieldwork research).

Previous YMCA youth work in-service training programmes placed an emphasis upon ensuring students were equipped to evangelise the Christian faith. Biblical Studies, Theology and preparation for Discipleship was unfailingly granted due weight within the syllabus. This time, the focus was on creating a space where people could develop as youth and community workers in varied settings - much as envisaged in the Youth Service Development Council report *Youth and Community Work in the 70's* (Department of Education and Science, 1969). The Report advocated closer linkage on the part of youth work with adult education, community education programmes, schools, further education colleges and community work. It argued for a reduced focus on youth clubs and centres which, it noted, were losing members and failing to cater effectively for those over 16 and young women. The publication combined two distinct reports one written by a committee chaired by Fred Milson who taught at Westhill College (Birmingham). And a second which paid special attention to community and youth work

in relation to schools and further education colleges. This was chaired by Andrew Fairbairn, then Deputy Director of Education for Leicestershire County Council. Tash was one of the five members of the second committee. Under her influence the *YMCA National College* was far more in line with the thinking expressed in the *Youth and Community Work in the 70s* report than a majority of the existing youth leadership courses. Most of these focussed on club-based youth work and, at this juncture to varying degrees, emulated the model adopted by the *National College for the Training of Youth Leaders* (Leicester).

Why a secularist route was chosen by the *YMCA National College* was never spelt out. However, one can hazard an informed guess as to the reasoning that under-pinned the decision. First, the YMCA in the United Kingdom has always been an uneasy coalition of Christians drawn from competing traditions, with the wrath of its evangelical wing in the past always easily aroused. Tensions betwixt liberals and fundamentalists may have become less virulent by the 1970s, but they remained alive. Whatever curriculum was adopted it risked leaving one or another party disgruntled. As was the earlier case with *Springfield College*, a majority, of the staff were from the liberal wing of Christianity. Tash, for example, became heavily involved with the Iona Community after she retired in 1978 (Smith, 2020). Safety, therefore, lay in treading a more 'professional' path. Second, although the relative absence of a Christian dimension might result in a minority of YMCA staff opting for one of the Christian Youth Work courses offered elsewhere, it was surely going to be the case that their absence would be amply compensated for by entrants gleaned from other faiths or none. This prediction proved to be valid, for although early intakes were small and predominately comprised YMCA staff, it was not long before 'outsiders' were drawn to the programme which produced a pattern of expansion that tipped the balance towards those with minimal or no prior connection with the Movement.

After the *YMCA National College* had been active for a few years it became evident that there was a substantial demand for part-time qualifying routes – and that significant numbers of potential students

were unable to access existing programmes through a lack of entry qualifications. Being part of the National (English) YMCA meant the *YMCA National College* could access Department of Education and Science (DES) developmental project monies for youth work. This put it in an advantageous position compared to other higher education institutions who were excluded from applying for such grants. Income was secured, via this route, to develop and establish, from 1980 onwards, the United Kingdom's first Access programme for youth work training. The YMCA National College programme ran with DES funding until the mid-1980s. At around the same time the DES also paid for an action-research project which explored the potential demand for and the functioning of a part-time Distance Learning route to qualification. The Brixton and then the Toxteth, riots in 1981 appeared to have re-ignited the DES's interest in youth work training and in January 1982 the first cohort started the College's Distance Learning Programme. The project's core staff came with backgrounds in community development, teaching, youth work, distance learning and action research. In line with the approach advocated by Tash in her text *Supervision in Youth Work* (1967) they placed supervision and practice at the core of the programme. Also, unlike subsequent programmes elsewhere, they used residentials and regional study groups to augment the study materials and focus learning. Practice processes self-evidently informed the structuring of the programme. Working with individuals, groups and communities provided the foci and this was underpinned by a concern with management and action-research.

The experience of running the Access and Distance Learning programmes, combined with being part of a major voluntary organization placed the *YMCA National College* in a unique and advantageous position. For example, it was able to draw upon, and feed into, a wide range of networks thanks to the YMCA's federal structure. In addition, it also had the capacity to work across the United Kingdom. The most significant example of this was the close to thirty-year partnership with the Rank Foundation that commenced in the second half of the 1980s. The Rank Foundation offered longer term

developmental funding to local agencies and, also, looked to give young people 'with a gap in their lives' the chance to work alongside experienced practitioners for six to nine months in those agencies. The first of these programmes included the opportunity for agencies to employ a worker for five years and for those individuals to be inducted into the work and simultaneously gain a professional qualification without themselves having to contribute towards the financial costs of doing so. The second initiative involved foundation training around working with others. The *YMCA National College* developed special programmes for them both which also adopted the broader concept of 'informal education' as the central organizing idea. Introduced by the *George Williams College* (Chicago) during the 1920s this focus was championed in the United Kingdom by Josephine Macalister Brew. Her book *Informal Education: Adventures and Reflections* (Brew, 1946) was sufficiently popular during the 1940s to go through three reprints. This move can be interpreted as reverting to an earlier tradition; however, in another respect it broke with current convention. For by placing informal education at the core, it ensured that the focus of the course was educational rather than upon either youth work techniques or casework. The qualifying programme in 1991 in line with this shift was renamed the Diploma in Higher Education (Informal Education).

Scotland had abandoned the youth work model operating in the remainder of the United Kingdom in 1980 and had adopted the broader concept of 'community education'. This catch-all incorporated youth work, adult education, community work and development, and social group work across the age-bands (McConnell, 1996). It became clear to many staff at the *YMCA National College* that informal and community education in combination was a helpful way of articulating the nature of the programmes and encapsulated the format of the work undertaken by students on placement. Given the Rank Foundation was also funding projects in Scotland and that a significant number of YMCA staff were now working with adults, children and communities, the next step was to seek professional recognition for community education as a model of practice – and that meant formulating a new degree.

Up until this point, the *YMCA National College* which, hitherto lacked degree awarding powers in its own right, had worked with the *North East London Polytechnic* (known as the *Polytechnic of East London* from 1989 and the *University of East London* post-1992) as its awarding body. The decision was made in 1991 to break with the *Polytechnic of East London* and instead align with *Canterbury Christ Church College* (which until 2000 - when it secured full university status – had its diplomas and degrees validated by the *University of Kent*) to develop the new programme. It uniquely involved professional recognition from both CeVe Scotland and the National Youth Agency (England). It was also devised to unify informal and community education and ran from 1992 onwards. As such it was the only degree, anywhere in the world, to offer dual recognition, and the first and only one to be designated as a qualification in informal education.

Both the Distance Learning and the full-time taught programmes were popular - with over 250 students in total registered on the DipHE and degree in any one year during the second half of the 1990s. At a time when the demand for professional youth workers was lessening, the title and content of this degree had the advantage of allowing students to apply for a wider range of jobs. The *YMCA National College* had also taken the precaution of designing the programme so that it could be mapped against many of the social work outcomes required for the nationally recognised Diploma in Social Work launched in 1994. This allowed youth work and informal education practitioners who sought to 'change' their career trajectory to fast track this process by acquiring 'social work credits' as a result of completing selected units during their period of study at *YMCA National College*.

Alongside these developments the *YMCA National College* opted to amend its name – and its governance. With students being drawn from across the United Kingdom the existing title was viewed as being increasingly problematic. In 1994 the YMCA was celebrating the 150th anniversary of its launch and the Trustees decided that it would be appropriate to incorporate the name of the organisation's founder within a new title. In addition, it simultaneously disentangled itself from the

direct control of the National Council of the YMCA and became an independent charity – and, in the process, a YMCA in its own right. Separate governance allowed the re-named *YMCA George Williams College* to henceforth control its own finances. This was vital as it had outgrown its current buildings. A move was necessary – and that involved the acquisition of a mortgage. In 1990 Chandu Christian became principal following the retirement of Derek Shepperd. He remained in post until the close of 1996 and was responsible for the relocation of the *YMCA George Williams College* to south Canning Town. There it moved into the old Docklands Labour Exchange at 199 Freemasons Road.

The entrance to the Freemasons Road building

Gallant efforts were made to humanise the building, but the impact was minimal. The aspect from the outside was grim and unsympathetic; the interior was more reformatory than academic. Devoid of any aesthetic merits, the building proved to be over-sized and consequently it rarely gave the impression of being fully alive or vibrant. Neither the location, nor the ambience of the building, spoke of a successful purchase.

Chandu Christian, like Shepherd before him, possessed a long and wide-ranging involvement with the work of the YMCA both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. His successor Mary Crosby (formerly Turner) took over in 1997 and, like Christian, had previously worked for the College. With a background in detached youth work and counselling, she embraced Joan Tash's emphasis upon supervision (Turner 1995) and the College's focus on informal education (Crosby 2001). While she had worked in a project associated with the movement, she was not part of it in the way that Shepperd and Christian were. Nor were any of the principals who came after her. Mary Crosby sadly died in 2004.

Memorial window in honour of Mary Crosby in the Canning Town Building

Her successor was another internal candidate - Mary Wolfe. She had a background in schooling, adult education, and community education. As Principal, she combined a strong interest in informal education (see Richardson and Wolfe 2001) and social justice with a concern to keep the programmes relevant. Whilst she was the Principal, the College

became the only institution up to that point to be awarded two distinctions by the National Youth Agency. She retired, due to ill-health, in 2012 (see Sloss 2014).

Building on the Foundation programme designed for trainees and volunteers on Rank Foundation initiatives, the *YMCA George Williams College* developed an Access programme. It met CeVe prequalification, National Youth Agency (NYA) level 3, and Wales Youth Agency requirements and therefore simultaneously served as a part-time youth work qualification. The programme was accredited as an Access Programme through the Open College Network and later via Laser (the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). These level three (level 6 Scotland) programmes attracted a significant number of students through both the Rank Foundation network and various local agencies located across the United Kingdom. In 2009/2011 there were 260 students registered. This programme continued to develop and went on to offer various specialisms under the banner of working with children, young people and families. Included amongst these were outdoor learning, community sports, Christian work with young people and communities, and three different social pedagogy options focused on work with vulnerable young people, working in residential settings, and working in specialist education settings.

Supporting all these programmes was a unique study aid designed to offer both internal and distance-based students access to knowledge and documentation relating to informal education. Infed.org, established in 1995 by Mark Smith a member of staff at the college, initially with support from the Rank Foundation, provides open access material on almost every aspect of informal education practice and history. It remains in operation. In the two and half decades since its launch it has expanded to over 500 items and has been accessed by over 30 million visitors.

The overall timespan required to create a new degree programme meant additional courses kept emerging in higher education institutions even as demand for youth and community workers diminished. Indeed, a

number were validated after their moment passed and never actually recruited an initial cohort. Including amongst this new raft of degree programmes were, for the first time, some cheaper and also some less demanding distant learning programmes. Across the board competition for students' year-on-year became increasingly cut-throat. Worse, the employment opportunities available to those graduating kept shrinking. What commenced as a trickle in the 1990s after 2010 became a torrent. Between 2010 and 2019 the estimated youth service funding in England and Wales decreased by 70 per cent. In London, from where most of the *YMCA George Williams College's* full-time students came, over half the units ceased to function prompting 500 redundancies and low levels of recruitment.

One backwash from this regression was a widespread closure of courses. Some avoided this fate, often only temporarily, by adopting modular structures whereby adjacent courses within a given institution shared units to generate economies of scale. What was feasible for a university with say an already operational Social Work, Childhood Studies or Education degree was never an option for a monotechnic institution such as *YMCA George Williams College*. For the latter, their only routes to survival lay in either creating new courses or embracing planned retrenchment – and various staff at the time were understandably arguing for one or other of these options.

Post-2000 the number of students enrolling on the full-time programme began to steadily shrink and soon it was, in effect, being subsidized by the Distance Learning programme. Come 2010, the total number registered on the three years of the full-time programme was down to 50. There were then more than three times that number on the Distance Learning route. With an eye on the changing pattern of demand for the existing programmes; *YMCA George Williams College* in 2012 developed three different routes through the degree programme which led to; (a) the BA(Hons) in Youth Work and Community Learning and Development; (b) the BA (Hons) in Education and Learning; and (c) the BA (Hons) in Social Pedagogy. The last of these was one of the first social pedagogy honours degree in the United Kingdom. Sadly, it all too soon

became the first to close. All three satisfied NYA and CLD Scotland requirements for professional qualification, and when the Social Pedagogy Professional Association was formed in 2017 the Social Pedagogy degree was recognized by that body.

While many of the College staff had argued for retrenchment it was not a strategy which appealed to the governors nor the principals who came and went between 2012 to 2019. The first staff redundancy occurred in 2014; then in order to reduce overheads and secure funding a decision was made to sell the Canning Town property and move the *YMCA George Williams College* to smaller rented premises in Whitechapel. The management also looked to grow numbers in a challenging market and to take the *YMCA George Williams College* into areas of activity not easily linked to the core areas of staff expertise and to existing networks. One or two developments seemed like they could flourish given time. Level 3 programmes concerned with housing management and with developing the role of teaching assistants as pedagogues within specialist education settings looked promising. However, time was not on their side and funding for such work was in short supply. Numbers on the full-time programme continued to decline – and the unremitting cuts to youth services inevitably translated into reduced enrolment on the Distance Learning route. The hammer blow came with the decision of the Rank Foundation to alter its focus and approach to supporting local agencies. This led to the dismantling of their existing youth work programme – and the loss of a significant number of students on the Distance Learning Programme. Now, each of the core courses threatened to simultaneously run up a deficit. Poor governance and management never helped but one senses the *YMCA George Williams College*, like similar courses elsewhere, principally folded because youth and community work as a practice format, was in terminal decline.

The monotechnic model, which in all likelihood proved to be the fatal weakness, had during the bulk of its lifetime been the *YMCA George Williams College's* greatest strength. Staff, in this setting, were locked into face-to-face teaching whilst simultaneously they were writing distant learning materials. They generated an exceptional array of texts,

on-line open-access resources and research material relating to youth work, informal education, group work, social pedagogy and counselling. Being based in a free-standing institution meant staff were never enmeshed in the ridiculous 'research assessment' procedures which blighted universities. Whilst colleagues in universities were forced to churn out rarely, if ever, read formulaic articles published in expensive, and for practitioners unobtainable, journals, *YMCA George Williams College* tutors were at liberty to focus on writing material associated with the very worlds of practice their students engaged with. Hence, this tiny staff team followed in the wake of Tash and bequeathed an incredible legacy of publications (see some below). One that will serve to preserve the memory of this small institution which during the half century it was in existence carried forward a YMCA tradition now almost certainly lost.

Green and Christian (2012) | Smith and Smith (2008) | de St Croix (2017) | Stanton (2014) Rogers and Smith (eds.) (2010) | Belton (2009) | Richardson and Wolfe (2001) | Smith, Stanton and Wylie (2015)

Farewell

Despite the fact that the staff's contribution to the field was outstanding, and that the College's capacity for innovation was noteworthy, the tide was on the turn. The Further Education Department closed in June 2021, and the degree programmes finished a year later. Yes, it is unfair that other far, far weaker and less academically vigorous programmes stayed afloat whilst YMCA George Williams College went under. But Higher Education is now overwhelmingly a corrupted market which generally pays scant attention to scholarship or the educational needs of students, preferring to focus its ambition on securing a profit. It is impossible to envisage, given the organisation's current ethos, that another college devoted to the degree-level education of youth workers, social group workers, informal educators or social pedagogues will be established in Europe or North America by the YMCA or, for that matter, any similar philanthropic organisation. For a start, YMCAs and most similar bodies are way too busy chasing income to invest in educational projects that promise no immediate payback. However, maybe one day the flame will be re-ignited in which case a new chapter might yet need to be attached to this account.

On February 14, 2025, the Trustees of the College announced that they had decided to close the charity with effect from March 31, 2025. It will not have come as a surprise to many who knew the fields it operated in. The work that made its name – the professional training of youth workers and community educators – had effectively finished in 2022. The merger with the Centre for Youth Impact in the same year was always going to be problematic. Their focus on measuring the impact of youth provision and enhancing youth voice required government and sector support, and unsurprisingly, it was not forthcoming. The sector

was shrinking, the government was cutting funding, and impact measurement was deeply problematic. It certainly would not have come as a surprise to YMCA England and Wales. They had been reporting on the scale of decline of the sector for well over a decade, and did not appear to have viewed the final closure of the College as newsworthy for their website.

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