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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

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Volume 24  
Issue 3 *September*

Article 12

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September 1997

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### Recommended Citation

Knupfer, Anne Meis (1997) "African-American Facilities for Dependent and Delinquent Children in Chicago, 1900 to 1920: The Louise Juvenile School and the Amanda Smith School," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 24 : Iss. 3 , Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol24/iss3/12>

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# African-American Facilities for Dependent and Delinquent Children in Chicago, 1900 to 1920: The Louise Juvenile School and the Amanda Smith School

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*This article examines two "homes" and later industrial schools founded in the Chicago area for African-American dependent and delinquent children during the Progressive Era: the Louise Juvenile Home and Industrial School; and the Amanda Smith Industrial Home and School. The juvenile court's inception and expansion, especially through the Chicago Woman's Club, as well as African-American club women and probation officers, is first described. The African-American women's activism in fighting segregation and in fund-raising for the schools is especially highlighted. Nonetheless, both schools' success, as well as eventual demise, were due largely to their economic dependence upon the juvenile court.*

The first American juvenile court system was created in Chicago in 1899 to remedy a host of social ills, including the rise in juvenile delinquency, "neglectful" and "undesirable" home conditions, and "improper" parental care (Bremner, 1974, pp. 506–511). In actuality, however, the court created a bureaucratic machinery replete with scientific and legal classifications, categories, case studies, surveys, and dispositions. Of particular significance to this article is the examination of the court's differential treatment of African-American youth and children in terms of classifications, court deliberations and dispositions, and facilities. Not only were African-American children more often classified as delinquent rather than dependent, despite the children's age, and nature and number of offenses; they were also sent to segregated industrial schools which received little state funding or administrative support.

This article discusses two industrial schools to which African-American children from Chicago were sent in the early 20th century: the Louise Juvenile Industrial School, established by Elizabeth McDonald, an African-American rescue worker and volunteer probation officer; and the Amanda Smith Industrial School, founded by missionary and temperance speaker, Amanda Smith, in Harvey, Illinois. Because of the prominence of white club women in the articulation of the court system, I begin with an examination of their influence as progressive maternalists. Their ideologies and activism differed greatly from African-American women, who subscribed to Du Bois's talented tenth leadership, a deep-seated Christianity, and their culturally veritable roles as "other mothers" (Collins, 1991) and community caretakers.

#### "The Path of Rectitude":

##### Progressive Maternalism and the Chicago Juvenile Court

Social welfare and feminist scholars have corroborated the prominence of a middle-class, white maternalistic rather than paternalistic influence in the juvenile court system (Abramovitz, 1988; Boris, 1991; Ladd-Taylor, 1994; Platt, 1969; Schlossman, 1977; Skocpol, 1992; Youcha, 1995). The roots of this maternal influence ran deep in the Cook County Juvenile Court, beginning with the Chicago Woman's Club's advocacy of the first juvenile law and court in 1899 (Bowen, 1925). Indeed, the very language of the first juvenile law intimated such an influence, as the words "neglected," "disreputable," "depravity," and "unfit" carried freighted images, interpretations, and recommendations largely culled from middle-class maternalistic ideologies. As Eileen Boris (1991) has astutely assessed, the very language and ideas which female reformers used to guide them in their activism was that which concurrently promulgated women's subordinate economic and social positions. Molly Ladd-Taylor (1994), in her analysis of "progressive maternalism," has likewise examined the ways in which white middle-class women's concepts of motherhood reinstated women's traditional roles. Essentially, the juvenile court reinscribed women's "dependent" status economically, politically, and socially. For poor African-American women and children, the consequences were especially dire.

The conditions of crowded and dilapidated tenements, unsanitary living conditions, and poverty in Chicago's Black Belt were those which court officials thought especially "neglectful," "unfit," and even "immoral." Such conditions were certainly not conducive to what they deemed "proper" home life. Notwithstanding, child welfare reformers argued that keeping home life intact was of utmost importance in preventing delinquency and truancy. The nagging question before the court was whether poverty itself constituted "neglect"; if so, many children, especially African-American and immigrant, would be removed from their homes. Social reformers sympathized with their impoverished conditions, arguing that reform should encompass *family* life, not atomize it (*Proceedings of the Conference on the Care of Dependent Children*, 1909). Despite this cloaking of reform in terms of the collective "family," the intervention of probation officers, as well as the creation of mothers' pensions, pointed to ways in which motherhood was carved into middle-class prescriptive, and thus, restrictive roles through the juvenile courts and the welfare laws. For example, inscribed within the restrictions for mothers' pensions were the criteria of morality, economic dependency, and citizenship (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1972; Bogue, 1928; Goodwin, 1992; Gordon, 1994; Leff, 1973). One unwritten restriction was race: court records in Chicago, as well as nationally, indicated that African-American women and their children received few mothers' pensions. Crawley (1927) noted that as of 1920, mothers' pensions were granted to twenty-four African-Americans out of the five hundred and seventy-three applications in Chicago.

Thus, African-American women—as club members, juvenile court officers, and founders of homes—faced not only immense challenges but contradictions. This held particularly true for African-American probation officers. For one, they had to deliberate on home conditions in communities where the city government had not yet provided any infrastructure through laws nor inspection agencies. As of 1905, the city of Chicago had no tenement house department; instead, the inspection of tenements rested with the Building Department and the Department of Health. Additionally, a chief sanitary inspector had not been legally appointed (Wald, 1905). Paradoxically, then, even though there were few mechanisms in place to inspect the unsanitary con-

ditions of tenements, garbage disposal, and vacant lots, parents were held accountable for "neglectful" conditions within their own homes.

Secondly, African-American and other women received little training or remuneration for the efforts as probation officers. In the early years of the juvenile court, there were sporadic and un-systematic efforts at "standardizing" the education of probation work. Curiously, this allowed women further influence in their clients' homes and was consistent with most ideologies which considered women morally superior in domestic and household affairs. Although their visits were termed "inspections," replete with case study reports and evaluations, the probation officer was encouraged to form personal relationships with the family: to be a friend, a confidant, a teacher, and even a member of the family. Female probation officers performed a multitude of roles and duties, ranging from instruction in child care and household chores to visiting children's schools and canvassing the neighborhood for unwholesome past-times (Abbott & Breckinridge, 1917; Schlossman, 1977). As Eli Zaretsky (1982) has epigrammatically noted: "The form in which the welfare state expanded was public, the content private" (pp. 14-15). This "private" instruction, under the moral guardianship of probation officers, dovetailed conveniently with volunteerism, as early court officials argued that salaries would lead to political corruption.

The third constraint faced by African-American women concerned the placement of dependent and delinquent children. Despite the fact that probation officers in many cases intimately knew the conditions of family life, they served only in an advisory capacity to the juvenile court judge who made the final decision. Although court deliberations were not recorded, it is likely that probation officers exerted *some* influence, particularly as they were matched as "cultural brokers" to the families, based on their similarity in race, ethnicity, religion, and first language (Lou, 1927). Nonetheless, there were few facilities in which African-American children could be placed. Crawley (1927) noted that as of 1926 there were only three African-American facilities which accepted dependent children; as such, African-American delinquent children were sent to state institutions or returned home under the supervision of probation officers. This situation was

complicated by the often interchangeable classifications of "dependent" and "delinquent" for African-American children so that they could be accommodated at segregated facilities.

Despite much evidence of the progressive maternalists' influence, we know little about the specific contexts of the probation officers' home visits and interactions. How, for example, did the women mediate, interpret, and make recommendations concerning family conditions and court laws? Conversely, how did their court work influence their ideologies and community uplift practices? The ideologies and activities of African-American club women, many of whom were appointed probation and truant officers, provide some contexts. Most African-American female activists spoke of "doing Christianity," evident in their missionary, rescue and social uplift work. This was congruent with Du Bois's model of leadership, which demanded that the African-American middle-class reach down and assist those less fortunate. African-American club women and probation officers also reenacted traditional community roles as "other mothers" or "fictive kin." In the establishing of "other homes"—be they orphanages, industrial schools or homes for working girls—the African-American women extended their caregiving and moral guardianship (Knupfer, 1996).

Such a community ethos was demonstrated in the multiple strategies the club women employed for child welfare issues, including creating mothers' clubs, forming committees to canvass the streets, inspecting tenement conditions, and writing newspaper articles to highlight the need for playground and recreational facilities. To alleviate delinquency, they organized and chaperoned youth clubs, dances, lyceums, and picnics, thus luring adolescents away from neighborhood saloons, dance halls, and pool rooms. Although the club women spoke of "rescuing" and "protecting" young women in language not unlike the YWCA and other child-saving agencies, they also confronted the economic and social ills facing many parents. Accordingly, they established day nurseries for working mothers, family health care facilities, industrial education and night classes, and homes for dependent and orphaned children, as well as for young working girls.

Underneath the concern of African-American girls' protection were the tensions and implications of sexual misbehavior.

This was not unique to African-American girls, as immorality and incorrigibility were the two primary causes for all young girls' delinquency in Chicago. However, the historical and persistent sexual violation of African-American women made the issue of morality an especially troubling one. Hine (1989) has unfolded the argument that many southern African-American women migrated to the North to escape the sexual aggression of men. However, many young women were prey to the very same mistreatment in the North. Most young migrants from the Chicago train station were directed to the Black Belt for lodging, where they roamed past brightly-lit saloons, cabarets, and pool halls in search of lodging. As men were often given preference over women as lodgers, in part because they were perceived as less demanding, many young women were left without accommodations (Grossman, 1989).

African-American women were alarmed at such vulnerabilities. Club leader, Elizabeth Lindsay Davis warned of how "many of [these] girls were going astray by being led unawares into disreputable homes, entertainment and employment. . . ." (Meyerowitz, p. 54). Much press coverage was devoted to "disorderly" and "good time" houses, as well as young women's indecent apparel and dance steps (*Broad Ax*, Sept. 18, 1909; *Chicago Defender*, July 13, 1918). What remained unacknowledged, at least publicly, by both white and African-American club women, was the possibility that young women might prefer such life styles. As Meyerowitz' study (1988) of "women adrift" in Chicago documents, many young women favored their own independence, evident in their choices of living quarters, friendships, and entertainment. What has emerged from her study is an underside of young women's lives, revealing increased independence, sexual curiosity, and frequenting of public dance halls, cabarets, and movie theatres. Such independence ran contrary to the Young Women's Christian Association, the church-sponsored homes, and the Chicago juvenile court.

Suffice it to say that African-American club women and probation officers were acutely aware that their children and youth were particularly at risk. As the following sections on the Louise Juvenile Home and the Amanda Smith Home indicate, discrimination for African-American children and youth was double-

edged. On the front end, many lived in impoverished neighborhoods, making them more vulnerable to the judgment of "neglected." On the back end, many were placed in segregated institutions with inadequate resources and funding.

### The Louise Juvenile Home and Industrial School

Even before Elizabeth McDonald founded the Louise Juvenile Home, she was deeply involved in rescue work, having been "anointed" by God to "go into the highways and hedges and compel men and women to come in" (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903). While there were no records of her rescue work prior to 1903, it was likely that her volunteer work as a probation officer to the juvenile court after 1899 gave her further access to dependent children and their families. The first annual report of the Cook County Juvenile Court in 1900, in its enumeration of probation officers, noted six probation officers paid from private sources, in particular the Chicago Woman's Club, as well as "one colored woman who devotes her entire time to the work, free of charge, and whose services are invaluable to the court as she takes charge of all colored children" (Lubove, 1965, p. 140). There is little doubt but that the "one colored woman" was Elizabeth McDonald. Indeed, McDonald epitomized what a later annual report considered essential for successful probation work: "the spirit of a missionary" (*Cook County Juvenile Court Report*, 1906, p. 4).

Such a missionary spirit was evident in her 1903 report submitted to the *Broad Ax*, in which she rendered a brief sketch of her life and her recent work. Therein, she described her rescue of eighteen persons from "shameful lives" (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903.) Similarly, although her recorded activities as probation officer included removing children and mothers from "disreputable homes to less "criminal surroundings," she also spoke of her efforts to deter young girls from frequenting the "dens" and "traps" of the Black Belt (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903). Although McDonald occasionally attempted to divide her "official" duties as probation officer from those of rescue worker, both were often informed by her deeply-felt religious beliefs. In the case of one home visitation, she found the family not only in abject poverty



but the parents subject to much drinking. Upon discovering that the parents had "wandered" from their faith, she urged them to attend church, as well as to "leave off strong drink." Her efforts were successful: not only were the children baptized, but the family returned to church (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903). In another case, a young girl was removed from a "house of immorality" and sent to an industrial school. Shortly thereafter, the house was torn down so that other young girls would not fall prey to such temptations (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903).

In reference to her probation work, McDonald stated that she did not receive "one cent of salary" (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903). This was in accordance with the earlier juvenile court law which stipulated that the court could appoint "discreet persons of good character" as probation officer but that they would receive "no compensation from the public treasury" (Bremner, 1974, pp. 506–511). However, McDonald did receive in-kind donations and financial assistance from women's club and private donors. When funding for poor families was inadequate, she decided to take the examination necessary to procure a salary as a probation officer. Although McDonald did not pass the examination, due in her account to her lack of formal schooling, she nonetheless continued to draw young girls away from the saloons and cabarets, to visit inmates in the jails and asylums, and in one case, convinced a young couple to marry before the Juvenile Court (*Broad Ax*, Nov. 14, 1903).

In 1907, the Louise Juvenile Home officially opened in Chicago. McDonald's private home had always been open "to receive the suffering of any nationality" and she continued this non-discriminatory policy. Located west of Morgan and Hyde Park, in a ward where the population was no more than 20 percent African-American, the home provided care for fifty-six white and African-American children and two mothers. Two non-salaried staff members, McDonald herself and Elizabeth Scott, a student of Walden University, taught the children industrial education, mostly of washing, ironing, cooking, sewing, and needlework (Crawley, 1927; Du Bois, 1909; Jackson, 1978).

The home's first anniversary in 1908 highlighted its accomplishments, especially the purchase of an eleven-room house, whose upper level rental provided revenue for the home. Al-

though most of the funding was to have originated from charitable organizations, McDonald admitted that she "had failed absolutely along that line" (Du Bois, 1909, p. 81). McDonald's deep involvement in rescue work must have certainly consumed much of her time, time which might have been spent on fundraising. However, McDonald argued that there would not have been as many jail and penitentiary inmates to rescue if she had been able to reach them as younger children through home visitations, preaching and prayers. Like Du Bois, she insisted that rescue work was "greatly needed" (1909, p. 61). The 1909 annual report continued to detail the number of religious conversions and prayer meetings alongside her home efforts: "49 conversions, 250 home visits that included prayer meetings. 40 visits to the jail, paroled 3 prisoners. Cared for 89 children and 1 mother. Got employment for 7 persons" (*Broad Ax*, Dec. 25, 1909).

By 1913, the debt had grown to over fourteen hundred dollars, despite the increase in individual donations, obviously too small to be of much significance (*Broad Ax*, Dec. 30, 1911; *Broad Ax*, Jan. 4, 1913). Relying upon her affiliation with the juvenile court system, McDonald found a solution. In July of 1913, through the home's incorporation, the Louise Training School for Colored Boys was founded to "provide home and proper training for such boys as may be committed to its charge" (*Broad Ax*, July 26, 1913). The school officers consisted of legal and court representatives, and the board of trustees included jailers and probations officers, as well as African-American female and male leaders.

Thereafter, the reports were no longer signed by McDonald as "Yours in His name," but as Superintendent. The previous annual reports of prayers and conversions were replaced with descriptions of anniversary celebrations, where state inspections were followed by military drills, choir singing, plantation songs, and uplifting talks (*Broad Ax*, Oct. 4, 1914). Boys aged five through twelve were taught vocational skills such as shoemaking, fixing window screens, and other handiwork (*Chicago Defender*, Sept. 20, 1913; *Broad Ax*, Oct. 4, 1914). The curriculum paralleled that offered at John Worthy School, the Juvenile Detention Home, and other homes for dependent and delinquent boys. The Juvenile Detention Home's course of study steadfastly directed the boys' future as industrial workers, as well as helped them "readjust

mentally and morally," through wood work, basket making, and folksong and patriotic singing (*CCJC Annual Reports*, 1912 & 1919). However, such training for African-Americans boys was considered by many court personnel to be futile, given the youth's lack of opportunity and discrimination in employment. Bowen (1913), in fact, had concluded that these problems were the major causes of delinquency among African-American boys.

Unlike the Juvenile Detention Home which strictly separated children according to the classification of dependent and delinquent, the Louise Juvenile Industrial School took in both dependent and delinquent African-American boys. In the case of delinquents, however, the juvenile court most often sent first-time offenders to homes and industrial schools; second- and third-time offenders were sent to the John Worthy School (*CCJC Annual Reports*, 1918 & 1919). Concurrent with the incorporation was increased financial support from Cook County, as the "Training School for Boys" Act stipulated a payment of ten dollars per dependent boy committed to training schools. The African-American community, too, lent its support, especially the women's clubs.

There were few newspaper accounts of the School from 1915 until 1920, when it officially closed. McDonald's dream of moving the school to a farm was partially met in 1917, when the school relocated to a thirty-acre plot adjacent to the Glenwood Manual Training School, twenty-five miles outside of Chicago. Since the superintendent of Glenwood was also the treasurer for the Louise Juvenile School and both were schools for dependent boys sent from the Juvenile Court, the schools became administratively joined, at least for the next three years. According to the Cook County Juvenile Court's annual reports, the number of boys sent to the Louise Manual Training School during this time fluctuated from two in 1918 to ten in 1919. When the school closed in 1920, the children were either sent to Glenwood, to relatives, back to the juvenile court, or to the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society. Elizabeth McDonald and her husband moved to California, where she continued her social welfare work (Crawley, 1927).

#### The Amanda Smith Home and Industrial School

Amanda Smith, was considered one of the "Race's foremost evangelist who spent [her] life and fortune in temperance, religion

and charitable work. . . ." (*Chicago Defender*, Mar. 6, 1915). Born in 1837, Smith along with seven of her siblings were slaves. In time, her father not only bought her freedom but his other children's (Brown, 1926; Majors, 1893; Smith, 1893). Although Amanda had little schooling, she became an evangelist in the Methodist Episcopal Church, participating in religious and temperance conferences in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Upon a later return to England, after many years of missionary work in India and Africa, she heard a voice asking her what she had done for her own people back in America. The vision of an industrial home for children appeared before her, the beginning of the Amanda Smith Home for Colored and Dependent Children (Brown, 1926).

Smith purchased property in Harvey, Illinois, a temperance town outside of Chicago. However, it was not until 1899 that the orphanage home was opened with five children and with funds of 288 dollars. One year later, enrollment increased by sixteen children, fourteen of whom were school-aged; by 1903, thirty children resided at the home. The growing number indicated the home's connection to the juvenile court, even though no financial support from the county was forthcoming (McClellan & Bartlett, 1994). Similar to McDonald, Smith was compelled to spend much of her time fund-raising through her evangelistic and temperance engagements. Consequently, the Amanda Smith Home, like the Louise Juvenile Home, faced a rising debt. Although inspectors found the home to be "inadequate" according to state standards, as it was deemed the only substantial facility for African-American children in the state, it was not closed (Spear, 1967).

Such official inspections, however, conflicted with opinion from the African-American community, as members of one women's club reported "the cleanliness and sanitation was without flaw or blemish, the garden work was first class . . . peas, beans, tomatoes, cabbage, potatoes, all the lettuce and radishes were served from the garden" (*Broad Ax*, June 29, 1914). The club women also surveyed the chicken yard, and samples of clotheslines, neck halters and other rope-making products made by the children. Clearly, though, the Chicago communities were cognizant of the home's need for financial assistance as Smith had placed a plea in the *Chicago Defender* to help raise at least one thousand dollars for fuel, lumber, hardware, groceries, and

plumbing. The home continued to rely upon community support, as well as a financial windfall from an English friend. Despite this financial grace, little did Smith know that as early as 1910 the activities of the West Side Woman's Club would change the future of the Amanda Smith Home. At an October meeting of the West Side Woman's Club, over one hundred club women and social reformers convened, many of whom were affiliated with facilities for young working girls and dependents. This meeting provided the impetus for the opening of a three-story home for girls ages four through fourteen. The home, however, was short-lived, as in 1913 it merged with the Amanda Smith Home (*Chicago Defender*, Oct. 8, 1910; *Chicago Defender*, May 25, 1912).

The West Side Woman's Club was only one catalyst, though, in this change. Because of racial segregation, many institutions created for dependent children did not admit African-American children. As the African-American community interpreted the situation, many young dependent girls were designated as "delinquents" and sent to a state school. According to one newspaper account, due to discriminatory practices, "it became necessary at times to send dependent girls to the State School for delinquent girls, when they should have had the care and training of dependent girls" (*Broad Ax*, Aug. 17, 1913). This perception, though, was not entirely accurate. Although there was a county-funded school for African-American girls, the Illinois Technical School for Colored Girls, it was established for dependent, not delinquent, girls. Juvenile court records from 1912 through 1918 indicated that African-American dependent girls appearing before the court for the first time were sent to the Amanda Smith Industrial School; those dependents who returned to the court two or more times were sent to the Illinois Technical School (*CCJC Annual Reports*, 1906, 1912, 1915, 1917).

The Illinois Technical School for Colored Girls received further criticism from the African-American community because it was maintained under the auspices of the Catholic Church (Bowen, 1913). They argued that not only was the color line drawn but that no respect was given to Protestant girls' religious affiliation. One editorial stated the African-American community's feelings most succinctly:

our people insist that if our girls are to be "jim crowed" at all we prefer to have them sent to an institution organized, maintained and controlled by our people, who are directly interested in the welfare of these unfortunates. If we must be segregated, we want to segregate ourselves; we do not want to be "jim crowed" by white people and then pay them for doing it (*Broad Ax*, Aug. 17, 1913).

The situation was resolved in August of 1913 through the joint efforts of African-American and white club women, juvenile court representatives, and other "Race" leaders. In the decision to transform the home into an industrial school for dependent African-American girls, African-American club women and auxiliaries pledged to "make the school a success" through their support. Consistent with an industrial emphasis, the Amanda Smith Industrial School for Girls fittingly opened on Labor Day. As with the Louise Juvenile Industrial School, the Amanda School received county funding; the law stipulated that each dependent girl attending an industrial school receive fifteen dollars (*CCJC Annual Reports*, 1918 & 1919). Shortly thereafter, members of the West Side Women's Club inspected the school and promised to assist. They promptly set up stations in Chicago where toys, candies, and clothing were collected for the girls' Christmas presents. A new sewing machine and a bolt of gingham was donated; clubs pooled their resources to finance a coal fund. The women also encouraged community members to visit the girls not only to provide them with company but to encourage future donations (*Chicago Defender*, Dec. 20, 1913; *Chicago Defender*, Apr. 22, 1916; *Chicago Defender*, Nov. 18, 1916; *Broad Ax*, Feb. 15, 1913; *Broad Ax*, Jan. 26, 1917).

Although Amanda Smith had been "relieved" of her administrative responsibilities in 1911, due to ill health, she continued to be active and greatly respected by the African-American community. When she passed away in 1915, the African-American newspapers recounted her missionary and temperance work, as well as her work at the home and school. Although she was occasionally criticized by community members for accepting financial support from white philanthropists, Amanda Smith had not wavered in her determination to keep the home and school open. Even after her death, the school remained opened for several years. As of 1917, thirty-eight girls, ranging from four to seventeen years of

age, attended the school. Tragically, in 1918, the Amanda Smith Industrial School burned to the ground and two children lost their lives. Some attributed the fire to faulty wiring, which the state inspector had "overlooked." According to Sophonisba Breckinridge, the state was implicated not only in the persistence of segregated facilities but in the deaths of the two children (Gittens, 1994).

### Conclusion

This article has examined two schools established for African-American dependent and delinquent children in the Chicago vicinity. Paradoxically, both schools' success, as well as eventual demise, were due to their relations with Chicago's juvenile courts. Although the county and state provided stipends per number of children to the schools, it also condoned segregated facilities which were inferior in structure and maintenance. Despite Amanda Smith's and Elizabeth McDonald's unwavering commitment to the schools, as well as multitudinous contributions from the African-American women's clubs, both schools did not survive into the 1920s. By 1917, a chapter of the Urban League was established in Chicago; as an umbrella organization, it subsumed many of the child welfare activities which had typically been perceived and performed as "women's work."

This is not to suggest that African-American women did not continue to work with the courts. Quite the contrary, the numbers of African-American female probation officers, lawyers, and social workers working with the courts increased during the 1920's. However, as there were few facilities available for dependent and delinquent children, more families began to take in children through the coordination of the African-American branch of the Illinois Children's Aid Society. Despite such coordinated efforts, delinquency rates increased as the poverty and housing conditions in Chicago's Black Belt worsened. African-American children continued to be "delinquenced" through poverty, inferior housing conditions, and segregated facilities.

Even today, in Chicago, these dilemmas persist. The once middle-class African-American communities of Woodlawn, Englewood, and Morgan Park are largely segregated and known now for their rival gangs and dilapidated public housing. Several child welfare cases in Chicago have received national notoriety,

such as the "Keystone" children and the 11-year-old boy who dropped a youngster from the eleventh floor of public housing. Similar to the 1909 conference on dependent children, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services still grapples with distinguishing between "neglect" and poverty, even though a newly-created policy not only supposedly spells out these differences but provides caseworkers with cash to assist families in need (*Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 24, 1995).

Yet alongside the daily trials of poverty, violence, and inadequate social facilities exists a strong female community activism, not unlike that expressed by Amanda Smith and Elizabeth McDonald. In Chicago's public housing, women such as Cabrini-Green's Hattie Calvin and Washington Park's Artensa Randolph speak out on behalf of children's and mother's welfare. As presidents of their local housing councils, these women are not paid employees but volunteers (*Chicago Tribune*, Aug. 13, 1995; Dec. 19, 1994). In a spirit hauntingly similar to Smith and McDonald, Bethune teacher Corla Hawkins, known as "Mama Hawk," takes in homeless and troubled children, providing them with food, care, and respite. She hopes to establish a residential school for up to two hundred poor children on Chicago's West Side and has been given preliminary approval by district officials (*Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 8, 1995).

Functioning as "other mothers," these women continue the African-American female traditions of caring and extended family out in the community. As Cheryl Gilkes (1983) has extensively documented, the activism of many African-American women today rests on these historical issues of child welfare. Through such activities African-American women continue the legacy of cultural bearers, as well as ensure the survival of less fortunate community members (Radford-Hill, 1986). Unlike white progressive maternalists who advocated for poor women through the lense of their middle class lives, the African-American women described herein have spoken from a different type of collective, one based on common ground and experiences.

\*Material for this article is taken from Chapter 4 of a forthcoming book, *Toward a Tenderer Humanity and a Nobler Womanhood. African American Women's Club in Turn-of-the-Century Chicago*. I gratefully acknowledge New York University's Press's permission for use of materials.



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