PROGRESS REVIEW — Reviewing 10 years of progress on a prize-winning project, the Negro Day Nurseries, Inc., begun jointly by five federated women's clubs in Lafayette, are Mrs. J. J. Davidson Jr. (left), first president of the governing council, Felix Kurz, first treasurer; Mrs. Lenox Fitch, current president, and Mrs. J. A. Tobin Jr., secretary, who filled the unexpired term of Anthony Wolf, first secretary, Mrs. W. A. LaFleur, who served as the organization's first vice president, and is now serving in that capacity, is not shown. Other members of the first board of directors included Horace Rickey Sr., Joe W. Simon, Dr. Paul Kurz, Mrs. E. V. Chauvin, Mrs. Edmond Hardin, and Mrs. P. E. Stiles. Ten years ago, when the program for the care of children of Negro working mothers was first organized, the five federated women's clubs included the Woman's Club of Lafayette, LaFleur's Fiddle, Idonian and Heure de' Amilie, entered a contest sponsored by the National Federations of Women's Clubs, winning first prize in Louisiana. They received cash. (Advertiser Staff Photo)

2 Lafayette Day Nurseries Prove Boon to Working Parents

When Negro children attending the two Lafayette Day Nurseries in Lafayette turn out to be citizens of which the area may be proud, much of the credit will go to their parents and teachers, who have cooperated with the federated club women of Lafayette in establishing and maintaining the nurseries, it is generally agreed, now that the project is 10 years old.

The first of these nurseries for pre-school children of working Negro parents was opened on October 3, 1949, with 10 children present. Today, this school has 80 children attending and almost double that many on a waiting list, said Mrs. James Collins, spokesman for the group. This nursery is located at 319 Ninth Street.

A second nursery, located at 102 North Washington Street, was opened on September 2, 1952. Prior to this time a survey had been made by the federated women's clubs of Lafayette, to determine whether or not such a nursery was needed for white children of working parents. The survey yielded no evidence that such a nursery was needed at that time, said Mrs. J. J. Davidson Jr., who spearheaded the movement for the Negro Day Nurseries, Inc., and who became the first president of the board of directors governing it.

 Presidents of this board during the 10-year period of the existence of the nurseries have been Mrs. Davidson, Mrs. E. C. Hardin, Mrs. Elroy Citron, Mrs. W. A. LaFleur, Mrs. Herbert Heymann, Mrs. James E. Collins, and Mrs. Lenox Fitch, the current president.

5-Club Affair

At the time the idea of the first such nursery was introduced, Lafayette had only five federated women's clubs, the Woman's Club, Althean, Toujours Fidele, Idonian, and Heure de' Amilie. These five clubs joined to inaugurate this project, seeking a solution to the problem of the proper care for pre-school Negro children.

The object of the nurseries as laid down by the women of the federated clubs who originated them is to provide care and supervision of children of working parents, to teach the Negro pre-school children good character, fair play, proper health habits and preliminary pre-school training. Children in the nurseries range in age from two and one-half years through age six.

Miss Margaret Newman and Miss Louise Dorsey, teachers, have been with the nursery since 1950. They and others see to it that the children, who are at the nursery from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m., have a morning snack of juice and crackers, a nourishing noon lunch, aimed at introducing the children to new foods, and an afternoon snack. The children paint, color, learn songs, have a rhythm band, hear stories, and learn to write their names. A rest period in the morning and another in the afternoon are part of the schedule. Annually a graduation program is held when graduating students receive diplomas and the students present the program. According to Mrs. Davidson, this annual event, planned with great care, attracts a capacity audience.

Tuition is so reasonable that any parents who work can manage this without undue strain. They are charged $1 per week for one child, $2 per week for two children from one family. Enter the nursery, the second child's tuition is cut 25 cents, and the third child's is cut an additional 25 cents.

While the first nursery did not immediately attract much attention, Negro nursery schools, Negro trade schools, clubs, and civic groups all have aided the project, Mrs. Davidson recalls. The trade school made the benches and tables, cots and playground equipment. The five women's clubs who originally joined to begin the Negro Nursery program in Lafayette offered to supply the school with staple equipment every year.

Present board members include Mrs. James E. Collins, Mrs. J. H. Dismukes, Mrs. Lenox Fitch, Mrs. Herbert Heymann, Mrs. Iola Huger, Felix Kurz, Mrs. W. A. LaFleur, Mrs. Womack Lejeune, Mrs. Earl Louviere, Mrs. Jerry McCaulley, Mr. H. C. McCullough, Mrs. Marg McInteer, Mr. J. A. Tobin Jr., Mrs. C. W. Van Vleet.

Clubs represented on the board are Idonian, LaHeure de' Amilie, Althean, Chez Amis, Woman's club, Toujours Fidele, Les Amicales, En Avant, L'Avenir, Lumiere, with each club donating specified supplies throughout the year.