



GFWC Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs



History Highlights

Organized on April 17, 1895 at South Highland Presbyterian Church in Birmingham

- Hostesses Club: Cadmean Circle
- Nine clubs were present

Miss Mary LaFayette Robbins suggested the meeting and was the voted the first President of the Federation.

From the very beginning,

AFWC was formed as a “service organization” and “a power for good”

The first AFWC flower was the pansy with the color being violet

The first project was Literacy.

- Then Music and Art
- Subsequent projects included:
 - Traveling Libraries
 - Reformatory for boys to separate them from older criminals
“Reformatory not a purgatory!!!”

By the Third meeting Education and Parliamentary Law was added

- Discussed joining GFWC but that did not happen until 1907
- Men were allowed to join (mainly because they attended the meeting because they had to drive their wives to the meeting) were not allowed to vote
- First new publication was called the “Official Organ”

At the Fifth meeting other projects were added, including:

- Kindergartens
- Equal Pay for Women
- Education for Girls

Sixth Meeting:

- Alabama Girls' Industrial School
- Child Labor Laws
- required education for State Superintendent of Education and Certification for Teachers
- Birmingham News printed the first article on AFWC

Tenth Meeting:

- Mills were again working young children
- Petitioned the State to appoint a State Inspector at mills
- Beauty at Niagara Falls

Eleventh Meeting:

- Tuberculosis
- Joined GFWC

Thirteenth: First Yearbook

Fifteenth:

- 58 clubs and 1,900 members
- Reported that the Board of Education was cooperating to add Kindergartens
- Add books on Health to the Traveling Libraries
- Christmas Seals

Sixteenth:

- Permanent Endowment Fund was \$2,222.70 (Margaret Coleman Memorial Fund)
- Child Labor Laws
- Arbor Day
- Purchased 8 cows, 28 tents and a cornet to loan to a boy at the Industrial School that “desired and deserved”. Had helped 1,200 boys to date

Seventeenth:

- “Shady Ways” to stop cutting down trees along roadways
- Stopped wearing feather plumage except for ostrich

Eighteenth:

- Observance of Alabama Day” and Lee’s Birthday
- Getting women on school boards
- Miss Julia Tutwiler praise for work with prison reform
- \$60 Music Scholarship at Athens College
- Added “Bird Day” to programs

Nineteenth:

- Department systematized; workshops were born
- Alabama won the prize from GFWC for the most subscriptions to the GFWC Clubwoman Magazine and received a hand painted pottery trophy for the President and \$80 in gold plus \$20
- Fight and received \$40,000 from the State to build a dormitory for girls at the University of Alabama
- Urged clubs to beautify their city – everything from roadway, parks and railway stations

Twentieth:

- 159 Clubs
- State Legislature enacted a Juvenile Court Law, which the judge gave credit to AFWC
- Projects:
 - Music in public schools
 - child welfare committee
 - state orphanage
 - blindness
 - prison reform
- Margaret Coleman Memorial Fund now at \$6,367.37
- Speaker was Dr. H. L. Smith, President of Washington & Lee University

Twenty-Second: Concerns of war activities

Compiled by: Jane Brooks, 2018-2020 AFWC President’s Special Project Co-Chairman