

March 1992



THE INDIANA JUNIOR HISTORIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE INDIANA HISTORICAL BUREAU, STATE OF INDIANA

Focus—

Madam Walker—Entrepreneur

A Real Opportunity for Women
who wish to become Independent.

MME. WALKER'S SYSTEM

of Scientific Scalp Treatment and
Sales of her Hair Preparations are
giving support to more than
100,000 people in this Industry.
Come in and learn how.

Madam Walker was a businesswoman and an entrepreneur—someone who assumes the risks of the business and gains the profits. She hired black women to work for her and sell the Walker Products.

Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Walker Collection, C 3855.

Focus

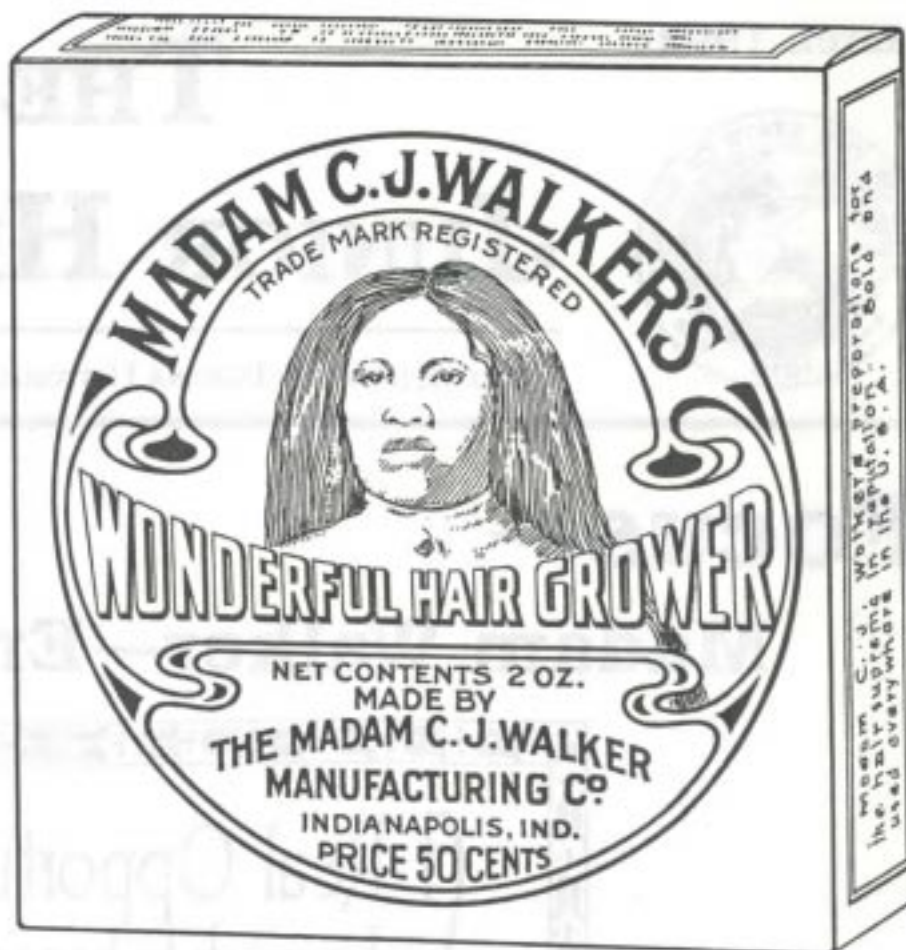
Madam C. J. Walker's life was a true rags to riches story. Her parents were freed slaves; she lived in extreme poverty, and yet she became the first black female millionaire. In a time when most black women worked as maids and cooks, Madam Walker owned her own company and employed hundreds of people.¹

She made contributions to black schools, orphanages, and civil rights organizations. She devoted a great deal of time to the fight for the rights of black war veterans and for federal antilynching legislation.

March is women's history month. Women, who often have been excluded from history books, are recognized in March. Madam C. J. Walker is one of those remarkable women.

Listen to The Nineteenth State tape, two part episode 6-3 and 6-4 entitled Madam C.J. Walker.

¹Madam Walker had a significant impact on the black community in Indianapolis. Her company is still in operation, but members of the Walker family are no longer involved with its operation. The company has moved its corporate headquarters from Indianapolis to Tuskegee, Alabama.



Madam Walker did not use glamorous models to advertise her products; she used her own likeness. She felt that customers could identify with a regular face rather than a glamorous one.

Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Walker Collection, C 3856.

Twentieth Century Business Breakthroughs

People have bought and sold products for thousands of years. What could possibly be new about such an old idea? During the late 1800s there *were* new ideas about buying and selling, and Madam Walker was able to take advantage of one of these ideas.

Advancements in transportation, communication, and postal services changed the way people could do business. In the early 1800s, products and raw materials to make products moved very slowly from area to area by wagon or boat. It took weeks for some-

thing to arrive in Indiana from the East Coast.

In the later 1800s the railroads changed business by connecting the regions of the country and really *uniting the states*. Products could be shipped wherever the railroad went and in less time than by wagon or boat. Railroads made it easier and cheaper to buy and sell products in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and all the towns in between.

Reaching Customers

Other developments also af-

fectured business. Faster printing presses and cheaper paper made from wood pulp made newspapers and magazines more affordable for readers and more profitable for publishers. Products and services had been advertised in these publications for a long time, but the ads were small and often placed in the back of publications.

During the 1890s, the number of newspapers and magazines increased dramatically. McClure's magazine, for instance, went from a circulation of 8,000 in 1893 to 250,000 in 1895!¹ Advertising in these publications increased dramatically too. Advertising could help the customer learn about new products, and it increased the customer's desire to own the product.

Mail-orders boost sales

Madam Walker began selling her hair care products door to door. Selling products door to door was a good way to reach customers directly, but it took a great deal of time and energy. Products could be sold in a store, but only those customers who lived near the store were able to buy them. How could Madam Walker share her hair care formula with many African-American women all over the country?

She saw that many products were being advertised through magazines and newspapers, and it didn't take Madam Walker long to establish her business through ads in black newspapers. Customers would see the ad and buy the product through the mail. A mail-order business was an excellent way for her to sell her products and reach black women all over the country.

The establishment of Rural Free Delivery (or RFD) helped people who didn't live in big cities receive letters and packages quickly. Now, people in outlying

areas could shop better by mail. In 1896, Hope, Indiana, became the first RFD distribution center in the state. In 1897, there were 44 RFD routes in the country. By 1900, Indiana had 270 RFD routes, more than any other state. By 1903, there were 25,000 RFD routes in the nation.² RFD routes were very important to mail order businesses and catalogue businesses like Sears & Roebuck.

Many of the businesses established at the turn of the century are still in business today. They probably would not have prospered and lasted into this century without the advancements made in transportation, communication, and postal services.



The growing hair of the young girl must have proper care now to insure its future health and beauty. Systematic shampooing with

Packer's Tar Soap

is Nature's best aid in promoting the growth and health of the hair at all ages. The pure pine tar, suitably combined with other health-giving agents, has an invigorating effect on the scalp tissues, increasing the hair's vitality and beauty.

Send for our booklet of practical information, "How to Care for Hair and Scalp." Mailed free on request.

Packer Mfg. Co., Suite 87C, 81 Fulton St., New York

Source: *Rowsome, They Laughed When I Sat Down*.

¹Goodman and Dalrymple, *Advertising in America*, pp. 128-129.

²*Rowsome, They Laughed When I Sat Down*, p. 9. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, p. 141.

Activities



- Design a 1992 ad for one of Madam Walker's products. What type of sales techniques will you use—slogans, jingles, endorsements from stars? How does your ad compare with the ads of the early 1900s?
- Survey the students in your school and determine the most popular ad on television and in magazines today. Ask why students like the ad. Does that ad encourage them or their parents to buy that product? Is the advertisement truthful?
- Chapter Three in *Bundles'* book, *Madam C. J. Walker*, gives an excellent description of how Madam Walker started her business. Read that chapter and compare Madam Walker's early career with the careers of other businesswomen past or present.
- Research the early days of these two catalogue businesses: Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. Develop a chart to compare the two.






Continued on p. 11

Health and beauty were two ways that advertisers tried to attract customers. This advertisement appeared in the February 1, 1911 issue of Ladies Home Journal. Courtesy: Indiana State Library.

Activity



A Re +



Madam  + er was looking for a new  to build her national



 +  + S. In 1910 she decided that  +  + is,  + a



would be the best location.  +  + is was located in the  of the

 + 's transportation network and was often called the





 + roads of .


 +  + is was one of the country's largest manufacturing centers.

Eight major  systems traveled in and out of the .

More than 1 million freight cars came through  +  + is yearly.




Two hundred passenger  + s arrived
and departed daily.

 +  + is was the  + er of the  industry

during the early years of the 20th  + ury.

Many other industrial and manufacturing companies were located

in  +  + is. No wonder

Madam  + er wanted to establish her  +  + S there.

Information from: A'Leila Perry Bundles, Madam C. J. Walker.

Madam's Mail Order

Madam C. J. Walker mailed hair products from her Indianapolis factory to agents in the United States and around the world. Pretend you are in charge of the shipping department and must get the products listed out today.

Using the information below, figure the correct postage according to weight and mileage. Although these rates may seem low today, salaries were much lower. The average *yearly* salary for a white man in Indiana in 1914 was \$636 (Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, p. 327). Parcel Post rates shown are from the *1916 Classified Directory, The Indianapolis Star*, Wellett Printing Co. Inc., p.7.

From Indianapolis to:	
Chicago, IL	181 miles
Fort Wayne, IN	118 miles
Memphis, TN	435 miles
Nashville, TN	279 miles
New York, N. Y.	713 miles
Philadelphia, PA	633 miles
Pittsburgh, PA	353 miles
St. Louis, MO	235 miles

15 packages weighing 47 pounds go to St. Louis, MO	\$ _____ total postage
10 packages weighing 25 pounds go to Memphis, TN	\$ _____ total postage
3 packages weighing 20 pounds go to Philadelphia, PA	\$ _____ total postage
35 packages weighing 15 pounds go to Chicago, IL	\$ _____ total postage

Weight, lbs.	local.	First. Up to 50 miles.	Second. 50 to 150 miles.	Third. 150 to 300 miles.	Fourth. 300 to 600 miles.	Fifth. 600 to 1000 m.	Sixth. 1000 to 1400 m.	Seventh. 1400 to 1800 m.	Eighth. Over 1800 miles.
1	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.05	\$0.06	\$0.07	\$0.08	\$0.09	\$0.11	\$0.12
2	.06	.06	.06	.08	.11	.14	.17	.21	.24
3	.06	.07	.07	.10	.15	.20	.25	.31	.36
4	.07	.08	.08	.12	.19	.26	.33	.41	.48
5	.07	.09	.09	.14	.23	.32	.41	.51	.60
6	.08	.10	.10	.16	.27	.38	.49	.61	.72
7	.08	.11	.11	.18	.31	.44	.57	.71	.84
8	.09	.12	.12	.20	.35	.50	.65	.81	.96
9	.09	.13	.13	.22	.39	.56	.73	.91	1.08
10	.10	.14	.14	.24	.43	.62	.81	1.01	1.20
11	.10	.15	.15	.26	.47	.68	.89	1.11	1.32
12	.11	.16	.16	.28	.51	.74	.97	1.21	1.44
13	.11	.17	.17	.30	.55	.80	1.05	1.31	1.56
14	.12	.18	.18	.32	.59	.86	1.13	1.41	1.68
15	.12	.19	.19	.34	.63	.92	1.21	1.51	1.80
16	.13	.20	.20	.36	.67	.95	1.29	1.61	1.92
17	.13	.21	.21	.38	.71	1.04	1.37	1.71	2.04
18	.14	.22	.22	.40	.75	1.10	1.45	1.81	2.16
19	.14	.23	.23	.42	.79	1.16	1.53	1.91	2.28
20	.15	.24	.24	.44	.83	1.22	1.61	2.01	2.40
21	.15	.25	.25						
22	.16	.26	.26						
23	.16	.27	.27						
24	.17	.28	.28						
25	.17	.29	.29						
26	.18	.30	.30						
27	.18	.31	.31						
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38	.24	.42	.42						
39	.24	.43	.43						
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41	.25	.45	.45						
42	.26	.46	.46						
43	.26	.47	.47						
44	.27	.48	.48						
45	.27	.49	.49						
46	.28	.50	.50						
47	.28	.51	.51						
48	.29	.52	.52						
49	.29	.53	.53						
50	.30	.54	.54						

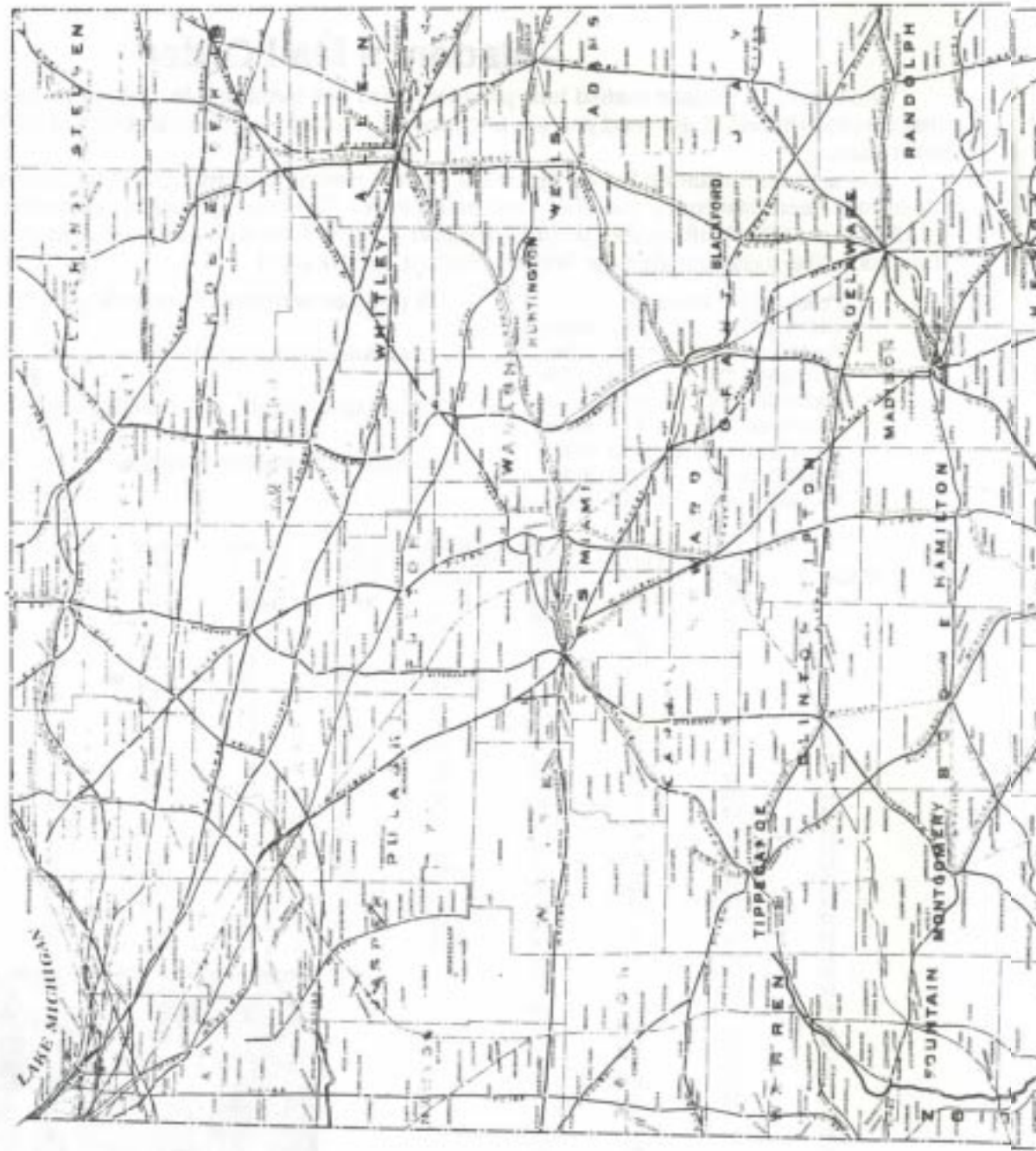


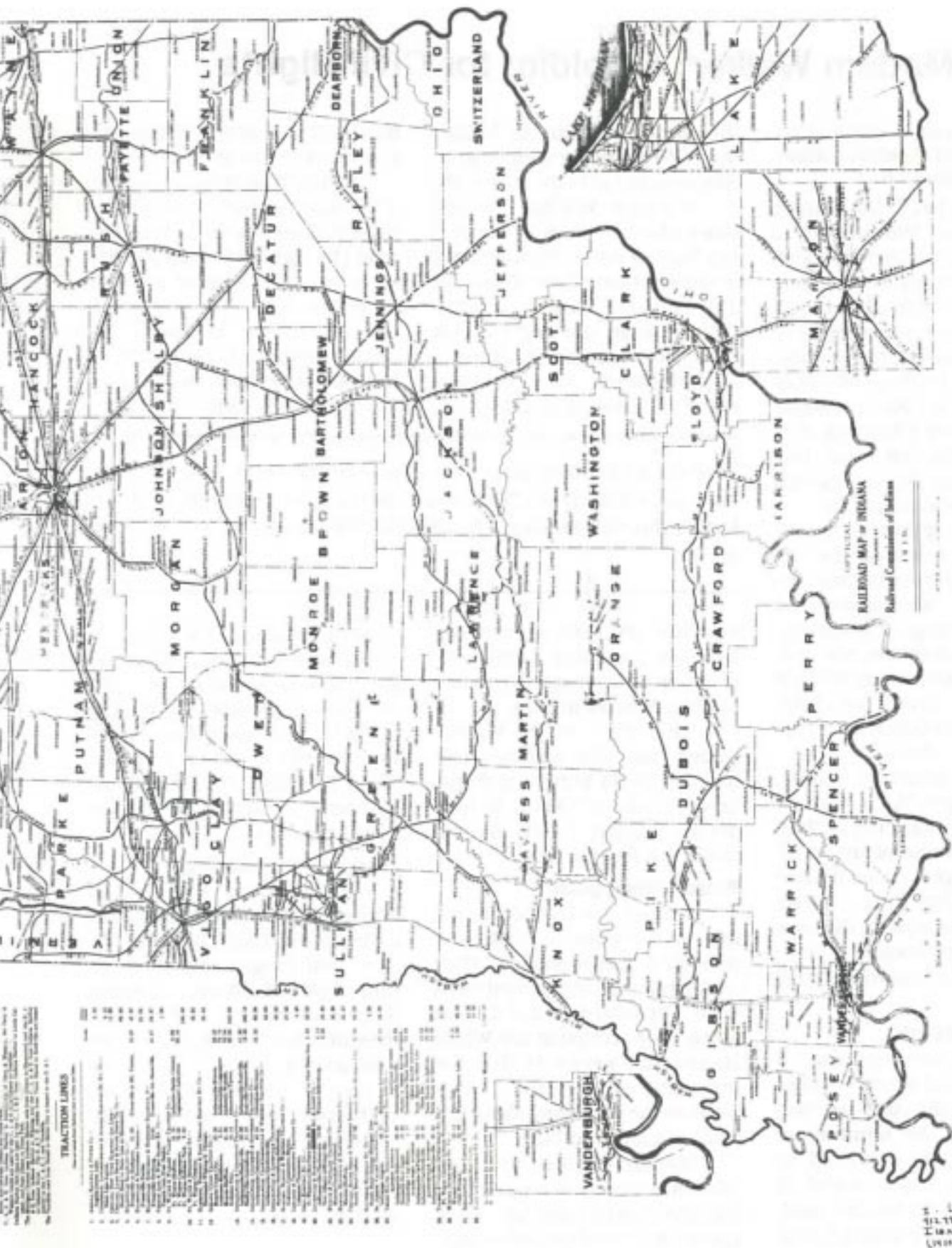
The Madam Walker Company shipped products to all parts of the nation. This photograph was taken in 1919 and shows a delivery truck loaded with products. Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Walker Collection, A 76.

1910 Railroad Map of Indiana

Was your town located on a railroad in 1910? Does a railroad run through your town today? Why are there fewer railroads today?

STREAM BOARDS
 NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES
 PENNSYLVANIA LINES
 PISCO LINES
 MICHIGAN LINES
 WABASH
 ELGIN CENTRAL
 WABASH
 CASS LINES
 TERMINAL AND BRIDGE LINES NOT SHOWN ON MAP
 OPERATIONS & ARRANGEMENTS





Courtesy: Indiana Division, Indiana State Library.

Madam Walker: A Soldier for Civil Rights

[Unless otherwise noted this article is based on *Bundles*, Madam C. J. Walker, pp. 73-87.]

In April, 1917, the United States entered World War I, and a great controversy began in the black community. Many blacks felt that they should not fight for America until they were given their own civil rights. Others, including Madam Walker, felt that black citizens should stand with America, volunteering with the hope that they would finally be granted full and equal citizenship.

Walker supported the enlistment of black soldiers. As with any cause she became involved with, she dedicated much time, energy, and money. Using her influence, she endorsed the government's black recruitment drive. In July, 1917, 700,000 black men registered for the draft.

Visiting training camps, she encouraged black soldiers to become outstanding in their duty. "We all remember you....," wrote one sergeant after Walker had visited his post. "Those words have stayed with the boys longer than any spoken by anyone that I have known or heard of."¹

The Silent March

Not everyone was pleased with the idea of black soldiers fighting to help America win the war. In the summer of 1917, race riots occurred in several cities. The worst of these riots left 39 blacks dead, hundreds of others injured, and

thousands of families homeless. White policemen reportedly watched or helped the mob.

Madam Walker joined other black leaders in the Negro Silent Protest Parade, held in Manhattan, New York, on July 28, 1917. In order to show their outrage and anger at the mob violence, an estimated 10,000 black New Yorkers marched down Fifth Avenue.

"We all remember you....," wrote one sergeant after Walker had visited his post. "Those words have stayed with the boys longer than any spoken by anyone that I have known or heard of."

Another 20,000 spectators watched the silent protest. A number of the marchers were Madam Walker agents.

After the march, Walker hoped that she and her colleagues could persuade President Woodrow Wilson to take action against lynching and make it a federal crime.²

Wilson Disappoints

Walker and other black leaders composed a petition to present to the president. They were promised an appointment with President Wilson, but when they arrived at the White House they were told that the president could not see them because he was busy signing a farm animal feed bill.

Madam Walker and her friends were very disappointed, but they did not give up. They spoke to several senators hop-

ing to get an antilynching bill proposed in Congress.

Walker agents voted in 1917 to send a telegram to President Wilson urging him to defend the rights of black Americans and take a stand against mob violence. The president did issue a public statement against lynching a year later, but his words had little effect.

Madam Walker felt that her

speeches against the inequality of laws were having an effect. She spoke to a convention of Walker agents and urged them "... to remain loyal to our homes, our country and our flag." She also encouraged her listeners to keep fighting for equal rights.³

Bitter Homecoming

After World War I had ended, disillusioned black soldiers found that the America they had fought and died for still rejected them. Having fought to protect rights and freedoms for others, they were still denied those same rights at home. Madam Walker felt both great sadness and anger at the betrayal. Refusing to give up, she continued to fight for equality of all blacks until she died in 1919.



Private Lee Green was inducted into the Army on August 22, 1918 in Evansville, but he died in November at Camp Dodge, Iowa, from complications of influenza.

Courtesy: State Archives, Indiana Commission on Public Records.

¹Bundles, *Madam C. J. Walker*, p. 80.

²From the last quarter of the nineteenth century, blacks were subjected to regular acts of terror. One of the worst acts against blacks was lynching— an unlawful hanging. From 1882 to 1962, 3,442 blacks and 1,294 whites were lynched in the U.S. In Indiana during those same years, 33 whites and 14 blacks were lynched. Harry A. Ploski and James Williams, *The Negro Almanac— A Reference Work on the African-American* (5th Edition, Gale Research Inc. Detroit, New York, 1989), p. 365. Gener-

ally speaking, states considered lynching an ordinary homicide. In 99% of lynching cases, no criminal action was taken against those involved. No federal antilynching law was passed, but the 1968 Civil Rights Act authorized federal action for conspiracy to intimidate. *Dictionary of American History*. Although the Indiana General Assembly passed antilynching legislation in 1899, enforcement did not occur until 1902. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, pp. 376-377.

³Bundles, *Madam C. J. Walker*, p. 83.

Activities

- A'Lelia Perry Bundles is Madam Walker's great, great-granddaughter and the author of the book *Madam C. J. Walker: Entrepreneur*. Ms. Bundles is also a producer with ABC *NewsWorld News Tonight*.

Pretend that Ms. Bundles has asked you to direct a 30 minute television program about Madam Walker. Develop an outline for the show. You only have 30 minutes, and some of that time will be used by the advertisers. What information will you include and what will you leave out?

- Design a book jacket for a biography of Madam Walker.

The Beauty Business

Cosmetics are those products designed to beautify the body. We usually think of women when we think of cosmetics; however, during the 1860s most cosmetics were made for men and sold in barber shops. These included hair oil, dye, and hair and moustache conditioners.

Preparations for women at this time were typically made from home recipes. One recipe for hand lotion included lard, rose water, and coconut milk. Wrinkles around the eyes might be treated by soaking brown paper in apple vinegar and placing strips of this paper over the eyes. Women bit their lips and pinched their cheeks to give color to their faces. Lipstick

and rouge were not available to the average woman. Women shampooed their hair with regular bar soap and rinsed it with rain water to soften it.

Cosmetics for women became more acceptable by the end of the nineteenth century, and a new industry was established. It was during this period of time that Madam Walker developed her line of hair care products.

She experimented with home recipes and finally developed a formula that made her hair look and feel good. Her first three products were called Wonderful Hair Grower, Glossine, and Vegetable Shampoo.¹ She also designed a metal comb with wider teeth that

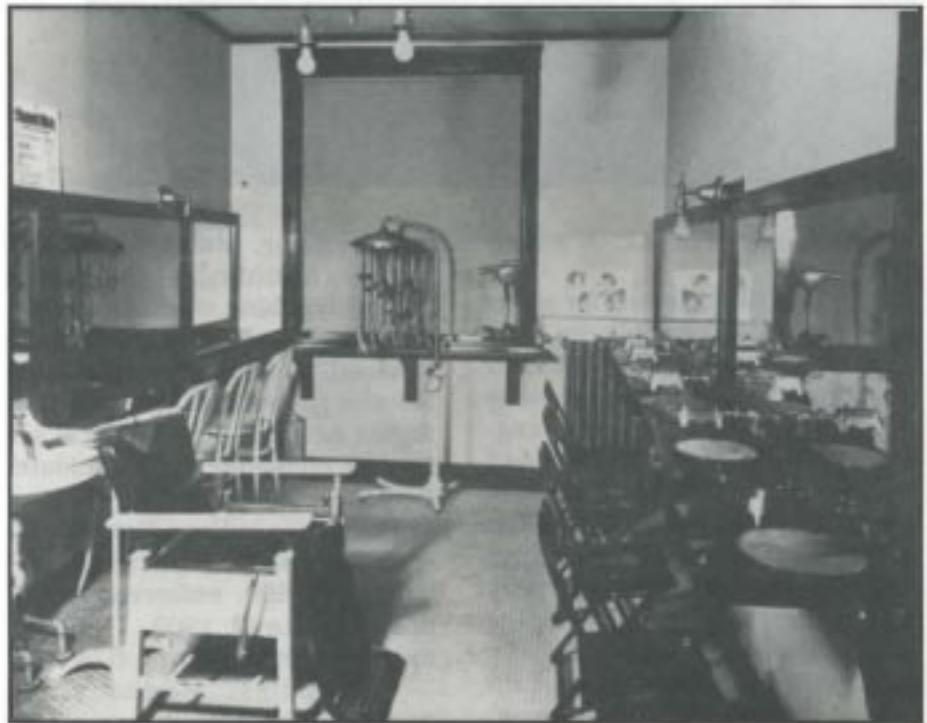
could be heated. The comb and a light oil helped to make the customer's hair softer.

Walker's hair care products were not the first ones designed for black women; there were several on the market. Walker believed that her products were the best for black women, and she sought black customers and black women to sell her products. Her instincts about business were correct, and she became a very successful businesswoman.

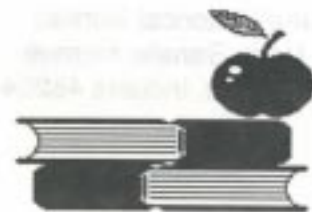
¹These three products (and many others) are still manufactured by the Walker Company today.

Source: Goodman & Dalrymple, *Advertising in America*, pp. 128-129; *Bundles*, Madam C. J. Walker.

Madam Walker opened beauty colleges to teach her system of hair care. This 1924 photograph shows a beauty shop at one of those colleges.
Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Walker Collection, C 3634.



An Apple for Everyone



Selected resources pertaining to Madam Walker and black history in Indiana

- *The Indiana Junior Historian*, February, 1992.

The February issue of this publication described the early years of Madam C. J. Walker's personal and business life. There are many resources listed in the Apple of that issue.

- Bundles, A'Lelia Perry. *Madam C. J. Walker: Entrepreneur*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991.

This is an excellent source on the life of Madam Walker written by her great, great-granddaughter. The book includes wonderful photographs and fascinating information. Written for intermediate and advanced elementary school readers; fast and easy reading for secondary school students and adults.

- Goodman, Charles and Dalrymple, Helen. *Advertising in America: The First 200 Years*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1990.

Well-illustrated history for secondary school and adult readers.

- Lathan, Charles, Jr. "Madam C. J. Walker & Company." *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*. Summer 1989. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 29-40.

This is a good, general article with excellent photographs.

- Phillips, Clifton J. *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of*

an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1968.

This is a basic reference for Indiana history in this time period.

- Rowsome, Frank, Jr. *They Laughed When I Sat Down: An Informal History of Advertising in Words and Pictures*. New York: Bonanza Books, 1959.

This book includes wonderful illustrations and easy to read text.

- Strasser, Susan. *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market*. New York: Pantheon, 1989.

An excellent source for secondary school and adult readers.

Other Sources of Interest

- *Two Dollars and a Dream*.

This excellent 56 minute video on the life of Madam Walker is available free of charge from the Indiana Humanities Council, 317/638-1500.

- **Special thanks to Wilma Gibbs**, Editor, *Black History News and Notes*, and Program Archivist, Indiana Historical Society, for her assistance and cooperation.

- **Special thanks to A'Lelia Perry Bundles** for allowing *The Indiana Junior Historian* to use photographs in the Walker Collection.

Activities, continued from p. 3

- Divide your class into cooperative learning groups and read chapters from *They Laughed When I Sat Down* (See An Apple for Everyone, page 11). Using the information in the book and other sources, prepare a bulletin board showing the history of advertising. How does early advertising compare with today's ads?
- The title of the book *They Laughed When I Sat Down* is actually part of a slogan for a product. Ask your parents or grandparents if they can name the product. Look for the correct answer in the book.

The next issue of *The Indiana Junior Historian* will focus on the Indians of Angel Mounds, noted Indiana archaeologist Glenn Black, and the process used to gather information from early peoples.

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The Indiana Historical Bureau was created in 1915 to celebrate the centennial of statehood. It is the duty of the Historical Bureau to edit and publish documentary and other material relating to the history of the state of Indiana, to promote the study of Indiana history, and to work with others engaged in such pursuits. The Historical Bureau provides books, educational resources, and programs for students and teachers. Several are listed below. The Bureau also directs the Historical Marker Program and the care of the Governors' Portraits Collection.

- **BROADSIDES** produces supplemental educational materials based on primary sources for teaching Indiana history. Student packets encourage active participation and skills development with possible integration in various grades and subjects. An extensive teacher guide provides ready information and teaching resources.

- **Indiana Close Up** is a high school local government program affiliated with the national Close Up Foundation. This participatory annual event encourages study and discussion through the Jefferson Meeting on the Indiana Constitution.

- **Indiana History Day** encourages students grades 4 - 12 to research and prepare papers, exhibits, performances and media presentations on an annual historical theme. An emphasis on original research and interpretation allows students to experience the excitement of discovering or developing skills and interests that enrich their education and their lives. It is part of the National History Day network.

- **REACH**—Resources Educating in the Arts, Culture, and History— is a dynamic program that utilizes art and objects to stimulate dialogue and provide hands-on experiences, exploring not only the arts but also the culture and history of Indiana. Its arts-in-education basis encourages on-going planning for involving community resources in the school.

The Indiana Junior Historical Society is a network of history clubs for students in grades 4 - 12. Locally sponsored clubs initiate and participate in activities which encourage the study of Indiana history, often outside the classroom. The Indiana Junior Historical Society program is administered by the Indiana Historical Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202; 317-232-1882.

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