

Celebrating
50
Years of Unity

WELCOME!

PTA History 101: The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and Unification

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST
August 20, 2020

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recorded and will be
available to share.*

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★ Today we will:

- Learn about the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT)
- Learn about the history behind the 1970 signing of the declaration of unification between NCCPT and the National Congress of Parents and Teachers
- Reflect upon the contributions of the NCCPT to today's PTA and the lessons learned from unification that can inform today's PTAs as we advance diversity, equity, and inclusion

Webinar Speakers

Presenter



Dr. Christine Woyshner

Discussants



Leslie Boggs



Anna King



Sylvia R. Reyna

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Why should every PTA member and leader know more about *THIS* history?



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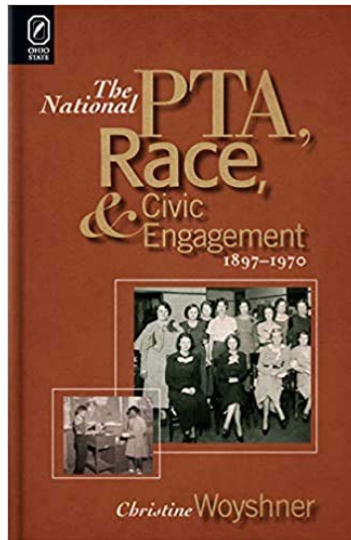
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The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers



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Check out “Handouts” to download this slidedeck and related resources.

The National Congress of Mothers

- Founded 1897
- Elite white women in Washington, DC
- Founders Alice M. Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst
- Focus was parent education, child welfare, and home-school relations
- Organized from the top-down in a federated structure



The NCM declared it would be open to “all mankind and to all womankind, regardless of race, color, or condition.”

“I do not ask any special favor for the colored mother. . . . But I do ask you to give what we cannot touch with our hands, the ideal things that can not be measured with a line nor weighed in a balance.”

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper,
1897 NCM





National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, founded 1926

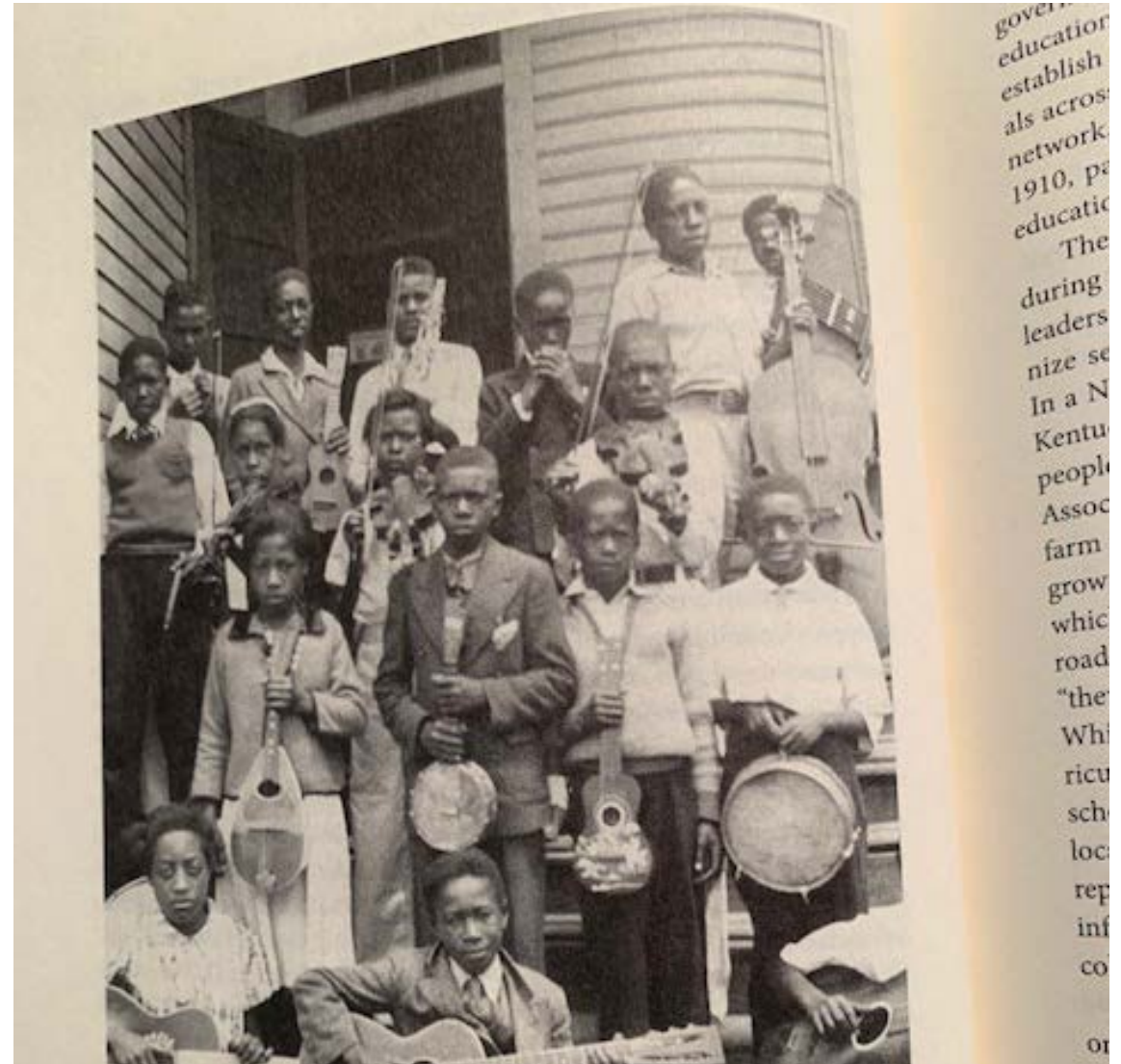
- Organized from the ground-up
- Founder: Selena Sloan Butler (pictured)
- “Study the past and the current history of your race and with pride tell it to your pupils in the classroom or to your children as you sit around the fireside. If you do not do this, who will?”

1897, Spelman Messenger



Accomplishments of the Black PTA

- Organized local communities around building schools in the American South
- Held fundraisers to purchase educational supplies, musical instruments, and school buses (!)
- Cultivated leadership skills within their local and state associations
- Emphasized the teaching of black history in segregated schools
- Worked for “racial uplift”
- Held scholarship contests to send students to HBCUs or to northern colleges



Comparison of Black and White PTAs



- **White**

- Led by volunteers, some of whom were former teachers
- Mainly a women's organization, although fathers encouraged to participate
- Fundraising downplayed by leaders as twentieth century progressed
- Emphasized support of local schools without interfering with education professionals

- **Black**

- Led by professional teachers
- Men participated in larger numbers, mainly because they were also teachers and school leaders
- Fundraising was a staple of all black PTA programs to get needed materials in schools
- Emphasized school and community building, as well as racial uplift

What resonates with you
about the history and
culture of NCCPT?



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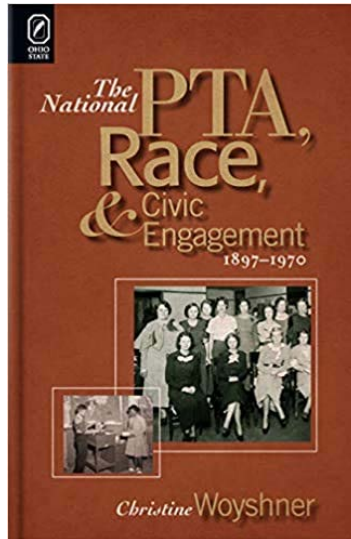
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Unification of the NCCPT and NCPT to form today's PTA



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NCCPT

State Units of NCCPT 1926



State Units of NCCPT 1927



State Units of NCCPT 1928



State Units of NCCPT 1929



State Units of NCCPT 1946



The Unification of the Two PTAs

- After *Brown* decision, May 17, 1954, the National (white) Congress of Parents and Teachers leadership in Chicago released a statement that encouraged local units to “study and pursue effective means in working toward integrated education for all children.”
- Border state PTAs integrated first, albeit slowly, while others refused until after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



A Look at Two Different States

Alabama

“I cannot be any part of an organization that has an integration statement or policy as its ultimate goal.”

Betty Baldwin McLaurine, President, Montgomery County Council PTA, July 24, 1956

In Alabama, members and local leaders resisted the NCPT’s call to integrate PTA units. From 1956-1957, the Alabama PTA lost 20 percent of its membership because of the PTA’s integration statement.



Kentucky

“Yes, we know the time is close at hand when the P.T.A. will be one organization. . . . but I want to live until I’m counted, until my qualities are seen, felt and are notable among the accomplishments of other organizations that are included.”

Minnie Hitch, 1966; KCCPT member and NCCPT president 1964-1967

The KCCPT left the NCCPT as it was being dissolved and formed the KY Parent League. The KY Parent League then rejoined the unified Kentucky PTA.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

- In the summer of 1967, five state colored congresses merged: DE, KY, MD, TN, and WV
- At the time of the 1970 unification ceremony, seven states had still not merged: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas
- White PTA leaders at the national level realized they would have to take more concerted action
- Black PTA leaders in southern states welcomed unification while they understood the losses it would mean to black communities in the South

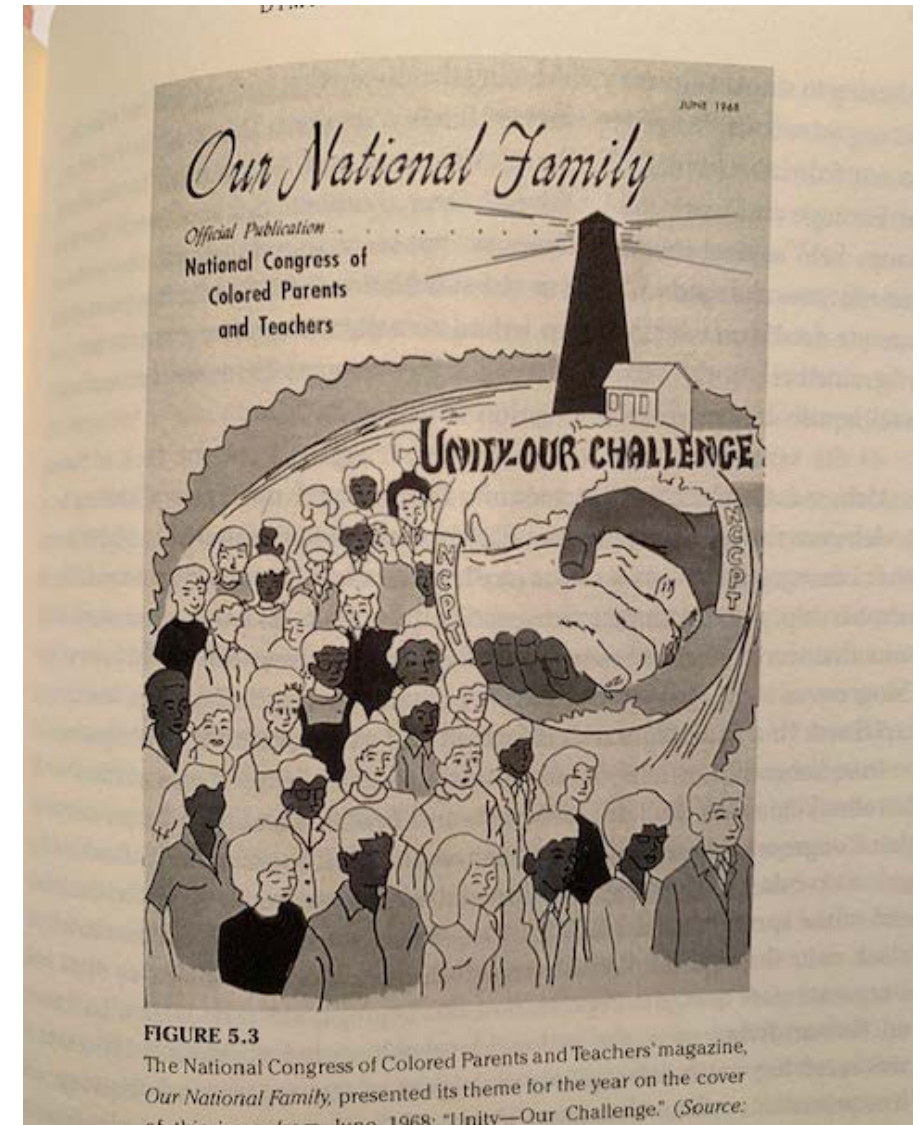


FIGURE 5.3

The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers' magazine, *Our National Family*, presented its theme for the year on the cover of this issue from June 1968: "Unity—Our Challenge." (Source:



Black PTA Leaders' Thoughts on Unification

“The Mobile [AL] County-wide [black PTA] has any number of schools, that don’t have any whites at all, and every time we lose a school, that weakens us to the point where we cannot support our county-wide, state, or national organization.”

Rev. R.L. Hope, Oct. 1969

“Only black parents can speak for black children.”

Black PTA President, Clara B. Gay, June 1970, after signing the merger agreement with the white PTA

“We shall always treasure the memories of an organization that was and will forever be dear to all of us for it is true we are really losing more than most of you have any dreams of, or realize.”

Alabama Black PTA President, Lonia Gill, April 1971, after AL PTA merger



What was lost? What was gained?

- National white PTA leaders saw the merger as a success, as it ultimately realized the goals of the *Brown* decision, albeit 16 years later
- Black PTA leaders and members were set adrift; few landed leadership positions in the local, state, and national levels of organization
- Little of the history and documentation of the black PTA was saved for posterity
- The federated structure both helped and hindered unification

What are your take-aways
from the history of
unification that you think
every PTA leader should
know?



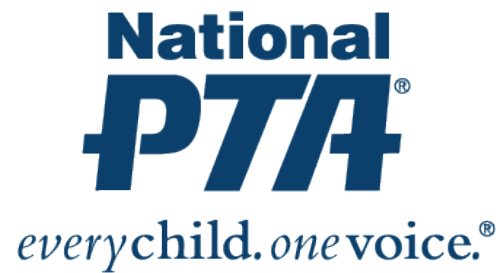
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Lessons Learned from This History...



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Learn More!

Check out “Handouts” to download this slidedeck and related resources.



- National PTA's [Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (en [Español](#))
- National PTA's [Position Statement on Institutional Racism](#)
- National PTA [Diversity, Inclusion, and Outreach Committee Facebook Group](#)
- Parent Resource: [How to Talk to Your Child About Race and Injustice in America](#)
- 50th Anniversary T-Shirt and Pins at [ShopPTA.com](#)
- [The National PTA, Race, & Civic Engagement, 1897-1970](#) by Dr. Christine Woyshner (30% off with code **PTA50TH**)

