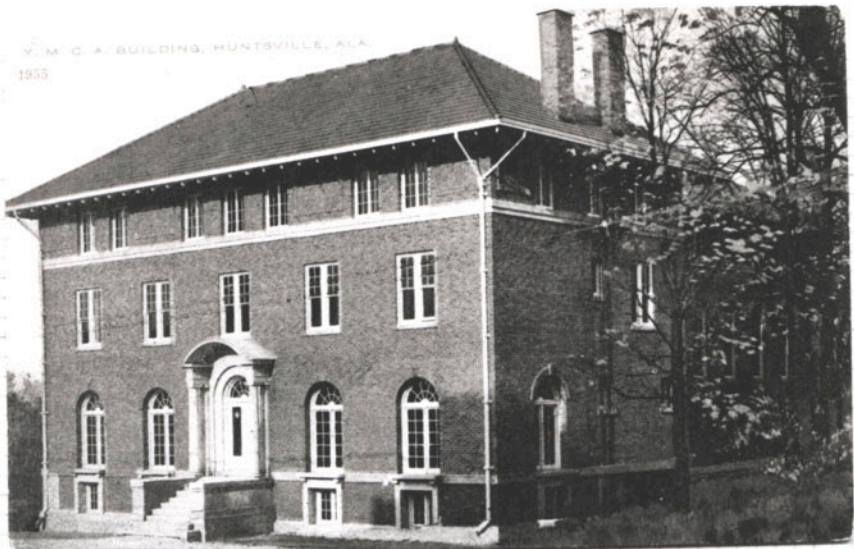


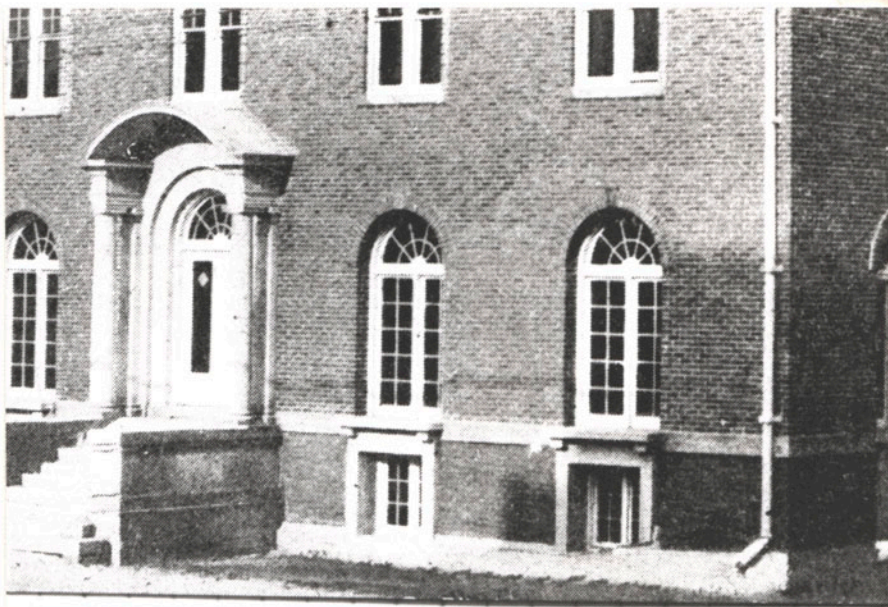
Y. M. C. A. BUILDING, HUNTSVILLE, ALA.
1955



N

Randolph Ave

Greene St.



N

YMCA
1910

Huntsville YMCA

1910

Edgar Love, Arch.

old postcards copied Jan. 1989

Harvie Jones, F&A

Originals - Ralph Allen, ALA

N



Interior of Y. M. C. A., Huntsville, Ala.





YMCA - Huntsville, AL.
1991 Copies of old photos - 128 Jones, FAIA



← c. 1920 (per card) →

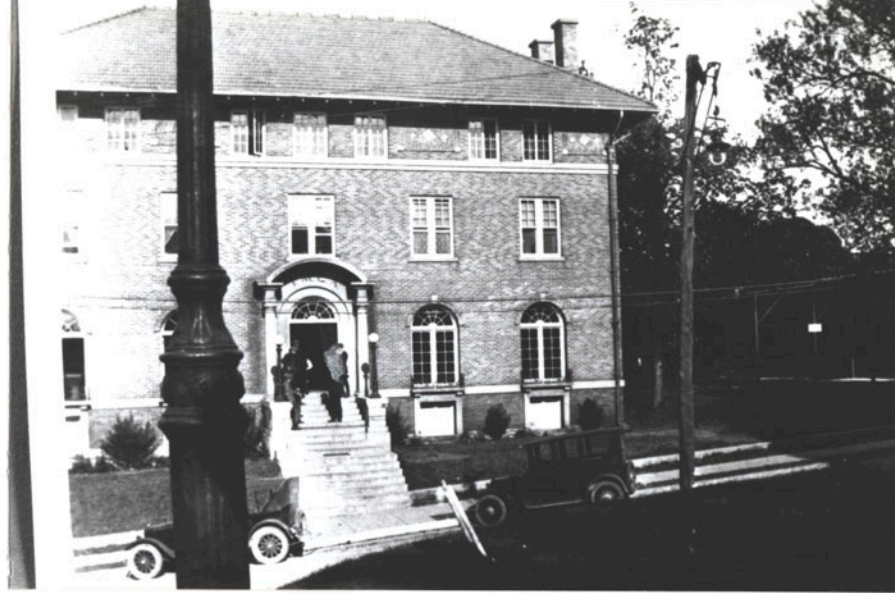


c. 1920 per clothes

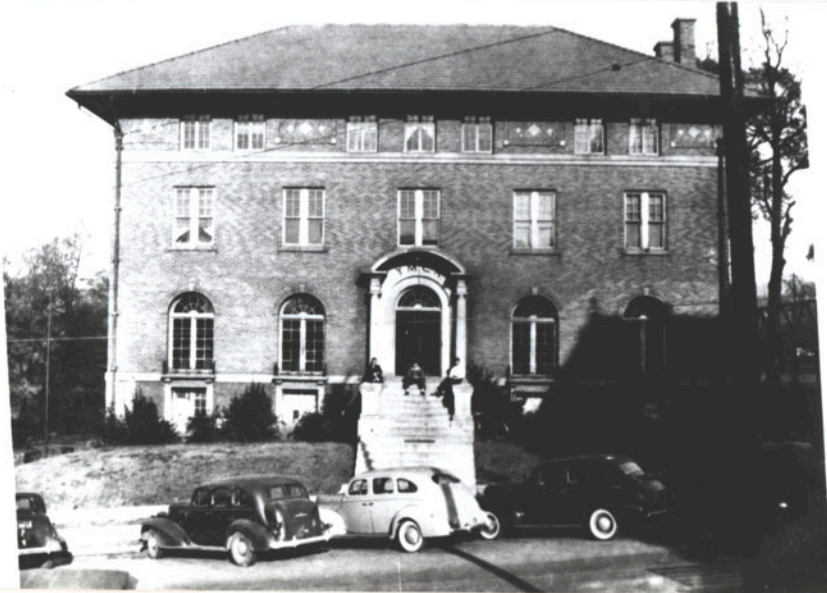
182



c.1920?
(per cars)



c.1920?



c.1940?
(per cars) Lts. gone from steps



c.1940? (per clothes & missing stps. & shrubs)

2072

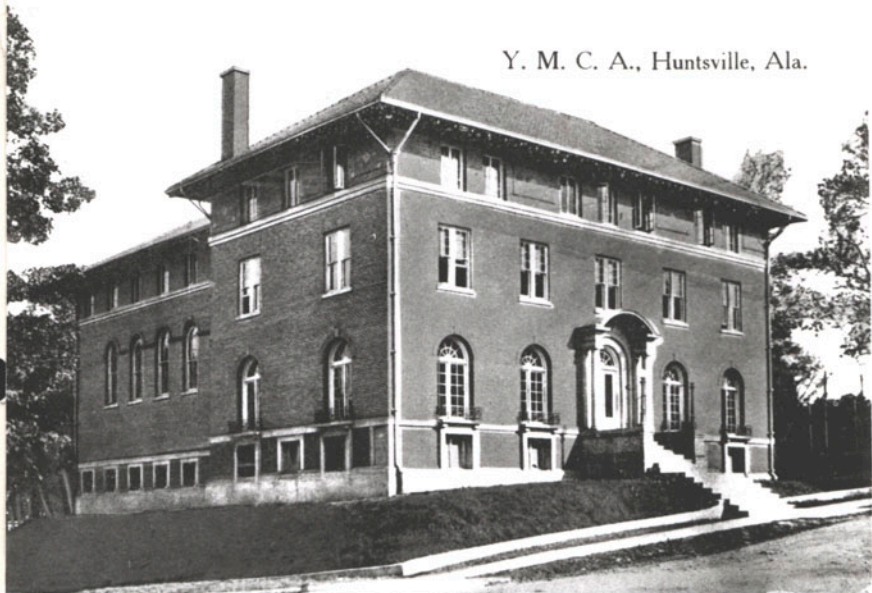


Feb
1989

L.A.M.

OLD POSTCARD NOTE LAMP POSTS BY STEPS

Y. M. C. A., Huntsville, Ala.





Lobby
c. 1910 photo(?)

N
A



Lobby
Feb 1989

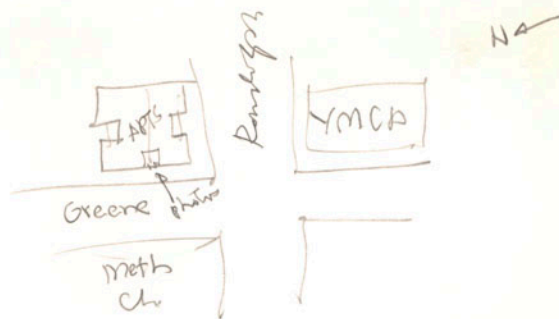
N
A



↑
NOTE
Cornerstone
1910

1910 Y.M.C.A.





early 20th c.
 "Spanish" complex
 apt. bldg (now office)
 N. of YMCA
 (entrance = similar to
 original at YMCA)

N →



148



West front doors

→ N
→ N



C. 1910 YMCA
Lansdale, AL.
Edgar Love, Arch^r
S.E. Corner of
Riverview & Greene Sts
photos April 1998
A.P. Jones, FAIA

VERIFY

orig
cat. W.A.



to N. Lobby

off.

Had donated design of details
for entry to exercise rm,
to be built here, to be
similar to entry shown
at left. Execution?



→ N



→ N

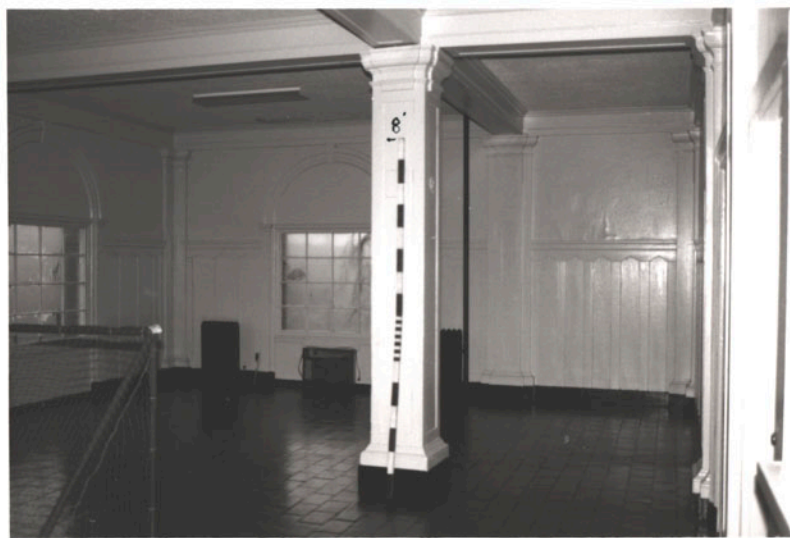
NORTH Lobby (to be excavated in 1974)



N

PN

I put in
col.
indicates
locations
of original
lights.
See hist.
photo.



PN

304



NA



NA

office

entry

1210
Av. Ymca
in April 1994

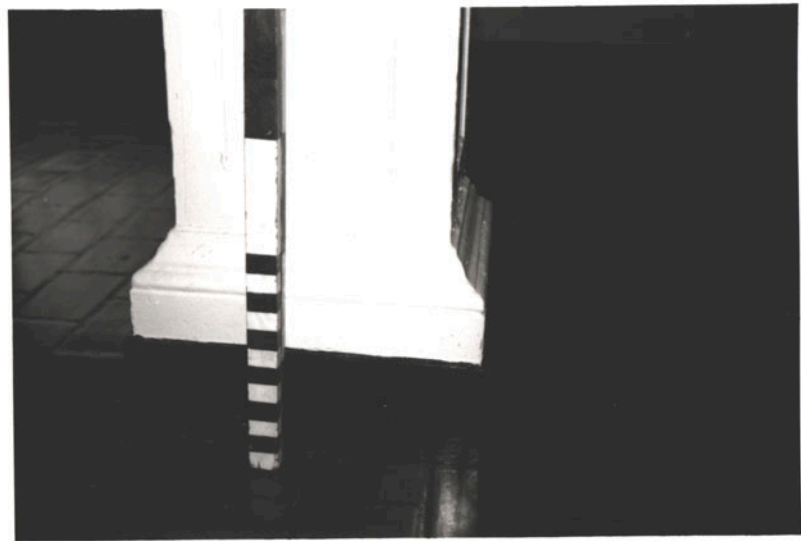


pentm

1210



Typical cas. (wood)



Original cas. tile

JONES & HERRIN

Architecture/Interior Design

February 27, 1991

Andy Teal, Executive Director
Huntsville YMCA
203 Green Street
Huntsville, Al. 35801

Re: Metropolitan YMCA

Dear Andy:

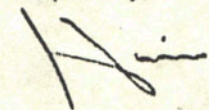
The downtown "Y" is a fine design of 1910 by the architect Edgar Love, who designed many important early 20th century buildings in Huntsville. This building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is in the Twickenham Historic Preservation District. An old postcard view of the lobby shows that it was well designed and furnished and is little changed except for some added makeshift partitions and removal of original light fixtures (reproductions of similar fixtures are currently available).

This well-built and well-designed building has held up over 80 years of hard use with minimal renovation. It is time to honor this exemplary service by restoring the building so it can continue to serve and beautify the city. Since it is well-built, this shouldn't be hard to do. At present the downtown "Y" has an image of a down-at-the-heels facility, which houses residents of a type not originally intended and about which I've heard numerous complaints from nearby residents.

It seems to me that the downtown "Y" should be approached just as you would a suburban cornfield that has nearby houses. and no "Y" members. These suburban areas have had nice "Y"'s built in the anticipation that a nice facility would attract new members. I don't think that it is logical to assume that this downtown building can't be renovated because there aren't enough members. A nice "Y" would surely attract members, as they have in other areas. A run-down "Y" with questionable occupants is not likely to attract many, no matter how hard you advertise.

This is too fine a building to let die on the vine. I hope your Board can find a way to bring it back to life.

Respectfully,



Harvie P. Jones, FAIA
HPJ/am

cc: Mark Samples, Prudential-Bache
303 Williams Avenue, Suite 113
(P.O. Box 145, 35804)
Huntsville, Al. 35801

Old YMCA moving from downtown

Property exchanged for former Landmark site

By KEITH CLINES
Times Staff Writer

After 86 years on Green Street, the Central YMCA will be moving next year to the former Landmark Chevrolet property.

And while the new site will have room for expanded facilities, it apparently won't have a swimming pool.

The YMCA swapped its Green Street building, which was built in 1910, for the former Chevrolet dealership property at Pratt Avenue and Washington Street.

The families of Ray Jones, Peter Lowe and John Blue donated the dealership property to the YMCA on Tuesday. In return, the Green Street building was deeded to Jones, Lowe and Blue.

The families will allow the YMCA to remain in the Green Street building for another year while plans are made for the move, according to YMCA Presi-

dent Bill Pippin. "We'll have to get some money," Pippin said today. "It will probably take us at least that long to get the money."

Pippin didn't know what plans the families have for the Green Street property. Because the old YMCA facility is in the Twickenham Historic District, any exterior changes or demolition of the building would have to be approved by the Huntsville Historic Preservation Commission.

The property the YMCA is getting consists of five acres and buildings with a total of 60,000 square feet. Pippin said the YMCA will study how much renovations will cost and try to raise the money.

Buildings on the property have office space, but the buildings must be renovated for gymnasium space, Pippin said. There will be at least two gyms in the new

Please see YMCA on A7

YMCA

Continued from page A1

location and probably a youth baseball field, he said.

But the YMCA won't build a swimming pool at the new location because of the cost, Pippin said. The present YMCA has one gym and a swimming pool.

Pippin said the YMCA needed to expand, but didn't have room at its Green Street site.

"This was an ideal trade," Pip-

pin said. "It gives Central YMCA greater land and building space than we now have. We will be able to expand our services and programs for the youth of this area."

Pippin also said the new site will serve as the YMCA's headquarters for its city and county programs.

The YMCA's building was appraised at \$370,000, Pippin said. He doesn't know the appraised value of the property the YMCA is getting. "We got the best of the deal," he said.

Blue, a member of the YMCA's board of directors, has been working on the proposed deal for four or five years, Pippin said.

Blue could not be reached for comment after the announcement this morning.

Pippin said the YMCA was grateful for the "magnanimous gesture" of the Jones, Lowe and Blue families.

"These families have made it possible for the YMCA to have a good future," Pippin said. "The youth are the beneficiaries of this gift."

Piece of Huntsville history will close with Central Y

Weary building left behind, but memories move on

By MIKE MARSHALL
Times Staff Writer

You can't lift a jump shot from the corner — absolutely no way, even after all these years.

You have this balcony in the way, shaped like a horseshoe, the color of penny loafers, at the west end of the gym above the square, snow-white backboard. The edge of the balcony sags like a wooden stalactite.

You have a better chance of finding Jimmy Hoffa than making a 15-foot baseline jumper at the Central YMCA, the four-story, red-brick building at the corner of Greene Street and Randolph Avenue in downtown Huntsville.

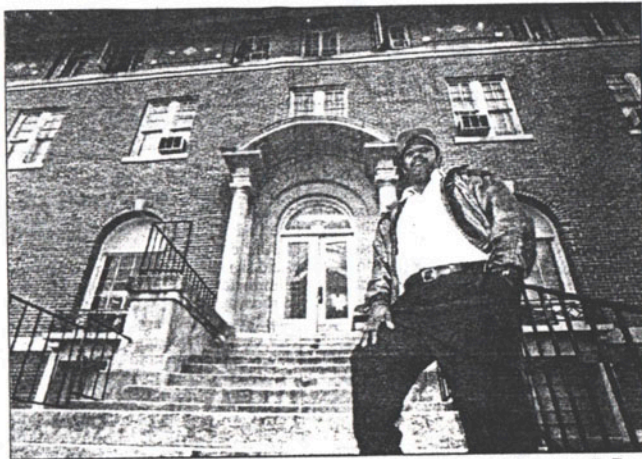
No one in the Noon-Time Basketball

League — a group of almost two dozen businessmen, insurance salesmen and retirees — complains too much about the balcony or the dead spots on the floor, which make a basketball bounce about as high as a medicine ball.

No one belittles a building that has been like a grandparent — in its 80s, a positive, profound influence on children and young adults. They have even less reason to ridicule a place that has provided so many good memories after learning Monday that the Central YMCA is moving, to an old car lot at Pratt Avenue and Washington Street.

Forest Summers, standing outside the gym entrance about 1:30 Monday afternoon, wipes post-game blood from his lower lip onto his T-shirt and tries to digest the news

Please see CENTRAL on A4



Dave Dieter/Huntsville Times

James Baker leaves the Green Street YMCA where he has worked in the Health Club for the last 32 years. "This is like home. I raised two boys here," he says.

Central

Continued from page A1

that broke earlier in the day.

"My father was one of the people who started this league," says Summers, watched some of the Noon-Time League regulars file off the court and filter toward the locker room.

His deceased father's name was Tooney, then the proprietor of the Little Gem Cafe at 217 East Side Square, later a member of the Madison County Athletic Hall of Fame.

In the late 1950s, Tooney Summers and George Lilly decided to play one-on-one basketball at the Central Y. As the years passed, Carey Crosson and the Rev. Dick Thomassin joined them, then Benny Nelson and Billy Neighbors and Dave Singleton came, and then the Noon-Time Basketball League began.

Thirty-three years ago, Forest Summers became a charter member of the league. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, he drove to 203 Greene St., the place he rode his bicycle to on dusty summer days when he was a kid, the place where he learned to swim and play basketball.

For all those years, he was able to hold onto a chunk of his childhood.

But now, with Monday's news, he feels as if a big piece of his past will be gone forever.

"This place has probably changed less than anything else in Huntsville," he says. "There's the same front door with the same concrete step worn out. How many buildings can you walk up to the front door and see that?"

That's what happens when the same door and the same step have been used since 1910.

After a while, though, a lot more than the concrete step wears out.

Wearing out

James Baker, a stocky, middle-aged man, stands at the back of the Men's Health Club where the businessmen are toweling off after showers and steam is escaping from saunas.

Baker has been working in the basement of the Central Y since 1965, when the South was struggling with the rest of American society. Back then, when George Wallace was governor and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was marching from Selma to Montgomery, Baker was completing his senior year at Council Hill School, the all-black school on Pelham Avenue.

"Civil rights had started to come to a head," he says. "At that time, we were just beginning to go into restaurants, sit at the lunch counters at Woolworth's. No, things are 100 percent better."

Things became better for Baker near the end of 1965. His part-time job at the Central Y became full time, which meant his paycheck grew to \$70 a week.

Later, he had two sons — James Jr. and Eraldo — both of whom spent the majority of their childhoods at the Central Y. Baker remembers his sons playing in the gym so much that "they wouldn't even break for lunch." Today, his sons are living in California, the youngest one

"I knew something was about to happen," he says, referring to Monday's news. "I kind of hate it. This is like home. I raised two boys here."

But in other ways, he feels like he did in 1965, when he was a student at Council Hill and the South was swirling with social unrest. He is ready for change.

"In all the late '70s, we used to have to go outside and get coal for our furnace," Baker says. "Then we got a new boiler." He points to a few other additions, such as tile and ceiling fixtures.

"Those are about the only new things in the whole building," says Robert Edwards, who helps Baker with the Men's Health Club maintenance.

Negative feelings

James Gossett, the director of the Central Y for four years, sits in a chair in his paneled office. He is talking about the move to the corner of Washington and Pratt. He figures it will not happen for at least a year, until the lease at the current facility expires.

"Your hope is that moving doesn't cause negative feelings," he says. "I know what this building stands for in this community."

He knows what this building stands for because he, too, grew up at the Central Y. He used to play basketball here. He used to go through weigh-ins for youth-league football.

He knows what this building stands for because he passes by the trophy case near the front door every day. He can see the deer-horn trophy from the 1915 tennis tournament. He can see the oversized baseball trophy with the inscription: "Presented by Rawlings Mfg. Co., St. Louis, Madison County Baseball Champions 1927."

He knows what this building stands for because he can go to the side that faces Randolph Avenue, and he can see more history. "Jesus Christ Himself Being the Chief Cornerstone 1910," reads the still-clear message on the freshly bleached stone.

Two years later, on Feb. 1, 1912, the building opened with a pool in the basement, the gym on the first floor, the business offices on the second floor, dormitory rooms on the third floor.

About 45 years later, Tooney Summers and George Lilly decided to play one-on-one basketball one day.

They walked to the front door, where the top concrete step was worn.

They passed by the deer-horn trophy from 1915 and the oversized baseball trophy from 1927. They went to the gym, where the balcony hung over the west end of the court.

Without even knowing it, they had created the Noon-Time Basketball League, one of the most enduring legacies in the history of the Central YMCA.

"It's like throwing out a pair of shoes that you feel comfortable with," Gossett says of the Y's impending move. "Some people met their husbands and wives here. There's a lot of history and sentimental feelings in this place, but you can make memories in the new facility, too."