

c o m i n g !

PAUL ROBESON
Great Negro Bass

who won world-acclaim in his dramatic
performance of

"BALLAD FOR AMERICANS"

will appear in concert at
MEMORIAL HALL

Wednesday, January 29th

Auspices of ROSENTHAL-REYNOLDS, Biltmore Hotel

Ticket Prices: \$3.00 - \$2.50 - \$2.00 - \$1.50 - \$1.00 and
75 cents (plus tax)

Mail orders received now. Tickets reserved now will be held for
payment until January 10th.

Inland Children's Chorus members were guests at a concert by Paul Robeson with the Linden Center Choir, a group that was later sponsored by the Inland Manufacturing Division of General Motors Corporation. *History of Linden Center follows with note on the chorus and the Robeson concert.*



Linden Community Center

This article appeared in the City of Dayton Annual Report of 1941, pages 12-16

Linden Community Center by Captain R. H. Mallory, Director

In the year of 1906, just thirty-six years ago, a certain colored preacher-janitor, Edward T. Banks by name, living on the West Side of Dayton, opened his back yard to the children of the neighborhood as a playground. The children were of all races, creeds and nationalities and "Ed" neither made nor allowed any discrimination. In his act – though he did not realize it at the time – he was laying the foundation for what is known today as Linden Community Center. This now includes a \$100,000 building, two acres of playground and constituted as a Bureau in the City of Dayton. Not only is there now a beautiful community center, but also a nine-hole golf course situated three miles from the Center has been added. This has materially increased our scope of activities.

Following the flood in 1913, the old stock yards at the corner of Mound Street and the Pennsylvania Railroad were demolished. There was a considerable area here. Somehow Mr. Banks conceived the idea of a community playground and asked Mr. Schantz, who owned the land, whether he could go ahead and clean up the space so that it might be used by the community. Mr. Schantz agreed. Several young men, Mrs. Banks and two young girls donned overalls and worked like field hands clearing that land of rubbish and woods.

The City of Dayton had a large rocking horse or "giant dip" out at Bomberger Park. This was removed to the lot. A volleyball was secured. There was a young boy named Thomas who knew electricity well. He climbed up a pole of the Dayton Power and Light and hooked on the wires of his old motion picture machine. Thus we "borrowed" current for awhile. Whenever a movie house would throw away a film Thomas would patch it up and the children enjoyed the thrills of a movie.

In 1914, Mr. Schantz had an opportunity to sell the land which had been cleaned up. He said that if "Ed" would let him out of the his bargain he would send his teams and men to clean up the land at the corner of Norwood Avenue and Pease Street, the present site of the Community Center. Again, the same "crew" donned their overalls and worked together to build the new playground.

The Greater Dayton association became interested, petitioned the City that the playground be affiliated with the general Park and Playground Department. On the same day, Mr. Schantz contributed \$1,500 to the playground. Iva White and Nell Young were put on a salary by the city at \$10.00 a week and Mr. Banks was appointed as a Social Service Director.

In 1917, Mr. Banks went to France, leaving Mrs. Banks in charge of the Center, which shortly became affiliated with the War Chest as the Federation for Social Service among colored people. The National Recreation Association, which had always been interested, became actively engaged in helping the Center. In 1918, J. M. Pollard of the Association was appointed the first Executive Secretary and remained in this capacity until 1923. Through those years the Center was supported through the following sources: The City of Dayton, the Community Chest, the National Recreation Association and from private subscriptions.

The work was becoming more and more important and the little house located on the lot was becoming smaller and smaller – more and more inadequate. Finally in 1923, the National Recreation Association was forced to curtail its generous contribution. Linden Center was made part of the Recreation Department of the City of Dayton and in March, 1926, Robert H. Mallory of Dayton was made Executive Secretary at the suggestion of the Board of Directors, all colored.

Mr. Mallory at once made plans for a more permanent establishment. He interested many civic groups, with the result that in November, 1928, the City Commissioners passed a resolution whereby a Tax Levy of two-tenths of a mill, amounting to \$140,000, was put before the voters. This money was to purchase land and erect a new building at Pease Street and Norwood Avenue. The levy passed. Linden Center was thus assured of a permanent lodging and its position as an affiliate of the Dayton Community Chest and as a Bureau of the City of Dayton was made secure.

On May 5, 1930, the excavating was started for the new building and on June 22, 1930, the cornerstone was laid. The new building was sufficiently completed for the Christmas program of that year, and was formally dedicated in March, 1931.

In 1928 the City owned several hundred acres along the Miami River south of the City. A prominent citizen donated \$1,000 for its improvement. Here a summer camp for boys and girls was established. Hundreds of children used this spot for their summer vacation periods. A minimum fee of three dollars a

[Home](#)

[Books/Booklets](#)

[Articles](#)

[Roz Young](#)

[Dayton
Images/Videos](#)

[Site Search](#)

[Subject Search](#)

[Dayton
Memories Blog](#)

[Links](#)

[Updates](#)

[Support DHBO](#)

week was charged to these youngsters. Further expenses were taken care of by donations.

Two years later the camp was converted into a recreation and picnic grounds; across the road a nine-hole golf course, namely, Miami View, was built. This was indeed a task, because of the deplorable condition of the land and buildings. With the aid of the FERA and City Supervision, a water system was installed. At that time golf equipment was practically nil, hand mowers and scythes were used to cut fairways and greens. Later the purchase of an old truck somewhat lightened the toil entailed in perfecting the appearance of the land. Landscaping developed the corn fields and woods with beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers.

Linden Center, in the past ten years particularly, has endeavored to promote a threefold program. Such a program includes cultural development and character building, a varied athletic program and service to the community in the form of lending assistance in the adjustment of social problems for those persons needing aid.

Unemployment, poor housing, and an increase in delinquency have been contributing factors in the need for recreational training under proper supervision during the leisure hours. Unemployment problems have been brought to the attention of the director and in numerous cases suitable employment had been found. During the present crisis in the nation's history, Linden Center is cooperating to the fullest extent with the Dayton Defense Council. An industrial league has been formed. Through this league men from eight industries are engaged in basketball. Game rooms for boys and girls are open always. Provisions are made for them to enjoy table tennis, checkers, chess and quiet games.

Primarily, Linden Center is not a case-working agency; however, it serves as a medium or clearing house for persons in need of assistance in solving their problems, such as housing, relief, health, and affairs pertaining to veterans. Surveys and studies have been made on delinquency, housing, and community problems on the West Side. Out of this has grown the Community Health Council, an organization composed of representatives from public and private agencies, P.T.A. organizations and the like. The organization has pledged itself fully to the services of the Defense Council.

The cultural program serves as an outlet for youth and adults to develop in leadership, initiative, education, and habit-forming ideals. Clubs give the individual the opportunity to demonstrate his ability for leadership, adjust himself to new situations more readily, create hobby interests and get along with people more easily. Classes in dancing, music, dramatics, sewing, clay modeling, and handcraft afford both education and recreation during the leisure hours.

Aside from historical facts and generalities, in this annual report I should like to mention some of the high spots in the year's work.

Linden Center Choir received many favorable comments for its splendid performances at the Paul Robeson Concert held at Memorial Hall on January 29th. Mr. Robeson took the leading role in "Ballad for Americans," with the choir furnishing the background in chorus parts. "It was a pleasure and privilege to work with such a fine group," said Mr. Robeson. This was a real treat for the choir, because Mr. Robeson has traveled extensively in this country and abroad. Mr. Charles Higgins, director of the choir, was applauded and praised to the highest for his fine interpretation of "Ballad for Americans." Since this performance the choir has appeared before several large industrial groups and business organizations, including the Rotary Club, Junior Chamber of Commerce, and participated in several radio broadcasts.

The month of March marked the tenth anniversary of the occupancy of the building. The anniversary celebration was conducted on March 20th and 21st. The Anniversary Celebration was of the highest type of culture and education. Programs consisted of dancing exhibitions, Girl Scout play, style show, one-act play, handcraft exhibits, and choral selections. The style show, directed by Theodore Pearil, was one of the highlighted attractions. The transformation of the general appearance of the women enhanced by the beautiful garments made in the class seemed almost incredible. The handcraft display, under the direction of Mrs. Lida Belle Williams was recognized as the most varied display ever held at the Center. Skill in craftsmanship was demonstrated in excellent fashion. Each of these instructors supplement the staff through the facilities of the Works Progress Administration.

As usual, Linden Community Center has extended its facilities to the general public for the celebration of National Negro Health Week. Sunday, March 30th, marked the opening meeting. Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee, instructor of medicine at Howard University, and director of the Rural Health Project in the state of Mississippi, delivered a most informative address on "Opportunities in the Field of Health." The Community Health Council secured the services of Mr. James Robinson, Ph.D., dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Wilberforce University. Dr. Robinson presented an informal lecture on general health, beautification, general clean-up and "fix-up" of homes and yards for promoting good health. A neighborhood group in the immediate vicinity of the Center was organized for the purpose of carrying out these ideas and suggestions, and also to work for a closer relationship between City officials and the people themselves.

To all those who have contributed in any way to the success of our program, may we express our sincerest gratitude, and leave with our friends this thought – that we, as a public agency, will make every effort to uphold the traditions and ideals in the "American Way of Living."