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# Methodological Considerations for Micro Studies of UNIA Divisions

## Some Notes Calling on an Ethno-Historical Analysis

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This article explores various analytical and interpretive tools and historical methods and techniques of historical research and writing for conducting research on local Garveyism and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). The article suggests a new framework that could be used to ably describe, interpret, and evaluate a micro-level analysis of UNIA-ACL divisions of the 1920s and 30s. In an effort to increase knowledge about the role and impact of the Garvey Movement in the United States, the article suggests some methodological considerations.

**Keywords:** *Garveyism; ethno-historical methods; Idlewild; Black Colorado*

This article introduces graduate students with research interests in studying the Garvey Movement to various analytical and interpretive tools and historical methods and techniques of historical research and writing in their investigations of local Garveyism and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL). The objective is to suggest a framework that outlines a methodology that can be advanced as a set of procedures to describe, interpret, and evaluate the micro-level activities of three UNIA-ACL divisions, located in the midwestern and western regions of the United States of the 1920s and 30s. In an effort to gain a better understanding of the concept of Garveyism and the social forces that gave rise to the popularity of Marcus Garvey's UNIA-ACL, the tools *of the intellectual*

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*process and craft that is history* are consulted to guide the direction of this examination. It is for this and a host of other reasons that the subject of this essay warrants intellectual attention because it fills a void in the literature in its promise to offer some methodological considerations that contribute to our knowledge through the engagement of micro-level UNIA studies, a conversation that is rarely addressed in the historiography of the Garvey Movement.

The methodological considerations Black historians have employed over the years to collect and analyze their research and to write scholarly books, monographs, and articles about their findings chronicling civil rights activities in local communities have relied on a combination of intellectual tools, including oral history accounts and historical documents such as newspapers and vital records. In the tradition of the scholar-activist Melville J. Herskovits (1951, p. 124), the techniques of research known as ethno-history are used in this essay in its investigation of some of the activities, events, and leaders of the Idlewild, Michigan, and Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado, UNIA-ACL divisions. This ethno-historical methodological model connects historical analysis and research and ethnographic comparison.

A series of historical undertakings, beginning with a review of the major body of literature, is first necessary in understanding the historiography of the UNIA. A second task should involve consulting the Central Division Files of the UNIA, followed by a systematic search through the newspaper micro-filmed collections of Black newspapers of the period, including *The Negro World (NW)*, along with a process of verification of authorship and the credibility of the newspaper's accounts of the division's activities. The following Black newspapers were consulted: *NW*, *The Lake County Star (LCS)*, *The Denver Star*, *The Colorado Statesman*, and *The Colorado Springs Gazette*. A systematic search through these publications resulted in the creation of a chronology with interpretive summaries of major events for each division, though for the sake of space limitations this essay focuses on only one of them. In the process of learning how to read *NW* and other Black newspapers, through the tools of internal evidence and effective note takings, chronologies and membership rosters, complete with the names and identities of division leaders, were created. A final strategic choice for this method was to cross-reference primary and secondary sources within and outside Michigan and U.S. borders.

In our second methodological consideration, which is ethnographic, the field researcher discovers firsthand from the perspective of family members of later generations their interpretation of the various UNIA initiatives. Family members of UNIA division leaders and members are consulted and interviewed so that the researchers can collect valuable documents, stories,

and/or artifacts saved, preserved, and shared by family members. This qualitative method is widely known for drawing conclusions about the nature, meaning, and significance of community activities. The documentation used to contextualize the histories of the Idlewild, Denver, and Colorado Springs communities came through in-depth, face-to-face, tape-recorded oral history interviews with approximately 10 participants. Nearly half of the interviews were conducted with individuals who have had some active involvement with the building and preserving of their community's history and family's legacy. In some cases, some informal interviews were conducted to foster quality relationships with key informants and selected community stakeholders for the purpose of getting leads. For example, in the Idlewild, Michigan, community, some of the residents who had an abundance of experience and knowledge to share about the history of their community provided significant information about the activities of their relatives. It was clear from the in-depth conversations with some of the participants that too often some of the residents have had little influence and/or control over the documentation of their lived experiences. In overcoming the obstacle of prolonged periods of doing without the "rare" documentation needed to speak to their realities, trust and credibility must be gained to ensure positive results. The use of this selected list of oral history interviews in the end proved to be an excellent investigation of time and energy.

### **Contextualizing U.S. History and the Garvey Movement**

William K. Storey (2004), author of *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, was correct when he stated,

Historical writing resembles detective work because sources often raise more questions than they answer. Sometimes they lead historians on exhilarating wild-goose chases that culminate in dead ends. Other times they enable historians to slowly recover unexpected tales from the past. (p. 17)

Fortunately, there is only one way to conceptualize the history and phenomenal growth of the UNIA, and that is to search through the academic literature written by and about Garvey, Garveyism, and the UNIA-ACL, which is well documented in the writings of E. David Cronon (1955), Amy Jacques Garvey (1970), Tony Martin (1976, 1983), Randall Burkett (1978a, 1978b), Emory Tolbert (1980), Robert Hill (1983-1990, 1995), Judith Stein

(1986), Jeanette Smith-Irvin (1989), Winston James (1998), and Ula Yvette Taylor (2002). Although the standard interpretation of the Garvey Movement generally concludes that Garvey was either a success, a failure, or a traitor, they each in their own way make a contribution to our understanding of the value of micro-level studies of the organization. The extent to which Garvey and the UNIA-ACL were influential as change agents in altering life experiences of Black people in local communities is still to be determined in spite of the mounting problems he encountered as president general of the UNIA-ACL with the federal government for using the mail to defraud and some of his enemies for making contact with the grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. For some scholars, Marcus Garvey was successful in motivating millions of Black people worldwide to take pride in their culture within a 10-year period (Fitzgerald & Scruggs, 2006). The scope of his vision as a visionary thinker and leader significantly contributed to our understanding of the international, national, and local relevance of the UNIA-ACL in the United States, the Caribbean, Canada, and Africa.

In the United States, the 20th century represented a period of profound social, political, cultural, religious, and economic changes and challenges for African Americans in communities in the South and the North that ultimately fostered a sense of community and identity. Stephens (2003), who paraphrased Vincent (1988), notes that in the wake of World War I, which heightened expectations to fight against European colonial rule in Africa and the Caribbean and racial segregation and discrimination in the United States, Garvey's repeated rhetorical utterances of "Africa for the Africans" appealed to millions of Africans in the United States and abroad. In the 1920s and 1930s, Garvey's UNIA represented the largest Black mass movement in modern history "operating on five continents with a reputed membership of six million followers organized in over 800 branches" (Lee, 2000, p. A8). The measure of change, which was manifested through the activism of UNIA-ACL branches in Southern Africa, the British Caribbean, Latin America, and many of the urban cities and rural towns of the United States, inspired Garvey to motivate a significant number of African American citizens migrating from the South to the North, East, West, Midwest, Southwest, and industrial South (Trotter, 1991). Garvey's thundering voice rallied them to make the mental shift from a race of an inferior people to a race of a people who proudly embraced their cultural dignity, heritage, identity, independence, and God-given human rights.

Initially, the organizational aims and objectives of the UNIA did not become widely known to members of various African American communities until after the 1920 International Convention of the UNIA-ACL, held August 1 to 31, 1920, the convention at which UNIA delegates drafted and

adopted the organization's constitution and bill of rights and announced the election of Garvey as a world leader and a Negro leader of 12,000,000 people of the United States and the provisional president of Africa. With this notoriety, the literature informs us that Garvey used Harlem, then known as the capital of Black cultural and economic success, as his base of operation from 1916 to 1927 to initiate his call for racial pride, African redemption, and self-reliance. At the height of his power and influence, Garvey motivated Black middle- and lower-class supporters to both establish and support Black-owned grocery stores, restaurants, laundry mats, insurance companies, real estate brokerages, resort communities, and other business enterprises (Vincent, 1988).

The ideological and organizational activities of the UNIA-ACL essentially embraced many of the very same commercial, political, religious, and social concerns of the Black masses worldwide. However, the business ventures of Garvey, which were marked by both praise and negative criticism, did not materialize into the progressive ideas he outlined. Historian Theodore Vincent (1988) illustrates how during 1919 and the early 1920s, the U.S.-based New York headquarters of Garvey's UNIA-ACL had begun to

buy and rent property for what would become cooperative grocery stores, restaurants, laundries, garment factories, dress shops, greeting card companies, a millinery, a phonograph record company and a publishing house. Most of these business ventures developed as part of the Negro Factories Corporation, an economic cooperative whose directors were elected annually at UNIA conventions.

Vincent explains how Garvey's plans for the Negro Factories Corporation "called for creating the infrastructure to manufacture every marketable commodity in every big U.S. industrial center, as well as those in Central America, the West Indies, and Africa." Next to these business ventures, the UNIA-ACL acquired two additional operations, *NW*, the official communications organ of the organization, and the Black Star Steamship Line. *NW*, which ceased publication in 1933, represented the pinnacle of Garvey's journalistic career, whereas the Black Star Steamship Line and its successor, the Black Cross Navigation and Trading Company, failed because of mismanagement and charges of fraud. Eventually, the mail fraud charges led to Garvey's conviction in 1921, his imprisonment in 1925, and his ultimate deportation in 1927, which came as a result of a lengthy investigation led by J. Edgar Hoover, a young agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Post Office. It was these two arms of the federal government that

influenced the U.S. Attorney General's office to bring charges of mail fraud against Garvey for selling stock in the failed Black Star Line.

In the historiography of Garvey and Garveyism in the United States, scholars have only recently begun to document the micro-level activities of the UNIA-ACL. Local UNIA histories reported in the scholarship of Cronon (1955), Clarke (1974), Tolbert (1980), Martin (1983), Elkins (1994), Lewis (1994), Olusanya (1994), Rosaina (1998), James (1998), Taylor (2002), and Stephens (2003) represent an excellent starting point for calling for continued research on grassroots activism of local UNIA divisions and Garveyites in selected Black communities in the Caribbean, the United States, and Africa. In the past 20 years, these ideas about the historiography of the Garvey Movement have undergone profound changes. This, in turn, suggests that there is a continued need for a reorientation in our thinking about how we conduct local UNIA histories and how we always need to verify basic assumptions and practices of historical research and historical writing.

Next to obtaining a solid grasp of the major literature about Garvey, Garveyism, and the UNIA-ACL, it would help researchers to identify and verify the location of specific UNIA divisions in the states and cities and towns where they were founded and to explore their longevity and impact as small activist groups and community-based organizations. One primary source to consult to get to these results is the UNIA-ACL Central Division Files at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library.

### **Consulting the UNIA Central Division Files, 1919-1930**

In the case of Garveyism in Idlewild, Michigan, Stephens (2003), citing Lee (2000), found reviewing the original membership cards in the UNIA Central Division (New York) files, 1925 to 1926, to be extremely helpful. The files, which are located in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Marcus Garvey collection and cited in Martin's (1976) *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* as well as in Hill's (1983-1990) edited *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, provided important information during the early stage of the research process. In researching the files of the Idlewild Division and a report quoting UNIA Secretary General Henrietta Vinton Davis, which was published in the May 3, 1930, *NW*,<sup>1</sup> listing charters issued to "renewed" and "new"

branches (D), the following list of Michigan UNIA branches was drawn from the UNIA Central Division (CD; New York) files, 1925-1926. The list of divisions was identified, along with the division number, as Albion No. 179 (CD); Ann Arbor; Branch; Detroit No. 125/No. 170 (D); Flint No. 276 (CD); Halfway/Half Way (*NW*, 4/3/26, 2: 4); Hamtramck No. 159 (*NW*, 2/21/25, 8: 4; V); Idlewild No. 895 (CD)/No. 126 (D); Jackson No. 349 (CD); Kalamazoo; Macomb; Macomb Garden No. 752 (CD)/No. 104 (D); Muskegon (*NW*, 10/4? /30?: 4; 10/25/30, 4: 5); North Detroit No. 171 (D); Pontiac No. 259 (CD)/No. 106 (D); Quinn Road No. 788 (CD); River Rouge No. 315 (*NW*, 2/21/25, 8: 4); and Ypsilanti No. 597 (CD).<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that when using the tools of internal evidence, evaluating the reporting mechanism of the Central Division files and other sources is important in the documentation process.

In one report of the Idlewild Division published in *NW* that reads “the Rev. O. W. Motley spoke of the new club in Muskegon, which will soon send for a charter,” the use of internal evidence suggests that there was yet another Michigan UNIA division developing, which did not get recorded in the Central Division files. After months of searching through Idlewild Division reports published in *NW* and *LCS* newspapers, the Muskegon Division was reported in the October 4, 1930, issue of *NW*. After combing through *NW*, I created a chronology of Idlewild Division events.<sup>3</sup>

## **Chronologically Outlining UNIA Division Activities and Reports**

Chronologies serve “a number of purposes” for historical research and writing.

Chronologies can help you place primary sources in their contemporary context because they list events in order of the date they occurred and suggest the cultural influences that potentially impacted the individuals and groups you are analyzing. Sometimes these reference sources will categorize social, scientific, and political events in separate lists. (Presnell, 2007, p. 34)

The chronology established from these local division reports published as primary or secondary sources in *NW*, other Black newspapers, and scholarly books offers critical insight and knowledge about the activities of a given UNIA division. A chronology should systematically arrange the narrative from these reports to ensure a good historical introduction of the division’s

origins and activities, a brief historical treatment of the period under investigation, and a reliable explanation of why these division reports can assist in telling a story about the specific role a division served in a local community.

In the chronology established for the Idlewild UNIA Division, references to primary and secondary sources are cited in abbreviations of publications, along with page numbers and dates. Chronological entries covering a 3-year period of division activities and events were arranged according to date and order of events.<sup>4</sup>

## 1927

*May 9:* John H. Hawthorne and Ella J. Hawthorne purchases convey Lots 9, 10, 11, and 12 in Block 13 of Wilson's Paradise Gardens from Herman O. Wilson and Lela G. Wilson. A warranty deed was signed after a payment of \$1.00 was received (Lake County Abstract Company, Title Information, May 9, 1927).

*May 22:* Mrs. Anna Reese, secretary for the Detroit Chapter, reported in the division's report, "We are working to get Michigan organized for the Universal Negro Improvement Association" (*NW*, June 4, 1927, p. 6).

*July 3:* Leonard Smith, president and acting commissioner for Michigan issued the following statement: "To all divisions and chapters of the UNIA in the State of Michigan. Each division must hold a local convention, beginning Sunday, July 31, and continuing to Saturday, August 6, in which you are to discuss the agenda outlined in *NW*. We request that each division and chapter in Michigan send one or more delegate to Detroit where we shall convene from August 7 to 14. In this assembly we propose to discuss ways and means of expanding and increasing our activities in this state" (*NW*, July 16, 1927, p. 7).

*August 20:* A. G. Taylor, Brooklyn, New York, donates monies, along with other division leaders and members, to Marcus Garvey, Register No. 19359, during his imprisonment at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary (*Garvey Papers*, VII, p. 472).

*November 18:* Responding to pressure for Garvey's release, President Calvin Coolidge commutes Garvey's sentence, but the government directs that he be deported back to Kingston, Jamaica (Martin, 1976, p. 200).

*December 2:* Garvey departs from New Orleans, Louisiana, on the S. S. Saramacca. Among the 5,000 well-wishers who arrive to see him off is a committee composed of the larger UNIA divisions, including Craigen, Joseph A. Craigen of the Detroit Chapter (Martin, 1976, p. 17; *Garvey Papers*, VII, lxxvii, p. 6 n. 3, p. 14; Cronon, 1955, p. 123).



## 1928

*January 21:* *NW* publishes Garvey's new list of six UNIA high commissioners, including Craigen, who is made district leader of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota (*Garvey Papers*, VII, p. 88).

*October 15:* Mortgage is assigned over to Division Number 895 of the Universal Negro Improvement Association of Idlewild, Michigan, to A.H. Brott and recorded in Liber 30 Mtgs. W.O. Jones, president and Charles W. Wilson, secretary and Moody Birt, Tom Thomas, John H. Hawthorne, A. D. Smith, and Nero Williams, its board of trustees. The property was purchased for \$500.00, with a principal payment of \$10.00 or more per month beginning November 15, 1928, to April 15, 1929, inclusive; \$20.00 or more monthly beginning May 15, 1929, to October 15, 1929, inclusive; \$10.00 or more per month beginning November 15, 1929, to April 15, 1930, inclusive; \$140.00 on or before November 15, 1930, according to terms of one promissory note of even date. Interest 7% per annum, payable monthly. Power of Sale on default (Lake County Abstract Company, Title Information, 9).

## 1929

*February 17:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting in Liberty Hall. The meeting opened in the usual way with the president, Mr. Albert Glen Taylor, conducting the opening services. The program consisted of songs and speeches by various members of the division. Among those who spoke were the lady president of the division (Vina G. Smith), Rev. George R. Rainey, and Mrs. Laura Jones (*NW*, March 30, 1929, p. 3).

*February 24:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting in Liberty Hall. The meeting opened with the singing of the opening song and continued with a reading of the front page ("On With the Fight," written by Marcus Garvey, March 24, 1923) of *NW* by the lady president. The opening address by the president was based on the topic discussed by the president general in his weekly message (*NW*, March 30, 1929, p. 3).

*March 31:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting in Liberty Hall on Easter Sunday brought out "all the folks and a few new frocks to the church for morning service, and to the UNIA for the afternoon program given by the juveniles" (*NW*, April 13, 1929, p. 3; *LCS*, April 5, 1929, p. 3).

*April 7:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting on "Goodwill Sunday" at the Paradise Club instead of Liberty Hall because the kitchen service is more complete. The UNIA rendered a program and a get-together of the people in the surrounding neighborhoods for the purpose of some plans for better business. E. G. White introduced Mr. Edward A. Elsner, the first speaker, spoke on the subject of "unity." Mr. Pete Moore, the county road high commissioner, also gave a great talk. After a harp solo by Joseph Thomson, Rev. H. Franklin Bray made a soul-stirring address on

“good will.” This was followed by talk on “unity” by the first lady vice president, Mrs. Lela G. Wilson, and the closing address by the president focused on the objects and aims of the UNIA (*NW*, May 11, 1929, p. 3; *LCS*, April 5, 1929, p. 3).

*April 9:* Some Idlewilders raised concerns about the purpose and nature of the UNIA in the community. In response to community criticisms, an editorial appeared in *LCS*, which reported the following: “The Universal Negro Improvement Association is a friendly, humanitarian, charitable, educational, institutional, constructive and expansive society, and is founded by persons desiring to the utmost to work for the general uplift of the Negro peoples. The members pledge themselves to do all in their power to conserve the rights of all mankind.

“Believing always in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, our motto is ‘One God, One Aim, One Destiny,’ therefore, let justice be done to all mankind, realizing that if the strong oppress the weak, confusion and discontent will ever mark the path of man. With love, faith and charity toward all, the reign of peace and plenty will be heralded into the world and the generations of men will be called Blessed.

“There has been quite a bit of misunderstanding of the aims and objects of the UNIA, but with the present president, this is being wiped out, and we are truly thankful. This organization has and is reaching into the homes of millions of people that needed to be awakened to the more serious side of life, and to share the responsibilities of being better citizens and having more regard for the world at large in the right way. This organization believes in race purity. It advocates all religions, and disagrees with none” (*LCS*, April 19, 1929, p. 3).

*April 14:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting in Liberty Hall. The meeting was opened with the usual song, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains,” which was followed by prayer. The women and the children rendered a very unusual but highly entertaining program. The last speaker of the day was the division’s president, Mr. Taylor, who made the last half hour very interesting by explaining portions of the ancient Negro history (*NW*, May 11, 1929, p. 3).

*April 21:* Division No. 895 met in its usual form with A. G. Taylor, president, in the chair. Then, there was short talk by the president instructing the members on the necessity of being financially substantial. The Rev. M. L. Turner, appointed chaplain for the division, followed. The president then turned the meeting over to Colonel E. G. White, captain of the legion. For “Legions Day,” the legion gave a splendid program at Liberty Hall. The members felt that E. G. White “is well qualified to train the young men in military tactics, having served in the world war with the rank of lieutenant” (*LCS*, April 26, 1929, p. 3). Two new members joined the division. The closing address was by G. R. Rainey, who made a soul-stirring talk about the need of the legion (*NW*, May 24, 1929, p. 3).

*May 3:* The division traveled to Baldwin on a special occasion. Mrs. Jane Brown noted how the work of the legion brought success to the division (*LCS*, April 26, 1929, p. 3).

*May 4:* The legion sponsored “entertainment” at Liberty Hall to raise funds “to purchase uniforms” (*LCS*, May 10, 1929, p. 4).

*May 5:* Division No. 895 held its regular weekly meeting. The meeting was called to order at the usual hour with A. G. Taylor, president, in the chair. The division served dinner the entire week at \$0.25 per plate to raise money to be used to buy materials for flags and pennants. Rev. H. Franklin Bray donated a manufacturing or business site to the division (*LCS*, May 10, 1929, p. 4). Four new members joined the division (*NW*, August 3, 1929, p. 3).

*May 12:* Division 895 held its regular weekly meeting in Liberty Hall. The division discussed preparation for the arrival of the Detroit Division, as the program committee was “busy finding sleeping accommodations for about 1000” (*LCS*, May 17, 1929, p. 2).

*June:* The UNIA held its Legion Encampment, which meant a “lengthening of the season. The Detroit Division [was] the first to arrive, and [was] 375 strong.” They camped in Paradise Park, while lots of members stayed with local residents from Cherry Valley to Idlewild Terrace (*LCS*, May 24, 1929, p. 2).

*June 8:* Albert Glen Taylor, the newly elected president of the Idlewild Division of the Idlewild Division of the UNIA, Division 895, purchases Lot 6, Block 1 of Thompson Park in Yates Township of Lake County, Michigan (Lake County Abstract Company, Warranty Deed, Libel 81, 1929).

*July 24:* The regular mass meeting of Division No. 895 was opened in the usual form with the first vice president, George R. Rainey, in the chair. Singing their usual song, “Greenland’s Icy Mountains,” preceded prayer by the president. There was a short talk about the front page message of *NW* by the president. The first lady vice president, Mrs. L. G. Wilson, made a splendid address about her visit to the Cleveland Division (*NW*, October 5, 1929, p. 3).

*August 1-31:* Garvey hosts the UNIA convention at Kingston. Among the Michigan delegates are Craigen and Smith of Detroit and A. G. Taylor of Idlewild (*Garvey Papers*, VII, pp. 316, 318 n. 4, 341, 448, 962; *The Blackman*, August 31, 1929, p. 5).

*August 19:* As one of the numerous delegates to the convention, A. G. Taylor notes in an interview with *The Blackman* that “our conditions can easily be improved, and if some of us would direct our attention from the staple produces as bananas and the like, and seek to push other products of this country such as the pineapple for champagne and producing fruit, which would be cheaper and equal in quality. . . . We would help to improve our situation” (*The Blackman*, August 26, 1929, p. 7).

*August 25:* Following the opening address of Mr. Garvey, three delegates, Taylor (Idlewild), Benjamin Sumlin (Chicago), and Bishop Barber (Youngstown), spoke to nearly 20,000 attendees of the convention. The Rev. A. G. Taylor delivered a rousing speech concerning his thoughts about the American wing of the UNIA and about his presidency in Idlewild, Michigan, "a small suburban town with a very small population." Taylor states that "the majority of the population of Idlewild are members of the UNIA, the chief-officer of the township is a member, the Justice of Peace are members, the constables are members, and, in fact, every civil officer in Idlewild, Michigan is a Garveyite to the core" (*The Blackman*, August 31, 1929, p. 5). Taylor spoke on several other matters during the convention, "and as a result of his sane enunciations, he was named by the Speaker in Convention to several committees" (*The Blackman*, August 31, 1929, p. 12).

*September 15:* Division No. 895 met in their usual form, the lady president, Mrs. Vina Smith, singing "Greenland's Icy Mountains." There was a prayer by the lady president, who also read the front page of *NW*. The members who pledged on the building were called for. A message from the president, A. G. Taylor, from Harrisburg, Pa., was on his way home, and will arrive in Idlewild on the 30th. Mrs. Lola Underwood was asked to get up a program for the occasion (*NW*, November 2, 1929, p. 3).

*September 28:* According to the president-general's Weekly Message of *NW*, September 28, A. G. Taylor of Idlewild pledged \$500.00 to be paid in quarterly, half yearly, or yearly installments to execute the program decided on during the sixth international convention (*NW*, September 28, 1929, p. 2).

*October 6:* Division No. 895 met in the usual form with G. R. Rainey, acting president, singing "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." The president gave fine instructions to members, noting that every member of the UNIA should pray that Marcus Garvey should be relieved and reach the League of Nations. The front page message of *NW* was read by the lady president, stating that the Hon. Marcus Garvey was again in trouble (*NW*, November 16, 1929, p. 3).

*October 20:* Before arriving in Idlewild, a column of *The Blackman*, titled "Some Delegates Write," was published in which the Hon. and Rev. Albert G. Taylor of Idlewild, Michigan, writes to friends of Jamaica, stating "he begs to return thanks to all those who helped to make his stay in Jamaica a happy one. He had a big welcome from his Division, they were glad to see him and to hear the news of the Convention. . . . His Division has arranged to carry on the drive for Negro emancipation more than before and are ready to give their all to the movement. He says 'Carry on Jamaica, Idlewild is behind you!'" (J.A.J.A., "Some Delegates Write," *The Blackman*, October 21, 1929, p. 7).

*October 29:* The meeting of the Idlewild Division opened in the usual manner, with the lady president, Mrs. Vina Smith, in the chair. The vice president then introduced the president, who had just returned from the

convention. Mr. A. G. Taylor, the president, brought a very inspiring message from the convention, outlining divisional changes and asking for the cooperation of the membership in putting over the big program (*NW*, January 25, 1930, p. 3).

*November 17*: Division No. 895 opened in the usual manner, with the lady president, Vina Smith, in the chair. Communication from the Hon. E. B. Knox was read by the secretary and was received with great applause (*NW*, December 21, 1929, p. 3).

This chronology was useful in linking the micro-level activities of the Idlewild Division to other UNIA divisions located in and outside the state of Michigan and on one occasion outside the U.S. Interstate and outer-state networks were established with divisions in such cities as Detroit, Michigan; Muskegon, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; Gary, Indiana; and Chicago, Illinois, as well as with the Parent Body in New York. The chronology also reveals how the Detroit chapter was significantly instrumental in expanding the visibility of the UNIA in Michigan. Although the Detroit chapter and other Michigan divisions embraced themes of institution building, cultural identity, and Black achievement, it and other UNIA divisions across the country took the religious character of the movement very seriously. This was reflected in belief in Garvey's "well developed and internally consistent theological framework," which gave "meaning to [their] history and their destiny under a God who was working on their behalf" (Burkett, 1978b, p. 196).

## Learning How to Read *NW*

Learning how to critically read *NW* involves a series of close readings of various sections and issues of the paper to ensure accuracy and specificity. Note taking is essential to the recording of members' names and the names of local officers attending the meetings and in establishing membership rosters, verifying dates of events, and cross-referencing primary and secondary sources. Presented in Table 1, excerpts in the forms of summaries were developed to create an elaborative membership roster to illustrate how good note taking can prove to be a very useful exercise.

Critically reading *NW* and other Black newspapers of the era also raises a number of critical questions, such as the following: When were the division reports written? Where were they published? By whom were they written? From what preexisting material were specific reports produced? In what original form were they produced? And what is the evidential value of the

**Table 1**  
**Creating Membership Rosters for the Idlewild Universal  
 Negro Improvement Association Divisions**

Division No. 895 (1929-May 4, 1930)	Division No. 126 (May 4, 1930)
Rev. Albert G. Taylor, president (1929)	Mrs. Lela G. Wilson, lady vice president
Mrs. Vina Smith, lady vice president	Mrs. Vina Smith, lady president (1930)
Mrs. Lela G. Wilson, major property owner	Mr. Lee Porter, president
Rev. George R. Rainey, captain legion	Rev. Mary L. Turner, chaplain
Mrs. Ella Hawthorne (wife)	Rev. Oliver W. Motley (Muskegon)
John H. Hawthorne (husband), businessman	Mrs. Beulah Riddle
Mr. Oscar Blankenship, contractor	Catherine Smith (daughter)
Catherine Smith (daughter)	Adam Daniel Smith, reporter

contents of the reports? In the case of Idlewild, the research reveals for the year 1929 that Division 895 regularly met in Liberty Hall on the following days: January 6, 13, 20, and 27; **February 3, 10, 17, and 24**; March 3, 10, 17, 24, and **31**; **April 7, 14, 21, 28**; May 5, 12, 19, and 26; June 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30; **July 7, 10, 17, 24, and 31**; August 4, 11, 18, and 25; **September 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29**; **October 6, 13, 20, and 27**; **November 2, 10, 17, 24, and 31**; December 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. The use of a perpetual calendar may prove to be extremely useful in cases where UNIA Division reports were not published in *NW* and where other evidence published in *LCS* may suggest that the division regularly held their meetings. Notice that only the division reports with the months and days highlighted in bold were printed in *NW*. The dates division meetings occurred must be checked and cross-checked with the dates the newspapers published them. In *NW*, on the Division News Page of the UNIA, however, one weekly meeting was held in Liberty Hall on Sunday, February 17, 1929, but was not published in the newspaper until Saturday, March 30, 1929 (column 7, p. 3). The division’s secretary, Adam D. Smith, reported that the meeting occurred on Sunday, February 17, where it

opened in the usual way with the president, Mr. A. [Albert] G. Taylor, conducting the opening services. The program consisted of songs and speeches by various members of the division. Among those who spoke were the lady president of the division, Rev. George R. Rainey and Mrs. Laura Jones. The meeting closed in the usual manner.

During these meetings, as Burkett (1989) observed, they “possessed many of the characteristics of a religious service” (p. 63), as these meetings were usually held on Sunday afternoons and evenings, where they began with

**Table 2**  
**Idlewild Division Officers, 1928**

Division number	895
Founding	September 1927
Headquarters, meeting places	In the home of Lela G. and Herman O. Wilson
Membership	Approx. 15
President	William O. Jones
First vice president	Moody Birt
Second vice president	Tom Thomas
Executive secretary	Charles W. Wilson
General secretary	Adam Daniel Smith
Treasurer	John Hawthorne
Assistant treasurer	Nero Williams
Ladies' division	
Lady president	Mrs. Vina G. Smith
First lady vice president	Mrs. Lela G. Wilson
Second lady vice president	Elizabeth Thompson
Third lady vice president	Edna Thomas
Assistant secretary	Mrs. Beulah Riddle
Assistant treasurer	Mrs. Lizzy Dorsey
President, Black Cross Nurses	Mrs. Mattie Martin
President, Girls' Department	Ms. Catherine Smith

hymn singing, prayers, and sermons by local [and regional] clergy men [and women]. Special rituals were devised to give local groups a sense of identification with the national organization, such as public reading of the front page of *NW*, which was always written by Marcus Garvey. (Burkett, 1989, p. 66)

The implications of these revivals in Idlewild and elsewhere were to reinforce the doctrine of the UNIA, which crossed age, gender, class, and religious lines (Stephens, 2003).

### **Creating a Roster of Idlewild Division Officers**

A systematic search through the property titles of Lots 5 to 20 in Block 13 of Wilson's Paradise Gardens, the second largest subdivision in Idlewild, showed that it was the site of Liberty Hall.<sup>5</sup> In the recorded plat thereof, a building fund was established by the Idlewild Division in October 1927, where John H. and Ella J. Hawthorne of UNIA Division 895 purchased five lots of property in 1927 from Herman O. and Lela G. Wilson, who owned Wilson's Paradise Gardens Subdivision. Sometime in late November 1928, Liberty Hall

**Table 3**  
**Idlewild Division Officers, 1929**

Division number	895
Membership	Approx. 45
Headquarters, meeting places	Liberty Hall
President	The Rev. Albert Glen Taylor
First vice president	Rev. George R. Rainey
Second vice president	Clifford Logan
Third vice president	Charles W. Wilson
General secretary	Adam Daniel Smith
Treasurer	Tom Thomas
President, Juvenile Boys' Department	Lee Porter
Captain, Universal African Legions	Rev. George R. Rainey
Chaplain	Rev. Mary L. Turner
Chairman, Universal Negro Political Union	Oscar Blankenship
Ladies' division	
Lady president	Mrs. Vina G. Smith
First lady vice president	Mrs. Lela G. Wilson
Second lady vice president	Elizabeth Thompson
Third lady vice president	Edna Thomas
Assistant secretary	Mrs. Beulah Riddle
Assistant treasurer	Mrs. Lizzy Dorsey
President, Black Cross Nurses	Mrs. Mattie Martin
Matron, juveniles	Ms. Fannie Brown
Assistant matron	Ms. Catherine Smith

was built on Baldwin Road, approximately 150 feet east of Tampa Street. From this, a roster of the names of division officers was created for the founding years of the division in 1928. Table 2 provides the names of the founding officers of the division and the location of their meetings.

For the 1929 year, a similar observation was made in *NW UNIA Division Reports* and the Beulah Riddles column, "Heard in Idlewild," which was published in *LCS* in the 1930s (see Table 3).

During the weekly division meeting that occurred on October 29, the vice president, Rev. George Rainey, introduced the president, Rev. Albert G. Taylor, who shared information about the 1929 convention proceedings. Taylor "brought a very inspiring message from the convention, outlining divisional changes, and asking for the cooperation of the membership in putting over the big program" ("News and Views," 1930a, p. 3). Taylor's term ended the first week in February 1930. However, the contributions he made to the division, which were to affect future developments of the organization, were significant. He was instrumental in increasing the division's



visibility locally, nationally, and internationally. However, by the time of the February 9 meeting of the division, two important decisions would be made to ensure many challenges and successes for the division. The first, which took immediate effect, concerned the Rev. George R. Rainey. The former vice president of the division was elected the new president. The second decision, which was deferred until the next regular business meeting, announced a special communication from the secretary-general, Lady Henrietta Vinton Davis, which appeared on the front page of *NW*. Davis announced the new charter number for Division 895 would be 126 (see "News and Views," 1930b, p. 3; *NW*, 1930, p. 3).

### Cross-Referencing Primary and Secondary Sources

Cross-referencing primary sources contributes significantly to the kind of detective work historians are known to engage in. The availability of a relatively small collection of Idlewild documents found in the Pathfinder Library of Baldwin, Michigan, presented new possibilities for research on the president of the division. Sweeping through this collection, I located four copies of the oldest publication in the community, *The Idlewild Community Herald* newsletter, which was published by the Peoples Tabernacle Community Church from 1923 to 1939. In one of the 1929 issues of the newsletter, under a column titled "Local Happenings," one entry read, "Glen Taylor is leaving for Kingston, Jamaica to attend the UNIA convention." In another publication, *NW*, some of the 1929 division reports mentioned the last name of the division's president as Taylor and the initial "A" for his first name. The two mentions of the name *Taylor* inspired additional probing to the extent of my making contact with Dr. Martin of Wesleyan College, who advised that a search through *The Blackman* newspaper during the period of the convention might prove to be a rewarding endeavor. Martin was correct, as I discovered that the initial *A* referred to the name *Albert*, whereas the *Glen* reference found in *The Idlewild Community Herald* newsletter of August 1929 referred to an middle initial. It was also revealed that Albert G. Taylor as reported in *The Blackman* was identified not only as "the Reverend, Father Albert G. Taylor" but also as the president of the Idlewild UNIA Division. Apparently, based on reports published in *NW*, that Taylor was sent by the division as its delegate to the convention.

Taylor's most enduring legacy as the division's president unfolded as he garnered international visibility and regional and national support for the division. Taylor served as one of three Michigan delegates to attend

the Sixth International UNIA-ACL Convention held in Kingston, Jamaica, from August 1 to 31, 1929. Taylor was immediately recognized as an important UNIA division leader on August 19 following an interview held with *The Blackman*, as he proposed a possible solution to Jamaica's pressing economic problems and elaborated on other matters during the convention. This, in turn, heightened his credibility as an "experienced" and "widely read" division leader. Following Garvey's opening address to the nearly 20,000 convention attendees, three delegates—Taylor (Idlewild), Benjamin Sumlin (Chicago), and Bishop J. D. Barber of the Triumph Church (Youngstown)—made shorter speeches that were enthusiastically received. Taylor, in particular, delivered a rousing speech expressing his thoughts about mounting problems with the American wing of the UNIA and about his presidency in Idlewild, Michigan, "a small suburban town with a very small population" ("Rev. A. G. Taylor Speaks," 1929, p. 5). Taylor noted,

The majority of the population of Idlewild are members of the UNIA, the chief-officer of the township is a member, the Justice of the Peace are members, the constables are members and in fact every civic officer in Idlewild, Michigan is a Garveyite to the core (applause); and they want the people of Jamaica to know, together with the Delegates that they are going to follow Marcus Garvey until the sun goes out because we the American Negroes are in a better position to understand the feelings of the white race relative to us. ("Thousands Attracted at Edelweis Park," 1929, p. 5)

The message was warmly welcomed. However, as he neared the end of the speech, he spoke to the enemies of the UNIA in Jamaica and advised them to cease "trying to be the best possible English man and [to] try to be the best possible Negro" ("Rev. A. G. Taylor Speaks," 1929, p. 5).

Taylor understood how the racism that helped to sustain slavery and subsequent forms of oppression and discrimination in the United States was present in the African Diaspora of the Americas and that the vast majority of enslaved Africans in the United States were aware of the fact that they were essentially forced and transferred Africans from African and Caribbean societies. As the convention came to a close, Taylor pledged on behalf of the Idlewild Division that \$500 "be paid in quarterly, half yearly or yearly installments to execute the program decided during the sixth international convention" (*NW*, 1929, p. 2).

## Contextualizing Local Black Histories in Colorado Springs and Denver

Before focusing on the social forces that gave rise to Garveyism in the state, this section of the essay surveys the history of African Americans in Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado. In a special publication written by the Negro Historical Association of Colorado Springs (1986) titled *Black Settlers of the Pikes Peak Region, 1850-1999*, it is noted that during the movement west to California, a number of pioneering Black families found Colorado an appealing location to resettle, and in the years to follow the Civil War, “black servants from the South [migrated to the city] with their masters.”<sup>6</sup> One such example was Frank Loper, who was born in Mississippi, on the plantation of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Loper migrated to Colorado Springs in 1886 when his overseer left Mississippi.<sup>7</sup> Some years later, other Black families, workers, and professionals relocated to the Pikes Peak area because it was known as a place where they could find rest and relaxation from Jim Crow segregation and racial discrimination in the South.<sup>8</sup> As the Black population began to increase, African American professionals and their families discovered other reasons to relocate to the area. As the Colorado Springs area became known as a health resort, some Black pioneering families relocated for health reasons.<sup>9</sup>

By the turn of the 20th century, pioneering Blacks of the Colorado Springs area either owned various businesses or held limited middle- and working-class occupations. Holley (1990) explained how

James McCottry [who] was believed to be the city’s first Black butcher during the 1920s was a meat cutter at James Thomason’s grocery on East Cucharras across the street north of the courthouse, a grocery operation which McCottery himself financed.<sup>10</sup>

Also among the few Black-owned food stores were the grocery stores of Adams Jones.<sup>11</sup> Other Black-owned businesses include two weekly newspapers in Colorado Springs. *The Enterprise*, which was founded and edited by P. S. Simpson, and the *Colorado Springs Sun*, which was edited by Z. M. Booker, with W. H. Duncan as city editor. And with the departure of Dr. R. S. Grant in 1919, the only Black physician in Colorado Springs, Dr. Isaac Edward Moore, who migrated from St. Louis, Missouri, “opened a practice from his home at 317 West Monument Street in 1921.”<sup>12</sup> A year later, Moore “announced the opening of his Lincoln Sanatorium for Colored People in a two and a half story red brick house in the 300 block

of West Williamette,” a sanatorium “with provisions for ten patients, with plans to accommodate that many more as soon as additional equipment could be acquired” (Holley, 1990). In addition, there was the Sadler brothers, who were well known as builders and remodelers of homes, and Ed Beckwith, who was known as an expert caterer. Blacks were also successful as farmers and ranchers. Among the large farms and ranches at the time was that of William Seymour’s, located in the Black Forest area, as he raised dairy cattle and supplied milk to various dairy outlets in Colorado Springs (Holley, 1990).

Colorado Springs was also known as a city of churches and schools. At first, there were no religious structures in town for African Americans to worship. But this soon changed as four brothers from the Carter family, known as the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) congregation, pulled their resources together and immediately began constructions of some donated property obtained through the Colorado Springs Company on Pueblo Avenue and South Weber Street. Dorothy Bass Spann remembered in an interview with Inez Hunt in *Black Pioneers: History of a Pioneer Family in Colorado Springs* how “the building, which followed, eventually became Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church” (Negro Historical Association of Colorado Springs, 1986). Soon other church structures such as Peoples Methodist Episcopal Church followed these developments.

As early as March of 1903, a small group of former slaves and children of former slaves, who had been meeting, praying, and planning for over a year, began construction of a new church. The new church building was erected at the corner of North Oak Street and East St. Vrain Street. In 1904, the first minister to pastor this new church structure was the Rev. C. W. Holmes, who served the congregation from March 1903 until August 1905. Because of the nature of their jobs, many of the members of the church had to work on Sunday mornings and were unable to attend the morning service. An afternoon service was established to better serve the majority of the membership. The leading charter member of the church was Frank J. Loper, who also served as a member of the church’s trustee board and the church’s first building committee. Between Loper’s active membership, the participation of the new pastor, and the membership, Peoples Methodist was extremely active in supporting numerous civic affairs and events for the community (Negro Historical Association of Colorado Springs, 1986). The church also served as headquarters of the Colorado Springs UNIA Division 508 (Spann, 1978).

At the same time of these developments in Colorado Springs, African American migrants were also rushing “to Denver to find work and their fortune in silver and gold. Denver seemed to be the perfect place to begin a

new life” (Spann, 1978). As African Americans “escaping the oppression and racism of the Post Civil War South [many] found work laying track for the railroad companies.”<sup>13</sup> This, according to Laura Mauck (2001), “enabled Denver to become a major trade center for the west.” By “1890 Denver had a population of 106,713.”<sup>14</sup> In a special report produced by R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons (1995), titled *Denver Neighborhood History Project, 1993-94: Five Points Neighborhood*, which was commissioned by the city and county of Denver, the data indicate that

segregation in Denver confined African American citizens principally to portions of lower downtown and to the Five Points Neighborhood. . . . The Black population of Denver had grown more rapidly than the city’s population as a whole during the 1870s and 1880s, increasing from 237 in 1870 to 3,045 in 1890.

Initially, the demographic character of the Five Points area was

white with a large German, Irish, and Jewish population. The community was named in 1881 for the five-way intersection of Welton Street, 27th Avenue, Washington Street, and 26th Street. The Curtis Park district, which is within the Five Points area, was considered the most elegant streetcar suburb of Denver in the 1880s.<sup>15</sup>

By 1893, after the

wealthy moved on to more prominent neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill to the south, Black Americans began moving into the area. Prior to the 1890s, the Denver African American population was scattered throughout the city. But as Denver’s overall population grew, the area known as Five Points became the heart of the African American community. Denver’s small African American community would continue to grow during the early part of the 20th Century.

And the Five Points area played an important part in African American social, political, and economic history.

The Five Points neighborhood matured as a significant Black business section of the city during the 1920s. The 1920 U.S. census indicated a total of 6,075 African American residents in Denver, an increase of 649, or 12%, from 1910. The continued Black migration from the South created “a political, economic, and cultural base” for businesses in the Five Points area. In addition to the migration of attorneys, physicians, surgeons, and embalmers,

there was the establishment of Douglass's undertaking, the Rossonian Hotel, though originally built as the Baxter Hotel in 1912, and the only White-owned Atlas Drug Store, which was built in 1911. Denver was also home to two Black-owned newspapers, both of which were founded during the late 19th century. Both *The Colorado Statesman* and *The Denver Star*, "encouraged change" through the efforts of the editors of both papers in the promotion of "civil rights" issues. For example, Joseph D. D. Rivers, editor of *The Colorado Statesman* and a close friend of Booker T. Washington, "used his newspaper to encourage blacks to come west to invest in real estate and establish businesses."

Essentially, Welton Street from 22nd to 29th Streets served as the "main street of Denver's Black community by the mid-1920s." The Welton Street business district of Five Points of the 1920s not only "attracted a variety of businesses such as restaurants, tailors, real estate agencies, saloons, pool halls, doctors, dentists, and a branch of the American Woodmen Insurance Company" but also served as an important resource site for residents in the community. Simmons and Simmons (1995) further explained the many different aspects in which business and social arrangements were actualized:

As in other parts of the city, the emergence of a small business district which provided for the needs of those in the immediate area was of tremendous significance in the development of the community. Local businessmen served as role models for neighborhood children and their enterprises symbolized success and stability. Often these local businessmen became leaders within the community and were granted added status among their peers. Local business establishments became meeting places for the entire community, where issues of relevance to the neighborhood were discussed. In addition, the owners of businesses in the district aided their neighbors by extending credit and helped many survive and recover from hard times. (p. 24)

The social purpose that businesses served emphasizes one of the bonds that held Black families of the Five Points neighborhood together. However, the most enduring institution responsible for gluing the community together was the church.

Churches in the Five Points neighborhood played a pivotal role in the lives of community residents. Serving as "a kind of settlement house and social club," Black churches offered incoming migrants and permanent residents a place they could call home away from home. As elsewhere in the country, Black churches functioned as houses of worship, providing both members and visitors opportunities for Christian fellowship, meaningful sermons from their distinguished pastors, invited guest speakers such as

UNIA and NAACP officials, and first-rate sacred and secular sites for community networking. Shorter AME Church, for example, was the first African American Church established in Colorado. Organized in Denver in 1868 by Bishop Thomas M. D. Ward, a pioneer of African Methodism in the West, Shorter AME, with its rich history in the community, fulfilled multiple needs of Black residents of the Five Points area. As in other Black communities throughout the country, a number of similar and different religious denominations developed, calling for the building of other church structures. The Scott Methodist congregation, which traces its roots to 1904, was established as Denver's only United Methodist denomination to serve Blacks at the time. Scott Methodist purchased the building originally belonging to the Christ Church congregation on 22nd and Ogden Streets.

Racial residential segregation was rampant in Denver. So too was the Ku Klux Klan. Born alongside D. W. Griffith's film *The Birth of a Nation*, the Klan in Denver, which was organized during the early 1920s, functioned, according to historians Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and David McComb (1994), authors of *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State*, as a

blow against outsiders who were pushing their way into positions formerly held by native-born citizens. Jews and African Americans with a modicum of self-respect were bad enough. Roman Catholics were worse—they represented the spearhead of a conspiracy against the Puritan civilization that had made the country great. At the same time, the average Klan member worried about the peace of his community and the honor of his daughter. (p. 76)

The fears of change and difference were the driving forces that inspired the Klan. The changing demographic face of residential life and to some extent employment dynamics in Denver accelerated racial and religious tensions in the city.

In its first year Denver's Klan followed the national pattern, mixing petty violence and harassment with conviviality. For Friday night entertainment, Klan members routed auto caravans through the Jewish neighborhood on West Colfax, honking their horns and shouting insults. The local NAACP suffered Klan threats, and at least one African-American who allegedly failed to observe the code of interracial contact was driven out of town. (p. 76)

During the 1920s, KKK participation, according to historians Abbott et al. (1994), was "at an all time high in Denver," as some "fifty thousands Coloradoans" were members, "making it second only to Indiana" (p. 76). Some Klan members were even elected officials. This includes "Colorado's

Governor Clarence Morley,” who served the state from 1925 to 1927, Denver’s Mayor Benjamin Stapleton, who served the city from 1923 to 1931, and Denver’s chief of police. Moreover in the “communities surrounding Five Points [were] formed Neighborhood Improvement Associations, which created covenants that banned residents from selling their homes or property to non-whites” (Mauck, 2001, p. 3). The politics in Colorado during the progressive era left African Americans with no choice but to create an internal progressive era opportunities, which resulted of a number of progressive Black thinkers.

Targeting the Five Points neighborhood at the end of February and during the first two weeks of March 1921, Brooks delivered a series of well-received public addresses before large audiences at several of Denver’s Black churches and community halls. Speaking first at the Peoples’ Presbyterian Church, Brooks discussed the Black Star Steamship Company, the Negro Construction Loan, and the Redemption of Africa. Nearly 300 persons were present at these events, despite revival services being held in two of the leading churches of the city. Brooks “swayed the audience with his powerful appeals for race solidarity, race maintenance,” and participation in the good life, proving

again the intelligence and spirit permeating the Negro of today, who is making a determined stand for real Liberty, Justice and a place in the recognition of the world for his contribution to civilization and the propagation of that democracy which knows no bounds. (Mauck, 2001)

Among the impressive expressions that fell from the secretary-general’s lips was that

every race has answered the racial call quicker and earlier than ours. Our cause is not against the white man but Negroes who have not measured and even when given the vision refuse to accept. The white man prepares to live while we prepare to die, even though we are aware that death is inevitable.<sup>16</sup>

Members of various church organizations who were in attendance applauded these addresses as Brooks spoke at Fern Hall, St. Stephen’s Baptist Church at 32nd Avenue and Lafayette Street, Central Baptist Church, and Campbell AME Chapel.<sup>17</sup> At the division meeting to follow, an increase of 100% in membership was reported, as were subscriptions of nearly two thirds of the division’s quota in the Black Star Line Steamship Company and Liberian Construction Loan.<sup>18</sup>



As the Denver Division membership continued to increase, an emphasis was placed on the youth of the Five Points community, who were being “energized by the electrifying influence and spirit of the movement. Fathers, mothers, and grandparents understood that parental control and training in the home was essential to having a sound mind in a sound body.” This emphasis on preparing young and adults “for life’s [battles and] the shouldering of responsibility” was employed to achieve and accomplish goals toward the redemption of Africa.<sup>19</sup> With news of the addition of Phyllis Wheatley to the Black Star Line fleet, the Denver Division gave credit to the New York headquarters for “having a ship large enough to accommodate nearly 2,000 passengers and all the equipment for modern traveling.”<sup>20</sup> A fundraiser calling for a “dollar drive” to help with furnishing equipment for the Phyllis Wheatley was being encouraged of each member through the exhibiting of photographs of the ship. Denver Division leaders emphasized that the ship would be capable of carrying 4,500 tons of cargo and a large number of passengers.

## **Ethno-Historical Findings in Colorado Springs**

Despite years of being identified as a relatively small population in Colorado, there is some very rich Black community histories of institutional building in Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado. The Black population in Denver, though once confined to the isolated Five Points neighborhood, constituted the largest in the state, whereas the second largest was located in the St. Vrain neighborhood of Colorado Springs. However, with the rapid rise of Garveyism and the phenomenal growth of Marcus Garvey’s UNIA-ACL, there is no doubt that Colorado’s rich Black history needs continued documentation.<sup>21</sup>

Oral history interviewing through ethnographic research was useful in my discoveries from the perspective of family members of the community their interpretation of the history of UNIA activism in their communities. These in-depth, face-to-face, oral history interviews were used to encourage interviewees to assign meaning to what they heard, witnessed, and experienced growing up in their communities. Interviewing questions focused on diverse and complex views about the community’s culture, identity, values, goals, beliefs, and geography and the social, political, and economic situation in the midwestern and western regions of the United States.

In drawing examples from ethnographic field notes in Colorado Springs, Colorado, I found the oral history accounts to chart both the transformative strength of UNIA divisions during the 1920s and their limitations. Through

an oral history interview with Richard Walker, whose parents were members and officers of the Colorado Springs Division, and through a letter obtained from him that was written by J. B. Yearwood, assistant secretary general of the Parent Body, internal evidence was used to support this conclusion. In the letter, which was addressed to the Rev. G. Sterling Sawyer of the Peoples Methodist Episcopal Church, dated January 12, 1922, Yearwood acknowledged "receipt for the sum of \$32.50" as the required payment "of charter for the Colorado Springs Division." Yearwood's letter extended to Rev. Sawyer, who was first division president, and "to the members of the Colorado Springs Division, a hearty welcome."

In the months to follow this letter, numerous communication exchanges between Yearwood and Rev. Sawyers occurred. These exchanges focused on issues ranging from requests for buttons and news releases of two postponements of Garvey's trial to payments of new membership dues. However, with the plans for Garvey's travels to Colorado, I found this method to be extremely important when I obtained a copy of the letter Garvey wrote to Rev. Sawyer, dated May 2, 1922, in which he informed Sawyer that he would be touring the area to "speak in the interest of our [the UNIA's] Spring and Summer drive for new members, and for stirring up interest in the Association." Garvey's letter detailed the following specifics:

You are, therefore, asked to arrange immediately for this meeting in a Church or Hall for the night. You will please get as many of your members as can sing and recite to take part in the concerted program. You will also ask strangers to help in the program to make it a success. Please do not offer to pay anyone to sing or recite so as to keep down expenses.

You will also try to get one or two local speakers to help us to make the program interesting. We would like a big crowd to attend these meetings. Please go ahead and make all arrangements and get your circulars printed, and boost the meeting. Admission is 50 cents.

After expenses are paid, one half of the net proceeds go to the Parent Body, and one half to your Division. We shall accept no excuse from you, but that you and the other Officers will co-operate immediately for this meeting, and make it a success.

Prepare lodgings for two ladies, and two gentlemen; the two ladies together, and the two gentlemen in separate rooms in the same building.

With very best wishes, I have the honor to be your obedient servant.

Between the newspaper leg work and the interview with Walker, I discovered that Garvey arrived in Colorado Springs on May 23, 1922, along

with Amy Jacques, his personal secretary at the time, and Lillian Willis, orator, Charles Zampty, auditor general. In addressing a large and interracial audience the evening of May 23, 1922, in Perkins Hall on the campus of Colorado College, Garvey began his speech in classic Black nationalist UNIA form, as the crowd greeted him and listened spellbound, stating,

America is the white man's country. We are constantly reminded of the fact, and it is indisputable. Africa is for the negro, and it is there that we must make our future homes. Throughout the world are towering monuments to the accomplishments of the white man. The Negro must accomplish something noteworthy to win the respect of the world and then he will be ready to make for himself a nation in his God-given land.

At one of the most forceful talks heard in Perkins Hall, according to *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, Garvey, provisional president of the Negro Republic in Africa and head of the UNIA, stated, "The expressed [aims] of the association is to unite the 400,000,000 Negroes of the world together into one organization, and to emigrate with them to their native and rightful home in Africa." Garvey, the article stated, had been called the second Booker T. Washington and had done more toward the dreams of Washington than the great thinker himself. Garvey stated,

We must establish a government and ourselves build an empire. I admit the manifold difficulties that would be entailed in the undertaking. But it can be done. It must reflect the nationality of the people as do the nations of France, Germany, Italy and other countries. Negroes are scattered all over the earth. They have become accustomed to the ways and customs of other lands, but there is not one that we can call our own. Africa is the only land on the face of the earth that we can claim as ours. The Negro must set out and accomplish something to win the respect off the world. I do not preach the hatred of races. Instead, I would lavish praise upon the white man. But the Negro must for obvious reasons find another land in which to live.

Garvey scorned the idea that Africa held no opportunities for the Black race, noting it was the richest continent in the world.

Its rich mineral deposits, huge and wealth-abounding forests of mahogany and other valuable species of timber, and various other natural resources were named. As long as the Negro waits and attains no goal, so long then will he continues to be slave and servant. The great part of the blame for his condition rests with himself. Let him make good.

Illustrating how the total population in North America leaped from a population of 100 pilgrims to 90 million Americans within 300 years, Garvey argued that within the next 100 years at that rate the country's population would be overcrowded. Stating that there would be no room for the 400 million African descendants, Garvey emphasized, "It is our own negligence that has placed us in this state. Let us arise morally and mentally and gain respect of all."<sup>22</sup>

Focusing on Garvey's travels to Colorado, I found the use of maps and other artifacts extremely useful, as this was the primary mode of transportation the Garvey couple employed (Hill, 1983-1990). Presnell (2007) wrote,

Our lives are filled with geographical references, conveying a sense of place and space. It is hard to imagine life without the visual representation and accuracy of the maps we use to navigate city streets, mark land plot ownership, and watch weather patterns. (p. 159)

Maps available in the Denver Public Library, in the Western History Department, enabled me to visualize the train routes Garvey took to travel to Colorado.

## Conclusion

The scholarship on Marcus Garvey, Garveyism, and the UNIA-ACL undoubtedly documents one of the most profound culturally specific moments in United States social history for graduate students to study. Garvey's pragmatic ideas, which influenced, inspired, and motivated hundreds of thousands of people of African descent, took immediate hold. The spread of local divisions throughout the U.S. prior to, during, and even after Garvey's deportation from the nations in 1927 is evident of the phenomenon, Garveyism. The organization's doctrine captured the spiritual, social, and political imagination of Garvey supporters who embraced the movement's mission. In this study an important piece of early UNIA-ACL history in Colorado Springs and Denver, Colorado, and in Idlewild, Michigan of the late 1920s and 1930s is investigated. This article essentially proposes a set of procedures graduate students can use as they discover how to collect, sort, and analyze data that attempts to explain how the philosophy of Garveyism was sustained in local communities.

Multiple methodological approaches were used to understand these cultural traditions in one midwestern and two western communities. First, an

ethnographic applied approach was used to discover from the perspective of family members of later generations of the community their experiences and interpretations of social reality. Because ethnography is intricately concerned with socially responsive discourse, this study used both physical and social characteristics of Black lived experiences in rural and urban communities to determine meanings from the perspective of the people living in the three communities. The data were collected from a variety of sources. This included approximately 12 in-depth, face-to-face, oral history interviews with second or third generations of family members of local UNIA-ACL divisions to assign meaning to what they observed, remembered, and experienced. Detailed notes from a partial participant-observation process were also used to assign meanings to the cultural norms, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of living participants. Data were also gathered from a search through several archival collections. The collections owned by the Library of Michigan in Lansing, Michigan; the Burton Historical Library in the main branch of the Detroit Public Library; the Western History Department in the Denver Public Library; the Yates Township Public Library in Idlewild, Michigan; and the Pathfinder Library in Baldwin, Michigan, were all consulted. Twenty years of historical analysis as a result of a systematic combing through the microfilm newspaper collections of *The Michigan Chronicle*, *Chicago Defender*, *Lake County Star*, *Colorado Statesman*, *Denver Star*, and the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, was undertaken, from which several tables, charts, chronologies, and biographies were developed to make sense of the data.

From this, important information was discovered about the activities of local UNIA divisions in Idlewild, Michigan, and Denver and Colorado Springs, Colorado. The residents who reside in these communities have rich histories that are frequently overlooked in traditional historical accounts. The comparative ethnographic field and historical research methods used to document these activities in the end enable community stakeholders, scholars, and graduate students to address these historical oversights. Investigations of historical developments of these and other local UNIA-ACL divisions reveal a unique set of important tools used to assist in studying Black rural and urban life experiences, challenges, choices, and collaborations in 20th-century African American historiography. Thus, the research methods and techniques used in this examination to collect new data suggest a need for more in-depth oral history interviews, cultural observations, use of geographical mapping, and systematic reviews and outlines of public records, microfilms of black newspaper collections, and archival research materials, including the use of letters, ledgers, and diaries from the private collections of local citizens and leaders.

Some implications of the methodological considerations advanced in future micro-level studies of Garveyism call attention for more research of local UNIA-ACL divisions in several midwestern, western, and southern regions, states, and cities of the United States such as Cincinnati and Cleveland, Ohio; Oakland and San Francisco, California; Ogden, Utah; Seattle, Washington; Portland, Oregon; and the Miami, Florida divisions. A related consideration suggests the importance of future studies that involve some periodizations to make meaningful comparative analyses of some of the reasons for the rise and decline of these divisions. A final set of considerations for future research purposes concerns a call for a transnational analysis of local UNIA-ACL divisions in Africa, Europe, the United States, the Caribbean, and South, Central, and Latin America.

## Notes

1. Report by Henrietta Vinton Davis, secretary general of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL; August 1929) of the World, published in *The Negro World*, May 3, 1930, in Hill (1983-1990, Vol. 7, pp. 403-404). Note: Marcus Garvey formed this organization, separate from the New York-based UNIA, during the Sixth International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World, held at Kingston, Jamaica, in August 1929, in a controversial attempt to reassert his control over the movement. "Divisions of U.N.I.A., 1925-27 (Compiled from 3" x 5" file cards found with the Central Division Records. Original cards are stored with the rest of the record group at the Schomburg Collection)," Universal Negro Improvement Association Records of the Central Division (New York), 1918-1959, Series A—Early Records (Inherited from the Parent Body and Other Sources), Box 2, Folder a16, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Harlem, New York.

2. Although it is unclear whether the Macomb and Macomb Garden listings refer to two separate branches or a single branch, the fact remains that contact between these and other Michigan UNIA-ACL divisions was significant.

3. *The Negro World* was published on Saturdays and ceased publication in 1933.

4. The original Idlewild chronology I created covers over 30 years of UNIA local and regional history. In so doing, I consulted Robert A. Hill, editor-in-chief, *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: Africa for the Africans, June 1921-December 1922*, Volume IX, for ideas about how best to incorporate editorial principles and practices to develop the chronology. Hill's work was useful for determining when and how to use abbreviations and symbols of published works (newspapers and books) such as, *NW* for *Negro World* and *LCS* for *Lake County Star*.

5. Idlewild is located in rural Western Michigan, in the heart of the Manistee National Park, in Yates Township, on 2700 acres of land in Lake County, Michigan. It is located just 70 miles north of Grand Rapids, 80 miles south of Traverse City, 33 miles east of Ludington, and five miles west of Baldwin. Idlewild is a formerly famous resort community that has a contemporary year-round residential population of approximately 850 year-round residents, and a total annual population of between 4,000 and 5,000 seasonal residents from May to August. The geography of Idlewild includes more than five major subdivisions: Gleason's subdivision, Stewart's subdivision, Thompson's subdivision, Idlewild Terrace, Idlewild Heights, and

selected properties in neighboring Cherry Valley and Pleasant Plains' townships. Sometime in late November of 1928, the land purchased from Herman and Lela Wilson of Paradise Gardens by the Idlewild Division of the UNIA, which erected a structure known as Liberty Hall, was built on Baldwin Road, approximately 150 feet east of Tampa Street.

6. The Black historian, John Hope Franklin, in his pioneering work, *From Slavery to Freedom*. Vintage Books: New York, 1969, discusses these early migration patterns.

7. Frank Loper was a well respected citizen of the Colorado Springs area, having also published the first Black newspaper in the area, along with James Booker and W.E. King. See Obituary of Frank Loper, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, November 10, 1937, p. 5; Appointed senate page in Denver Legislature, *Colorado Springs Gazette*, January 4, 1935, p. 12; John Stokes Holley. *The Invisible People of the Pikes Peak Region: An Afro-American Chronicle*. Colorado Springs: The Friends of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, 1990, pp. 131-134, which also provides of photograph of Loper; NHACS, 1986, p. 16; "Sun Illuminated Truth" *Colorado Springs Gazette*, February 25, 2001, section 1, p. 2; "Former Slave Published" (1998), and "Profiles of Frank Loper" (1982), *Colorado Springs Gazette*, February 8, 1998, section 1, p. 2.

8. Dorothy Bass Spann as told to Inez Hunt, in *Black Pioneers: A History of a Pioneer Family in Colorado Springs*. Colorado Springs: Little London Press, 1978; and *Black Settlers of the Pikes Peak Region, 1850-1899*, p. 6, a special publication of the Negro Historical Association of Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1986. Lu Lu Pollard, a pioneering lay historian, was responsible for spearheading the publication, after having first published "He Fought and Died for Freedom, A Study in American Negro History," in the Colorado Voice Newspaper for Black History Month, 1949.

9. See Negro Historical Association of Colorado Springs (NHACS, 1986). An example of the great movement is the 10-year period between 1850 and 1860, when California's Black population increased from 962 to 4,086. The NHACS publication further stated that during the movement west to California, a number of pioneering Black families found Colorado an appealing location to resettle.

10. See *Black Settlers of the Pikes Peak Region, 1850-1899*, pp. 8-9.

11. See Spann (1978).

12. See Span (1978, p. 8).

13. See Holley (1990, p. 105).

14. See Mauck (2001, p. 8).

15. See Mauck (2001, p. 8).

16. Hewetson Watson, who worked as a reporter for *The Colorado Statesman*, served as local president, and Edward C. Davis, who was also a writer for the paper, served as secretary. The two men were instrumental in getting Brooks to come to Denver. Regular meetings of Denver Division, No. 118, were held at the Masons's new hall, at 2800 Welton Street every first and third Tuesday of the month at 8:00. The division's Liberty Hall was located at 2626 Welton Street. Brooks aroused Black Denverites as he persuaded them to embrace race consciousness and to improve economic conditions in the neighborhood. Davis was not only a reporter for the *Colorado Statesman*, but he was also Secretary of the Denver Division.

17. Hon. James D. Brooks on "The Garvey Movement." *The Colorado Statesman*, March 5, 1921, p. 5. As a result of Brooke's visit and series of talks, the Denver Division's drive to increase its membership resulted in 200, and \$500 in shares to the Steamship and Construction Loan fund was raised.

18. See Brooks on "The Garvey Movement." *The Colorado Statesman*, March 5, 1921, p. 5.

19. Virgie Cole, *Colorado Statesman*, July 9, 1921, p.1.

20. See Davis, *Colorado Statesman*, p. 4.

21. The information gathered about the activities of the Denver Division was published in *The Colorado Statesman* and *The Denver Star*, whereas the information learned about the Colorado Springs Division No. 508 was published in *The Colorado Springs Gazette*. References to the activities of the Denver Division suggest it may have been organized first, at least 1 year prior to the founding of the Colorado Springs Division. Based on the historical account of the Peoples United Methodist Church of Colorado Springs, of which I obtained information during the 104 anniversary celebration of the church through a publication entitled, "Celebrating 104 Years in Ministry," March 11, 2007, the church's published records does not indicate the church as the site of the division, however, based on internal evidence from reading several letters obtained from Richard Walker, whose family history in the church dates back to 1915, it was revealed that the church served as Liberty Hall in Colorado Springs. See letters to Reverend Sawyers from Yearwood, dated January 12, March 10, 16, and 17, 1922. The original church was located in the East St. Vrain Street Neighborhood from 1904 to 1965. In 1965, Peoples Methodist Episcopal Church members moved from its original location to 828 East Boulder Street, as the church's name became officially known as Peoples United Methodist Church in 1968 after joining the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Methodist Church. Under the leadership of a new pastor, Reverend C. Darnell Allen, the membership elected to purchase property in a new location and sold its property on East Boulder in 2004, and moved temporarily for eighteen months into the chapel of First United Methodist Church. Soon thereafter the church was blessed to secure five acres located at 5110 Tamlin Road with a church building on the property in February of 2006. Marcus Green, church historian, also provided a membership/pastor roster of church and UNIA members, dating back to the founding of Peoples Church (1903 to 1921). A cross-checking of some of the names of the leading lay members identified from his list matched the names of early UNIA division members of the Colorado Springs Division in two articles written by Bassett, and in James Holly's *The Invisible Peoples of the Pikes Peak Region*. A search through the *Colorado Springs City Directories* was also performed to verify names, mailing addresses, and occupations. The same steps were performed for the Denver Division.

22. Garvey finished the address as he was enthusiastically applauded. A reception in the home of Lonnie C. Bassett, a local Negro of prominence, was well attended before the party of four left for Denver, Salt Lake City, and the Pacific coast as part of the countrywide tour. See Garvey's address in Greatest Republic in Africa Dream of Negro Educator, *The Colorado Springs Gazette*, May 24, 1922. After leaving Colorado Springs, Garvey spoke at Fern Hall, Sunday, October 5th, at 3 p.m. and again at 8 p.m. The announcement was published in *The Colorado Statesman* twice three weeks prior to his arrival. An ad appearing in the *Statesman*, entitled "Look Who is Coming," September 27, 1924, p. 5, generated positive feedback.

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