

Shmanners 249: Ada S. McKinley

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to... *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: [through laughter] Hello, dear.

Travis: For a second there, forgot where I stopped talking.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I was halfway through it and I thought, "Am I usually done by now?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Am I doing Teresa's part? What is happening?"

Teresa: That's how I feel right now.

Travis: It has been... a weird week. So, with all the weather going on, we still have power, we didn't lose power at any point. It's cold here. Uh, lots of snow. But we didn't lose power. Justin and Griffin have lost power this week.

Teresa: Right. So that's—

Travis: That's a whole thing.

Teresa: That's a whole thing. Um, and there's been— there's— there's been some, uh... I'm gonna say... not *un*-passable roads, but some— some poor conditions.

Travis: Well, and not just there. Poor conditions inside the house. Baby Dot cuttin' two teeth, and an incredibly runny nose. So mad.

Teresa: All the time.

Travis: So mad. Not sleeping.

Teresa: All she wants to do is park her head— her face directly into my shoulder.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So now, four of my t-shirts are covered in snot.

Travis: And so... you know! [laughs] It's— I've— I don't know the intro anymore! I forgot the intro, you know?

Teresa: I guess what we' saying is, [through laughter] it's a normal week for us!

Travis: It's just a normal...

Teresa: Regular time.

Travis: ... everyday week. It's like we have all our ducks in a row, but the ducks are all different sizes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And one of them's a goose, and one of 'em— it might be a possum! I don't know!

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: I don't... know. [laughs]

Teresa: But you did the intro just right. Good job. Today, we are... in keeping with our Black History Month topics you may never have heard of, we present this week's episode on... Ada S. McKinley!

Travis: Now, here's the thing. You've nailed it in one. I don't know who that is.

Teresa: Yeah. Isn't that sad?

Travis: Yes!

Teresa: I didn't know who it was either. So, thank you to Emma, who emailed us this topic. Please suggest other topics for us. Email them to shmannerstcast@gmail.com. Alex reads every single one of those, and she was very pleased to find this suggestion, because—

Travis: And let me just go ahead and say, real quick, Black historical figures that have had a huge impact on society that we don't know about, we don't have to just talk about those during February. If you have great suggestions for bios on those, or people we can talk about, send 'em literally any time.

Teresa: Any time.

Travis: 'Cause they are fascinating, and 'cause it's stories we haven't heard, right? And they're important stories. So, send those if you've got 'em.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: So why was Alex excited for this?

Teresa: Well, um, because her contributions to the city of Chicago are often overlooked, but they are a multitude.

Travis: Now, I've heard of Chicago.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: It—[stammers] I believe it's called the Blustery City. If I'm not mistaken.

Teresa: No, Windy. The Windy City.

Travis: No, I don't think that's it. Oh, it's Winedy.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Winedy City, [holding back laughter] I think it is.

Teresa: Okay, this— this bit is old before it even started.

Travis: Oh, much like me. Go on!

Teresa: Um, what I'm reminded of is the, um, Jim Croce song, "Bad Leroy Brown," right? The south side of Chicago is the baddest part of town?

Travis: Sure, sure.

Teresa: Here's the deal, right? She was actually born and raised in Texas, in Galveston. She was born in 1868, and then shortly after moved to Corpus Christi. She was born right at the beginning of the Reconstruction Era, and again— so, let's have a brief synopsis of the idea of the Reconstruction Era.

The Reconstruction Era refers to the period of time in America following the Civil War, so historians place it between 1865 and 1877. And here is— like, the name is taken quite literally. So, they— during this time, um, the US was trying to physically reconstruct the country.

Travis: Yeah. There was a lot of, like, destroying of supply lines for the South and the North of, like, trains— uh, just shipping in general— as well as, you know, buildings and infrastructure, and all that stuff.

Teresa: Exactly. So, while the nightmare of institutionalized slavery was over, there was still a lot to be done with all these newly freed citizens, and the kind of— like I said, the— the establishment in these areas really tried to hang on with whatever they could grab, as far as keeping this new class subservient.

Travis: Yeah. I— I think it will surprise no one that it wasn't like, "Okay, great. Uh, we're doing the Emancipation Proclamation." And the fact that everyone didn't go, "Oh, okay! Cool. Let's flip that big ol' switch, huh? And make everything good." Like, it didn't...

Teresa: Exactly. So, many flocked to larger Northern cities, which is called—which is, like, the first wave of the Great Migration. And just because a war is over, like you said, doesn't make it so that everybody is instantly healed and hunky dory, and everything's fine.

So, there were different factions of people. The Reconciliationists called for everyone to come together to cope with, you know, obviously the devastation leftover from the war. There were Emancipationists who argued for full freedom for once-enslaved peoples. And then white supremacists, obviously, um, demanded segregation and preservation of white cultural domination, right? So, this is kind of like a political stew of a— mess of a stew, really, is what it is.

Travis: It sounds like a terrible stew, by the way.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It sounds like if somebody said, "I'm gonna make soup, right? And you know what? I'm just gonna throw in some dirt."

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah.

Travis: "Wait, what?! No, don't put dirt in there!"
"No, no, no, no. I'm just gonna put—"

Teresa: "It's fine."

Travis: "—big— I'm gonna put so much dirt in that it just tastes like dirt."
[laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. And she was born kind of right in the middle of this.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so there really aren't many records of her as a young person. What we know is that she was the first child of Joseph and Alice Dennison. Uh, they were employed as a hotel waiter and a laundress. Um, we know that she was a college graduate, which is a giant deal for a Black woman, a person of the time. She attended Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College, and Tillotson Missionary College in San Antonio.

At Tillotson was where her desire to help others seemed to be formed. She wanted to go on a missionary trip after she graduated, but her father disapproved, thinking that she was too young to make the journey to the Sandwich Islands by herself.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Well, she wasn't by herself, but, you know, unescorted?

Travis: [posh voice] Unchaperoned.

Teresa: [laughs] I assume that there would've been other people along, but not someone in the capacity of chaperone to Ms. McKinley.

Travis: To her specifically, got it. Okay.

Teresa: Yes. Then she tried her hand at helping people at home. She shifted her focus to aiding illiterate African-Americans in rural Texas, and taught elementary school in Austin when she graduated. So, was teaching elementary school in 1887 when she met and married her husband, a dentist from Tennessee named William McKinley.

Travis: Different William McKinley, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That happens a lot, actually, that people are—

Travis: Named after Presidents, yeah.

Teresa: —named after Presidents. And, like, it's so funny because, like, my grandfather's parents— he was named after Robert E. Lee, which is...

Travis: Ugh. Ugh.

Teresa: ... not awesome. But his—

Travis: I would say— hey, can I just say? Bad.

Teresa: Bad.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Uh, so his name was Robert Lee. But his brother's name was Calvin, after Calvin Coolidge.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: What was the other one? I don't remember. There—

Travis: Ronald McDonald.

Teresa: No, there was another one.

Travis: Well, we just talked about George Washington Carver.

Teresa: Exactly, yeah, that makes complete sense too. This is another little— some paprika for this stew.

Travis: Yeah, people can't see, but you're doing a little— you're doing a definite sprinkle.

Teresa: A definite sprinkle.

Travis: Like old school Salt Bae. I say old school. That was, like, last year, wasn't it? [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Just a little— a little paprika to the stew. Um, there was a diphtheria epidemic—

Travis: Don't c— don't conflate paprika and diphtheria!

Teresa: Well, I'm just saying, we're talking about the political stew. This was another...

Travis: Yeah, but— some shards of glass [wheezes] in the stew! It's not— we've established, this isn't good stew we' making. This is bad stew!

Teresa: Um, made its way through Texas. Ada and her husband lost three of their children to the disease.

Travis: [gasps]

Teresa: And that's when they moved to Chicago in hopes for, like, a fresh start. They did have other children, they just lost three of them.

Um, so William had relatives in the city and thought, you know, like a lot of people, he could find better work, better jobs. So, sometime in the 1890's, they moved to the south side of Chicago, right near the Douglas School at 32nd street and Calumet Avenue.

And we know this, because... she made an impact specifically in this neighborhood, the south side of Chicago.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And like a lot of cities at the time and, I mean, now, right? So there's kind of, like, if you were to— if you were to take, like, a Google Earth picture, you can see that there are different, like, epicenters of ethnicities that, like, kind of congregate in the same areas, right? These neighborhoods.

You talk about, like, in New York City, there is the upper west side, the upper east side, there's Central Park, around there. There's the boroughs, obviously, things like that. So this also happened in Chicago.

Um, but what would happen is... so, the city was growing very fast. It started at the beginning of the 20th century with approximately 300,000 people, which ballooned to nearly 1.7 million at the time.

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: Right, exactly. Um, and so you had these different, like, centers of industry. There was steel mills, there were meat packing districts, there were stock yards, and different types of ethnicities tend to flock to the different types of work, right? And establish communities there.

Travis: I assume that that was because at the time, just were, like, experience and training? Or it's just like this is something that we are allowed to do, this is

something that— I don't know why. There's probably a sociologist out there who could explain it better, but—

Teresa: And I think that it more equates to kind of, like, um, socioeconomic levels, where certain groups of people get jobs at certain places, and so they all make the same amount of money, and so they all live in kind of the same area that is the same amount of money for rent and such. And here's— here's one of the other things. This time—[laughs] this time in Chicago, um, there were no legal limits on building heights.

Travis: Huh!

Teresa: So, if you were a landlord with plenty of money, you could erect gigantic tenement houses and shove as many people into your cramped and gross living spaces as you wanted to.

Travis: Oh boy. Okay. So, bad. Bad, bad, bad.

Teresa: Bad. Crime rates also soared, and mob activity began to emerge, because people were living in desperate situations, right?

Travis: Right, we talked— when you talk about, like, a population blooming so quickly, to go from 300,000 to 1.7 million, the infrastructure's just not there, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: You don't have the— the— you don't have the necessary resources to help a community, and so inherently crime is going to be on the rise because of that, right? 'Cause that's why we see— I mean, take Prohibition as a perfect example of this idea of, like, there is a need here, and so that need is going to be filled legally, and if it can't be filled legally, it's gonna be filled *il*-legally.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: People don't just say, like, "Well, then I guess I just won't!"

Teresa: So, this community in Chicago was devastated by poverty, violence, racism, disease, and it was a lot more rampant than those of the poor white counterparts, right? So there was a point in history where this— this kind of, like,

circle around the south side of Chicago area was referred to as the Black Belt. Because 78% of the city's Black population lived in that district.

Here comes... Ada S. McKinley! She always had a deep connection to others, and a hunger for justice and equality. We saw that in Texas, by being a teacher, and she wanted to continue working directly with whatever community she landed in.

Travis: Any way she could help, yeah, mm-hmm.

Teresa: Exactly. Her first project was childhood nutrition. She noticed—

Travis: A good one.

Teresa: Yeah! It's great. Um, she noticed that schoolchildren on her block normally had lunches that were, like, soup, pickles, and candy.

Travis: Mm. Oh boy.

Teresa: Yeah... I mean, that'll fill you up.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But not a lot of diverse nutritional aspects.

Travis: Not a lot of lasting energy, either, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeah. I mean, maybe— I don't know what it's in the soup.

Teresa: I don't know what's in the soup, but...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: I think one can assume.

Teresa: One can assume. So, she immediately opened a small establishment to serve hot lunches to schoolchildren at low prices.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: That's awesome.

Travis: Yeah, nice.

Teresa: Then she threw herself into political work. She was an educated woman, as we talked about earlier. Um, and so she, with the focus of improving the lives of others, she joined the Phyllis Wheatley Club, which is a club of Black women dedicated to community care, and has some chapters alive today, which is awesome.

Travis: Oh, great!

Teresa: She organized for the League of Women Voters, and even became President of the Citizen's Community Center.

In 1916, she served as secretary for the Colored Women's Hughes Republican Headquarters, where she worked with other Black women, such as Ella Berry and Ida B. Wells-Barnett.

Okay. We're up to 1914.

Travis: And I can't wait to find out more. Can't wait to continue on to 1915, maybe even 1916.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We'll keep going. But first...

Teresa: All the 19s.

Travis: All the 19s? All the teens. But first... how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Alright!

[theme music plays]

Teresa: *Shmanners* is sponsored in part this week by Zola. We've talked about Zola before.

Travis: It's about marriage and engagement, folks.

Teresa: Indeed!

Travis: Did you know Teresa and I are married?

Teresa: We are! And we did have a wedding website, and I wish that Zola would have been available, because there's— there's a lot that goes on with a wedding.

Travis: And I'll tell you, what— at the time, it was all these individual pieces that we had, right?

Teresa: Right, right.

Travis: Your wedding website, your registry, your save-the-dates, your these and this and this and that, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And if we had had Zola, you can centralize that all into one place, right? And they will take care of, uh, just about everything you can think of!

Teresa: Yeah! So they make wedding planning easier and less stressful, with everything you need in the one place. And Zola has helped 1 million couples get married! So you can let Zola help you, too. I have to point out—

Travis: For some reason my brain filled in, "Get married, and get even."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And I don't know why.

Teresa: Oh, man. Uh, one thing I have to point out is I love the honeymoon fund feature. I think that that is the best idea. We may have mentioned it, but we really enjoyed our honeymoon in Scotland.

Travis: Yeah. And the fact is, man, a lot more people are living together before they get married. They don't need plates or whatnot. [through laughter] They need money!

Teresa: Exactly! Um, you can also take care of your whole paper suite at Zola. They have beautiful, affordable invites and paper all designed to match. You can even match it to your website!

Um, they'll help you collect the addresses and track online RSVPs with their guest manager. There's just so many bonuses to this. So, you can go to zola.com/shmanners today, and use the promo code "SAVE 50" to get 50% off your save-the-dates!

Travis: Is that SAVE 5-0, Teresa?

Teresa: Yes. S-A-V-E 5-0. And you can also get a free personalized paper sample before you purchase. That's 50% off save-the-dates at zola.com/shmanners, with the promo code "SAVE 50." S-A-V-E 5-0.

Travis: Now, Teresa, I know that our next sponsor that we want to talk about is Quip, and I want you to tell people what I'm doing now.

Teresa: Putting your phone with the copy down.

Travis: That's right! Because I want to tell you from the heart.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: About the future.

Teresa: Oh boy. [laughs]

Travis: Let me tell you about the future, folks.

Teresa: The future of teeth.

Travis: The future of teeth is now. Because when you' brushing your teeth with a Quip toothbrush, using the Quip toothpaste, flossing with the Quip flosser, and then chewing the Quip gum in the Quip gum dispenser, you feel like you're in the future!

Teresa: [through laughter] Alright!

Travis: It is like *Blade Runner* technology today, brushing your teeth. The toothbrush, gentle vibrations, a thorough clean that connects to your phone so you can get rewarded for brushing your teeth. And then the flosser, right? It has a little case that feels cool, and then you use the little flossing pick thing to reach into the floss case, get the floss out, floss, floss, floss, throw away the old floss.

Teresa: Which literally uses, like, an inch of floss.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: This is gonna last forever.

Travis: Feels cool. And then, the Quip gum, [gasps] in comes in this cool little case. Ka-pow! Right? Like an adult Pez dispenser—

Teresa: For gum!

Travis: —fobbin' out the gum, and then the gum is actually good for your teeth and refreshes your teeth. Now, I am gonna pick back up my phone so that I can look at the copy. But I'm just saying, it's amazing.

And in addition to gum packs, Quip also delivers those fresh brush heads, floss, and toothpaste refills every three months for \$5. Shipping is free, so you can save money and skip the misery of in-store shopping. So, get chewing for less than two dollars per gum pack. Get all of it! It's all incredible, and I love it.

And if you go to getquip.com/shmanners right now, you can get a free plastic dispenser with any refill plan. That's a free dispenser at getquip.com/shmanners, spelled G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners. Quip! The good habits company.

[gavel banging]

John: I'm Judge John Hodgman.

Jesse: And I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn.

John: Ten years ago, I came on *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* and judged my first dispute. Is chili a soup? It's a stew, obviously.

Jesse: The Judge has dispensed a decade of justice. He's the one person wise enough to answer the really important questions. Like, should you hire a mime to perform at your own funeral?

Speaker Three: After they cry, I want them to laugh.

John: Do you really need a tank full of jellyfish in your den?

Speaker Four: They smell like living creatures decaying!

Speaker Five: Only if they are decaying.

Speaker Four: Yeah, which they will be.

John: Real people, real justice, real comedy.

Jesse: Winner of the Webby award for Best Comedy Podcast.

John: The *Judge John Hodgman* Podcast. Every Wednesday, on Maximumfun.org.

[gavel banging]

Travis: When last we left off, it was 1914.

Teresa: And what happened in 1914?

Travis: Oh! She was helping the community— oh, no! There were three— one— what? She turned 31.

Teresa: No!

Travis: No.

Teresa: I'm signaling you with World War I.

Travis: Oh, see, I thought it was 31, was what I saw.

Teresa: [laughs] But that's—

Travis: But that'd be—

Teresa: There's three, that's W.

Travis: No, I see that now.

Teresa: Okay. [laughs]

Travis: But I thought you were saying that in 1914, [through laughter] she turned 31.

Teresa: No. That's— this is what I get for trying to help you out.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Anyway—

Travis: World War I. You know... if it was World War II, I could've told you. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: I don't know about that.

Travis: Actually I don't know— now, is that 1942? I don't know. Alright.

Teresa: Anyway. McKinley was very interested in the war effort. She was active in the Chicago Urban League, where she would volunteer as a hostess for Black soldiers through their war camp community service.

So, this is where she really, like, came into her own ideas for, like, a place to help the community.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: In 1919, she created the Soldiers and Sailors Club, which was to attend to the needs of Black veterans returning from the war. So it offered programs for youth, focused deeply on community building and crime prevention. And through this club, she would secure shelter, food, jobs, all kinds of things for lots of the

Black veterans and migrants, quickly earning a reputation as a, quote, "woman of extraordinary abilities."

Travis: [whispering] Wow. Wow!

Teresa: 1919, though, was not a good year for Chicago, because there was the Chicago Race Riot of 1919.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: And for an entire week... okay, let me set the scene first. In the summer of 1919, there was a huge heat wave. Everybody went to Lake Michigan to cool off, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And swimming was segregated at that time, and I don't understand how if you're swimming in a lake that's segregated and you get mad... one type of body is touching the water where you're also touching the water? I don't—

Travis: Who knows.

Teresa: I don't understand it.

Travis: Segregation doesn't make sense, never has made sense. It's bad.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And I know— this is a bold stance, I know. But segregation is bad. Okay.

Teresa: Yes. 17-year-old Eugene Williams was one of these boys playing in the water, and so they inadvertently drifted in the water into a white-only swimming area, and another white beach goer hit him with a rock, striking him, and caused him to drown.

Travis: [gasps] Oh no.

Teresa: And the coroner's report cited that Williams drowned because the stone kept him from coming to shore, the stone-throwing. So he was afraid of getting hit, so he didn't come in, and died, drowning of exhaustion. Right? Not true.

And so when his friends complained, that's when the riots went off, because white gangs went into Black neighborhoods and attacked whoever they could find, making sure, actually, to target innocent citizens who were going to and from work.

38 people were killed, and over 500 were injured. Up to 2000 people lost their homes, to fire and vandalism. Yeah. Powers that be denied calling in things like the National Guard to help. Everyone pretty much just ignored it and let it happen.

So, in the absence of support from basically the rest of Chicago, Ada S. McKinley knew that the answer was in community care, right?

Travis: A thing, by the way, that we still should understand now.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Now, that supporting communities and giving a community resources and giving communities the ability to patrol themselves is the answer? Okay, go on.

Teresa: She marched together with white activists to show that interracial solidarity was possible. She linked arms with well-known activists like Mary McDowell, Jane Addams, and Harriet Vittum. Um, these women marched actually through angry mobs as a demonstration of peace, which is... incredible to me.

Travis: Bold, brave.

Teresa: Very bold, indeed. They were later described—

Travis: I just got chills.

Teresa: Ooh! They were later described as “The Four” and became a symbol of unity for, I mean, one of Chicago's darkest days.

Protest wasn't enough. To further alleviate the racial tension in Chicago, McKinley assisted the Chicago Commission on Race Relations to restore order to the city. She continued her work with the Soldiers and Sailors Club. She offered a space and services for more Black soldiers and veterans who were being discriminated against by the larger white-run veterans organizations. She knew that there had

to be a way to extend this veteran care to the entire community. So, in the early 1920's, her Soldiers and Sailors Club was rebranded as the South Side Community Service.

There were dozens of organizations of this kind in Chicago, but the South Side Settlement House not only served the largest area, but was also the only house staffed completely by African-Americans.

There were lots of things that happened to this settlement house. The government cut their funding off. Let's see, in the early 1920's they had a little bit of funds left over from the War Services funds, but they launched a massive fundraising campaign, and even though it didn't meet their goal, they were able to keep the doors open. And so, the Chicago Commission on Race Relations described the South Side Community Service as, quote, "Aiming to provide wholesome recreation and leisure time activities for its neighborhood."

And it totally did! You've heard me refer to the organization both as the Community Service and the Settlement House. So, what's a settlement house? Is what I want to talk about.

It's basically a giant community center. And there was a whole movement throughout the UK and the US in the 20's, and so what it is, is a kind of social experiment to alleviate poverty. So, you bring the rich and the poor of society together in both physical proximity and social interconnectedness, and the idea is that you open these houses in poor urban areas to provide services such as day care, education, healthcare, you know, whatever. And you hope that the middle class volunteers and the people they serve become socially connected, and they share their knowledge and culture with each other, right?

Travis: Oh, okay. That— I mean, I understand what that is going for. That idea of, like, seeing these people in a very human connection way, of actually getting to know them in a very personal way, and becoming connected to them and wanting to help, because now you know names and faces and stories and all that stuff.

Teresa: So, by 1927, they had offered social programs and, you know, providing general services to over 25,000 individuals in need!

Travis: Wow.

Teresa: Um, but the stew... gets thicker.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: 'Cause here comes the Depression.

Travis: Oh boy. Man, was real rough there!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: For, like, 40 years, huh?

Teresa: [through laughter] Yeah! Totally.

Travis: Oh boy.

Teresa: Totally. Uh, payroll in the city shrank by 25%, and Black Chicagoans by 1932, up to 50% were unemployed.

She did not falter! She did not fail. She rose to the challenge. So, she established job training and literacy programs. She maintained a nursery. She sponsored infant well care station that provided healthcare for approximately 400 children a month!

Travis: Wow!

Teresa: Soon, countless clubs, guilds, political labor parties, entrepreneurial organizations were formed, and held their meetings at her settlement house.

I think that it needs to be said, this was a Black woman in the 30's with almost no resources.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: This is amazing. So, um, one of the cool things about the South Side Settlement House is it never was affiliated with any, like, specific religious denomination. There were lots of different churches that met there regularly for services, but time and again, it proved like a pillar for this part of the Chicago community.

Um, FDR's New Deal helped out considerably. Uh, because McKinley got support from the Work Progress Administration, so they funded courses to train unemployed people in things like painting, and sewing, and cooking, and pottery, and carpentry. And these were— I mean, these were things that, like, would actively get people to work, which was one of the great things about these programs.

And so, the hope that these new trainees would be encouraged to use their skills to contribute to their communities also gave Ada the opportunity to do something that no other settlement house at the time had done: work with the residents of public housing.

Travis: Hmm! Okay.

Teresa: So she reached out to Ida B. Wells Homes, which at the time was one of the poorest public housing projects in Chicago. Um, and they were able to extend their care to that community.

So, they had a small network of community residents and politicians and Black sororities that would help improve the neighborhood and the living conditions, but as far as, like, running day to day things, this was two to three full time jobs for Ada, right?

Travis: Yeah. And what year is this? Twen— what?

Teresa: This is, um, early 40's.

Travis: Wait, really?

Teresa: Yeah. In 1949, after continuing to assist the South Side Community—

Travis: She was 81?

Teresa: Yeah! And at 81... [laughs] they needed a new building. So, um, they began a community renovation project, and the spouses— the faculty members and the spouses of the Illinois Institute of Technology joined up with the Women's Guild at the Settlement House and began raising the funds they needed for a new building. And in 1950, enough funding was secured to develop it on the corner of 34th and Michigan, um, that they dedicated the cornerstone to her! They

renamed it the Ada S. McKinley Community House. And at that point, she was retired. Right?

Travis: I mean, yeah, she was—

Teresa: Totally.

Travis: —this was 1952. She was... 80...

Teresa: 4.

Travis: 84 years old, right.

Teresa: Yeah. At the ceremony, she made this wonderful speech about how she was overjoyed, and so excited that her many years of work had, you know, culminated in such a wonderful plan for an establishment. It wasn't— it wasn't done. But... that night she died.

Travis: So, she laid the cornerstone, and then on the same day—

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: —she died.

Teresa: Um, she was walking up the stairs to her room and she fell on the stairway. And so her cause of death was cerebral hemorrhage, so she hit her head in the fall, basically. And I think that... it's kind of darkly poetic, isn't it? That she would pass the day after her dreams of a permanent South Side Community Center came to fruition.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: So today, she lies in the Oakwood Cemetery in Chicago with her husband and son, and her gravestone is right next to a monument to Chicago's first Black mayor, Harold Washington. And when her monument was dedicated, it was marked by an overflight with the Tuskegee airmen.

Travis: Nice.

Teresa: Pretty awesome! Um, here's the thing, right? These settlement houses are all over major cities, right? Or they were. Some of them have been turned into museums. But you know why this one isn't a museum?

Travis: Why?

Teresa: 'Cause it's still working!

Travis: [gasps] Wow.

Teresa: People are still doing things there. Right? And she never received the same attention or appreciation as, you know, her peers. And, I mean, it's obviously racially, uh—

Travis: Motivated?

Teresa: —motivated.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. So what I would like to offer is, um, Alex found this amazing paper called Ada S. McKinley: A Hidden History of African-American Settlement Houses in Chicago, right? And that's pretty much where all of the information for this came from, because if you look her up on Wikipedia, she's got, what? Two or three paragraphs?

Travis: Yeah, not much.

Teresa: So, if you look up her white counterparts, say Jane Addams, who was operating at the same time as McKinley and doing similar work on the West Side, her Wikipedia page is massive. There are articles about her on PBS, Britannica, the website for the Nobel Peace Prize. Like, her former settlement house is one of those museums. And I think that just the access to information regarding her white counterparts is so much easier to find, right? There is so much more access. And without this paper by Dieser and Lee I don't think we could've had an episode like this.

Nothing against Jane Addams, of course. She helped her community too, right?

Travis: It's not that she deserves less recognition, it's that Ada deserves more.

Teresa: Exactly. Uh, she fought her whole life, Ada did, on behalf of other people at a time when Black women basically held no power in the world. Um, so, hey, listeners. If you are a budding documentary filmmaker, um—

Travis: Or a budding documentary journalist, or whatever—

Teresa: Right, right. I got very heated a couple episodes ago about how— how dare my education not include people like this. And I think that the answer is, we have to make our own. We have to go out and we have to... [sighs] we have to talk about these people. We have to talk about the contributions to society, and we have to get the information out there.

Travis: I also think that it is important to note that there are still people like this today, who are operating, trying to make the world better for the people in their communities, for people of color, for LGBTQ+ people, for people who are still marginalized, in the way that Ada McKinley was trying to make things better for people, and they still need your support today. That this isn't just a historical fight. And so I think it is important to learn about the history of this, while also fighting to support the present of this.

Teresa: Exactly! Let me throw some numbers out at you. As of 2020, the Ada S. McKinley Community Service Incorporated operated more than 70 program locations throughout Chicago. It has sites in Wisconsin and Indiana. Today, they serve over 7000 people, and their work has expanded from the past century, and offers several new programs such as mentoring, foster care, housing opportunities, youth and family counseling, employment placement and training, head start programs, and college placement assistance. Their educational program has placed more than 70,000 youth at over 400 colleges and universities across the country, many of whom went on to become first generation college graduates.

In 2019, the Ada S. McKinley Community Services Inc. celebrated its 100th anniversary. You can visit their website, and you will see... a button, where you can learn more and donate to the cause. So, one of the things that is going on at the moment— not only can you donate to the facility, you also can sign a petition to get a street named after her.

Travis: These are both good.

Teresa: Um, and so if you have the time and resources, do like Ada would do, and connect and serve others in your community.

Travis: Alright, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for listening, and thank you to— was it Emma? Emma who suggested this topic?

Teresa: Yes, thank you to Emma, who suggested it, and Alex, who did such a deep dive for this one. Really appreciate that.

Travis: Amazing. Um, and thank you to Max Fun, our podcast home. Thank you to the other McElroy podcasts. They' very good. You can listen to them—

Teresa: They are *very* good.

Travis: Check them out. Mcelroy.family. Uh, we had talked before about the *Adventure Zone* live show coming up. We had to postpone it because of the inclement weather we discussed. That's coming March 5th, now. Um, let's see. What else?

Uh, you can go to mcelroymerch.com to check out all the cool merchandise that's there. Uh, we wrote a book called *Everybody Has a Podcast (Except You)* that will teach you how to make your own podcast that you are proud of. If you go to mcelroypodcastbook.com, you can find out all the details. Let's see. What else do we usually say, here?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, where— and— which is— whoa, goodness. Which can—[laughs] you can find where it's sold as a ringtone. I don't— I usually that so well and so fast, and I don't know what happened. Try again.

Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. That's @shmannerscast, and when we take questions, that's where we go to get those questions. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover banner of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. Go and join that if you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans.

Travis: Okay, and that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*...

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it?

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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Jesse: Hey, it's Jesse. What you' about to hear is real.

[phone rings]

Chris: Hey, this is Chris.

Jesse: Hi, Chris. It's Jesse, calling from Maximum Fun.

Chris: [through laughter] Hey, Jesse.

Jesse: I heard that you got into a car accident.

Chris: [through laughter] Yeah, I was listening to *Stop Podcasting Yourself* and I just laughed so hard that I, uh, slammed into a construction barrier. [laughs]

Jesse: [wheezes] Do you remember what it was that was so funny?

Chris: I will never forget, I'm sure! They started talking about Vegas and they, you know, stuff that happens here that stays here, and that stuff. And then Graham was talking about, "Oh, you know, wasn't there some other slogan for another commercial?"

Graham: Oh, it was like a commercial for food, and it said, like, "Whatever's in there stays in there"? I can't remember what it was. Clams or something.
[wheezes]

Dave: Clams?!

Chris: Just so ridiculous. And man, I got lightheaded I was laughing so hard. [laughs] Next thing I know [through laughter] smashed [unintelligible]. They are— they are just really, really funny.

Jesse: So, I talked to Dave and Graham from *Stop Podcasting Yourself*. We would like to pay your car repair bill. Is that okay?

Chris: That— I mean, that would be super nice, Jesse. I really— thank you, I appreciate that.