

Denver, married to C. J. Walker, and the use of advertising were edited by her. After "a big success for my hair," she sent for it, coming in faster than she could assist, did not she also sold a long into a racial crisis. Throughout her life, Sammy Davis, Walker's products, she would invent, she opened Lelia her business to the nation of America. Illustrations on this despite the disrupted Booker T. Washington by demanding "12 by demanding grace," Walker shout- been trying to tell the fields of the South. She noted to the cook manufacturing hair know how to grow endless to say, she got the name of the first black woman in Indianapolis and

financed the restoration of Frederick Douglass's home in Washington, D.C. In July 1917, when a white mob murdered more than three dozen blacks in East St. Louis, Illinois, she helped lead a protest against lynching, contributing five thousand dollars to the NAACP antilynching movement and traveling to the White House with other leaders to present a petition to President Woodrow Wilson. Walker herself moved to New York in 1916, leaving the day-to-day operations of the Mme. C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company in Indianapolis to managers. She quickly became involved in Harlem's social and political life.

In 1918 she moved into the neo-palladian Villa Lewaro, an estate she built at Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, which was designed by the first registered black architect, Vertner Tandy, and situated near the estates of John D. Rockefeller and Jay Gould. At a time when unskilled white workers earned about eleven dollars a week, Walker's agents were making five to fifteen dollars a day, pioneering a system of multilevel marketing that Walker and her associates perfected for the black market. When Walker died of kidney disease in 1919, her fortune and business were left to her daughter, A'Lelia, who like her mother enjoyed entertaining and supporting causes. During the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s she organized a literary salon in her townhouse at 108 West 136th Street. The salon was called "The Dark Tower" after Countee Cullen's column in *Opportunity* magazine. Its purpose was to provide a place for young African-American artists and writers to discuss and exhibit their work.

More than any other single businessperson, Madame C. J. Walker unveiled the vast economic potential of an African-American economy, even one suffocating under Jim Crow segregation in the South and less rigid but still pernicious forms of oppression in the North. She showed how black people could prosper by focusing on the particular needs and desires of their fellow African Americans.

*There is no royal flower-strewn path to success. And if there is, I have not found it, for if I have accomplished anything in life it is because I have been willing to work hard.*

—Madame C. J. Walker

1900-1909