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Becoming Creole, Becoming Black: Migration, Diasporic Self-Making, and the Many Lives of Madame Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena

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Abstract

This article examines the complex life of one of the Universal Negro Improvement Association's most charismatic but undertheorized figures, Madame Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena. Relegated to the footnotes of UNIA history, the existing version of de Mena's biography identifies her as an Afro-Nicaraguan immigrant who rose to the upper echelons of the UNIA. After years of serving as assistant international organizer and electrifying audiences throughout the hemisphere, she eventually assumed control of all the North American chapters of the UNIA, the editorship of the *Negro World*, and acted as Marcus Garvey's representative in the United States and globally. Recently uncovered archival materials reveal that de Mena was actually born in St. Martinville, Louisiana, in 1879. How could such a prominent UNIA figure vanish from the historical record only to reappear and be so misunderstood? Part of the dilemma lies in the fact that de Mena appears to have intentionally altered the key elements of her biography to reflect her changing personal life and political commitments. This article maps de Mena's shifting racial and political subjectivities as a transnational proto-feminist, moving through the landscapes of the U.S. Gulf South, Caribbean Central America, the U.S. Northeast, and preindependence Jamaica. It provides a critical corrective to de Mena's existing biography and examines how black women moved through transnational political and cultural movements of the early twentieth century, authoring themselves into existence through intimate and public acts of diasporic self-making.

Introduction

On September 15, 1953, the Kingston newspaper the *Daily Gleaner* reported that Mrs. Mary Morris Knibb, the vice-president of the Jamaica Women's Liberal Club, would serve as acting president of the organization in the place of Ms. de Mena Aiken, who had recently left the island "for the benefit of her health" to seek medical attention in the United States. While her friends and colleagues in Jamaica lamented her departure and assumed that she would

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be “off the island for some time,” there was little reason to believe that the charismatic and “prominent social worker” would not return in due time. The situation, however, proved to be far more serious than anyone imagined: Madame de Mena Aiken was dying from cancer.¹ She had sought treatment in Kingston in 1949 for the illness and successfully recovered. Her trip to Chicago, however, proved to be her last.²

Her death on October 23, 1953, was a tremendous loss to Kingston’s small community of proto-feminist reformers, trade unionists, anticolonial organizers, politicians, and intellectuals. When she arrived to the island in September 1935, de Mena was already well known as the former international organizer and head of the North American field of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Despite the fact that she was not a native Jamaican, de Mena cultivated a profound investment in the struggles of everyday Jamaicans. In a eulogy published four days after her death, the editors of the *Daily Gleaner* suggested this was due, in part, to her connection to the British West Indies via Nicaragua: “She was born in Jamaica’s ancient ‘dependency’—on ‘The Shore,’ the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua—in a day when the connection between the island and the Mosquito Shore was still not regarded as over.” She then moved to “America and there was profoundly influenced by Marcus Garvey, becoming a militant member of the U.N.I.A. which she subsequently helped to introduce into Jamaica, where she was constantly identified with it.”³ As this eulogy demonstrates, by the time of her death de Mena had become a political figure known and respected throughout the Americas.

But there was much that the eulogy missed. For, if the biography elaborated by the *Gleaner* remains the widely accepted version of de Mena’s life—a narrative that she carefully curated throughout her life—her death certificate told a dramatically different story. While some of her contemporaries imagined that Madame de Mena Aiken was a daughter of the not-so-distant Mosquito Shore of Central America, her death certificate lists Louisiana as her place of birth. And although many of her North American and Jamaican colleagues assumed the energetic activist died prematurely in her mid-50s, in reality, de Mena was only two months shy of her seventy-fourth birthday.

In the years following the decline of the UNIA, the organization, and the men and women who built the first modern transnational black social movement, faded into obscurity. While scholars have uncovered the biographies of more notable figures in the movement, they have paid little attention to de Mena despite the fact that, by the mid-1920s, she was among the most

recognizable figures in the UNIA (Ewing 2014; Hill 1989; James 1999; Taylor 2002; Watkins-Owens 1996). Yet she appears in the history of the UNIA as little more than a footnote. Too often these cursory references have relied on the commonsense narrative of her life and have not investigated her actual biography and the trajectory that led a diminutive woman from the sugar belt of southern Louisiana to become Marcus Garvey's representative in the United States and the officer-in-charge of the North American field. The mystery surrounding the life of one of the most prominent figures of the UNIA has persisted well into the twenty-first century. How could such a prominent figure seemingly vanish from the historical record only to reappear and be so thoroughly misrepresented?

Part of the dilemma lies in the fact that de Mena intentionally altered her biography—including her age, racial identity, and place of origin—as she moved through the diverse political landscapes of the black Atlantic in the early twentieth century. This article maps de Mena's shifting racial and political subjectivities from Creole to black, as a transnational proto-feminist activist moving through the diverse landscapes of the U.S. Gulf South, Caribbean Central America, the U.S. Northeast, and preindependence Jamaica. Drawing on census data, travel records, newspaper articles, and speeches, this article examines the practice of diasporic self-fashioning in de Mena's complex and varied life. I suggest that these practices reflect not only her understanding of blackness as diasporic—which is to say, contingent, conditional, and constructed—but also her cosmopolitan, internationalist sensibilities as she engaged the political realities of the multiple places she claimed as “home.”

De Mena's biography is worth re-examining not only for what it reveals about the extraordinary life of a woman who was one of the most recognizable faces of the UNIA at its height, but also because of how her biography disrupts the tendency to cast black women activists as supporting characters in the dramatic history of early twentieth-century black internationalist movements. Highlighting the migrations and self-making practices of women like Madame de Mena unsettles masculinist accounts of Pan-Africanism in particular, and transnational black social and cultural movements in general, providing a richer, fuller, and more complex representation of black political history in the Americas. This article, then, joins the growing literature on black women's mobility, self-determination, and political subjectivity in the twentieth century that has only recently begun to emerge and to place black women activists back into their rightful place in the historical record.

Up from the Canebrakes: Race and the Reconstruction Era in St. Martinville, Louisiana

St. Martinville is a small town in St. Martin parish that sits along both sides of the Bayou Teche, which flows some 60 miles south into the Lower Atchafalaya River. Once considered a critical waterway for the transport of people and products, the Bayou Teche also functioned as a key geographical marker in the social and economic organization of the town. Historically one of the most important sugar-producing regions of southern Louisiana, the town was home to a diverse community of wealthy white planters and businessmen, displaced Acadian settlers, dispossessed indigenous peoples, recently enslaved and free blacks, and mixed-race *gens de couleur libre*. Maymie de Mena was born there on December 10, 1879, as Leonie Turpeau, the seventh child of Michel Turpeau Jr. and Isabella Turpeau (néé Regis-Hill), on a small farm on the eastern banks of the Teche.⁴

By the time of Leonie's birth, the Turpeaus had lived in St. Martinville for more than two generations. It was believed that the family patriarch, Michel Turpeau Sr., a free man of color born in Martinique, left the Caribbean by working as a ship hand and eventually settling in St. Martinville where he found work as a general handyman on the Banker plantation. Michel Sr. saved enough money to buy a small plot of land and build a small three-bedroom house on the property, where he brought his wife, Dine, who was said to be from French Guiana, and raised his five children including his youngest son, Michel Jr. (Turpeau 1942, 1–4). The Turpeaus were a family of relatively modest means, even by the standards of free people of color at the time. Despite this, they were thrifty, industrious, and ambitious, using their limited incomes to purchase land and invest in new business ventures. Michel Jr. was a small planter and lumberman, who attempted to improve his family's economic prospects through his business transporting lumber down the bayous and waterways of southern Louisiana.⁵

Leonie's mother, Isabella Hill, was the daughter of Maturin Regis, a formerly enslaved black man from Virginia, and Carrie Hill, a Creole woman from St. Martinville (Turpeau Sr. 1942, 7). Michel Jr.'s marriage to Isabella appears to have caused some consternation among his family members, who felt that Michel Jr. had "crossed the line and married beneath the caste," by marrying the daughter of a former slave (*ibid.*, 7–9). The Turpeau family's critical response to the union between Michel Jr. and Isabella reflected the complex and contentious racial politics of southern Louisiana. Free people of color tended to think of themselves as a class apart from enslaved and free

black people, and the tripartite racial structure of Louisiana slave society reinforced this way of thinking. While Creole identity tended to be defined largely in cultural terms—the practice of Catholicism, the ability to speak Creole French, and family ties—it was also a closely policed racial identity reflecting Creoles' fraught relationship to the African roots of their mixed ancestry.⁶

Leonie Turpeau made her first appearance in the historical record at the age of one in the 1880 census, in which she is listed alongside her mother and father as well as five of her siblings: George, Alexandre, David, Carry, and Paul.⁷ Although Michel and Isabelle would have two more children together, the marriage appears to have been an unhappy one. In September 1883, Isabella filed for divorce; Leonie was not yet four years old. Michel obliged Isabella's request, and the two were formally divorced some time later (Turpeau 1942, 14).⁸ According to her son David, Isabella left their farm on the eastern side of the Bayou Teche and moved with her children into town.

Isabella and Michel's divorce is revealing, in that it demonstrates that Leonie Turpeau grew up in an environment where, despite the gendered limitations that defined Creole women's social possibilities, women like Isabella could and did assert themselves in determining the conditions of their intimate and material lives. In October 1883, shortly after the divorce was finalized, Isabella returned to the parish notary public to claim her share of the assets that she and Michel had acquired during their marriage. The two agreed amicably to partition the property and sell a parcel of land, approximately 2-3/4 *arpents*, or about 2.32 acres. The following year she sold a portion of the property to her neighbor, Frank Jacobs, for the sum of \$50.⁹ Isabella was, according to her son David, "an exceptional woman, very high spirited, very independent, industrious and thrifty, highly intelligent" (Turpeau 1942, 22). It is reasonable to speculate that Isabella Hill provided an early example of assertive womanhood that would define Leonie's approach to her own life and relationships in the years to come.

In addition to their economic activities, Michel Turpeau Jr. and Leonie's maternal grandfather, Maturin Regis, were actively engaged in state and local politics in St. Martin Parish during the Reconstruction era (Turpeau 1942, 13–16). But if Reconstruction created greater openings for people of African descent to participate in political life, the period was also characterized by profound violence and the dismantling of the state's tripartite racial system that had allowed free people of color limited social privileges during the antebellum era. This was demonstrated clearly during the Loreauville Riot of 1884, in the neighboring parish of Iberia, considered to be the "last major

political riot of the nineteenth century” in Louisiana. The riot left a reported 16 black and Creole Republicans dead and led to “the end of Republican rule even at the local level” (Vandal 1989; see also Turpeau 1942, 19). The riot had a chilling effect on black political participation in the region and marked the full restoration of white supremacist rule in southern Louisiana.

There is no record of Leonie Turpeau following the 1880 census that can reveal the contours of her upbringing in St. Martinville following this incident. As a daughter of the Reconstruction era, however, she would have witnessed the consolidation of the Jim Crow order in Louisiana. The retrenchment of white supremacy in the region constricted economic opportunities for black people and limited their ability to defend themselves against a brutal regime of structural racism. While a handful of her siblings remained in St. Martinville and Louisiana, several of the Turpeau children began to leave, heading to the cities of the Midwest and the Northeast to escape the confining environment of the Jim Crow South. Leonie, in contrast, turned her sights southward to a small port town on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua called Bluefields.

On The Shore: Regional Politics and Black Nationalism in Bluefields, Nicaragua

On the morning of May 12, 1912, Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena boarded the S.S. *Dictator* in Bluefields, Nicaragua, heading for New Orleans. On the ship manifest, she indicated that she was 29 years old, married, and listed her occupation as “wife.” She was planning to visit her sister in Jennings, Louisiana, located some 60 miles west of St. Martinville. She reported that her husband, Francis H. Mena, had paid for her passage. And although she stated that she had been born in St. Martinville, when asked her nationality, she answered, “Nicaraguan by marriage.”¹⁰

It is unclear from existing documentation exactly how or when Leonie Turpeau met Francis H. Mena, a small-scale Creole planter, activist, and newspaperman from Bluefields. It is possible that she met him in New Orleans. Her older sister, Carrie, attended Gilbert Academy, an agricultural and industrial college founded in the 1870s for freedmen (Turpeau 1942, 24; Godman 1893). The school was later brought under the auspices of New Orleans University, where de Mena would later claim to have studied (Hill 1989, 117n1). It is possible that she did attend Gilbert Academy and may have met Francis Mena through middle-class black social networks in New Orleans. Commerce and travel between Bluefields and New Orleans was

common, with ships leaving Bluefields several times a week for the Gulf Coast. This is clear from the number of trips that she took from Bluefields to New Orleans from 1912 through 1922, usually to visit relatives. What is certain is that, after marrying Mena and moving to Bluefields, Leonie Turpeau began slowly recreating her identity.

Bluefields is a small port city that sits on the eastern shores of Nicaragua. It is located along what has historically been called the Mosquitia, the Caribbean coastal region that stretches from Honduras to Costa Rica. For most of its modern history, the Mosquitia operated as a semi-sovereign nation-state, home to a diverse mix of Amerindians, mixed-race Creoles, maroons, enslaved Africans, and European colonists. The modern Mosquitia developed at the intersection of the imperial aspirations of Great Britain, Spain, Nicaragua, and later the United States (Hooker 2010). In 1747, the Atlantic Coast was declared a protectorate of Great Britain under the authority of the governor of Jamaica. From this point, the Mosquitia began to develop into a multiracial society. Race mixing among the indigenous, European, and Afro-descendant communities was common and produced a Creole elite who distinguished themselves from both indigenous communities and darker-skinned free and enslaved blacks from the Caribbean. By the 1840s, the term “Creole” was widely applied to free people of African descent in the region; nevertheless the term was also fraught with internal skin-color politics, as lighter-skinned Creoles tended to look down on darker-skinned Creoles who were much more likely to occupy a lower-class status (Bell 1989, 17; Gordon 1998, 39).

By the late nineteenth century, Bluefields was a bustling port town whose growth and prosperity stemmed from its strategic location in the rubber trade, the emerging transnational banana market, and the profitable trade in lumber, tortoiseshell, sea turtles, and fishing throughout the Caribbean, South America, and the Central American mainland. With its vibrant economy, the town had become too important for the Nicaraguan government to ignore. In February 1894, Nicaraguan troops occupied Bluefields, forcibly bringing the Atlantic Coast under the jurisdiction of the Nicaraguan state and dismantling the Mosquito Reserve through a process that the state termed “Reincorporation.” Creoles watched in outrage as the Nicaraguan government, which viewed their demands for self-governance and political power as illegitimate, diminished their political and economic power. From the outset, the state was overtly hostile to Creoles, whom they saw as black foreigners whose racial inferiority and presumed immigrant status disqualified them from participating in the governance of the region or full participation in its economic activities.¹¹

By the 1900s, Bluefields had transitioned from a British protectorate to an “enclave of U.S. capital.” The growth of the banana industry in the region made it a prime location for U.S. corporations and small-scale planters to pursue their fortunes. In addition to the banana trade, commerce in lumber, mining, and fishing enriched the small town. As these industries grew, local businesses—saloons, dry goods and grocery stores, billiards parlors, print shops, newspapers, and hotels—sprang up seemingly overnight to accommodate the capital flowing through Bluefields. The enclave economy continued to grow, as West Indian laborers migrated to the Coast. Chinese immigrants arrived to the region in significant numbers as well, settling in the area and establishing successful commercial enterprises in the city. Passport applications to the British Consulate reveal the constant movement of black, Chinese, South Asian, Middle Eastern, and European migrants in and out of the region heading for New Orleans, Colón, Kingston, and Puerto Limón. Additionally, there were a number of African Americans from the U.S. South who immigrated to Bluefields at this time. Leonie Turpeau was among them. These African American migrants, along with their Caribbean counterparts, would slowly transform the meanings of “Creole” as they became absorbed into the community over time through long-term settlement, intermarriage, and cultural assimilation. Nevertheless, as Gordon notes, distinctions of color, class, and religion would continue to produce salient divisions within the cultural/racial category of Creole well into the twentieth century (Gordon 1998, 66).¹²

This period marked the development of Bluefields into a cosmopolitan port city whose identity was constructed not only through its unequal and uneasy relationship to the national body but through its economic, cultural, and social connections to the Atlantic world. It was not, however, an egalitarian society. The social hierarchy within the enclave was deeply racialized—white North Americans occupied the highest positions of power and privilege in the region, followed by Mestizos and Creole elites. Darker-skinned Caribbean immigrants, the Chinese, and indigenous peoples occupied a significantly lower status. Nevertheless, the multiracial milieu of Bluefields created a social order that was radically different from the larger Mestizo nation. Indeed, the Nicaraguan state continued to view the cultural and racial diversity of the Atlantic Coast as a key threat to the construction of a homogenous national identity (Hooker 2205, 2010; Ruiz y Ruiz 1925).

Contemporary scholars have tended to claim de Mena as an Afro-Latina political figure, which, given the popular narrative of her life, is understandable (Bair 1992; Hill 1989, 117–18n.1; Putnam 2013, 4; Watkins-Owens 1996,

5, 206n13). However, doing so not only obscures her actual origins; it also ignores the complex racial formations that characterized social life on the Caribbean Coast of Central America and the project of Nicaraguan nation building. People of African descent, regardless of their actual origins, were viewed as racial interlopers disrupting the formation of the Mestizo nation-state who needed to be assimilated or expelled (Gordon 1998; Harpelle 2003; Putnam 2002, 2014). People of African descent in Nicaragua and other Central American states, whether they were native-born or immigrant workers, tended to identify most strongly with the Caribbean colonies of the British Empire and were largely excluded from the Indo-Hispanic, Mestizo nationalisms of the countries in which they lived (Gordon 1998; Harpelle 2003; Putnam 2002, 2014). Therefore, de Mena, to the degree that she immersed herself in the struggles of Afro-Creole and black communities in the region, did not assume a Latina identity in the modern sense but rather would have been read as part of the region's far-flung Afro-Caribbean Diaspora.

Despite being systematically disenfranchised, Creoles continued to resist Nicaraguan national rule well into the twentieth century, refusing Nicaraguan citizenship and pulling their children out of school to avoid learning Spanish. From the 1900s to the 1930s, Creoles participated in a number of political rebellions to defend their claims to the region and dismantle the unequal relations of power that excluded them from full citizenship, opportunities for economic prosperity, and access to political power in the region. Creoles in Bluefields formed a number of social organizations including secret societies, Masonic lodges, bands, literary societies, and athletic clubs that served as bulwarks against Mestizo national hegemony in the region. The social clubs, and the Union Club in particular, became important political spaces for Creoles to protest the government's treatment of them and, later, to organize full-scale rebellions against the state (Gordon 1998, 71–76).

Local Creole struggles for autonomy and political redress dovetailed with and drew significant inspiration from the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Based on the ethos of black self-determination, racial uplift, cultural pride, and the redemption of the African continent, the UNIA was enormously popular in Central America, where it is estimated that approximately one-third of all UNIA divisions were located. There were five UNIA divisions located on the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast, two of which were based in Bluefields (Gordon 1998, 75; Harpelle 2003, 46; Wunderlich 1986). It is estimated that the two Bluefields divisions had 500 to 1,000 active members at their peak, nearly a quarter of the city's black population at the time (Harpelle 2003). Despite the popularity of the UNIA, the two UNIA

divisions were sharply stratified along lines of color and class. The chapter based in the Union Club was composed mostly of light-skinned Creole elites, while the Liberty Hall chapter's membership, based in the Beholden neighborhood, tended to be largely poor, dark-skinned blacks and a handful of Creoles. Although the two chapters occasionally attempted to "cooperate in the name of blackness," color and class undermined their efforts (Gordon 1998, 76; Harpelle 2003, 63).

The limited documentation available suggests that women participated actively in the two UNIA divisions. One Moravian missionary wrote disapprovingly, "The majority of our male church members and a goodly number of the female as well are active members of the Black Star Line, and I am sorry to say, not with advantage for their inner life" (Grossman 1920 in Wunderich 1986, 33).¹³ Information on the kinds of labor that women in particular performed in the local divisions is limited. Accounts from the *Negro World* suggest that although women tended to play traditional roles within the divisions, serving as Black Cross nurses and providing logistical support for division events, while men tended to occupy more prominent leadership positions that included public speaking, communicating the division's activities to the parent body in New York, and overseeing the division's programs locally, women also engaged in more visible leadership roles as well, giving public lectures and facilitating division meetings.¹⁴ There is little documentation of the extent to which de Mena was involved in political organizing in the city, although years later she would credit her involvement in the UNIA in the United States to her initial exposure to the organization in Bluefields.¹⁵ Nevertheless, her marriage to Francis Mena made her a member of the city's small, politically active Creole elite, particularly those involved in the Union Club. Francis Mena served as the vice-president of the Union Club for a number of years in the 1920s and later became an administrator for the English-language newspaper *The Bluefields Weekly*. As Gordon (1998, 71, 76) notes, the Union Club was a critical site for Creole political mobilization, particularly at a moment when Creoles' access to spaces of political power was tightly constrained. While women were not formally recognized as members of the club, they played an active role in its organizing efforts as demonstrated by the leadership of Anna Crowdell, a local Creole businesswoman and activist who ran the Crowdell Hotel, which also housed the British consulate.¹⁶

By the 1920s, Crowdell had become recognized as the "grand dame" of Creole civil society, and her political influence was known throughout the region. De Mena would have known Crowdell and very likely spent time in

the Crowdell Hotel either for social gatherings or political affairs. It is possible that de Mena may have taken cues from Crowdell as to how women of their class might navigate the complex social and political landscape of Bluefields. Although it was difficult for women to insert themselves into political spaces, they could access opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship in limited ways. Most poor Creole and black women were limited to either domestic forms of labor—serving as cooks, washerwomen, nannies for white U.S. and European families, or nurses—or in the illicit economy as sex workers (as was the case throughout Central America). But women from more privileged backgrounds had more flexibility in making a living for themselves through gender-normative forms of female entrepreneurship, as Crowdell did with her hotel.¹⁷ This exposure to Crowdell's powerful political and economic presence in *costeño* civil society, and the highly visible forms of political engagement of Creole women involved in the UNIA, may have provided an important model of the proto-feminist politics that de Mena would later espouse in her work with the UNIA in the United States.¹⁸

Travel records suggest that, early on, de Mena actively began to develop a career outside the home. On a trip to New Orleans in 1913, she listed her occupation as nursing. For the following four years, however, she continued to list her occupation as “housewife.” By 1917, she began to identify her profession as “clerk.” In January 1919, the daily newspaper *La Información* ran an advertisement for the Specialty School directed by Señora M. L. Turpeau de Mena. The school offered complete courses in English, French, piano instruction, bookkeeping, typing, and shorthand. The advertisement, placed alongside ads for furniture, legal services, hotel accommodations, and various reports on local affairs, is one of the few pieces of evidence placing de Mena in Bluefields at this time. The ad suggests that de Mena was not content to limit her talents to the domestic sphere, but, rather like Anna Crowdell, she created work for herself as a means of increasing her individual autonomy.¹⁹

The following year, de Mena traveled to the United States, heading to Indianapolis for vacation and study. While her husband paid for her earlier trips home, de Mena paid for her own fare, suggesting that she had earned enough money on her own to travel throughout the United States unsupported and unaccompanied by her husband. But the travel documents offer other small yet important details as well. In 1912, immigration paperwork stated that de Mena was 29 years old; five years later, she claimed to be 31 years old. While she regularly identified her place of birth as St. Martinville, occasionally she claimed to be from either Greytown, a small town south of Bluefields just miles away from the Nicaragua/Costa Rican border, or San

Carlos, a port town on the southeastern shores of Lake Nicaragua. Additionally, she was often identified as Spanish, mulatto, and as black or African. These frequent slippages in her racial classification reveal her ability to move between racial categories. In some documents, she lists her birth year as 1891, 1879, or 1889. From 1919 onward, de Mena listed her birth date as sometime in 1891 or 1892, shaving 13 years off her real age.²⁰

On June 22, 1922, de Mena boarded the S.S. *Managua* heading home to Louisiana. She would not be returning to Bluefields. The immigration official who processed her ticket simply put “D” under her marital status: divorced.²¹ Her marriage to Francis Mena had come to an end. There is no way of knowing, with the existing historical documentation, what led the marriage to fall apart. Whatever the case, de Mena, like her mother before her, left the marriage and moved on. She was an independent woman and a single mother responsible for the care of her young daughter, Berniza.

Living in the multiracial environment of Bluefields and witnessing the rise of the UNIA on the Coast proved to be formative experiences in de Mena’s political development. She had arrived as Leonie Turpeau, a young Creole woman from the backwoods sugar country of Louisiana, and left as Señora Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena, a politicized Creole activist who for the rest of her life would claim Nicaragua as home. The act of reinvention would continue on a much bigger stage in Chicago and then New York City.

“A Tireless Worker for the Cause”: Pan-Africanist Organizing in New York City

Upon returning to the United States, de Mena settled in Chicago. There is little documentation confirming what de Mena was doing in Chicago at this time. What is known is that shortly after arriving de Mena became actively involved in the UNIA and, in 1924, the UNIA leadership tapped her to serve as an organizer, translator, and secretary alongside Lady Henrietta Vinton Davis and George Emonei Carter on the Black Star Line’s 1925 tour of the Caribbean and Central America on the S.S. *Goethals* (Hill 1989, 117n1).

Upon her return to the United States in June 1925, de Mena rose rapidly in the UNIA ranks. She delivered her first public address, “The Capability of Bearing,” to the rank-and-file during the weekly meeting at Liberty Hall in New York City on July 12. In it, she implored UNIA members not to become disillusioned with the many challenges facing the organization in the wake of Garvey’s imprisonment. The time had come, she said, “When the Negro

must be prepared to fight—not with the sword nor with the gun, but to fight a moral and industrial battle that he may take his place in the sun even as the other races of the world have taken theirs.”²² The speech, which was only the first of many to come, reflected de Mena’s investment in the UNIA project of racial uplift and self-determination as well as her ability as a public speaker.

Shortly after this speech, Garvey instructed de Mena to join his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, on her public speaking tour of UNIA divisions around the country. During the summer and fall of 1925, Jacques Garvey and de Mena traveled to divisions in Detroit, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington, DC, Richmond, Atlanta, and New Orleans. In addition to her work accompanying Jacques Garvey on her speaking tour, de Mena also reported on Jacques Garvey’s success boosting morale among the divisions. De Mena at this point was already a moving public speaker who possessed the ability to “electrify” her audiences with humor, wit, and her passion for the cause of Garveyism.²³

De Mena accompanied Amy Jacques Garvey to Atlanta when she went to visit Marcus Garvey in prison, demonstrating her growing importance in the organization and her entry into Garvey’s inner circle. Upon her return to New York, de Mena gave a glowing report to the rank-and-file at Liberty Hall:

He smiled as I have never seen him smile before. He looked ten years younger than when he was here. . . . He is indeed happy because he knows you, the people are carrying on. He knows that whether he lives or dies there will be someone sitting in the chair who can fill Liberty Hall as it is filled tonight, and victory is assured.²⁴

De Mena’s optimistic assessment of the salutary effects of incarceration on Garvey’s health demonstrated her growing skills as a propagandist for the UNIA. Her reports were persuasive enough to convince at least one reader from Omaha, Nebraska, that the UNIA and its leader were alive and well despite their trials. Writing in the “People’s Forum” section of the *Negro World*, Louise Little assured the paper’s readers that the UNIA remained undeterred in its mission:

We know that out of the trials and tribulations of the leader and the disappointments which face the organization in carrying on the program a well-earned victory will spring some day. We only hope that the eyes of the Negro everywhere will be opened more and more rapidly until the great mass of our people have rallied to the cause.²⁵

Following Amy Jacques Garvey's speaking tour, de Mena traveled with her to Detroit, where the UNIA was hosting an emergency convention in March 1926. The membership elected de Mena to the position of assistant international organizer, thus formalizing her work traveling and speaking on behalf of the UNIA in the United States and throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. She began a grueling travel schedule that would continue for the rest of her career with the organization (Ewing 2014, 157–58; Hill 1989, 117–18n1).

As assistant international organizer, de Mena pressed for women's increased visibility and leadership within the organization. Speaking to a crowd at Liberty Hall, she stated, "Woman has made her contribution to the world ever since the day when God took her and fashioned her out of a man's rib. She has built churches, she has helped institutions of learning and she has done everything to help every good cause and uplift humanity."²⁶ At another Liberty Hall gathering, she criticized the tendency among many UNIA members to assume that women were only fit to serve with the Black Cross Nurses or in other seemingly gender-appropriate spaces. In 1926, she noted that, although women had long supported black men as leaders "in reality the backbone and sinew of the Universal Negro Improvement Association has been and is the real women of the organization, who are laboring incessantly for the freedom of Negroes the world over."²⁷

On January 13, 1928, de Mena married Milton T. Ebimber, a medical student from Cameroon, in a lavish wedding ceremony at Liberty Hall that was the talk of Harlem society, where, as the press reported, "Africa joined hands with Nicaragua." The press highlighted the exotic backgrounds of the bride and groom, pointing out Ebimber's African origins and reporting that de Mena was "a member of a royal family in Nicaragua." By 1928, the mythology surrounding de Mena's foreign and privileged origins had already been set firmly in place, and de Mena apparently did little to disabuse the press or the public of this error. Indeed, she would continue to deploy this narrative to solidify her performance of black respectability and elite leadership in the UNIA. Nevertheless, even if she was comfortable playing the role of a transnational Negro activist from far-off lands, she refused to sever all ties with her past. The *New York Amsterdam News* reported that the bride "was given away by her brother, Dr. David Dewitt Turpeau."²⁸

De Mena strategically used the wedding as a platform to extol the virtues of the UNIA and its leader, Marcus Garvey. She told the press she "had Mr. Garvey to thank for her union with her husband as it was through the U.N.I.A. that she met him." They opted to have their wedding at Liberty

Hall “because our future hope is in the U.N.I.A. . . . which is based upon the Negro’s urge for safety from oppression.”²⁹ But the marriage was short-lived. In March, Ebimber was arrested on charges of bigamy when his first wife, Mrs. Valentina Charles, traveled to New York City from Santo Domingo, where she alleged that he had married her, fathered a child, and then fled the country when he was charged with practicing medicine without a license.³⁰ Ebimber was later found guilty of the bigamy charges and sent to prison.³¹ Whatever grief this may have caused de Mena, she continued her public speaking engagements and spent the rest of the spring helping to coordinate the Sixth International Convention of the Negro Peoples of the World in Kingston, Jamaica (Ford-Smith 2004; Hill 1991, 317).

The 1929 convention was a particularly triumphant moment in de Mena’s career in the UNIA; throughout the conference proceedings, she was seated on the speakers’ platform alongside other UNIA dignitaries, including Garvey.³² By the end of the convention, she had become one of the central figures in the movement. Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than in her performance during the UNIA parade through the streets of Kingston. Dressed in full UNIA uniform and regalia, the *Daily Gleaner* reported that she cut “a striking figure . . . mounted on a grey charger,” her sword drawn and held defiantly in the air. This performance became a central part of her public mythology (Hill 1991, 317; White 1999, 137–38; see also Cronon 1969 and Ford-Smith 2004). At the end of the convention, the delegates elected de Mena international organizer, and, following the convention, she returned to the United States and continued her work representing the organization’s behalf (Hill 1989, 117–18n1).

Despite the apparent success of the 1929 convention, the meeting was plagued with internal divisions that had long been building within the organization. At the Kingston convention, Garvey formalized his split with UNIA, Inc. (created in 1926), and announced in August 1929 the creation of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League of the World. In 1930, in addition to her duties as the international organizer, Garvey then appointed de Mena officer-in-charge of the North American field and his personal representative in the United States. This move effectively made de Mena one of the most powerful figures in the UNIA, one charged with the enormous task of holding the UNIA together against attacks from within and outside of the organization and rebuilding the membership (Hill 1991).

As a result of her extensive travels and public appearances throughout the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean, de Mena became a symbol

for many Garveyites of women's dedication to the cause of black freedom. One UNIA member, Jane Martin, from Indianapolis Division 291, submitted "Ode to a Negro Woman," praising de Mena as a "light to womanhood" teaching men and women to uphold the cause of the UNIA and Marcus Garvey:

It is M. L. T. de Mena
Her voice ringing through the hall
This Great, Grand, and Noble woman
Is fighting for freedom of all.³³

Not everyone, however, was as enamored of Madame de Mena. In 1931, the editors of the *Negro World* published a front-page editorial, "Opportunities of Garveyism," in which they lamented the lack of leadership in the UNIA and the failure of that leadership to effectively mobilize the Negro masses. "As we look around us, we should be honest, if we mean to succeed with our program, to recognize that NOTHING WORTHWHILE is being done nor is the movement making any headway." Although the editorial did not name names, the implications were clear: "The leadership of the American field is so arduous that it cannot be handled to advantage by feminine hands even if she were ever so intelligent. But ignorance, whether masculine or feminine, will march Garveyism to sure defeat."³⁴

Throughout her tenure as the officer-in-charge of the North American field, de Mena faced considerable challenges to her authority as Garvey's legitimate representative, particularly from male colleagues who seemed to resent taking orders from a woman and blamed her for the organization's diminished influence. The *New York Age* reported that, as Garvey's official representative and international organizer, "she is supposed to have jurisdiction over the others and issue orders to them. But in reality there is not any too great submission to her authority."³⁵

Despite the difficulties and internal struggles facing the organization, de Mena continued to put on an optimistic face for the readers of the *Negro World*. Even with de Mena's upbeat reports in the *Negro World* about the creation of new divisions and the fact that many dormant divisions had been reactivated, there were clearly cracks in the foundations of the organization that could not be ignored. The organization was running out of money and was desperately understaffed. In October 1933, the *Negro World* ceased publication and finally closed its doors.

For a time she pressed on, transferring the energy that she had devoted to the UNIA to her own publication, *The World Echo*, a weekly publication

affiliated with Father Divine's Mission. The newspaper bore a striking aesthetic and thematic resemblance to the *Negro World*. She placed editorials condemning racial discrimination and promoting causes like the case of the Scottsboro boys alongside Father Divine's sermons extolling the virtues of racial transcendence and charitable works. Still, funding the paper proved to be as challenging as it had been for the *Negro World*, and, in 1934, the publication folded (Satter 1996; Watts 1992). When the *World Echo* ceased publication, de Mena finally seemed ready to move on. In September 1935, she packed her bags and left New York to begin a new life in Kingston, Jamaica.

Proto-Feminism and Nationalism in Preindependence Kingston

On September 14, 1935, the *Daily Gleaner* ran a small personal announcement recording de Mena's marriage to Percival Aiken, an electrician and UNIA activist from Kingston, in 1932. The *Gleaner* reported that "Mrs. Aiken returned from America" four days earlier and that the newly reunited couple would be entertaining friends at their home at 24 East Race Course, near what is now known as National Heroes Park in downtown Kingston.³⁶ De Mena's vacation was brief. Upon returning to her newly adopted country, she quickly began inserting herself into Kingston's diverse political communities, rekindling old relationships with former UNIA activists, and cultivating new relationships with many of the period's leading figures.

Like many middle-class black women, de Mena's initial forays into political activism on the island took the form of charitable service work and engaging with local political groups like the city's numerous neighborhood associations.³⁷ But de Mena and the community of proto-feminist reformers with whom she was affiliated were not content to limit themselves to these kinds of charitable, apolitical social projects. In April 1938, the *Daily Gleaner* reported on the creation of the Jamaica Women's Liberal Club (JWLC), "a promising organization" dedicated to "the uplift of girls and women of the island." The article also noted that the group's membership, which included such notable figures as Ina and Amy Bailey and later women like Mary Morris Knibb, the first woman to serve as a municipal councillor on the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation, was composed primarily of privileged middle-class women, "whose outlook on things of life has been heightened by the benefits of travel." It was hoped that this exposure to the broader world would ensure that "as a body they will be able to imbue fresh and healthy ideas and desires in the minds of members, as they are well aware from comparison, that the

attention paid to girls and women of this community can stand improvement.”³⁸

This was an understatement. As Joan French notes, between 1911 and 1943, women’s participation in the Jamaican labor force declined from 59.6 percent to 34 percent (Altnik 2011; French 1988, 39; Lobdell 1988; Palmer 2014). Although women had previously been overrepresented in agricultural labor, the loss of jobs in that sector led many women to pursue employment in larger towns and the capital. While some women found employment working long hours for low-pay as domestics for wealthy and middle-class families, other women were increasingly pushed into unremunerated labor in the home.

As de Mena continued to work with the JWLC and engage in charitable service throughout the greater Kingston area, she became more attuned to the dire socioeconomic conditions that shaped most poor black women’s lives. And like many social reformers of the time, including Amy Bailey and Una Marson, she became an ardent advocate of birth control and family planning (Gregg 2007; Jarrett-Macauley 1998). The question of how to regulate the island’s high rates of illegitimacy, female-headed households, and absentee fathers infused larger debates over birth control (Bourbonnais 2009; De Barros 2014). In a letter to the editor in 1939, de Mena defended her position on birth control by arguing for the need for women to be able to practice family planning in order to increase their chances for socioeconomic upward mobility. Birth control was a class issue for de Mena to the extent that women’s access to family planning was limited by their impoverished material conditions. She argued for the creation of birth control clinics where

the women of Jamaica will secure the necessary knowledge so easily obtained by those who are able to pay private physicians. Many women will acquire a general knowledge of the care of their bodies; through the work done by the physicians, they would receive much instruction that they would otherwise be deprived of, and which would be a great contribution to family welfare. Why not give a fair chance to every child that is born; and the right to every woman of voluntary parenthood?³⁹

The women who organized the JWLC may have come from privileged backgrounds, but they also recognized that poor and working-class women were being left out of larger conversations on social change in the country. This was especially true of the labor movement that emerged in the wake of the 1938 labor rebellion. While male workers in the industrial professions began to organize under the banner of the Bustamante Industrial Trades Union (BITU) (led by the charismatic labor leader William Alexander Clarke

Bustamante), female workers, who tended to be concentrated in domestic service, were largely overlooked. De Mena became active in the labor movement, helping organize a trade union for seamstresses and serving on the Trade Unions Advisory Council, a nine-member group composed of leading political figures in Jamaica and formed by Norman Manley to help oversee and provide counsel regarding the operation of the BITU. She appears to have been the only woman asked to sit on the short-lived council.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, her advocacy on behalf of working Jamaican women is clear from the amount of energy she spent supporting the BITU and organizing with trade unions that served female workers by demanding improved labor conditions and an increase in their salary and benefits.

Despite the expansion of her activist engagement in proto-feminist social reform, labor organizing, and party politics, de Mena remained invested in the work of Pan-Africanism and the social redemption of black people. She supported local efforts to dismantle the color bar in Jamaica and the institutional racism that limited black people's access to highly skilled professions and spaces of political power (Palmer 2014).⁴¹ She also reconnected with the UNIA on the island by becoming involved with the Harmony Division in Kingston. She was so active that the Harmony Division suggested to the president-general of the UNIA in New York that he appoint her commissioner for the organization on the island. It does not appear that this occurred.⁴² Nevertheless, de Mena was regularly involved in the affairs of the Harmony Division, occasionally speaking at public events for the division alongside Amy Jacques Garvey, who had returned to the island in 1927.⁴³

This brief examination of de Mena's life in Jamaica demonstrates that this period initiated a deepening and an expansion of her existing political values—racial uplift, economic self-determination, and black nationalism—and the integration of new paradigms in her political formation. Her activism evolved and became more explicitly feminist in its orientation, while retaining her insistence on economic justice and the empowerment of black people around the world. By the time of her death in October 1953, de Mena had become a key figure in Jamaican civil society who commanded the respect of even her fiercest detractors. The editors of the *Daily Gleaner* eulogized de Mena thus:

The late Mrs. M. L. De Mena Aiken had rare courage and strength of will. She was identified with causes that needed fighters and nothing deterred her from fighting. . . . She did not, like many reformers, regard social work as a "palliative" something that enabled a crippled society to continue crawling

along: it seemed to her an essential function of leadership to bring practical aid to the poor, and she was long amongst the few figures that commanded respect in certain “tough” areas of the city. . . . Her personality will be greatly missed in the island’s life.⁴⁴

Conclusion

This article has examined the ways in which Maymie Leona Turpeau de Mena Aiken created herself as a transnational diasporic subject, carefully refashioning her identity across time and place as she engaged in the tumultuous political struggles of black people throughout the Americas. Travel and migration served as critical modes for recreating her racial and political subjectivity. This microhistorical examination of de Mena’s biography demonstrates how black women’s migrations throughout the black Atlantic during the first half of the twentieth century played a crucial role in the development of black internationalism, including Pan-Africanist social and cultural movements (Putnam 2006). De Mena’s life and self-fashioning practices reflect the efforts of many women activists connected to Pan-Africanism to rethink blackness beyond the boundaries of the nation-state and to conceive of local racial justice struggles as fundamentally imbricated in a larger effort to dismantle global white supremacy. Throughout her life, de Mena demonstrated a clear understanding of antiblack racism as a highly adaptable social and political project shaped by divergent but linked geographical and historical formations, such as Jim Crow segregation in the United States, British colonialism in the West Indies, or the regional exclusion that characterized black social life in Caribbean Central America. Her political trajectory also reflected a growing awareness of gender inequality within black communities and the need for women to assert greater leadership in the political movements and processes that shaped their lives. Her shifting biography provides one example of the ways that women activists authored themselves into existence as political subjects by immersing themselves in the struggles of diverse black communities throughout the African Diaspora.⁴⁵

Notes

1. “Acting as President of Women’s Liberal Club,” *Daily Gleaner*, September 15, 1953.
2. “Mrs. Aiken Sinking,” *Daily Gleaner*, October 1, 1953.
3. “A Personality,” *Daily Gleaner*, October 27, 1953.
4. See Turpeau 1942, 14; See also Cook County, Illinois, medical certificate of death no. 74364 (1953), Aiken, Maymie L. Turpeau, Cook County Bureau of Vital Statistics, Chicago;

1880 U.S. Census Records, 1st Ward, St Martin, Louisiana (Enumeration District 033), Ancestry.com Subscription Database. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 18, 2014.

5. See Turpeau 1942, 13; Clerk of Court, St. Martin Parish, Estate of Alexandrine Alexandre, wife of Michel Turpeau Sr., File No. 2837 1/2, January 10, 1893; Clerk of Court, St. Martin Parish, Estate of Michel Turpeau Jr., File No. 3142, January 21, 1904.

6. For more on Creole racial politics in Reconstruction Louisiana, see Dominguez 1993; Fairclough 2008; Hall 1992.

7. 1880 U.S. Census Records, 1st Ward, St Martin, Louisiana (Enumeration District 033), Ancestry.com Subscription Database. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 18, 2014.

8. Clerk of Court, St. Martin Parish, Civil Suit, Isabella Hill, wife v. Mitchel Turpeau Jr., husband, Civil Action No. 8658, September 19, 1883.

9. Clerk of Court, St. Martin Parish, Deed of Real Estate, No. 17540, October 15, 1883; Clerk of Court, St. Martin Parish, Deed of Real Estate, No. 17927, October 18, 1884.

10. "New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1813–1963": 1912. Ancestry.com Subscription Database. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 18, 2014. De Mena's claiming to be "Nicaraguan by marriage" may have been more than a rhetorical gesture since, as Candice Lewis Bredbenner notes in *A Nationality of Her Own* (1998), in 1907, the U.S. government passed legislation declaring that U.S.-born women who married foreign nationals would assume their husband's nationality and forfeit their U.S. citizenship.

11. For additional historical analysis of Reincorporation and Nicaragua state formations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Dozier 1985; Gordon 1998; Hale 1994; Hooker 2005, 2010; Ruiz y Ruiz 1925.

12. Unfortunately, Gordon's account does not provide detailed statistical data on the settlement of African Americans on the Caribbean Coast nor a discussion of their place within the social fabric of the region.

13. In 1849, the Moravian Church established its first mission on the Atlantic Coast, concentrating its operations in Pearl Lagoon and Bluefields. Moravian missionaries opened the first formal schools in the region and assumed an active role in regional political affairs. As the most important social institution in the Mosquitia, the Moravian Church played a central role in fomenting an affinity for Anglo culture among Creole and indigenous communities in the region, by preaching the virtues of British patriotism and encouraging *costeños* to think of themselves as British colonial subjects (see Gordon 1998; Hale 1994).

14. "U.N.I.A. in Bluefields, Nicaragua, Forging Ahead," *Negro World*, February 26, 1921, 10; "Unveiling of U.N.I.A. and A.C.L. Charter in Bluefields, Nicaragua, Central America," *Negro World*, March 19, 1921.

15. "Dr. Ebimber Held as Bigamist," *The New York Amsterdam News*, August 1, 1928.

16. For additional information about Anna Crowdell, see the Report of the Chairman, US Electoral Mission to Nicaragua, 1932, Personality Sketches of Prominent Citizens of the Republic of Nicaragua, Sec. Navy General Corresp., 1925–1940, EF-49, Box 2010. R. H. Hooker Letter to the Union Club, November 30, 1927, Crowdell Archive, Centro de Investigación y Documentación de la Costa Atlántica (CIDCA). Anastasio Somoza García Letter to Anna Crowdell, February 21, 1936, Crowdell Archive, CIDCA. "Dona Anita Krause v. de Crowdell," *La Información*, February 27, 1944, 1. "Brillante Discurso Pronunciado Por la Distinguida Dama Costeña Doña Anita Krause Viuda de Crowdell, en Masaya Durante

la Celebración Cincuentenario de la Reincorporación de la Mosquitia,” *La Información*, February 27, 1944, 2, 5. See also Brooks (1998).

17. See Putnam (2002) for her analysis of women’s labor and social location in turn-of-the-century Caribbean Central America.

18. The term *costeño* refers literally to inhabitants of the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua. In addition to its geographical meaning, it also functions as a racial and cultural signifier to the degree that it has tended to be historically applied to describe Afro-descendant and Indigenous peoples from the region.

19. “The Specialty School,” *La Información*, n.d., [1919?], Crowdell Archive, CIDCA. Unfortunately, all that remains of the advertisement is the bottom half of the newspaper page on which it is printed. There is an article next to the article that lists the year as 1919, so it seems reasonable to surmise that the advertisement ran sometime in or after 1919 but before de Mena’s departure from Bluefields in 1922.

20. “New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1813–1963”: 1912, 1913, 1914, 1917, 1919, 1920. Ancestry.com Subscription Database. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 18, 2014.

21. “New Orleans Passenger Lists, 1813–1963”: 1922. Ancestry.com Subscription Database. Retrieved from <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 18, 2014.

22. “Great Liberty Hall Gathering Witnesses Distribution of Medals to Patriots by Hon. P. L. Burrows,” *Negro World*, July 18, 1925.

23. “Great Outpouring of People Pack Liberty Hall to Capacity,” *Negro World*, September 5, 1925.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Louise Little, “Rejoice at Strength in Leader’s Suffering,” *The Negro World*, September 26, 1925. It seems very likely given the location and date of this letter that it was written by Malcolm X’s mother, Louise Little, since the Little family was living in Omaha at the time where Malcolm was born that year; see Malcolm X and Haley 1995; Marable 2011.

26. “Leadership of Marcus Garvey Is Reaffirmed by the Followers of the Universal Negro Improvement Association,” *The Negro World*, October 3, 1925.

27. “Part Women Must Play in the Organization,” *Negro World*, January 23, 1926.

28. “Nicaraguan and West African Wed,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, January 18, 1928.

29. *Ibid.*

30. “First Wife Claims That Dr. Ebimber Is Bigamist,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, March 21, 1928; “Dr. Ebimber Held as Bigamist.”

31. “Grand Jury Holds Doctor Ebimber on Bigamy Charge,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, August 15, 1928; “Dr. M. T. Ebimber Jailed for Bigamy,” *The New York Amsterdam News*, January 9, 1929.

32. “Great Crowd at ‘Court’ Held by the U.N.I.A.” *Daily Gleaner*, August 23, 1929.

33. “An Ode to a Negro Woman,” *Negro World*, n.d.

34. “Opportunities of Garveyism in America,” *Negro World*, August 15, 1931.

35. “U.N.I.A. Inc. Opens Convention Here with Extensive Program; Garvey Withdraws from the *Negro World*,” *The New York Age*, August 13, 1932, 7.

36. “Announcement,” *Daily Gleaner*, September 14, 1935.

37. “Current Items,” *Daily Gleaner*, April 21, 1936. For more on middle-class women’s activism during the interwar period, see Altink 2011; Taylor 2002.

38. “Jamaica Women’s Liberal Club Meet,” *Daily Gleaner*, April 16, 1938.

39. "Birth Control," *Daily Gleaner*, September 8, 1939.
40. "Unions Council Members Named," *Daily Gleaner*, October 23, 1939.
41. "Kingston Citizens' Assn. and Dr. Anderson's Resignation," *Daily Gleaner*, July 14, 1938.
42. "No Decision Yet on U.N.I.A. Post Here," *Daily Gleaner*, December 22, 1942.
43. "Current Items," *Daily Gleaner*, July 20, 1943.
44. "A Personality," *Daily Gleaner*, October 27, 1953.
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