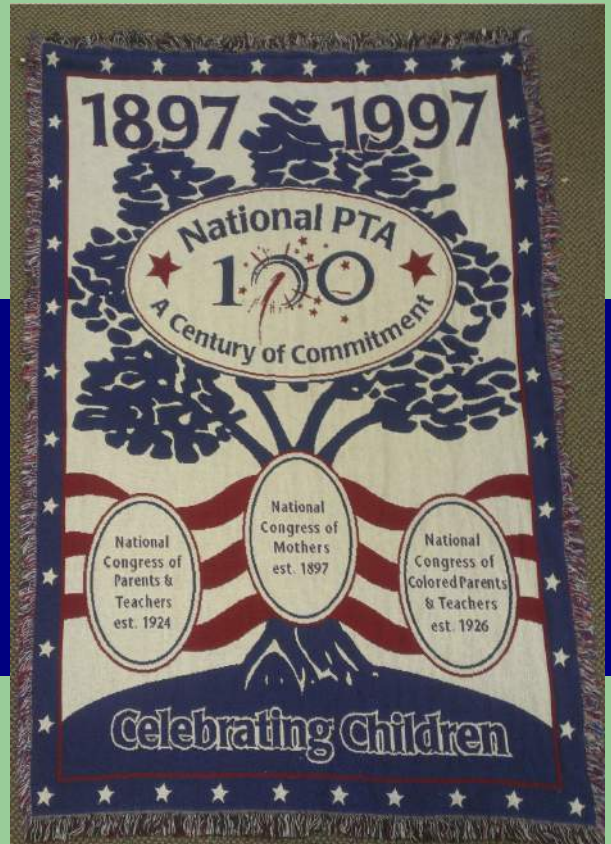


‘Not Your Mother’s PTA’:
Uncovering the Work of the
National Parent Teacher
Association

Jennifer McPherson

Dept. of History
Wednesday, March 18
12:00-1:00 PM
SUB Cherry/Silver



Over the course of the twentieth century, the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) spearheaded and increased the number of mothers' clubs in the 1890s and 1910s, initiated fatherhood involvement in schools in the 1920s and 1930s, influenced school redistricting and reassignment in the 1950s through the 1970s, offered an alternative to Republicans' "Family Values" campaign of the 1980s and 1990s, and finally, the PTA and its more than 5 million members have led the way in every major socio-educational reform movement in the United States. My dissertation, "‘Not Your Mother’s PTA’: Parents, Public Authority, and the Professionalization of Politics," examines the roots of western women’s public authority through the lens of National Parent Teacher Association branches in Denver, Colorado, from 1920 to 2000.

The Richard J. Daley Special Collections Library at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) holds the collective organization archives on the National PTA. With a collection spanning from 1897 to 2000, a close examination of this collection uncovers the historical roles the PTA had in women’s activism, gender structuring, and the relationship between the evolution of American education in relation to women’s activist roots in the twentieth century.



Jennifer McPherson is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of New Mexico. She is currently completing her doctorate in U.S. History with an emphasis in gender and sexuality. She started at the Center for the Southwest as its graduate assistant in 2012. She currently serves as the graduate coordinator for the AHA-Mellon PhD Career Diversity Project at UNM. In 2014, she received the Irene Ledesma Prize from the Coalition of Western Women’s History (CWWH) for her dissertation project.



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