



THOMAS & KATHERINE DETRE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES TREASURES

LA& Treasures by Alex Toner,
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The Dynamic Daisy Lampkin

Daisy E. Lampkin wasn't your typical 1912 African American housewife. Not if hosting suffragette meetings, organizing street corner protests, and actively pursuing women's rights are what you would consider typical. As her efforts began to garner the attention of African American leaders across the country, Lampkin soon found it difficult to find any time at home. The Childs Collection on Daisy Lampkin, processed in the Detre Library & Archives as part of a NHPRC Basic Processing Grant, reveals a woman who grew to be considered one of the 20th century's most influential American women in advancing gender and racial equality across the nation.

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1883 and raised in Reading, Pennsylvania, Daisy Elizabeth Adams relocated to Pittsburgh in 1909. She married William Lampkin in 1912, a union that would last for over 50 years. With no children of their own, the Lampkins adopted an 11-month-old infant, Romaine Childs, in 1924.

The foundation of Lampkin's activism can be traced to her roots in the suffragette movement. In 1915, she helped to found and lead the Pittsburgh chapter of the Lucy Stone Civic League, a society of black women that ardently supported enhancing women's status in American society. She remained dedicated to gender equality her entire life, initially as a charter member of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and eventually on the board of the National Association of Colored Women.

Attendees pose for a group photograph at the NAACP's 29th Annual Convention in Columbus, Ohio, in 1938. Seated front center in a place of honor is Daisy Lampkin. Also pictured are Thurgood Marshall, Walter White, James McClendon, Roy Wilkins, E.F. Morrow, and William Pickens.

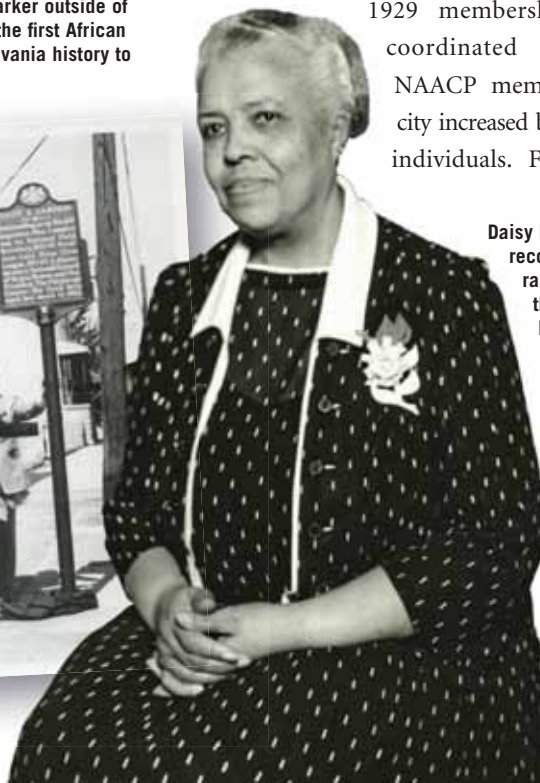


It wasn't long before she committed her life to civic advocacy and engagement. During World War I, Lampkin directed African Americans throughout Allegheny County in raising \$2 million in liberty bonds to aid the war effort. Her fundraising prowess continued to grow as she became involved in the expanding civil rights movement, notably with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Lampkin's dynamism earned her organizational clout as an African American female in mid-20th century America. When a group of African American leaders met with President Coolidge in 1924 to discuss racial violence and discrimination, Daisy Lampkin was the only woman amongst them. As she gained recognition for her oratorical flair and vigorous fundraising, Lampkin became instrumental in the growth of the NAACP between the 1920s and 1950s, both locally and nationally.

She played a principle role in organizing the Pittsburgh branch, illustrated by a 1929 membership drive she coordinated during which NAACP membership in the city increased by roughly 2,000 individuals. Fueled by such

Daisy Lampkin was posthumously honored in 1983 with a historical marker outside of her Webster Avenue home, the first African American women in Pennsylvania history to receive such an honor.



Daisy Lampkin was recognized in 1944 for raising more money than anyone in the history of the NAACP. She was its second-longest tenured executive, and became the first woman on the board of directors in 1947.



enthusiasm, Lampkin successfully lobbied to bring the organization's national convention to Pittsburgh in 1931. As a result, Lampkin was asked to spearhead membership drives across the country.

Traveling to segregated cities like Baltimore, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Memphis, Lampkin met with countless NAACP members and leaders to drum up support. She once held over 30 chapter meetings in a single month. In 1940, Lampkin channeled her "dynamic" and "forceful personality" in a two-week membership rush in Hartford, Connecticut, raising 1,500 new members. After working as NAACP regional field secretary between 1930 and 1935, Lampkin served as national field secretary for the next 12 years.

In 1947, Daisy Lampkin became the first woman elected to the NAACP board of directors, a position she held until 1964. She regularly worked with influential African American leaders of the time, such as Mary McLeod Bethune, Mary Church Terrell, Hallie Q. Brown, and Thurgood Marshall. The NCNW recognized her for building the largest membership enrollment in NAACP history

in a 1944 honor, the same year the NAACP *Bulletin* noted that she had raised more money than anyone as the second longest tenured NAACP executive.

Lampkin was often characterized as tireless, and when not on the road her efforts were exerted alongside her family in Pittsburgh. She served as vice president of the *Pittsburgh Courier* for 35 years, and was a member of the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Red Cross, the Pittsburgh Urban League, the Council of Churches, and Hill City, a local youth initiative. After becoming the first black woman elected delegate-at-large from Pennsylvania to a Republican national convention, Lampkin remained active in political circles, serving as vice-chair for both the Colored Voters Division of the Republican Party and the Negro Voters League of Pennsylvania.

From suffragette housewife to national civil rights advocate, Daisy Lampkin remained steadfastly devoted to her endeavors throughout her life. After suffering a stroke while conducting an NAACP membership drive in New Jersey in December 1964, Lampkin died on March 10, 1965. Her legacy is one of selfless devotion in fighting for women, minorities, and a better



Though often traveling for weeks at a time, Daisy Lampkin never neglected her own family, pictured here with husband William, c. 1960.

All HHC Detre L&A, Childs Family Collection on Daisy Lampkin, 1924-1997, MSS 0657.

America. To learn more about Daisy Lampkin's contributions in shaping gender and racial equality in Pittsburgh and throughout the United States, visit The Childs Family Collection on Daisy Lampkin in the History Center's Detre Library & Archives.

