

40 *Years of Progress
and Service*

1920 - 1960

The Ohio Federation
of Business and Professional
Women's Clubs



A HISTORY

The Ohio Federation
of
Business and Professional Women's Clubs



OHIO FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL
WOMEN'S CLUBS

COLUMBUS, OHIO

1960

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Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs

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A DEDICATION

TO

FLORENCE GIVEN

in recognition of her interest and
effort in collecting and assembling
the records of the Ohio Federation

we

respectfully dedicate this

HISTORY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Mary Rudd Cochran, of the Cincinnati Club, who has served as friend and adviser to the committee during the preparation of this history.

To the history *We Celebrate Our 20th Convention*, prepared in 1939 by Gertrude Fortune, of the Columbus Club, with the cooperation of two past state presidents, Marion Brogan, of the Cincinnati Club, and Dr. Anne Marting (Alstott), of the Portsmouth Club.

To the authors of the early histories and records of the Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Dayton, Springfield, Toledo, Warren, Youngstown and Zanesville Clubs.

To past and present state officers, committee chairmen and members of the Ohio Federation for material used in this history.

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Our sincere appreciation,

THE OHIO HISTORY COMMITTEE

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May, 1960

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	vii
Chapter I. Through the Years	1
Chapter II. Officers and Committees	16
Chapter III. Dues	17
Chapter IV. District Organization and Membership Growth	18
Chapter V. State Headquarters	21
Chapter VI. State Publications	23
Chapter VII. Legislative Program	25
Chapter VIII. Judge Florence Ellinwood Allen	29
Chapter IX. Projects	
A. Florence Allen Scholarship Fund	30
B. Small Business Clinic	31
C. UNESCO Fellowship	33
Chapter X. Appendix	
A. Minutes of Organizational Meeting, February 23, 1920	36
B. Original Constitution and Bylaws	40
C. The Collect	43
D. Ohio's First Business Woman	44
E. Convention Cities by Years	45
F. Past State Presidents	45
G. Ohio Members Having Served the Federation in Elective or Appointive Positions	46
H. Membership and Number of Clubs	46
I. Clubs Belonging to the Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs	47

FOREWORD

There were local business and professional women's clubs in Ohio before there was a state federation or a national federation.

While the custom of people to meet, to discuss, to organize has come down through the years since the days of Benjamin Franklin, it has been only since 1912 that records have been found of organized groups of women in business and professions. There are records of two business women's clubs having been organized as early as 1912, one in Omaha, Nebraska and one in Detroit.¹ In Ohio a business women's club was organized in Toledo in 1914 while clubs were organized in Ashland, Cincinnati and Dayton in 1916. Some of the charter members of these clubs still speak of the influence on their organization of those "girls from Omaha."

During the years of the First World War, it was possible to contact men through business and professional clubs, but there was no central organization by which women similarly employed could be reached.

As the National Young Women's Christian Association through its War Work Secretary, Lena Madison Phillips, had done much work among women, the U. S. Government allocated to it an appropriation to take the lead in starting a nationwide organization of business and professional women.

Early in April, 1918, a call went out from the National Board of the Y.W.C.A. asking that representatives from the states come to New York City to discuss the matter of organization.

At least five people from Ohio attended this meeting of 100 women in New York City on May 11, 1918: Regina Wolf and Gertrude Fortune of Cleveland, Mabel Gridley of Dayton, and Dr. Eliza Edwards and Edna Walton from Cincinnati.

Gertrude Fortune wrote in the Ohio History, *We Celebrate Our 20th Convention*,

Those who attended the first meeting will never forget the camouflaged troop ships coming and going in New York Harbor, nor the soldiers we visited at Camp Merritt across the river from Tenafly, N.J., on Sunday, May 12, 1918—Mother's Day.

At that meeting were women from the east, the south, the west, the north. Perhaps it was one of the first gatherings of its kind. They discussed informally the possibilities of an organization, and what if any should be its connection with the Y.W.C.A. The women felt they needed an organization of their own. They liked the idea of local, state, national and international groups of women meeting together for the cause of business and professional women. A working committee of twenty was appointed from this group of 100 to study the question thoroughly and report at a later date.

¹Volume I, *A History of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.*, 1919-1944, page 13.

CHAPTER I THROUGH THE YEARS

In July, 1919, 212 women representing clubs of business and professional women from all over the country met in St. Louis and completed the organization of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. Lena Madison Phillips, who had played such an important part in effecting the organization, was made executive secretary.

While Ohio had five members from three clubs at the meeting in New York, there were many more present at St. Louis. These women from Ohio who assisted in the organization of the national federation were doctors, teachers, owners of businesses, and others. All had a vision of what might come of such an organization. Many of them had already defined similar principles in their own local clubs. The following purpose was found in the history of the Cincinnati club organized in 1916:

The club was formed for the purpose of broadening the acquaintance, promoting fellowship and advancing the interest of business women, thereby affording an opportunity to increase their efficiency, encourage greater cooperation, elevate standards and put them in touch with the best that can be procured in educational, technical and cultural knowledge.

The early history of the Springfield club states its purpose was "the promotion of friendship, development and service among business and professional women of the city."

It was, therefore, easy for these women to assist in the outlining of the objectives as defined in the original national constitution

To elevate the standards for women in business and the professions; to promote the interests of business and professional women; to stimulate local and state organizations; to bring about a spirit of cooperation among business and professional women of the United States; to extend opportunities to business and professional women through education along lines of industrial, scientific and vocational activities.

These women who represented Ohio at the organization of the National Federation could hardly wait to get back home in order to lay plans for a state organization. With much enthusiasm and great foresight the first convention of the Ohio Federation was held at Columbus on February 23, 1920.

On Monday, February 23rd, 1920, women representing clubs in eight cities in Ohio gathered at the Deshler Hotel, Columbus for the purpose of organizing an Ohio State Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. A number of the women who were present on this Monday had been present in St. Louis in July, 1919, and had participated in the organization of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

Cities represented at this meeting were Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Springfield, Toledo, Warren, Youngstown and Zanesville.

This was no unplanned meeting. These women inspired by the St. Louis meeting had a plan.

A preliminary meeting of official delegates from each club was held on Sunday, February 22nd, at the Hotel Deshler. The need and opportunity of organizing an Ohio Federation of Business Women's Clubs was discussed in general and a Committee chosen to draw up a suggested constitution to be presented at the meeting of all delegates on Monday.¹

The original minutes indicate the following transpired in the morning session which was called to order at 10:15 a.m.: an election of a temporary chairman, an address of welcome in the name of the City of Columbus, as well as one from the executive secretary of the national organization; adoption of a constitution and bylaws; an appointment of a nominating committee; two talks, one on "Good Fellowship" and the second on "What This Federation is Going to Do." In addition, the group cited the proposal to leave Armenia under the rule of the Sultan as one of the greatest crimes in history, before it adjourned to reconvene again at 2:00 p.m.

These women knew what they were about. They put into the constitution the words, "that every Club in the State Federation shall automatically become a member of the National Federation."

Before the one-day convention adjourned, 46 voting delegates selected a slate of officers, endorsed a woman for the position of assistant prosecutor in Cuyahoga County and recommended that home economics should be provided for, as well as agriculture and industrial arts, in the vocational high school departments.

AN OHIO FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S CLUBS HAD BEEN ORGANIZED.

1920-21

The first year was a hard one. The President's Report at the second annual convention held at Hotel Statler in Cleveland on Monday, July 18, 1921, describes it

... the work of organizing new clubs was delayed on account of the fact that no budget had been made up, and no authority given to draw on the Treasurer for funds to cover organization expenses.

¹Copied from a report of the convention by Marie R. Wieg, Delegate, as found in the records of the Cleveland Club.

The treasurer's report indicated \$425.10 had been received for dues from the following clubs:

- Business and Professional Women's Club, Zanesville
- Business Women's Club of Cincinnati
- Women's Rotary Club, Cincinnati
- Y Business Women's Club, Columbus
- Business and Professional Women's Club, Youngstown
- Business Women's Club Y. W. C. A., Cincinnati
- Business and Professional Women's Club, Warren
- Women's Commercial Club, Springfield
- Cincinnati Home Economics Club
- Business Women's Club, Toledo
- Business Women's Club of Dayton

The need for membership was apparent. The 47 delegates present wanted to "engage the services of an organizer for one month to organize new clubs and inspire those already organized."

While the State Federation was holding its second annual convention in Cleveland, the National Federation was getting ready to open its third annual convention in the same city. Little is mentioned in the early records about Ohio's part as hostess to the National Federation. What a wonderful opportunity this must have been to a federation in its second year of existence! The minutes of the state convention that year tell

The annual banquet was held at 6:30 P.M. in the Ball Room of the Statler. Besides the delegates, the visitors from the State, there were many guests from other states who had arrived to attend the National Convention.

Twenty-five years later Ohio was again to serve as hostess to a convention of the National Federation in that same city.

1921-22

Although the state organization was now in a position to pay bills during its second year, there was discouragement. It needed membership. The national federation had sent word that "Ohio was already strong enough to develop itself."

With the hope of an organizer the State officers had gone ahead with preliminary work of development in the various cities. A list had been compiled of 335 business women scattered throughout the state in about twenty different cities who were not affiliated with any business women's clubs. While the national federation did not send an organizer, it did send literature to each one of the 335 individuals to acquaint them with its purpose. The state federation also sent a letter to each one of these women.

The third annual convention met in Toledo on May 29, 1922.

The first budget was adopted at this convention. While simple, it was a beginning. It allowed

4 Committees at \$25	\$100.00
R. R. Fare - Three officers two meetings a year	60.00
Bulletin for year	175.00
National organizer	250.00
Convention expenses	75.00
	\$660.00

The adoption of a budget not only laid the foundation for a well ordered household for the federation, but it paved the way for the fall and spring board meetings by providing for anticipated expenditures. This pattern of two board meetings has been followed through the years.

Voices were first raised in behalf of districts. It was suggested that the state be divided into five groups.

1922-23

The fourth annual convention opened in Columbus on Wednesday, May 30, 1923 with a recommendation of the Rules Committee, "Ladies please remove hats during session." The report of the state membership chairman was depressing.

Other national organizations are fast picking up the business and professional women of the state and throwing them in with their respective groups.

However, the federation was making progress. There were 175 women attending the banquet to hear the challenge of the president, "federation is the nucleus from which radiates inspiration, co-operation and good fellowship."

A fall meeting of the board was scheduled to be held in Dayton; a spring meeting in Cleveland and the 1924 annual convention in Cincinnati. With 13 clubs, the membership stood at 2,869.

1923-24

At the executive committee meeting in the fall, the members recommended the following standing and special committees:

STANDING	SPECIAL
Membership	Independent Woman, Club Emblem
Legislative	Cheer Leader
Publicity	Program
Finance	Speakers Bureau
Personal Research	
Education	

At the spring board meeting, a recommendation was introduced "that we charge a registration fee of \$1.00 for each delegate and member at the annual meeting in Cincinnati."

ON ITS WAY

The federation was on its way. It opened its fifth annual convention on May 30th, 1924 at the Assembly Room in the Cincinnati Club House with reports of credentials, rules, resolutions and nominating committees.

Mary Stewart, author of the Collect and chairman of the National Legislative Committee, issued a real challenge in her address when she said in part

The big lesson the world must learn today is to give value received. We have a clear duty, an important one — the bringing to all social and civic and economic problems the balanced judgment of the trained business women with our feet on the ground and our eyes on the stars and once in a while we can afford to stub our toe a little for the sake of looking at the stars, but after all, we cannot walk very far if we do not keep our feet on the ground.

It was at this meeting that the strongest project of the Ohio Federation originated, the Florence Allen Scholarship Fund. It was here, too, that Blue and Gold were adopted as state colors.

This had been no ordinary convention. While officers and committee chairmen reported on what had been done, the membership was looking ahead. State chairmen were at work, the executive board was functioning, but there was still need for membership. At this time a demand was made to the National Federation for a full time organizer in the field.

The report of the membership committee indicated that many seeds which

have been sown this year will bear fruit in the future but the year's experience has proved that obstacles must be met and overcome if the Ohio Federation is to measure up to the requirements which she has set for herself.

What membership there was had an awareness of its importance as noted by the report of the corresponding secretary:

. . . . Ohio Federation is becoming quite well known everybody wanted to serve us — Railroads, Telegraph Companies, Hotels, Speaker Bureaus, Printers, Reporters You see times have changed. They are now following the activities of women as aggressively as they did those of men.

Two paragraphs from the president's report sum up the thinking of the times:

The year has been one of progress and we are steadily going forward, setting our house in order, establishing ourselves on a firm basis; through our inspiring mid-year meetings promoting a spirit of good fellowship and understanding, and growing bigger, better, more understanding of our own and others' problems every day.

We look forward with hopes for greater and greater accomplishments. We know we shall succeed for our work is one of service — service to ourselves — service to the business woman of the future, service to our City, State and Nation. And service means growth, for the more one gives of self, the more one grows, and we are learning the true meaning of real service, which is bound to make us broader and bigger both mentally and spiritually.

For the first time the minutes carried written reports of officers and committee chairmen. The program chairman wrote "Our National Committee on Program is now beginning to function and with the state's co-operation it is hoped much constructive work can be accomplished by the local clubs."

1924-25

In 1924-25 "the fiscal year of all clubs" was brought to a uniform period and the period was made to coincide as closely as possible with the year of the national federation.

It was at the fall board meeting in Columbus that the following recommendation was adopted.

that in the near future some Club Courtesies may be worked out in the National Federation as well as in the Ohio Federation.

This was the beginning of the recognition of membership cards which the national organization initiated.

A state song book was published. Included was the federation song, OHIO written and copyrighted by Emma Sander, of the Cincinnati Club.

The annual convention was held in Cleveland, May 30, 1925. Again voices arose for district organization. Four districts were suggested, each to be responsible for the organizing of clubs in its territory. Plans adopted were the appointment of a state nominating committee; and an allowance in the budget for the work of special committees, such allowance to be recommended by the president and treasurer.

It was at the 1925 National Convention held at Portland, Maine that Olive Joy Wright, a member of the Cleveland Club, was elected president of the National Federation.

1925-26

Over 100 club members were present at the Open Forum in Warren in October 1925. The Marietta Club reported a limited membership of 75 with a waiting list. Through the years the Ohio Federation has frowned on limited membership although a number of clubs maintain it with success.

Work with the members of the local clubs was beginning to show results, as revealed in the minutes of the Open Forum, "we get our own girls to tell about their own work and they get used to speaking on their feet."

At the state convention in Columbus, 1926, the question was raised that continues to bother the members of local clubs. It is that of recommending that local clubs, "pay all or part of their delegates expenses to convention."

Concerned with current world conditions, the membership approved a recommendation requesting that the national federation work out details regarding the affiliation of foreign clubs, and further requested that findings be presented before the 1927 National Convention. The outcome of the recommendation was the Good Will Tour of the National Federation in 1928 which led to a definite organization of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women in Geneva, Switzerland in August, 1930.

The federation, non partisan, non sectarian, and self-governing was feeling the need of protection from outside groups that were attempting to secure assistance for the promotion of their selfish interests at the National Conventions. The Ohio Federation, with its large membership, felt it necessary that year to instruct its delegates to the National Convention not to endorse any controversial legislation which might be introduced.

The treasurer reported writing to other states in the national federation for information on budgets. "About 20 states wrote how they raised money," she reported, "and some sent copies of their budgets." The budget for 1926-27 totaled \$1500.00. It had gone a long way from the first one adopted in 1922.

1926-27

There were 65 delegates present at the 1927 convention in Dayton. These delegates represented a total of 2639 members in 26 clubs.

The president in her annual address stated

One great advancement in the organization of the Ohio Federation for the past year has been the establishment of District Meetings. We have been able to have three of these meetings at Springfield, Toledo and Zanesville.

She also commented on the work of the local clubs

We as a Federation are very proud indeed of clubs that can put on successful Baby Shows; Clubs that can effect a Saturday evening closing of stores; Clubs that can put through Women's Expositions; Clubs that can control elections

1927-28

In the year 1927-28 the first club in the United States to be formed on county basis was organized in Perry County. Ohio was recognized by the National Federation for having the most newspaper publicity during the previous year.

In April 1928, local clubs joined the state and national federations in observing for the first time National Business Women's Week.

In previous years the local clubs had been responsible for the entertainment of the state federation at annual conventions. Several unpleasant issues had arisen. The executive committee requested that an agreement be drawn up between the hostess club and the Ohio Federation. The first agreement to be so drawn was with the Marietta Club.

The idea of the district meetings received a further boost when the state president announced in her annual report at the convention in Marietta, that she was enabled through regional (district) meetings to meet representatives from every club in the state. Four such meetings had been held. In part she reported

The last few years all organized endeavors have experienced a let down in group activities, a very natural aftermath of the 'joining' habit formed during the hectic war and post war days. Our Federation was no exception. Being a 'war baby' it grew lustily on the effervescence of war enthusiasm and attracted great numbers, many of whom lacked the staying qualities and clear vision necessary for sustained interest

I believe I can now say that the Ohio Federation has successfully passed thru this crisis. True, some of her larger clubs have not regained the large membership they once had, but numbers are always of questionable and relative value. A group of active workers, who realize what our Federation stands for and individually appreciate and are loyal to its ideals, is worth twice that number if the majority are members in name only.

And I am glad to report that those clubs who were just a little in doubt as to the advisability of staying in the Federation have had a rebirth with Federation consciousness and have come to appreciate anew the inestimable value of a local club belonging to the State and National Federation.

This strength so vividly pictured helped to carry the Ohio Federation through the trying days ahead.

It was in the president's report that the question of the need for a paid state worker was first raised. "For instance, we cannot expect a corresponding secretary to labor hours upon hours taking care of necessary correspondence without some remuneration."

1928-29

At the fall board meeting in Newark in 1928, the board of directors adopted the following resolution regarding the endorsement of political candidates:

Whereas the Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs has always been a non-political organization:

Be it resolved that the attention of all club members be called to Article 7 of the State Constitution which reads: The policy of the Federation shall be self-governing, self-supporting, non-sectarian and non-partisan; that this be understood to mean that members as individuals are free to engage in political activities; but that, as a member of the Ohio Federation, no club shall endorse any political candidates or measures.

The executive board endorsed a State Rural Police, later known as the Highway Patrol. Radio talks were being used for the first time in connection with the National Business Women's Week.

The convention was held at Toledo, May 18, 1929. While Ohio members were trying to sing their way out of the depression, a report from national indicated that there would be no national convention in 1929-30, but instead regional meetings would be held.

The federation committee stated, "the one big job right now [in the local clubs] will be working up of attendance at the National Convention [Mackinac Island, July 1929]." Ohio was to be represented by a pageant, Grenadier Squaw, Ohio's First Business Woman². Over 100 women from Ohio were planning to attend.

1929-30

It was announced at the state convention in Mansfield in May 1930, that "your new president will be a member of the National board when the National Board of Directors will meet in July." Before this time the state federations were represented on the National board by what was known as a state vice president of National. This vice president was elected each year at the National convention. She was not necessarily the president of the state federation.

The Ohio Federation had been in existence 10 years. There was a demand during this period for an Ohio Handbook, which request has appeared again and again. Although a special committee on an Ohio Handbook was in existence for a number of years, no official state handbook was adopted. Reference also appeared in the records to the writing of a history for presentation in the summer of 1930.

The Ohio delegates at the Mackinac national convention subscribed \$200.00 toward a national home of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs in Washington, D. C. From 1929 to 1953, the national federation kept this project before the state federations. During the depression years, the local clubs of the Ohio Federation sent to the national federation over \$1,000.00 toward this fund. In 1935 the project was activated again, and in 1958 the National Headquarters was dedicated at 2012 Massachusetts Avenue N. W., in Washington, D. C. Again the membership of the Ohio

²The Appendix, page 44.

Federation was called upon for contributions, but this time it was for over 100 times the original pledge made at Mackinac in 1929.

During 1929-30 Governor Myers Y. Cooper declined to issue a proclamation for Business Women's week for the reason given in a chairman's report

. . . . to the fact that so many requests of a like nature are received that he had adopted a policy of issuing only those in connection with legal holidays and governmental activities. He further stated that if all the proclamations were granted that were sought, that they would lose their effect entirely.

1930-31

By 1931 some of the members of the federation wanted all the conventions held in Columbus.

The 1931 convention was the first one in which the program had been planned by the state executive board. Heretofore, all work had "centered in the particular club in whose town the convention was held." The preference for a banquet speaker included three nationally known women: Dr. Lillian Gilbreth, a leading engineer of the country; Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, a political figure; and Mary Pickford, a nationally known entertainer.

Plans for the convention included a four o'clock tea on Saturday to be furnished by the hotel as a courtesy to the organization.

A highlight was the Occupational Assembly held on Saturday afternoon. Titles of the short talks were

- Women's Place in Local Economics
- The Attitude of the Modern Girl Today Towards Business
- The Way Out of Wonderland
- Osteopathy as a Field for Women
- The Creation of a Greeting Card
- The Joys and Woes of an Impresario
- Self-Imposed Barriers
- A Woman's Place in a Small Manufacturing Company
- Radiant Health
- Paints and Brushes
- Chemistry as a Field for Women

Emily Kneubuhl, national representative, applauded the idea of the convention being planned by the state executive committee when she said, "Ohio group had blazed the trail in a new kind of convention with the elimination of non-essentials and strict attention to business."

The president's report carried the statement that Governor George White was the first governor to endorse Business Women's Week. Pictures of the Governor signing the Proclamation along with the state federation president appeared in many newspapers throughout the state as well as in the national magazine, the *Independent Woman*.

Prior to this time representation to the state convention had been one voting delegate for each organization having a membership of fifty members or less and an additional delegate for each additional fifty members or major fraction thereof. It was at this convention that a change was

made. Representation was "each club in the Federation shall be entitled to one voting delegate for each (10 members) or major fraction thereof."

1931-32

The year 1931-32 saw a decided change in the local clubs and in the state federation. The federation had always been interested in occupations and vocations. But the depression was upon Ohio. Women were the first to be laid off. The carefree, singing Ohio Federation of the past had a real challenge on its home front. In its third year it had had a membership of over 3,000. It was now in its twelfth year and its membership had dropped to 2,209, a 7 per cent loss for the year. For financial reason the state bulletin was to be discontinued.

At the convention in Cincinnati in May 1932, it was announced that "the memberships' heaviest losses are in the large cities." It was suggested that any club having dues over \$10.00 consider a reduction.

The annual banquet that year was dedicated to the past state presidents, a plan which has continued on and off through the years. Judge Florence Allen delivered the address, "America at the Crossroads."

1932-33

The Ohio Federation was at the cross roads. The year 1932-33 could well be termed its depression year.

Much time was consumed at the fall executive board meeting discussing whether or not there was a legal way of reducing dues without changing the constitution. The request to the national federation to waive the 25 cent penalty for late payment of dues went unheeded. The national constitution forbade it.

The trend of the times was shown in the report of the Florence Allen Scholarship Loan Fund. One applicant, employed as a Y. W. C. A. secretary had had her salary cut 50 per cent. The report of the chairman stated

Only one girl had been able to get a position in her chosen field, the others have been forced to take whatever position offered itself at this time . . . one was not able to secure a school on account of retrenchment of school boards everywhere.

Reports of committee chairmen told how local clubs met the depression "by going all out for coal for the needy, school lunches, depression bridge To 'eat' or not to 'eat', to have a dinner or not were the great questions for many Ohio Clubs." Clubs were also faced with the same dilemma as that indicated by the report of the chairman of the Florence Allen Scholarship Fund.

The loan fund suffered a set back by having \$180.16 of our money tied up in the . . . Trust Company, which was one of the banks not opened after the bank holiday. We do not feel this money is lost, but it is a frozen asset and it will be a matter of time until it is all paid out.

THE ROOTS ARE STRONG

However, there were concrete values to report at the 1933 convention

held in Cleveland. The Auditor's report showed \$727.38 in U. S. Bonds. While there was a decrease of 11 per cent in membership, the membership chairman stated that "no club in Ohio has withdrawn this year."

An attempt has been made to keep the young people interested by organizing Junior Clubs. These clubs maintained "separate events" and "programs particularly to their liking." Cincinnati, Newark and Toledo had such clubs. Twelve junior members had attended the convention.

The Cincinnati Club reported 195 minutes of broadcasting time; study groups on economic questions were organized; programs took on a seriousness of purpose. The federation strongly opposed the Minimum Wage Law for Women and Minors only, saying it was discriminatory, that it should be for men, women and minors.

1933-34

In spite of obstacles, the business women with courage and resourcefulness went on with their plans. Ohio celebrated National Business Women's Week. The convention was held in Columbus in May, 1934.

The convention body thought some method should be worked out for preserving old records, even to establishing a library of records. It stressed that every club should be a member of the International Federation. Topics of the round table discussions included "Art of Club Management," "Developing Club Personality," "Our Step in World Peace."

The Ohio Federation voted to affiliate with the Women's State Committee of Ohio for Public Welfare, Health and Education, which membership the state federation continues to maintain.

A change was taking place in the social and economic position of women. The report of the president said

I see our members among the first to adjust themselves to shifting conditions and to not only have confidence in the future but to spread confidence to others as well.

1934-35

At the September board meeting in 1934, the president was given authority to divide the state and appoint six district directors. This was an experimental plan. While a far-reaching decision, it was not until 1940 that such action became a part of the constitution. The growth of the district organization is given in Chapter IV.

The year 1934-35 was to see an increase of 420 members bringing the membership back to 2500. The need for a central place to keep records was apparent. Also there was continued talk of a state history.

Internationally, discussion centered around what clubs can do to formulate peace.

The chairman of the Florence Allen Scholarship Loan Fund in reporting said, "Prosperity now turning the corner, all of them [those receiving loans] will make more rapid strides in the liquidation of the loans."

THE OHIO FEDERATION GREW

The Ohio Federation grew. The roots were well planted. Prior to this time the history of the Ohio Federation was based on the minutes of the meetings and the reports of the state officers. Now it comes from the records of special and standing committees, from district directors, from the legislative program and from the special projects which constantly develop and become a part of the state program. The growth of these activities is found elsewhere in this history.

At the close of the year 1937, the balance in the state treasury was \$1,508.69. The plan of district organization was paying off; 630 had attended the six district meetings. There were 530 registered at the convention. The state bulletin came out with a new name, *Buckeye Businessette*.

Because of the tremendous amount of business to come before the convention body the time was changed so that the convention could officially open at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and continue through Sunday.

As storm clouds for another World War gathered, women were feeling the pinch of being dropped from positions. The state president in her report in 1940 said

Our National Federation came into existence at the close of World War I because the government felt the need of an organization of business and professional women. Now as what promises to be another world war has broken, we find various state governments attempting to take from women their right to work. In 1938-39, 22 states including Ohio attempted to deny this right.

Before another three years passed, the field of industry, never before open to women, was fairly crying for women.

The membership had been clamoring for an executive secretary and recognition of the district directors. At the 1940 convention the president included both in her recommendations. She set up the machinery by which these could be accomplished by recommending a general revision of the constitution.

The first executive secretary was appointed September 15, and plans of work of the state chairmen were mailed out from a central office in October.

In 1941 the convention body adopted a three point program for defense: 1) Health; 2) Defense Protection; 3) World Peace.

In 1942 the resolutions committee asked the membership for an Equal Pay Bill. It took eighteen years to fulfill this request. Voting machines were used at the state convention. The national organization cancelled meetings because of transportation difficulties, but Ohio held its convention.

Ten years previous, women were virtually starving for positions. At the spring board meeting it was reported that within a year "there will be another 12 to 15 million women at work." The membership chairman's report indicated that "clubs are beginning to include women in industry in their members."

Melanie Menderson, a member of the Cincinnati Club, was introduced at the 1943 convention as National Parliamentarian. Mrs. Menderson had been appointed in 1940 to succeed Belle Loewenstein, a former member from Ohio, but at that time a resident of California.

By convention action, the state board of directors of the Ohio Federation was given war-time emergency powers until the next state federation meeting. The 1943 National biennial had been cancelled.

In 1943-44 the state board passed a resolution inviting the National executive committee to hold the next biennial meeting in Ohio.

The districts, now carrying part of the responsibility of the growth of the organization made up the subject of discussion at all board meetings. A few voiced an opinion to do away with them. There was a strong demand to make the directors members of the state board. And voices were heard for redistricting.

The year 1944-45 could easily be termed the Ohio Federation World War II Year.

That year a check for \$2,807.98, contributed by local clubs, was presented to the American Red Cross for Ohio's War Project, the purchase and partial maintenance of a mobile kitchen unit to be sent to the British Federation, which had undertaken the task of helping to keep the men and women who manned the anti-aircraft batteries fed.

At the request of the U. S. Director of War Mobilization Reconversion that organizations hold no meetings "that will involve the assembly of 50 people which require transportation and hotel facilities," the annual meeting was cancelled and an election of state officers by mail was authorized in connection with the executive board meeting in June..

There was no question, the clubs of the Ohio Federation appear to be following the State and National Federation in endeavoring to function on a war-time basis by practicing economies and assisting to their utmost in projects and activities allied with the war effort.

At the 1944 Biennial in New York, Marie S. Schaffter, of Wooster, was elected second vice president of the National Federation. That same year Olive Huston, of Xenia, was appointed Director of Field Services for the National Federation. The National Federation accepted Ohio's invitation to hold the Biennial Convention in Cleveland in 1946. To finance the convention, the state board of directors asked that each club contribute \$1.00 per capita toward entertaining the National Federation.

Ohio was close to fourth place in membership nationally at the close of the year.

The new activities in connection with the "war years" had played havoc with the provisions of the constitution. The incoming president for 1945-46 was authorized to make a complete revision of the bylaws.

The revision adopted at the convention in May added a third vice president; elected district directors at the district meeting of presidents; permitted all past presidents to attend board meetings with no voting privileges.

A resolution was drafted urging the delegates of the United Nations in assembly to draft a charter to provide for pacific settlement of international disputes and added "that we commend the valiant efforts of these delegates to evolve an accepted charter." By Presidential orders, the banquet speaker, a Congress-Woman-at-Large from Illinois, was not permitted to leave Washington because of the nation-wide railroad strike.

The holding of the National Biennial in Cleveland in July 1946 was a "shot in the arm" to the Ohio Federation. While the cost of the entertainment fund alone, which came directly from the local clubs, was \$4,306.42, it was worth it. The membership at the close of the year, June 30, 1946, was 5,725, a jump from 4,990 the previous year. It closed the year 1947 with 93 clubs and 6,504 members.

The attendance at the 1947 convention was 739. \$500.00 was budgeted for the work of the legislative committee. The president in her report to the delegate body recommended

A study of the possibility of exchange of a business or professional woman from Ohio with a business or professional woman from another country.

The year 1947-48 opened with eight districts. A budget of \$600.00 was established for the official state magazine. By the close of the year 14 new clubs had been organized.

In 1948-49, 10 new clubs were organized, and the membership stood at 8,088. A Small Business committee was created, and a recommendation was approved to hold a school for presidents in June.

From 1950 to 1955, the number of clubs grew from 119 to 141, and the membership for the same period changed from 8,325 to 9,716.

There were 900 who registered at the 1951 convention. The Ohio Federation supported a UNESCO Fellowship. K. Lucille Provo served as the first director of the newly organized East Central region.

In 1952 the membership of the state reached 9,162. This membership placed Ohio third in the nation with Pennsylvania second and California first. There was a need for more suitable space for state headquarters. Because of the amount of business to come before the delegate body, it was necessary to have the opening session of the state convention on Friday evening.

A recording by Governor Frank J. Lausche and the state president was used during National Business Women's Week by at least 75 per cent of the clubs in the state. In her annual report before the convention body, the president stated

An informed public opinion is the backbone of democracy . . .

If we are to retain our effectiveness as an organization we cannot respond to all good causes, but we must decide where we can do the most good in line with our objectives.

In 1952-53, the revision of the bylaws created 12 districts in place of eight. That year the chairman of the public affairs committee met with the Governor to ask for more appointments for women involving high ranking positions and membership on boards of trustees of the state universities.

At the 1953 convention the term of office of the state president was limited to one year. The immediate past state president was made a member of the board of directors.

In 1954-55 the state federation participated in the Ohio School Survey Commission as well as the School Affairs Round Table. The membership

welcomed the dispensing of the programs outlined in the national federation magazine, *The Independent Woman*.

With the term of the state president limited to one year, the federation faced a new challenge which was so ably expressed in the president's report that year

As we approach the future, the vistas of opportunities are tremendous and the accomplishments and success of women are vividly pictured in those opportunities.

The ardent devotion and exertion of strength in cooperation with the president-elect are vitally important and absolutely necessary as we advance into the future of opportunities.

Attendance at the district leadership training meetings reached 901 in the year 1955-56.

As a means of furthering understanding of the work of the United Nations, the Ohio Federation sponsored its first trip to the UN in the fall of 1956.

At a luncheon in Columbus in January 1957, the Ohio Federation honored women elected to the Ohio Legislature in the preceding election in addition to women appointed to state policy making posts. Over 900 members were present at this meeting.

At the 1957 state convention there was a total registration of 1,185. This year 35 clubs sponsored 37 girls to the 11th session of the Buckeye Girls State in Columbus.

In 1957-58, in addition to the United Nations Tour, a tour was sponsored to Washington, D.C. which included a visitation to the National Federation headquarters.

At the 1958 Biennial, Helen Reisinger, a member of the Cincinnati Club, was elected Recording Secretary of the National Federation.

The year 1958-59 could rightfully be labeled Legislative Accomplishments. The Equal Pay Bill was passed. A Nursing Home Bill was co-sponsored by the Ohio Federation. Over 1,000 reservations had been received for the second all-Ohio luncheon honoring women in state government. While floods were pouring into every crevice of the State, it took the Mayor of Columbus and the Governor of Ohio to keep these members from fairly rowing into Columbus, so successfully had the word been spread of the 1957 occasion. Finally the rains, the mayor and the governor won. The meeting was cancelled and checks for reservations were refunded.

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In the 40-year period only eleven members of the Ohio Federation, in addition to the state presidents, have been members of the board of directors of the National Federation.

In the beginning the membership of the Ohio Federation flourished. Those members who assisted in the organization of the National Federation were the leaders in the organization of the State Federation. Those Ohio women, devoted and loyal watched over the national organization with an "eagle eye." The National Federation came first. The records of the Ohio Federation indicate the many "firsts" that were suggested in order to strengthen the National Federation. As it was strong so would

the state be strong. As the membership of the National Federation grew through membership of the various state organizations, its treasury likewise increased. Paid leaders started taking over some of the details and later carried out some of the policies of the National Federation. The dues of the National Federation were increased.

As the "joining" pains of the Ohio Federation leveled off, the membership leveled off. The depression years appear to be its lean years. While it has witnessed differences of opinion among its members, at no time has serious conflict of opinion of individual members or of clubs or of groups threatened its organization.

On three different occasions at the state conventions there have been nominations from the floor in addition to those made by the nominating committee. In all three incidents these nominations have been the result of some one "left out" by the decision of the nominating committee. It would appear that at no time has a delegation walked out of a convention hall, nor has any delegation been refused to be seated.

Through the years, the Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs has developed a strong board of directors, large in number and representative of every section of the state; carefully planned and presented leadership conferences, district meetings and conventions; and an official publication. This keeps an alert membership informed.