

# Looking Back

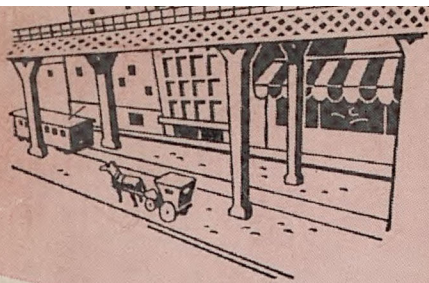
To look forward

# Kautz Family YMCA Archives Mission

The Kautz Family YMCA Archives collects, preserves, and provides access to the records of the YMCA of the USA and related historical material.

We believe that understanding where we have been allows us to more fully understand where we are now. This is in service of deciding where we will go next.

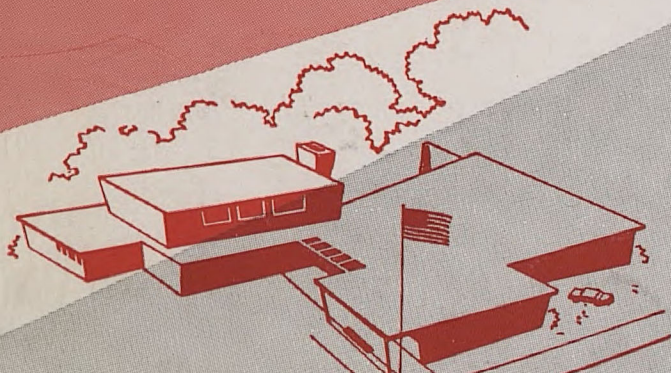
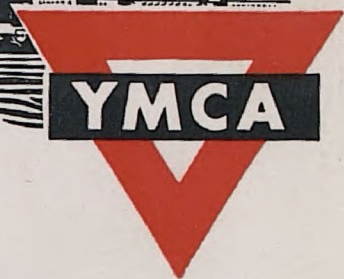
We are a part of the University of Minnesota Libraries and serve the YMCA movement as a core constituent group



**YESTERDAY**



**TODAY**



**TOMORROW**





What  
Makes a  
YMCA?

# Change: The Y's Sweet Spot

1855

2022



Industrial Revolution

American Civil War

Progressive Era

WWI

1918 Flu Pandemic

The Great Depression

WWII

Polio

Cold War

Civil Rights

Antiwar Movement

Gender Equality

AIDS Crisis

Tax Challenge

9/11

The Great Recession

COVID - 19

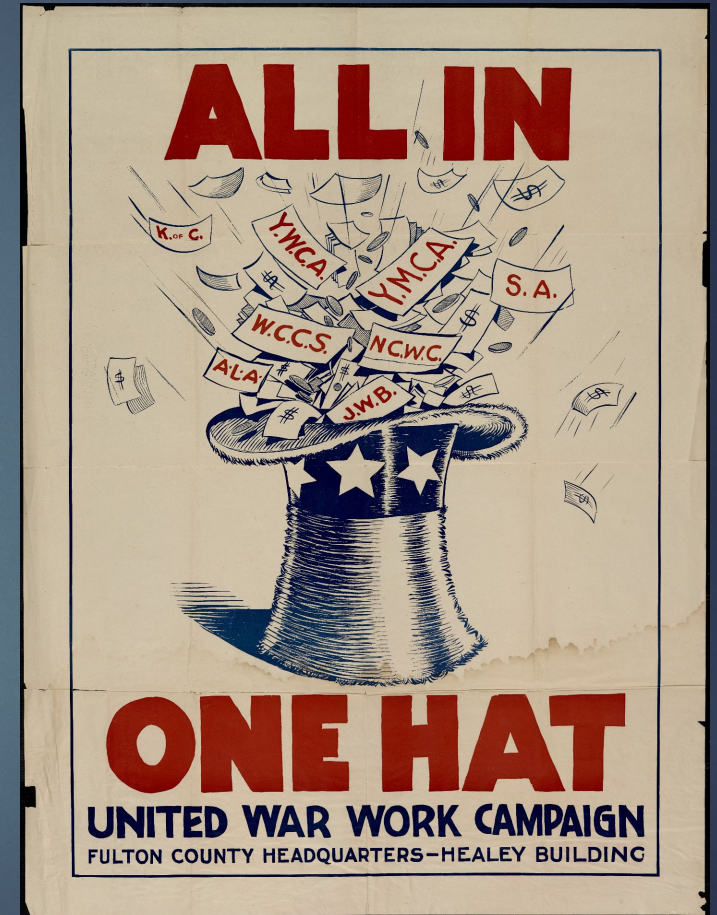
## Some specific examples

- WWI – The Y takes the lead
- 1918 Flu Pandemic – The Y rallies communities
- The Great Depression – The Y constantly adapts
- Civil Rights – The Y works behind the scenes
- Tax Challenge – The Y wakes up



# WWI – The Y takes the lead

- 1914 – 1919
  - US enters the war in 1917
  - The YMCA begins service in 1914 (POW relief) and continues its war work service through 1921
  - Morale Work – Sport and recreation, religious counseling, educational services.
  - 25,926 women and men serve “under the red triangle”
  - The Y’s raised and spent over \$152 million (over \$2 billion in 2020 dollars) and conducted over 90% of the war time welfare work



## 1918 Flu Pandemic – The Y rallies communities

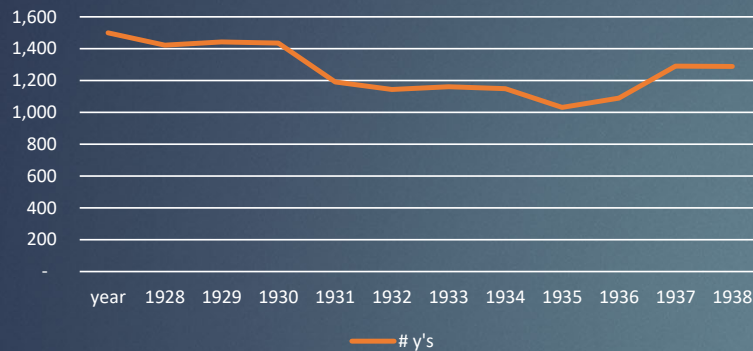
- Hit during war
- Likely cause of 82 out of 93 Y staff deaths during the war
- 75% of Y workers became ill
- The Y lead the United War Work Campaign which raised \$200 million (\$3.5 billion)



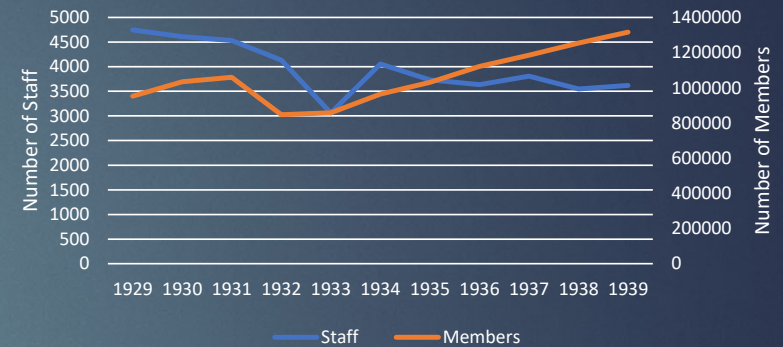


# The Great Depression – Constant Adaptation

Change in the Number of Associations During the Great Depression

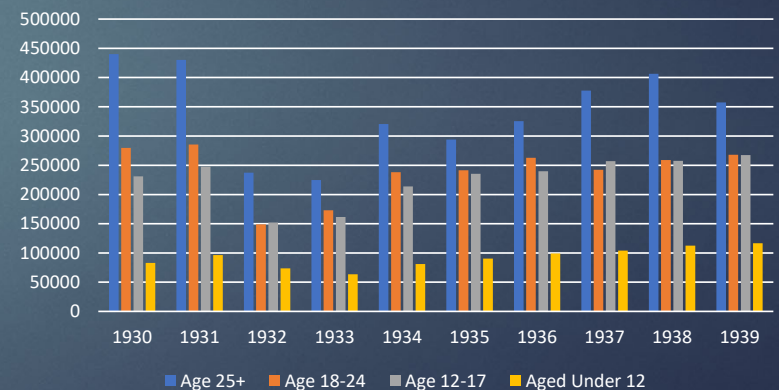


Annual Staff and Membership Totals During Great Depression



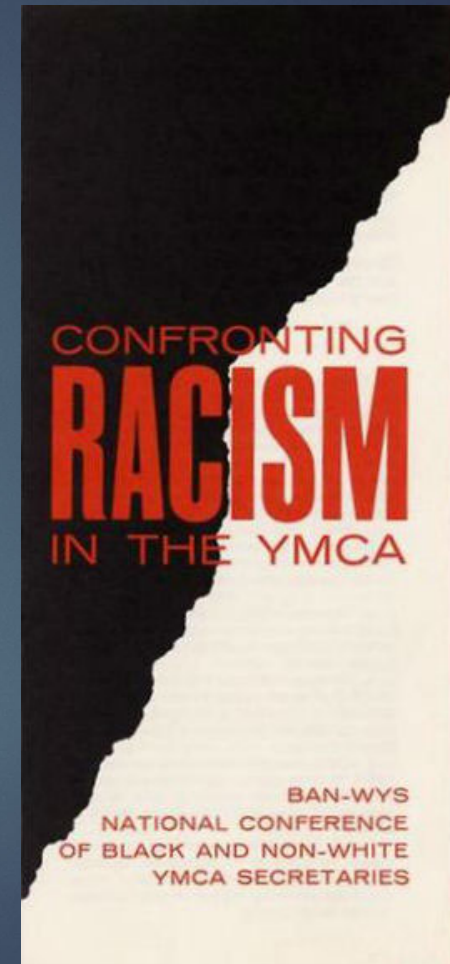
- Many state alliances dissolved or reduced their role and an increased reliance on a national office
- Increased concern for youth
- New interest in public policy

Annual Members Served by Age



## Civil Rights – The Y works behind the scenes

- 1<sup>st</sup> YMCA for African Americans – 1853
- The Y remained largely segregated until student YMCAs began to integrate in the 1930's
- 1946 the Y national office endorsed a desegregation policy
- 1967 annual certification standards ban discrimination
- 1968 BAN-WYS founded



# Tax Challenge – The Y wakes up

- 1985 – 2000
- Fitness and childcare become substantial revenue streams
- An estimated \$1.5 billion (~\$4.7billion today) in new facilities during the 1980s
- New facilities fostered inclusion
- The Y regains its public policy voice

## Y.M.C.A.'s Tax Status Challenged

*New York Times (1923-Current file); Jun 11, 1986; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times pg. C15*

## Y.M.C.A.'s Tax Status Challenged

CHICAGO, June 10 (AP) — After more than a century in the fitness business, Y.M.C.A.'s are besieged by commercial health clubs challenging their tax-exempt status in a pitched battle for America's exercise dollars.

At issue are Y adult fitness centers that offer such amenities as saunas, whirlpools and fancy exercise equipment. The health-club industry contends that tax breaks give these centers an unfair advantage in a highly competitive market.

Y.M.C.A.'s, classified as charities by the Internal Revenue Service, traditionally have been exempted from Federal corporate income taxes, said Robert Boisture of Washington, assistant general counsel for the Chicago-based National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations.

States also generally excuse Y's from income and property taxes, Mr. Boisture said, because they provide

community programs on a nonprofit basis.

Commercial health-club operators hope to change all that, and in at least two cases, in Illinois and Oregon, the Y's appear to be losing ground.

"The Y.M.C.A.'s are becoming very high-profile," said Fran Krasnow, an attorney representing 18 Chicago health clubs. "They're going after the same fitness dollars as the for-profit clubs."

The Y's contend that their emphasis on physical fitness is traditional. Indeed, the first Y gymnasium was built in Chicago in 1867, and fitness has long been a major part of Y.M.C.A. programs in most of the 2,000 local associations across the country. According to Y.M.C.A. officials, revenues from the adult fitness centers help finance reduced-fee or free programs for children, the elderly and the poor, although that is not a factor in the Federal tax exemption.

In a 1985 ruling in a Springfield,

Mass., case, the I.R.S. said Y's with adult fitness centers that charge higher fees are charities if they provide a broad community benefit of promoting good health, make no private gain and provide access for people of all income levels.

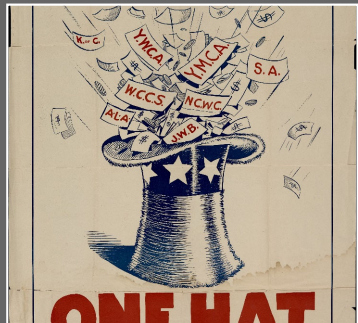
However, the Moline, Ill., fitness center, opened in 1977 in a new building housing other Y.M.C.A. programs, was placed on the county tax rolls three years ago. As many as 12 other Y's in Illinois are being scrutinized, said Chuck Gerschevsky of the state Revenue Department.

In Portland, the county tax assessor last year added four Y properties to the rolls: an adult center, two family fitness centers and a children's camp. The Y has appealed to the state Revenue Department and the issue could go as high as the state Supreme Court, according to a Y.M.C.A. official in Portland, Leslie Haines.

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# Lessons from the past



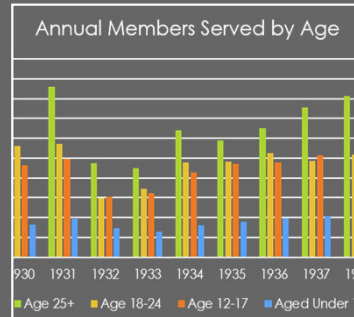
WWI

Collective action



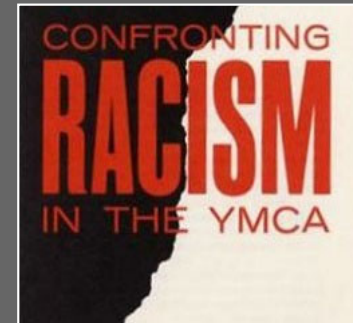
1918 Flu Pandemic

Anticipating what is next



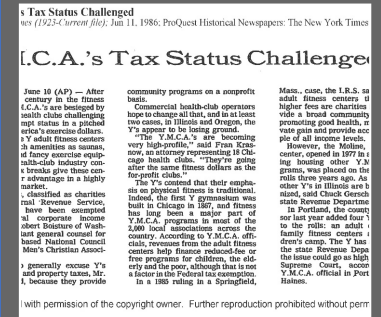
Great Depression

Constant adaptation



Civil Rights

Long term vision



Tax Challenge

Focus on mission

# What will the future Y learn from your leadership?

1855

2020



Industrial Revolution

American Civil War

Progressive Era

WWI

1918 Flu Pandemic

The Great Depression

WWII

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# Thank you!

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