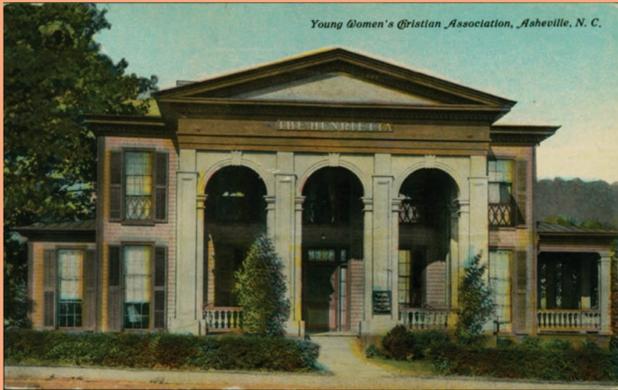




### How it all Began and Where: The Central YWCA

In the early 1900s, Bishop J.M. Horner of the Episcopal Church became concerned about the lack of a home for young women coming to Asheville to find employment. He, along with Captain Thomas W. Patton, began working with Mrs. Haywood Parker, Miss Florence Stephenson, Mrs. Thomas Patton, Mrs. H.E. Hilliard, Mrs. Fannie Patton, Miss Adeline Orr, Mrs. Charity Craig, Miss Annie Barnard, and Mrs. M.L. Stevens, and together they launched a plan to address this need in Asheville.



"The Henrietta," postcard, 1919.

"The Henrietta" building, located at 68 Biltmore Avenue, opened as a "Boarding House for Self-Supporting Women" and was the first location of the Young Women's Christian Association of Asheville (YWCA of Asheville).

Their efforts culminated in 1906 with the purchase of the Patton mansion named "The Henrietta." In 1920 the YWCA boarding house moved briefly to the Cherokee Inn on the corner of Woodfin and Oak and then to the Platt House on 52 Merrimon Avenue. In each of these locations, the focus of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was to provide dormitory rooms for young women coming to Asheville to find work.



52 Merrimon Avenue, 1900s.

A new epoch for the YWCA began in 1924 when 13 Grove Street opened as a furnished community center for girls and women. Since funds were not on hand at that time to erect both a community center and a dormitory, the board of directors determined that the need for a facility for activities was of higher priority. This facility was built

to offer girls and women of Asheville the best "spiritual, educational, recreational, and physical opportunities," and included a gymnasium, locker room, several classrooms for meetings or activities, and an expansive lobby. In 1927, a swimming pool was added on the lowest floor.



13 Grove Street. Copyright 1970, Asheville, NC Citizen-Times. Reprinted with permission.

In 1934, The Moorhead House opened on 23 Grove as a suitable home for young women coming to the city to work. It housed 46 young women—32 as permanent residents and 14 as transients. The YWCA operated this building as a boarding house until the mid-1960s.

The Grove Street facilities served as the Central YWCA of Asheville for several decades. From dances and vocational discussions to community meetings and swim meets, thousands of women saw the YWCA on Grove Street as their place to connect, learn, exercise, and serve.



13 Grove Street, 1949. [0658] YWCA Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, UNC Asheville 28804.

On the main floor of 13 Grove Street was a lobby and an office. Off the lobby there was a balcony overlooking the gymnasium below. On the basement floor, in addition to the gymnasium, there were showers, locker rooms, a kitchen, a large dining room, physical director's office, and examination room. On the upper floor were offices and club rooms.

In the late 1960s, the National YWCA communicated to the YWCA of Asheville board of directors that it did not support renovating the Grove Street facility due to the high cost of the needed improvements. The board suggested that Grove Street merge with the Black South French Broad Avenue branch. After much discussion and controversy, the YWCA board voted in 1970 to close 13 Grove Street and consolidate all YWCA services, and move to 185 South French Broad Avenue.



YWCA Moorhead House, 23 Grove Street, 1949. "This was to serve as a lounging place for members, out of town tourists and country folks shopping for the day" (Asheville, NC Citizen-Times). [0557] YWCA Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, UNC Asheville 28804.



Moorhead House, 23 Grove Street, 1965. [0595] YWCA Collection, D.H. Ramsey Library, Special Collections, UNC Asheville 28804.

Moorhead House residence hall was made possible by a \$100,000 bequest of Samuel E. Moorhead, father of Mrs. Charles Bryant who was president of the YWCA board during that period. Located

on the main floor of the Moorhead House were the lobby, two parlors, a library, office, and dining room. On the first floor below were service rooms such as a kitchen, laundry, and powder room. The third and fourth floor were the bedrooms and large baths for the young women.

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