

THE ROLE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN EDUCATING BLACKS IN MONTREAL,  
FROM 1910 TO 1940, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
REVEREND DR. CHARLES HUMPHREY ESTE

by

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN EDUCATING BLACKS IN MONTREAL, FROM 1910 TO 1940, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO REVEREND DR. CHARLES HUMPHREY ESTE

Blacks began to move into the Montreal area in increased numbers with the development of the railways at the turn of the Twentieth Century. They came from the Maritimes, the Caribbean and the United States; thus began the building of their Community. As they settled into the city supporting institutions arose. Three of these long standing institutions are the Union United Church, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Negro Community Centre, all three of which played an important sustaining role in educating and nurturing its members, particularly so during the thirty years 1910-1940.

Union Church became the nucleus from which the Black Community would gain strength and consolidation, providing religious sustenance and environment, an educational framework and a social and cultural structure, together with leadership responsibility that would ensure survival of the Community. At the forefront of the leadership was Reverend Dr. Charles Humphrey Este, who together with a nucleus of supporters provided religious and temporal auxiliaries and units to handle the needs of the Community wherever they arose.

Like the Church, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League (ACL) was concerned with the advancement

of African peoples. Its primary function revolved around "self-identity", "self-upliftment" and "self-improvement", which was the spirit of the international organization as set up by its founder Marcus Mosiah Garvey and carried out by the UNIA Montreal Division through its many units and programs.

The third institution, the Negro Community Centre, came into existence to provide services and programs for Black youth and adults, alleviate social and economic hardships, which were especially acute during the depression years, protect human rights, and work with the wider Montreal community to achieve better understanding between the races.

The educational environment created by these three institutions, which have endured, performed a special role, wide ranging in scope, for many areas of development and knowledge by providing a variety of learning situations which could not have been obtained by Blacks elsewhere. This thesis deals with the role this Black Montreal Community played together with the leadership given by Reverend Dr. Este, as illustrated through the three institutions, during these thirty crucial and important years in the life of this Community.



## SOMMAIRE

### LE ROLE DE LA COMMUNAUTE NOIRE DANS L'EDUCATION DES NOIRS A MONTREAL, DE 1910 A 1940: ON FAIT RESSORTIR LE ROLE JOUE PAR LE REVEREND DR. CHARLES HUMPHREY ESTE

Ce fut au commencement du vingtième siècle, lors de l'expansion du réseau ferré, qu'un nombre croissant de Noirs vint s'installer à Montréal et aux périphéries. Originaires des Maritimes, des Antilles et des Etats-Unis, ils se mirent à fonder une communauté. Au fur et à mesure qu'ils s'installèrent dans la ville, des institutions de sustentation virent le jour. A titre d'exemples, on peut citer le Union United Church, le Universal Negro Improvement Association, et le Negro Community Centre, qui jouèrent tous un rôle important dans l'éducation et l'instruction de leurs membres, surtout pendant les trois décennies 1910-1940.

Le Union United Church devint la source où la communauté noire irait puiser la force et la consolidation. Cette église fournit une ambiance et un appui religieux, un système scolaire, social et culturel, aussi bien que des qualités de direction qui devaient assurer la survie de la communauté. Le Révérend Dr. Charles Humphrey Este fut un des pionniers de ce mouvement. Ce pasteur, aidé d'un noyau d'adhérents, fournit des cadres et des auxiliaires, tant religieux que laïques, pour subvenir aux besoins de la communauté, dans tous les domaines.

Tout comme le Union United Church, le Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), et le African Communities League (ACL), travaillèrent au

progrès des peuples de descendance africaine. Les mots d'ordre de l'UNIA étaient "prise de conscience raciale", "l'élévation morale personnelle" et "l'éducation personnelle". Voilà le caractère de l'organisation internationale telle que fondée par Marcus Mosiah Garvey, caractère auquel la branche de l'UNIA à Montréal reste toujours fidèle par ses nombreux programmes et circonscriptions.

La troisième organisation, le Negro Community Centre, fut fondée dans le but de fournir des services et des activités aux jeunes et aux adultes noirs, pour alléger les privations sociales et économiques qui sévissaient pendant les années de la dépression, pour protéger les droits de la personne, et pour travailler de pair avec les autres Montréalais pour promouvoir une meilleure compréhension entre les races.

Ces trois institutions, qui existent toujours, réussirent à créer un milieu intellectuel qui joua un rôle spécial dans de nombreux domaines du développement et de l'éducation en assurant des facilités d'accès à l'éducation qui, en dehors de Montréal, étaient hors de la portée de toute personne de race noire. Ce fut une entreprise de grande envergure.

La présente thèse traite du rôle que joua cette communauté noire de Montréal; elle traite également du Révérend Dr. Este en tant que leader à travers une investigation du rôle qu'il joua au sein des trois organisations citées, au cours de ces trente ans décisifs et importants dans la vie de la communauté noire.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost among those who have contributed to the success of this thesis, I thank Dr. J. Keith Jobling, of McGill University, for his patience, guidance and direction. I further thank the many persons of the Community who so willingly talked to me, granted interviews, tapings and reference to their private papers, without which this study could not have been completed. Finally, I thank my husband for his encouragement and suggestions throughout the work and research of this thesis, and my daughter for proofreading it.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT . . . . .	ii .
SOMMAIRE . . . . .	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	vi
MAP: THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF MONTREAL - 1910-1940 . . . . .	10A
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER I. EDUCATION THROUGH THE CHURCH COMMUNITY . . . . .	7
Early Developments	
The Church Community Develops	
Reverend Este: Pioneer Minister	
Social and Educational Conditions in Montreal	
Education Through the Church	
CHAPTER II. EDUCATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA) - FORMAL AGENCIES OF EDUCATION . . . . .	44
History and Background	
UNIA Chaplain, Reverend Este	
Structure of UNIA Education	
Teachers	
Students and Student Aid	
CHAPTER III. EDUCATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA) INFORMAL AGENCIES OF EDUCATION . . . . .	83
Sunday Mass Meeting (SMM)	
Literary Club	
The Black Cross Nurses' Society (BCNS) and	
The Preparatory Nursing Class	
Music: The Choir, The Orchestra and The Boys's Band	
The Youth Administration	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER IV. EDUCATION THROUGH THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE (NCC) . . . . .	122
The Negro Community Centre is Formed	
Programs Offered by the Centre	
Teachers	
Students	
Health and Sanitation	
CONCLUSION . . . . .	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	158
APPENDIX 1 REVEREND DR. CHARLES ESTE, MINISTER OF UNION UNITED CHURCH FROM 1923 TO 1968 . . . . .	173
APPENDIX 2 REVEREND ESTE OFFICIATES . . . . .	174
APPENDIX 3 EXTRACT FROM: UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION . . . . .	175
APPENDIX 4 MAZIE DASH'S DESCRIPTION OF MARCUS GARVEY . . . . .	176
APPENDIX 5 EXTRACTS FROM UNIA CONSTITUTION AND BOOK OF LAWS . . . . .	178
APPENDIX 6 EXTRACT OF CORRESPONDENCE FROM QUEBEC BOARD OF BLACK EDUCATORS (QBBE) . . . . .	186
APPENDIX 7 UNIA NATIONAL ANTHEM . . . . .	188
APPENDIX 8 NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM . . . . .	189
APPENDIX 9 UNIA LITERARY CLUB . . . . .	190
APPENDIX 10 THE UNIA BOYS' BAND, MONTREAL DIVISION NO. 5, 1926 AND MODERNISTIC BAND . . . . .	191

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
APPENDIX 11 GOLDEN DARBY, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE . . . . .	192
APPENDIX 12 ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED AT THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE IN THE EARLY DAYS . . . . .	193
APPENDIX 13 DAISEY SWEENEY TEACHING MUSIC AT THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE . . . . .	194

## INTRODUCTION

Although Blacks have featured in the history of Canada from the days of exploration, very little is known about them or their struggle for survival. It is only within the last ten or fifteen years that publications focussing on Blacks and their development and contribution to Canada have begun to appear. There is, therefore, a great need for information and understanding of this group, both in the Black Community as well as the larger society. My contact with the Montreal Black Community made me aware that there were a number of institutions and individuals who had contributed to the growth and development of this Community during the early years of the century. Because I was involved in education in Quebec, a study of the Black Community in Montreal and its experiences and struggles to meet educational needs seemed relevant and pertinent in contributing to knowledge and understanding of this group.

This thesis advances the view that the Montreal Black Community played a vital role in the education of its members between 1910 and 1940. In this respect the contributions of three institutions; the Union United Church (UUC), the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League (ACL)<sup>1</sup> and the Negro Community Centre (NCC), with their leadership as exemplified by Reverend Dr. Charles Este will be examined, together with the problems faced and solutions attempted by this Community.

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<sup>1</sup>This is the full title of this organization which is more popularly known as the UNIA.

It was in the early 1900's that the Black Community in Montreal crystallized. The year 1902 saw the formation of "The Coloured Women's Club" and by 1907 the inauguration of Union Congregational Church (later known as Union United Church<sup>1</sup>), was pioneered by a handful of Black men and women who drew up their own covenant. The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and African Communities League (ACL), Montreal Division, received its charter in 1920 and in 1927 the Negro Community Centre (NCC) was founded.

The thirty years under discussion proved crucial to the growth and development of this Community. This period witnessed a rapid increase in the Black population which would establish a number of entrepreneurial businesses, fraternal organizations, and cultural and religious institutions that, nevertheless, remained largely invisible to the wider Montreal society. Challenges and privations were experienced during the depression years that would strain this Community, for it was not until 1940, World War II, that avenues opened, jobs became available and negative attitudes towards Blacks began to break down. The resourcefulness of the Community, coupled with the dedication of its leadership, proved imperative for the education and progress of Blacks as they struggled to endure during these years.

It must be pointed out that education as defined in this study must be understood in a much broader sense than the traditional interpretation of the term. This is necessary because Black institutions provided

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<sup>1</sup> Popular usage is "Union Church".



a variety of learning situations which were extremely important for its members during this period in their history.

It is in this context that the role of the Community and its leadership must be understood. Many of those around Reverend Este were eager to contribute to the general progress of the Community. Often these individuals were found serving in more than one organization, so that members of the Church would also be members of the UNIA and/or the NCC. It is through the eyes of these elder members that this aspect of Black History is heard. It is important that their view of the Black Community and of Montreal Society in general be recorded.

The Community encompassed any person of African descent who resided in Montreal. This inclusiveness arose naturally from the spirit that motivated the formation of Union Church, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Negro Community Centre. This spirit ensured that Blacks from any denomination would be welcomed to Union,<sup>1</sup> peoples of African origin, whether "at home" or "abroad" would be helped in "self-upliftment" by the UNIA and thirdly, any Black person who resided in Greater Montreal, regardless of place of birth or origin would be welcomed and aided by the NCC.

Although primarily English speaking, language was never a problem to this Community for in spite of diverse origins common experiences overshadowed such divisions. While it is true that the Community was comprised

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<sup>1</sup>Union Church Papers - File No. 1, A Brief Historical Sketch of The Union Congregational Church, 1923, p. 2. reads: "Then the question arose, what denomination it should be? Well, this was soon decided. It was agreed upon, as there were several among them who were of different denominations; why not make it a Union of religions? Thus they chose the Union Congregational Church as its name and having the simplest form of worship so as to be within reach of all."

mainly of Blacks from the United States, the Maritimes and the Caribbean, there were also Blacks from Africa; Dr. Lewis, the third President of the UNIA, Montreal Division, elected in 1920, was a native Nigerian who represented the Division on several occasions at conventions and meetings held in the United States.

Attention should be drawn to the terminology "Coloured", "Negro", "Black" and "African" which are used interchangeably throughout this study since these designations passed through evolutionary states but maintained their original meaning, i.e. people of African ancestry.

While many aspects of education can be readily researched in libraries, written information on the education of Blacks is extremely scarce. One must therefore seek out primary sources: private documents, original archives, files and papers, for much of the material. Early studies by Wilfred Israel, McGill Thesis 1928, and Ida Greaves, published for McGill University 1929, are limited in scope and time. Robin Winks in 1970 produced a History of Blacks in Canada which, though extensive and the first of its kind, does not come to grips with the aspirations and perceptions of a Black Community. Potter and Hill, in Negro Settlement in Canada 1628-1966, A Survey Report presented to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, April, 1966, contains little on this subject, and Leo Bertley's Canada and Its People of African Descent, 1977, and The Universal Negro Improvement Association, Montreal, 1917-1979, while illuminative do not address themselves directly to the problems

faced by Montreal Blacks and their attempts to acquire an education. Research on this specific topic is thus scanty and/or unavailable.

The Black Community is very fortunate to have many senior members who are still alive or have only recently died, and these are thus in living memory of many individuals of the Community. Such people as Mrs. Mattie Wellons, over 100 years, Tillie Mays, over 100 years, Reverend Este in his eighties, all died within the last three or four years. Mr. Clarence Este, brother of Reverend Este, Mr. Earl Swift\* who arrived in Montreal in 1917 with Reverend Este, Mrs. Packwood; long-standing member of the Coloured Women's Club, established 1902, Mrs. Mildred Williams, who has served the Church for over forty-eight years, Mrs. Daisey Sweeney (née Peterson) sister of Oscar Peterson and a product of the UNIA, Union Church and NCC, and many others are still with us.

Research for this thesis thus includes: Primary Sources: manuscript or printed, oral; tapings, interviews and conversations, records; Union United Church, 3007 Delisle Street, Montreal, Negro Community Centre, Coursol Street, Montreal, Quebec Board of Black Educators, Montreal, African Canadian Historical Association (ACHA) Archives, 115 Deslauriers, Pierrefonds, Quebec, private papers of Reverend Este (retained by his brother, Clarence Este), Marin Street, Montreal, and private papers of Mr. Henry J. Langdon, incumbent President, UNIA, Montreal.

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\*Earl Swift died in 1981 while this study was still underway.

Because of the nature of this study, short Biographical Notes are included in the Bibliography and Footnotes are inserted where it is thought these would provide information not readily available to the reader.

Furthermore, some of the original manuscripts or papers researched have no page number or are undated, in such cases this has been indicated in the footnote by "no page", (n.p.) for "no publisher" and "undated" where these apply.

## CHAPTER I

### EDUCATION THROUGH THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

#### Early Developments

It is not widely known that Blacks played a part in the History of Canada from its earliest beginnings. A Black man, William Da Costa sailed with Samuel de Champlain and acted as an interpreter with the Micmac Indians.<sup>1</sup> He eventually settled at the Port Royal Habitation on the bank of the Annapolis River in Nova Scotia, where he died and was buried.<sup>2</sup> In 1975 Professor Howard Fell, of Harvard University deciphered the inscriptions on the three Boustrophedon stones found near Bromptonville, five miles north of Sherbrooke. This inscription revealed that 500 years before the birth of Christ, North Africans travelled up the St. Lawrence Rivers and arrived at Sherbrooke in the Eastern Townships searching for gold which they found.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel G. Hill, The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada. The Book Society of Canada Limited, Agincourt, Canada, 1981, p. 291. Also Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 1 (Toronto, 1966), p. 452.

<sup>2</sup>There is a plaque at the Port Royal Habitation, Nova Scotia, commemorating his death.

<sup>3</sup>The Montreal Star, Quebec (CP), "Ancient Stones Bear Witness: Libyans Visited Quebec in 500 B.C., Archeologist Says." Montreal, April 9, 1975. (Reference to Article in daily paper).

Note: Professor Lee, a Laval University Archeologist, explained that North Africans sailed up the St. Francis River which flows into the St. Lawrence River southwest of Trois-Rivieres and so reached the Eastern Townships. Professor Fell of Harvard, believed they made at least two expeditions. The Stones, discovered sometime early in the Century now reside at Sherbrooke Seminary in Quebec.

As far back as 1689, Louis XIV gave permission to his subjects in New France to import African slaves,<sup>1</sup> and at the signing of the British North America Act, African slaves were thought important enough to be mentioned in Article 47.<sup>2</sup> According to Marcel Trudel<sup>3</sup> there were approximately 1,132 Negroes during the 125 years of French rule, while Audet<sup>4</sup> puts the number at 1,200. Canadian census records for 1844 lists Lower Canada as having 266 and for 1851-52 only 18.<sup>5</sup> It is still not clear what happened to the 11 to 12 hundred slaves in Quebec mentioned by Trudel and Audet. Ida Greaves suggests that those who did not emigrate were assimilated.<sup>6</sup> Buddie Jones, a Black Montrealer whose roots in Montreal go back to 1849 is presently researching his family's origins in Quebec and has discovered that many Blacks intermarried with the French.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marcel Trudel, L'esclavage Au Canada Français: Histoire et Conditions de L'esclavage, (Quebec, Canada: Presses de l'université Laval, 1960), p. 54.

<sup>2</sup>British North America Act.

<sup>3</sup>Marcel Trudel, op.cit., p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>J. Wilson, M. Stamp, L. P. Audet, Canadian Education: A History (Ontario, Canada: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Census of Canada 1865-1867, Vol. IV., 1876, p. 153 and p. 207.

<sup>6</sup>Ida Greaves, National Problems of Canada: The Negro in Canada, McGill University Economic Studies, No. 16 (Packet-Times Press, Limited, 1930), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>Two areas where Blacks intermarried are the Gaspé and Quebec City. Jones is a relative of Tilly Mays, a centenarian who contributed many long years to Union Church, and of George Elliott, who served for over 60 years.

The earliest record we have of a Black Québécois student was Oliver Le Jeune, who was brought in 1629 as a slave to Quebec and was taught in the first Quebec school established by the Jesuit Priest Father Le Jeune.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the ensuing years Africans as slaves, freedmen, and United Empire Loyalists came to Canada. Some of these settled in Quebec. Bertley mentions well-educated individuals who could speak many languages and who were experts in negotiating; men such as George Bonga, a legendary voyageur, educated in Montreal, spoke both French and English as well as Indian languages. "He was an acknowledged expert in the songs of the French Canadian voyageurs and was a master in the art of negotiation." François Dechouquette was another such voyageur. His mother was a "very knowledgable midwife, medicine woman, and nurse."<sup>2</sup> Within the social framework these men were highly regarded.

It was not, however, until the 1890's that Blacks began to move into Montreal in numbers large enough to form a community. Attracted by the building of the railways - the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific were completed and running by 1888 - which had Montreal as its major centre, Blacks arrived from the United States, the West Indies and the Maritimes. Those from the United States had a good reputation for work on the trains

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<sup>1</sup>The Jesuite Relations and Allied Documents. Travel and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France. 1610-1791. (Cleveland, 1896-1901, ed. Rueben Gold Thwaites.) V. 196 & 62.

<sup>2</sup>Bertley, Leo W. Canada and Its People of African Descent. Pierrefonds, Quebec: Bilongo Publishers, 1977. pp. 19-20.

and thus it was that many were hired to come to the City.<sup>1</sup> Representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railways also recruited in the West Indies and those who heard about it had visions of "great success in a rich and prosperous land."<sup>2</sup> Blacks in Nova Scotia, some of whom had roots going back to pioneer days, had an extremely difficult time obtaining an education and an even more arduous one procuring work there. Work on the trains therefore represented a way out of the Province and those who were able to, did so; both young men and young women made their way to Montreal.<sup>3</sup>

The railways established "quarters" for their workers<sup>4</sup> in the vicinity of St. James Street near the terminus, which became known as the St. Antoine Area. This area was bounded on the North by the Canadian Pacific Railway tracks, on the South by Notre Dame Street, to the East by Windsor Street and the West by the Glen Road,<sup>5</sup> (see Map at page 10A) with the highest concentration between Windsor Street and Richmond Square. The St. Antoine Area was not exclusive to Blacks, for immigrants

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. George Braxton, not retired and still living in Longeuil, was one of those recruited from the United States in the 1920's. (See also Biographical Notes.)

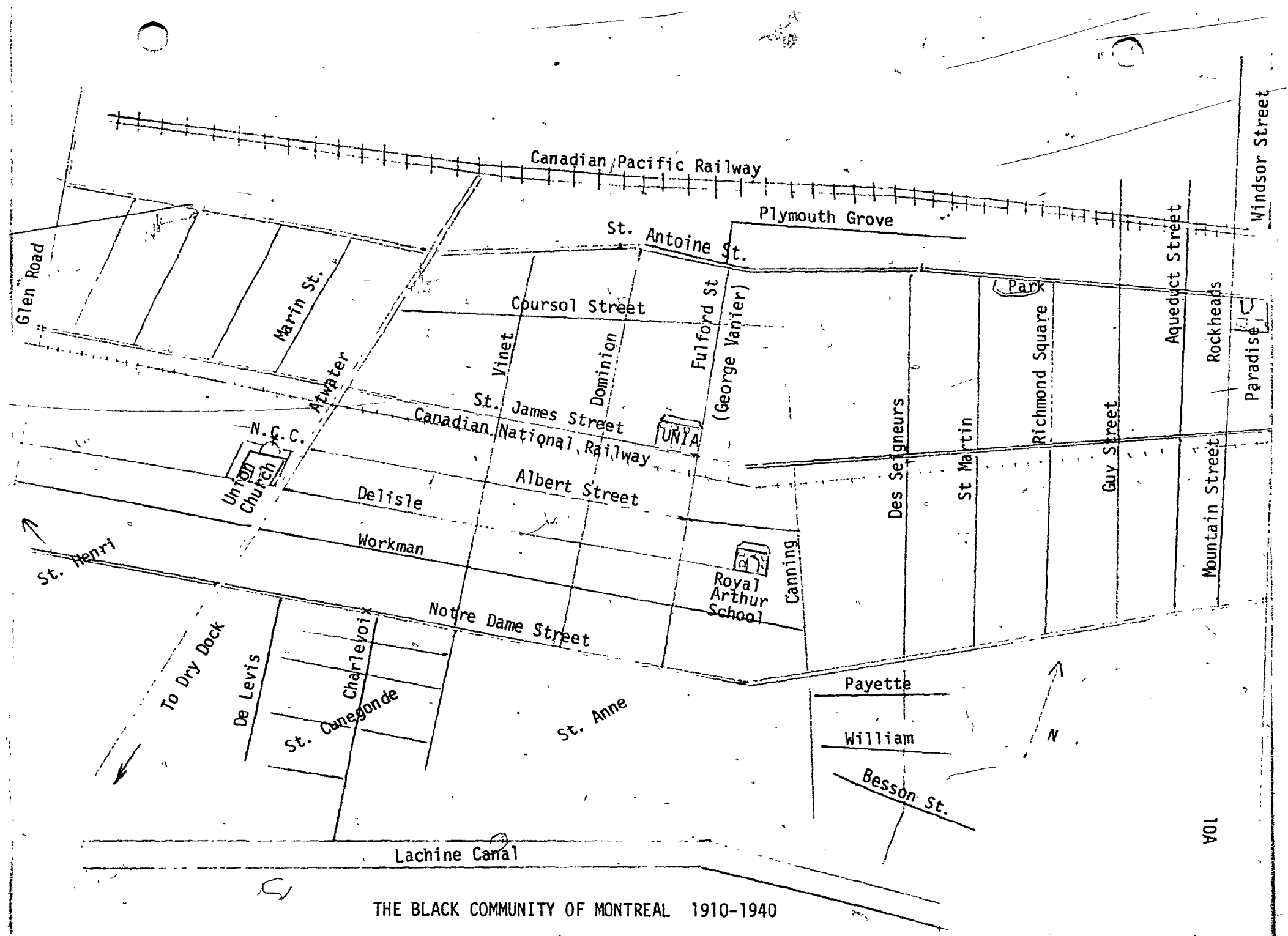
<sup>2</sup>Charles Este and Earl Swift from Antigua were thus recruited. Clarence Este, *taping and conversations*, 1978. See also E. L. Homewood, "The Preacher was a Bootblack", The United Church Observer, (June 1, 1959) pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup>Joe Sealey, came to Montreal while still a youngster. He was later employed on the trains. See Biographical Notes.

<sup>4</sup>Israel, Wilfred E. The Montreal Negro Community. M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1928, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 2.





and new arrivals found their way here until they established themselves well enough to move out. There was thus a constant movement of other groups in and out of the Community whereas the Black population remained relatively stable.

The years after 1917 brought an influx of West Indians and during the ensuing years the Black population continued to grow. Israel in 1928 notes:

This group forms the nucleus of the Negro Student body at McGill Union (sic) where they are to be found registered in all departments, with the largest numbers in medicine and agriculture. These men are seeking a higher education with a view to bettering their economic position and in the hope of serving their race.

Blacks were also scattered around Montréal; although most of them resided in the St. Antoine Area they were to be found

in Maisonneuve, Park Extension, Northeast City of Amherst, Papineau and Delormier Avenues, Christopher Colomb Street, Dufferin District, Notre Dame de Grace, Ville Emard, Cote St. Paul, Notre Dame Street and the City of Verdun.<sup>2</sup>

Thus by 1929 the population numbered about 5000.<sup>3</sup> As the Community crystallized and grew, many institutions, organizations and clubs arose to aid and nurture the Community in its thrust for survival. Organizations

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>This is the estimate given by persons such as Mr. Charles Ashby and Mr. E. J. Tucker. Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1, Ottawa, 1936, records 1,604 urban (Montreal) Negroes, Table 35, pp. 715 and 716. These estimates have traditionally been regarded as highly underestimated for a variety of reasons. See Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal 1917-1979, Doctoral Dissertation, Concordia University, Montreal 1980, p. 99.

such as the Oddfellows, Elks, Prince Hall Masons, Walker Credit Union, specifically established to utilize and direct the talents and activities of Blacks, have survived to contemporary times.<sup>1</sup> The first recorded Black organization in Montreal to be established was "The Coloured Women's Club" 1902, which still exists. This is a benevolent, social and charitable club, formed to cater to, and help those in need and to provide social activities where necessary. Five years later the 'Colored Church' which had been holding assemblies since the 1890's became the Union Congregational Church, responding to the spiritual and social needs of Black families who were left behind in Montreal when fathers and relatives went out "on trips" on the trains. The year 1917 witnessed the inception of the Montreal branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA),<sup>2</sup> an international organization set up to keep Blacks informed of their African heritage, self-identity and historical roots. From the Church would spring the Negro Community Centre (NCC)<sup>3</sup> established in 1927 to answer social and economic needs.

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<sup>1</sup>Note: Dan Handleman in his McGill M.A. Thesis West Indian Associations in Montreal, 1964, deals extensively with some of these.

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter UNIA.

<sup>3</sup>Hereafter NCC.

### The Church Community Develops

The inception of the Church came about through a handful of men and women who saw the need for a religious/socializing institution which was to be much more serious minded than the rum shops and gambling halls to which Blacks in Montreal were inevitably exposed. It was out of such need that the Church was founded. Montreal was the railway recruiting centre and it was from here that trips across Canada originated. This meant that men would be gone for twelve to sixteen days at a time leaving wives and children behind, where facilities for Blacks in Montreal during these early years of the century were very limited. Clubs and places of entertainment did not readily open their doors to them and not everyone would rent apartments or living quarters to Blacks.

The presence of an invader, whose colour sets him off from the wider community tends to be met with open resistance by the property owners. It is quite normal for them "to refuse to rent" and they would be told it was "already taken" and if they were successful they would have to pay "double plus"<sup>1</sup>

White churches did not welcome them. Mr. Tucker<sup>2</sup> now ninety-four, frequently tells the story of how he attended an Anglican Church in Ville Emard one Sunday morning. The stewards of this church, in the most

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 209.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Tucker, President of the UNIA for over 40 years (1935-1975) and now Honorary President, came to Montreal in 1907. He has been taped in connection with the UNIA and his view of Montreal in the early days. (See also Biographical Notes).

Christian-like manner, directed him to a position under the stairs and behind a hefty pillar. Mr. Tucker, unsuspectingly and gratefully accepted this seat. After the service he was hastily guided towards the door. On reaching outside, some of the Christian-minded teenagers, just fresh from spiritual devotions grabbed stones and shouted "let us stone the nigger." Mr. Tucker took to his heels and did not stop until he reached his rooming house. At this point the Jewish landlord came out and proceeded to lustily berate the teenagers who had followed Mr. Tucker right up to his door. Amazingly, this worthy gentleman, in recounting this incident is still able to appreciate the humour and irony of the situation.

It was in this kind of atmosphere that the half dozen or so Black gentlemen and their wives drew up their own individual covenant for a church here in Montreal. The Church has always been an especially important institution for Blacks, for it was not merely a place of worship since it served many purposes. Wilfred Israel<sup>1</sup> in his study of the Montreal Negro Community has noted this multiple role of the Black Church. He quotes from Kelly Millar:

The Negro Church has stood and still in large measure stands for the home, the school, and the state. It has been and is the greatest enlightening, uplifting, purifying and inspiring influence which actuates the life of the benighted masses. (Kelly Millar - Race Adjustments, p. 141).

<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 149.

Betty Riley, a Black Montrealer, points out that the Black Church "represents the coming together of a people to share in fellowship, social interaction, relevance and historical significance."<sup>1</sup> This concern is reflected in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church which give an indication of the religiosity of the individuals and their thinking for its membership. It was thus that provision was made for a Sunday School, Superintendent, teachers and a Sunday School Library.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore not by chance that out of the Sunday School would emerge the basis for many educating and socializing influences. The Church itself would function to serve its Community in whatever ways became necessary to foster its development.

One of the interesting facets of this Church is that it is open to Blacks of all denominations, thus its name "Union".<sup>3</sup> This was the spirit which obtained in the whole Community, to welcome Blacks from wherever they came irrespective of place of birth or of worship. Thus Blacks from any area were welcomed, and have served within this Church in various capacities regardless of their denomination, and Ministers have come from the United States and the West Indies, while invited guests have many

<sup>1</sup>Bettie Riley, "The Coloured Church of Montreal", Spear (Toronto, Ontario, June, 1974), Vol 3. No. 10, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Union Congregational Church, Constitution and By-Laws. Montreal, Quebec, 1907, Art. V. Sections I and IX.

<sup>3</sup>Union United Church papers, File #1, History, op.cit., ACHA Archives.

different backgrounds.<sup>1</sup> The Church has produced many dedicated persons from the congregation; George Elliot of Montreal, whose family goes back to the 19th century served in every important office of the Church for more than sixty years. He died in 1979. Mrs. Tilly Mays, originally from the United States, was head of the kindergarten and Junior Section of the Sunday School for decades, while Mrs. Mattie Wellons from Atlanta, Georgia, worked primarily with the Willing Workers Club.

Reverend Este, Pioneer Minister

Reverend Charles Humphrey Este, the son of a Pentecostal Minister in Antigua, West Indies, was one of the Blacks who came to Montreal early in the century. In 1913 he was attracted by the sales pitch of a CPR representative recruiting in the West Indies. Este and eight others, including Earl Swift, promptly took ship and headed "to the land of milk and honey".<sup>2</sup> At seventeen Este was highly intelligent and very determined, worthy characteristics for the challenges life in

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<sup>1</sup> Leo Bertley, Montreal's Oldest Black Congregation: Union Church. Quebec. Bilongo Publishers, 1976, p. 5, mentions persons such as Rev. Dr. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia Zion Baptist Church, Rev. F. Bailey of Candiack United Church, Rev. Dr. Charles S. Spivey, J.R., former Secretary of the Justice and Service Commission of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Carrie M. Best, Officer of Canada, from Nova Scotia, the late Mrs. Kay Livingstone, Chairman of the Visible Minority of Women of Canada, from Toronto, Roger Doucet (of 'O Canada' fame) more recently, and others.

<sup>2</sup> E. L. Homewood, "The Preacher Was A Bootblack", The United Church Observer, June 1959, pp. 8-10, 21.

Montreal would present and the role he would be called upon to play in this city. Securing a job was a first priority. The CPR promise of permanent work on the railways did not materialize and Este found job hunting in Montreal a serious business. His work in a steel factory did not last long and he was soon seeking employment once more, but work could not be obtained. Eventually, the Carona Hotel hired him as a "Bell hop/Boot-black", which enabled him to eat and to survive.<sup>1</sup>

Charles, optimistic and cheerful developed a good relationship with those around him. He was quite popular with guests who often suggested he should further his education. At first he thought of McGill's MacDonald College, but through a guest at the hotel, he arranged an interview with the Dean of the Congregational College<sup>2</sup> in Montreal where he was accepted on probation. Este, who had already completed primary education in Antigua, paid one dollar an hour out of his meagre wages for supplementary tuition, and by the Fall of 1918 he was able to attend college full time.<sup>3</sup>

While attending this college, Este developed his taste for creative writing and literature. His first literary effort, a book

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<sup>1</sup>E. L. Homewood, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>The Congregational College of Canada later merged with the United Theological College in Montreal.

<sup>3</sup>E. L. Homewood, op.cit., p. 9.



of poems,<sup>1</sup> was published, and over the next thirty-six years as he pursued a diverse academic career, he indulged his passion for journalism, particularly Religious Journalism. His education took him through prep school, the Pioneer Theological Seminary in Rockford, Illinois, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity, and the Lighthouse Bible College of Chicago, where he obtained a Doctor of Literature.

These details reveal the kind of man Este was. His struggle prepared and fitted him to be sympathetic and understanding towards those he would have to counsel and lead. In the words of Mrs. Packwood, "attending college was no easy achievement, especially for one who did not have the social contacts or the financial support."<sup>2</sup> Not only were jobs for Blacks scarce but prevailing attitudes towards education for Blacks in Montreal were highly negative, yet Este was able to surmount these difficulties and serve as a dynamic motivating force in the Black Community.

While his personal educational progress was no mean achievement, Este was at the same time, attached to Union Church in a pastoral

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<sup>1</sup> Clarence Este, brother to Charles, interviews and taping, 1978.  
Note: The only copy of the poems that could be located is owned by Earl Swift, now deceased.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Ann Packwood, taped interview, 1980. (See Biographical Notes). Mrs. Packwood is a longstanding member of the Community.

capacity from 1923 to 1924 during some of the most difficult years of growth and consolidation the Church would face in its history. Este had joined the Church early upon his arrival in 1913, while it was going through growing pains and there were troublous times financially and with regard to building the congregation. The Church at the time had an average attendance of twenty-two persons per service.<sup>1</sup> While still a student, Este was invited to preach because the Church has just lost its minister, who had left them with a debt of \$2500.00, and they could not afford a replacement.<sup>2</sup> Dr. E. Munsen Hall, then principal of the Congregational College, who was always helpful in assisting Union, in 1921 assigned Este and another student to the Church at seven dollars per Sunday.<sup>3</sup> The Church Board was so pleased with Este that they invited him to serve as their student pastor, from 1923 to 1925, while he was still attending college.<sup>4</sup> It was during this period that he succeeded in clearing the Church debt.

In 1925, three major events took place.<sup>5</sup> On 18 May 1925, Este was ordained as a Congregational Minister, secondly he received and

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<sup>1</sup>Union Church Minutes, ACHA Archives, 1913, no page.

<sup>2</sup>Union Church History. File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Union Church Minutes, ACHA Archives, 1925, no page.

<sup>4</sup>Union Church History and Minutes, ACHA Archives.

<sup>5</sup>Union Church Files, ACHA Archives, 1925, no page.

accepted the call as the full-time minister of Union Church and thirdly, he participated with the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists in the deliberations and consumation for forming the United Church of Canada.

This proved a very difficult year for Union Church. The Church had to be renovated, which required funds, and the membership had to be extended and consolidated. It would grow from an average attendance of 70 persons to an average of 150.<sup>1</sup> Este's duties were endless. He attended to pastoral duties of births, marriages and deaths, preached and gave addresses both in the Church and outside on visits to other churches and community groups such as the Elks, and the UNIA (to both of which he was chaplain); he visited the sick, which involved much walking, and he helped with immigration and legal matters pertaining to personal problems of individuals.<sup>2</sup> He struggled with welfare responsibilities and youth programs and activities which would lead eventually to the developing, financing and formation of the Negro Community Centre in 1927, and he was involved with and established contacts with agencies such as the Bahai Assembly, United Church and

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<sup>1</sup>Union Church History Files, ACHA Archives, 1925.

<sup>2</sup>Newspaper clippings. File, ACHA Archives, undated. Many community members have substantiated this. Mrs. Packwood, Mrs. Griffith, Mr. Langdon.

local welfare groups.<sup>1</sup> It was indeed an intensively productive, busy and trying time. To quote Mrs. Packwood:

He succeeded where others who also tried failed, and not because they wanted to. It was because of his outstanding qualities that he succeeded.<sup>2</sup>

In his writings Rev. Este talks about some of the difficulties and trials he encountered in "My Early Ministry."<sup>3</sup> His youthfulness presented a problem to some members who felt this would be a drawback to his performance as a minister and he became so discouraged that he seriously considered resigning. He was however counselled otherwise by one of the senior Elders. Este was maturing. He led a very busy schedule and eventually this took its toll of the young minister. At first he tried to do it all by himself, but he ended up in hospital. He learnt that as a minister it was important to delegate duties in accordance with the abilities of his congregation. Commenting on the leadership role of the ministry he said:

The genius of leadership lies in the minister's executive ability in putting people to work.<sup>4</sup>

and he realized that

In every congregation one would find members endowed with the gift of leadership. Talents are to be found among the younger element.

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<sup>1</sup>Union Church History, Files. (ACHA Archives) 1925.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Ann Packwood, taped interview 1980.

<sup>3</sup>Este, Rev. C. H., My Early Ministry. (ACHA Archives) undated, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

Others in the congregation are willing to work. It is the question of 'you and your place'. There is a place for everyone in the church, and it is the minister's responsibility to make sure that the congregation is set on fire by zealous and enthusiastic members. To attain this goal I have been set on fire myself.<sup>1</sup>

and he said that

Every minister should be a good organizer. Let the minister remember that one of the best ways of holding people's interest is to give them something to do.<sup>2</sup>

Este was thus no mere preacher. He understood the rudiments of teaching, preaching and educating people in its widest sense. Of his great interest in the young he writes:

Fundamentally and admittedly, I am interested in the youth of my congregation.<sup>3</sup>

Thus he tried wherever possible to direct the energies of youth into positive and fruitful channels.

I have harnessed the resources of our young people by giving them the opportunity to participate in public work.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

The interest he demonstrated in youth is reflected in the functioning of the Sunday School, the Sunday School Band, the Choir and clubs like the Excelsior Dramatic and Debating Club which grew under his guidance and inspiration. His publication of the Church Digest encouraged not only adults but the young to contribute articles and thus learn the disciplines and techniques of journalism. Henry Langdon, former member of the Executive Board of the Church, and now President of the UNIA, fondly remembers the encouragement given him in his desire to write and subscribe to various journals.

About his role as minister, Este writes:

The minister is a leader of men, and his task is to lead. Leadership implies direction. He must direct their thinking and train others to assume responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

Under his leadership and direction auxiliaries and committees that were previously established, flourished and expanded, and new ones were created. This however, did not occur all at once, it required persistent dedication and direction, and the ability to persevere even when difficulties appeared.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

### Social and Educational Conditions in Montreal

Insight into Reverend Este's role at Union Church requires understanding of the times and conditions under which Montrealers and especially Black Montrealers lived. The City Below the Hill<sup>1</sup> and The Anatomy of Poverty 1897-1929<sup>2</sup> provide interesting and worthwhile history of the period. Furthermore there are today still many Blacks<sup>3</sup> in the Community who lived through the twenties and thirties or have relatives who did, and they detail and confirm conditions during this period. The City Below the Hill which comprised working class made up principally of French, English and Irish, many of whom were immigrants, included the St. Antoine Area. It was here that immigrants and newcomers often settled, struggling for survival and better conditions and concerned primarily with their own individual ethnic progress.

In Montreal the population almost doubled in the years between pre-World War I and 1929, when Montreal had become a metropolis with a population of one million,<sup>4</sup> of which about 5,000 were Black.<sup>5</sup> By the thirties Quebec

<sup>1</sup>Hebert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill, (n.p.), Montreal, 1897.

<sup>2</sup>Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929, Canada, McClelland and Stewart, 1974.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. & Mrs. Packwood, Mr. E. J. Tucker, Mrs. Mazie Dash, Mrs. Everil Griffith, and many others who have been interviewed or have conversed with the writer. (See also Biographical Notes).

<sup>4</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. Charles Ashby, Mr. E. J. Tucker. Canadian census admitted difficulty in estimating this population. Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 3, refers to some of these problems.

was already an industrialized and urbanized province.<sup>1</sup> There were garment industries, steel works, chemical factories, etc., and more than half of the Quebec population lived in towns and cities. Montreal, the largest metropolis in Canada, had its share of unemployment and migrating farmers with their families looking for work and crowding already bursting tenements or buildings, with "shoddy shacks" on the outskirts of the town.<sup>2</sup> It was in this mosaic that Blacks would have to endure.

Politically, the provincial government of Taschereau gave way to the "iconoclastic" Maurice Duplessis, whose infamous "Padlock Law" would be used to undermine and subjugate selected groups or individuals, and put into jeopardy small business men like Rufus Rockhead, who had his licence revoked without cause or recourse, for a number of years.<sup>3</sup> At the Municipal level Méderic Martin tended to be sympathetic towards "ethnics"<sup>4</sup> as would also be the popular Camilien Houde.<sup>5</sup>

For the majority of working Montrealers, conditions were very poor. Housing accommodation was severely limited. Incomes were very low and

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<sup>1</sup>H. Blair Neatby, The Politics of Chaos, Canada in The Thirties. (Toronto, MacMillan of Canada, 1972). p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 109

<sup>3</sup>Rufus Rockhead, The Gazette, "Friends Bid Goodbye to Rockhead Today", Montreal, September 26, 1981. Also H. Langdon and E. J. Tucker.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker: The UNIA acquired its dance licence for many years under M. Martin.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. E. M. Packwood, in conversation, 1978. Mr. Packwood produced a newspaper called "The Free Lance" in 1934-1938, and he was interested in promoting Black business. He met and spoke with Mayor Houde on several occasions.



daughters and wives had to supplement the income wherever possible. Most people rented houses and it was not at all unusual for ten to twelve people or two families to live in a single room, while many homes had no windows, and outdoor toilets frequently served more than one family. Blacks tried to combat this housing shortage by banding together in co-operative efforts like the Eureka Association,<sup>1</sup> which promoted a venture to enable Blacks to own their own homes. The Association summarized the attitude of the society towards Blacks:

... that neither government nor colonization organization seem to be interested in our racial development. They apparently are not worried about our increased or decreased numbers, they are not worried about our social or moral improvement or deterioration, they are not worried about us when passing their immigration and colonization laws, in short, they are not worried about us at all.<sup>2</sup>

In 1919 their treasury had \$450.00 in hand, by 1921 the funds had reached \$20,000. The Company became incorporated with a capital of \$49,900.

Altogether they were able to totally own four buildings which were on Richmond Square and two on Plymouth Grove.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Eureka Association was a co-operative venture organized by a number of Blacks to acquire their own homes. Money was pooled together to buy a building, then another and so on. Mr. and Mrs. Packwood were involved in this venture. Wilfred Israel, op.cit. also refers to this Association. (see his Appendix).

<sup>2</sup>Eureka Letter and Pamphlet. See Wilfred Israel, op.cit., Appendix pp. 215-216 for copy of letter, etc.

<sup>3</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 213.

Montreal was considered very much behind many other North American and Canadian cities in the area of health.<sup>1</sup> Open sewers and deplorable living conditions were not uncommon. Copp tells us that health and social welfare were not high priorities with the municipality or the Province and these were primarily maintained by private agencies or benevolent individuals.<sup>2</sup> The unhygienic horse and cart were still quite common and delivered milk, ice and other commodities. Transportation in main areas was provided along main streets such as Atwater, Park Avenue and so on, but walking was a normal means of getting around, especially for individuals who did not have the fare. Not many people possessed cars, although one or two Blacks like Charles Ashby did manage to obtain one.<sup>3</sup> Rev. Este, himself, never owned a car; he reached the various regions of his Community primarily on foot and only took the streetcar when it was impossible to walk, thus while he covered endless miles per day, it kept his health in good condition.

During these years it was extremely difficult for Blacks to obtain work. Most of the men, regardless of their qualifications and skills worked on the railways and considered themselves fortunate to do so. The

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<sup>1</sup>Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, pp. 88, and 140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 90-91.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Charles Ashby, in conversation, 1973. Mr. Ashby often related how he was frequently stopped by "cops" who were positive he had stolen his car. (See Biographical Notes)

Red Caps at the station had to live from the tips received, if any, since they were not paid wages. On a bad day, they did not receive any money at all.<sup>1</sup> The women, wives and daughters of these men, worked 'in service' as domestics, where they could get it. Mr. Charles Ashby, a shipbuilder by profession, could not get regular work in his field, and finally acquired work on the trains.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Griffith, husband to Mrs. Everil Griffith, was a welder who worked at the Angus yards sweeping and cleaning up for a while. When one of the regular welders fell ill, he replaced him for a number of weeks. He was highly praised for the work he did during that period, but could not be employed "because the union would not allow it."<sup>3</sup> Eventually, he was hired by the railways. Mr. Blanchette<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Earl Swift, both university-educated, worked on the trains. Some braver and more determined souls went into business for themselves. Billy Jones' father, Frank Jones was a barber, Rufus Rockhead ran 'Rockhead's Paradise', a restaurant and night club of international repute,<sup>5</sup> Mr. Lockhart and his wife Hilda had an electrical shop, both were Quebec qualified and licensed electricians.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Charles Ashby, in conversation. Also article by Vipond. "An Interview with Charles Ashby of Montreal". A Key to Canada, Part II: Published by the National Black Coalition of Canada, Inc., 1976.

<sup>3</sup>Mrs. Everil Griffith. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>4</sup>Robin Winks mentions Blanchette in The Blacks in Canada in connection with his union work with A. Phillip Randolph with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. p. 425. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>5</sup>Rockhead's Paradise was a Montreal landmark for over fifty years. More recently in 1981, it was sold and is now under new management as 'The Rising Sun'. One member of the family now operates a restaurant in part of the building.

<sup>6</sup>Mrs. Hilda Lockhart, in conversation, 1980. ACHA Archives contains an artifact from this shop.

Mrs. Lockhart was taught by her husband and was certainly the first Black woman and probably the first Quebec woman to be so qualified and licensed.<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that:

This was a period during which child labour was still widely practised. . . One of the most injurious consequences was the hard necessity for children as well as young unmarried women to go to work at as early an age as possible.

Between 1890 and 1930 wages of the Montreal working man remained at subsistence level and sometimes dropped below it.<sup>2</sup>

and

For the three decades 1897-1929 there was the problem of inadequate incomes for a life of "health and decency" which existed for the vast majority of the industrial class throughout North America, but the evidence suggests that the problem was particularly acute in Montreal.<sup>3</sup>

Although there were no laws prohibiting Blacks from attending schools, prevailing attitudes discouraged them. It was not uncommon for teachers to tell Black students they were wasting their time and that this kind of education was not for them since they would only become porters or domestic servants.<sup>4</sup> Education during these years was more the preserve of the elite rather than the general populace,<sup>5</sup> and statistics given by Copp<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>Ann Packwood, Betty Riley, Daisey Sweeney, taped interviews, 1980.

<sup>5</sup>Roger Magnuson, A Brief History of Quebec Education From New France to Parti Québécois, (Montreal, 1980), pp. 77 and 97.

<sup>6</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., p. 61.

reveal that of the 25,792 students who attended the Roman Catholic schools during 1916-1917 at the primary level, roughly half went on to grade two, and of these again only about half to grade three, and by grade seven which was terminal for primary education, and for the majority of students who reached that far, only about one thousand were left, whereas in the high schools, grade eight, five hundred and sixty students remained. After grade eight there were no students. Protestant schools varied slightly with grade 11 (Secondary V) having about 149 students. At any rate says Copp, writing as recently as 1974, "for the majority of the population of Montreal, education meant elementary school until very recently."<sup>1</sup> It was not until the Quiet Revolution began under the Lesage government in 1960, that Quebec would once again have a Minister of Education (designated Minister of Youth in 1962)<sup>2</sup> Paul Gérin-Lajoie, who introduced reforms. The subsequent Parent Report (1964)<sup>3</sup> contained seeds of ideas which had lain dormant as far back as 1845 with Jean-Baptiste Meilleur, who had begun to think in terms of "the practical needs of the people", "diverting money towards those who could not afford it" and "a free education available to all."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert F. Quinn, The Union Nationale: Quebec Nationalism from Duplessis to Lévesque. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1979, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> J. Keith Jobling, The Contribution of Jean-Baptiste Meilleur to Education in Lower Canada. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Institute of Education, McGill University, 1963. p. 104 and p. 26.

Viewed in this backdrop, Reverend Este's task must have been monumental, for by sincerely helping those with whom he came into contact, he was able to inspire them to progress, achieve and dedicate themselves. Numerous stories are told of his generosity and inspiration. Although he had no children of his own, he regarded all children as his,<sup>1</sup> and "If anyone came to him for help, he would find a way to help him, even though it meant that he himself would have to do without and in this respect his help was not limited to his own race."<sup>2</sup>

#### Education Through the Church

Education through the Church took a variety of forms. Through Reverend Este's guidance the Church tried to meet the spiritual and temporal needs of its Community as necessity arose. As a result, a number of auxiliaries and units developed. The United Church Record for 1935 lists seven auxiliaries: The Sunday School, The Bible Class, The Willing Workers, The Choir, The Sisterhood and United Brotherhood and The Prayer Meeting Band.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Betty Riley, taped interview, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Ann Packwood, taped interview, 1980.

<sup>3</sup>"The Union United Church: A Church History" in The United Church Record and Missionary Review, pp. 12a-12p. Vol. 11, No. 6. Toronto, June 1935, pp. 12d-12p.

The Sunday School which had come into existence with the establishment of the Church<sup>1</sup> would provide the nucleus for a variety of units which would develop. Interestingly enough, its first Superintendent was a woman, Mrs. Ethel Gaspard, and according to the Constitution the Superintendent was one of the Officers of the Church<sup>2</sup> who possessed a great degree of autonomy and responsibility. Concerned primarily with the young and the young adults, it met every Sunday at 1:30 in order to allow children to attend earlier or later services with their parents. The children ranged in age from infants through kindergarten, junior and senior classes to young adults. During the Sunday School period special emphasis was placed on religious instruction<sup>3</sup> but recitation, music, singing and dancing would also have a place. The purpose was to teach Christian principles, provide stimulation for leadership<sup>4</sup> and encourage regular attendance. A further purpose was to appeal to and motivate children on the outer fringes of the Church's influence.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Union Congregational Church, Constitution and By Laws, Article V, Section I, 1907. Montreal.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Article V, Sections I, II and IX. (See Appendix 3).

<sup>3</sup>The Union United Church: A Church History, The United Church Record and Missionary Review, op.cit., p. 12e.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12e.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12e.

Lessons usually centered around the Bible and Bible stories with relevant references to everyday occurrences and application to life.<sup>1</sup> Home study of lessons was assigned and class and individual recitation of verse and Biblical passages were encouraged. Special stress was laid on discipline which involved behaviour, deportment and respect towards elders. The Sunday School not only concerned itself with the spiritual life of its members but it was here that the children were afforded the opportunity to learn and become proficient in elocution, public speaking and the art of recitation and take part in the presentation of plays, skits, pageants and other related activities. An important element was the opportunity provided to speak or perform in public and so acquire confidence and the techniques and skills of leadership. One such occasion was May 13, 1935, when Lucille Vaughan, daughter to Mrs. Ann Vaughan, (later Packwood) presented her premier recital "in Elocution" in the Church.<sup>2</sup> This event was sponsored by Mrs. Maude Jones<sup>3</sup> who trained students in elocution, deportment and recitation, while Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 12e.

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. Este, "The Union United Church", op.cit., p. 12m.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Maude Jones was a Christian Scientist and a staunch fighter against racial discrimination. Aunt to Buddy Jones, she was from the southern United States. She seems to have been relatively wealthy and an independently minded person who sponsored and patronized many activities in the Community.



Harold Potter provided the music at the piano.<sup>1</sup> Henry Langdon<sup>2</sup> and Allan Husbands, both of whom later became very active in the Community, received training through the Church. Henry Langdon, who served all three institutions, and Allan Husbands were highly reputed for their ability to speak in public. Allan, who was a porter of the Canadian Pacific Railways, was in later life selected as secretary for the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees which position he held until death in 1979. In this capacity he was frequently called upon to give reports and handle union matters. In adult life he helped train young people in public speaking through his capacity as Grand Master of the Mount Moriah Lodge of the Masons which was dedicated towards helping young people.<sup>3</sup> One youngster who had been sponsored by the Beaver Temple Lodge of the Elks Club was Rupert Whims. Rupert, who was trained by Mrs. Theresa Cooper, Directress of Education for the Beaver Temple of the Elks (IBOPE), was awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship (in 1952) by the Atlantic City oratorical contest. He was the one Canadian candidate

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<sup>1</sup>Charles H. Este, op.cit., p. 12m. Harold Potter, now a professor at Concordia University, is the son of Albert Potter who was very active in the UNIA. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>2</sup>Henry Langdon, who served all three institutions, will be discussed more fully under the UNIA.

<sup>3</sup>Allan Husbands, in conversations on many occasions during the 1970's.

and won over several other entrants from the United States.<sup>1</sup> Martha Griffith,<sup>2</sup> another student of the Sunday School, who was grounded in these arts, developed a lifelong love of poetry and recitation, and went on to lead a life of dedication to the Negro Community Centre.

The adult Bible Class was inaugurated in 1935 by Reverend Este and was specially geared towards adults who wished to study further the word of God. This Bible Class dealt extensively with the study and analysis of such subjects as Paul's Epistles to the Romans and his private letters.<sup>3</sup> These studies were compared and contrasted with items of topical interest and relevance to life. At other times guests, such as Reverend F. Newton of the Bible House were invited to give lectures and/or present lantern slides.<sup>4</sup> A Youth arm of this class called "The Christian Endeavour" was further formed.<sup>5</sup>

Rev. Este was fortunate to have a number of adults to work with him in his endeavours; Mrs. Tilly Mays, previously mentioned as teacher

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<sup>1</sup>Newspaper clipping (n.p.), August 2, 1952, ACHA Archives, also Mrs. Theresa Cooper. Rupert is now a Vice-Principal in a Montreal school.

<sup>2</sup>This lady will be further mentioned in the Chapter on the NCC.

<sup>3</sup>United Church Record and Missionary Review, op.cit., p. 12e.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12d.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12d.

and supervisor of the Junior and Kindergarten sections was very creative and embraced every opportunity to direct and develop the children's abilities.<sup>1</sup> She is remembered for the many programs of concerts, pageants, cantatas and recitals which frequently took place under her direction, ably assisted by Gladys Este, the Reverend's wife, who for many years presented pageants, involving the children of the Sunday School,<sup>2</sup> in the Church.<sup>3</sup> Earl Swift, a McGill graduate previously mentioned as travelling with Rev. Este from Antigua to Montreal, assisted with elocution, public speaking, debating and education. Belonging to the old traditions, he demanded high standards in these areas. A student of the Sunday School who served as a young teacher, overcame tremendous odds to pursue a successful career,<sup>4</sup> Vivian (née Wendham) Layne is mentioned in the United Church Record as graduating from Lincoln School for Nurses, New York, in May 1935,<sup>5</sup> where she attained "outstanding achievement."<sup>6</sup> Among those devoted

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<sup>1</sup> Mazie Dash, taping 1980.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12o.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 12o.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith.

<sup>5</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12e.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Tucker, in conversation, 1978.

to the Church was the de Shield family. Clara de Shield (née Trott), who graduated from the State Normal College in New York, a teacher training institution,<sup>1</sup> arrived in Montreal in 1912, four years after the inauguration of the Church.<sup>2</sup> She started the first Black Nursery School in the Church<sup>3</sup> and from this early beginning would further direct her energies towards both the UNIA and the Negro Community Centre.

In 1909 the Sunday School role listed fifteen scholars, but by 1935 it had risen to one hundred and forty,<sup>4</sup> and in later years it exceeded two hundred with fourteen officers and teachers. Among those who attended the Sunday School were the children of Dr. K. Melville, the Rockhead children, the de Shield children, the children of Mazie Dash, Betty Riley and many others.<sup>5</sup>

A Unit of the Sunday School, the Sunday School Band, boasted quite a record of achievements. At the New Year's Rally it had been first for replying to "Roll Call With Song" and was awarded "Signal honour" for

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. Este, Newspaper clipping, ACHA Archives, undated.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Evelyn Braxton, member of Union Church. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>4</sup>The United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12e.

<sup>5</sup>Mazie Dash, Betty Riley, 1980.

placing first.<sup>1</sup> After 1925 when Union had amalgamated with the other Churches into the United Church of Canada, it continued this record, gaining honourable distinction seven times.<sup>2</sup>

Other units that evolved from the Sunday School were the Excelsior Debating and Dramatic Club, the Library and the Literary Forum. The Excelsior Debating and Dramatic Club came into being around 1933. It was a revival of the kind of intellectual and social activities among young people which had existed during the early and vibrant twenties when there were many "coloured and foreign students" to supplement and support it.<sup>3</sup> The exodus of families and students from the city during the late twenties brought about a dearth of these activities. However, through the persistent efforts of the Minister, the Club materialized with E. A. Swift as its instructor. Originally ten members, their numbers were augmented to twenty-five, who produced real progress thereby "winning the esteem and commendation of our citizens".<sup>4</sup> The production of literary work and dramatic presentations were considered to be of a high order maintained by very selective and dedicated members.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12e.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12e.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 12i and 12j.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12j.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12j.

Their historical tradition was of considered importance to the Church members. A Black Library to acquaint students with their cultural history was initiated to encourage the children and adults to be "informed on their roots and identity".<sup>1</sup> This was particularly relevant since the services rendered by the UNIA Library provided by the Literary Club during the late twenties no longer functioned.

This emphasis on educational and literary matters manifested itself in various ways. One of these, the Literary Forum, encouraged the "passing on of educational experiences and information" sponsored by the "intellectual of the community".<sup>2</sup> Members from the wider community would be invited as guests to speak to groups at the Church. This allowed for question and answer periods from the audience. In this capacity, individuals such as Rabbi Stern of the Jewish Community, Professor Clark of McGill University, Messrs E. A. Reid (a Black Pharmacist), H. D. Thwaites, P. J. Reddie would speak on a variety of topics . . . "What are the Qualities Necessary for Success?"; "The Importance of Education"; or "Business Ventures."<sup>3</sup> These lectures were geared to inspire as well as motivate.

One of the enduring important and dynamic units of the Church has been the Church Choir. Over the years it has proven to be a vital structure

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Packwood, taping and conversations.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

of the Church. This auxiliary, composed of Senior, Intermediate and Junior sections,<sup>1</sup> has always attracted many young people, and Reverend Este early encouraged a vigorous choir to utilize their energies. One of the early Choir Directors was Mr. Charles Dyal,<sup>2</sup> a dedicated musician, who was also Music Director and ardent supporter of the UNIA. Not only was the choir an important part of the Church worship, but programs for spiritual enjoyment and appreciation were frequently arranged both within the Church Community as well as the Montreal area. Members were well trained since they were fortunate to enlist the help of such individuals as Florence Tucker<sup>3</sup> its mezzo soprano, Mrs. Gladys Este, the wife of Reverend Este who often presided at the piano, and introduced pageants which "created a memorable impression",<sup>4</sup> and Mrs. Mildred Williams.<sup>5</sup> She accompanied the choir on visits to various locales where they staged recitals and programs throughout the City of Montreal at places such as Her Majesty's Theatre and other churches. These performances helped raise funds for the

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<sup>1</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12f.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 12f.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Evelyn Braxton, daughter-in-law to Mrs. Tucker. Mrs. Braxton delivered the eulogy at the death of Mrs. Tucker in 1978 and recounted her contribution in this respect.

<sup>4</sup> United Church Record, p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Williams had been a member of the Church since 1912 when she joined the Sunday School as a pianist and has served the Church in a variety of positions.

Church and deserving causes, one of which was education, during the years when books had to be bought and fees paid for students attending the High School of Montreal.<sup>1</sup> These donations laid the foundation of the first Charles Este bursaries and scholarship funds. The United Church Record for 1935 points out that a substantial monetary gift to the Minister, donated by the Phyllis Wheatley Art Club, was declined by him, in favour of creating a bursary for the high school student who attained the highest average annually.<sup>2</sup> The Phyllis Wheatley Art Club<sup>3</sup> was founded primarily to focus attention of Blacks on their history and artistic endeavours and in addition to respond to more practical needs. It was named after the first recognized Black American Poetess who had been a slave and went on to write poetry and literature in the style of the early American poets of the period. They further established a Phyllis Wheatley Scholarship Fund of \$25.00 to be

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mildred Williams, Mr. Langdon, Mr. V. Phillips. Mrs. Williams is still an active member of Union Church. Her daughter Shirley Durant is presently Church secretary. Bernice Whims (née Jordan) daughter of Rose Jordan, was one of the students together with Tryphena Collins who attended the High School of Montreal.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12n.

<sup>3</sup> The Club performed a variety of activities consisting of a group of 12 coloured women which was later reduced to nine. Apart from giving donations to the Church, they sent baskets to the needy, helped with the sick, conducted a "Flower Fund", subscribed to the Children's Memorial Hospital, gave scholarships to deserving children in public schools and many other related activities. United Church Record and Missionary Review, op.cit., p. 12g.



"given to a number of coloured children who received scholarships from the public schools because of their high standing". The scholarship was given to the child with the highest points.<sup>1</sup> Today the Charles Este Bursary Fund which was consolidated on the 65th Anniversary of the Church and the fortieth year of Reverend Este's ministry, provides assistance for numerous Black students across the Island of Montreal and its suburbs.

Within the framework of the Church and congregation a tradition was established whereby the laity were always encouraged to participate in Church affairs. On occasions when the minister was sick or had to be away, members of the congregation would take over and organize the service, or fill in where necessary. Thus on May 9th, 1935, Mother's Day<sup>2</sup> Mr. W. A. Lawrie gave the sermon and the evening service was held under the auspices of the Household of Ruth<sup>3</sup> and addresses were given by Mrs. K. Bourne and Mr. Charles Ashby, while the soloists for the occasion were Mrs. H. Weeks and Mr. B. Gooding.<sup>4</sup> Such events provided opportunities for those capable to fulfil leadership roles and display their talents while inspiring and contributing to the Church.

Before closing this chapter, the point must be made that the many auxiliaries and organizations both within and outside the Church were very

<sup>1</sup>United Church Record, p. 12g.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., op.cit., p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>This is the female branch of the Oddfellows, a Black fraternal organization, established in Montreal in 1918.

<sup>4</sup>United Church Record, op.cit., p. 120.

supportive of one another. In the words of Mrs. Sweeney<sup>1</sup> it was a city of organizations or clubs which met either at the Church or the Centre or the UNIA or at individual homes. Not only did the specific groups exist for special purposes, but they also provided an important means of gaining experience in leadership and organizational abilities so imperative for the young people and adults of this Community.

These organizations made contributions in different ways. The Elks for example, a fraternal organization which received its charter from the Grand Lodge in Washington, D.C. on July 2, 1926, provided, among their benevolent activities, a recreational centre and conducted a Junior Athletic Club for boys and girls to have baseball, badminton and so on.<sup>2</sup> Other clubs and organizations such as the Coloured Women's Club, the Phyllis Wheatley Art Club, fraternal groups, all made their respective contributions. The Union Church Report<sup>3</sup> for December 31, 1927 makes special mention of the Willing Workers Club, the Board of Deaconesses, the Phyllis Wheatley Art Club, the Odd Fellows, the Elks, the Women's Club (The Colored Women's Club), the Benevolent and Charitable Association, the Household of Ruth, the UNIA, the PMBA (Porters Mutual Benefit Association), and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees.

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Daisey Sweeney, member of the Black Community, tape 1980. (See also Biographical Notes.)

<sup>2</sup>United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12f.

<sup>3</sup>Union Church Report, (ACHA Archives), December 13, 1927.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA): FORMAL AGENCIES OF EDUCATION

In the previous chapter reference was made to the various organizations which developed and grew out of Union United Church under the direction and inspiration of Reverend Charles Este. Even though this Church Community was very small, many of its leaders frequently supported more than one community organization. In turn various agencies of the Community supported many of the ideas and objectives of the Church. One such institution was the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and African Communities League (ACL).<sup>1</sup>

This Chapter will define the historical background of the UNIA, deal with its basic philosophy and direction, explain its educational thrust and thus show how the Montreal Division of the UNIA attempted to implement its educational imperatives.

#### History and Background

A short look at the historical background of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, (UNIA) is helpful in understanding the role played by this organization in education in Montreal. Founded in August 1914, the UNIA was the 'brain child' of Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a Jamaican.

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<sup>1</sup>This is the full title of the organization which is more popularly referred to as the UNIA. This designation will be used throughout.

When little more than a youth, Garvey observed the plight of Negroes living in Jamaica; their poor economic status, their lack of self-sufficiency, and the dire need for an organization to unify, uplift and improve their condition. Garvey travelled extensively to the British Isles, Europe, Central America; and the United States, and wherever he went the desperate and deplorable conditions under which Negroes lived appalled him, and he determined to dedicate his life to their betterment.

It was in the United States that his organization really took root. His first visit there was in March 1916,<sup>1</sup> where the UNIA developed, flourished and spread throughout the States and thence to countries all over the world. Hollis R. Lynch tells us that it became "one of the most phenomenal social movements in modern history."<sup>2</sup> At its peak it totalled "1200 chartered divisions throughout the world"; these included Australia, East, West, Central and Southern parts of Africa, the Republic of South Africa, England, Wales, Central and South America and the Caribbean.<sup>3</sup> In Canada, wherever there were Blacks, UNIA Divisions sprang up, totalling

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Garvey, "The Negro's Greatest Enemy," in Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed., Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, (Studies in American Negro Life, August Meir.) Athenum, New York, Vol. 2. p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed. Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, with a new preface by Hollis R. Lynch. (Studies in American Negro Life, August Meir, General Editor.) Athenum, New York, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Leo W. Bertley, The Universal Negro Improvement Association of Montreal, 1917-1979 (Unpublished Ph.D., Dissertation, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, 1980), p. 37.

twenty-eight altogether. The following comment from Bertley gives an idea of the response of Canadian Blacks to this movement.

In 1922, which seems to be the year when the UNIA reached its peak in Canada, there was hardly a community, with any appreciable Black population which did not have a branch of the organization. In Nova Scotia, there were units in New Waterford, Glace Bay, Sydney, Tracadie, New Glasgow, Halifax, Dartmouth, Truro, and Amherst. There was a division in St. John, New Brunswick, while the Montreal branch was the only one in Quebec. Other population centres with UNIA units included the following: Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Windsor, (Ontario); Winnipeg, (Manitoba); (Saskatchewan); Edmonton, Junkins, Donatville, Keystone, Calgary, (Alberta); Vancouver, Victoria, and Prince George, (British Columbia). This makes a total of 28 UNIA units at a time when the Black population was very small. According to official figures, Canada had only 1,046 people of African descent the previous year. This was unquestionably an underestimation. Today, only Montreal and Toronto have survived as members of the UNIA family.

Garvey's philosophy reached Montreal ahead of him through West Indian and American Blacks who came to the City, but by 1917 Garvey himself had visited Montreal, where, Wilfred Israel tells us, he addressed the Negro Community at the Chatham Street Hall during the Winter months.<sup>1</sup> It was not, however, until June 9, 1919, that the UNIA Montreal was inaugurated<sup>2</sup> and from 1919 to 1928 it took a leading part in the life of the local Negro Community.<sup>3</sup> It further established a number of auxiliary units which left an impact on the Black Community. Funds were raised towards

<sup>1</sup> Israel, Wilfred E., op.cit., p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Leo Bertley, The UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Israel, Wilfred E., op.cit., p. 205.

acquiring its own building, battles were fought against discrimination, immigration problems were dealt with, and it worked in areas where conditions for the Negro could be improved. So well were these early Garvey-ites inspired that those who lived on were able to keep it alive right into the eighties.

The UNIA has its own Constitution and Book of Laws.<sup>1</sup> It was first issued in July 1918 in New York and revised and amended August 1920, 1921 and again in 1937. The Montreal Division guided itself by this Constitution and set up structures in as many areas as the small Black population saw fit and could manage. The UNIA Liberty Hall was well known throughout the Black Community and people of the Community regularly attended its meetings, which were held on Sundays, weekly and on special occasions. Those who attended comprised three groups: paid-up members who were listed in the records and regularly supported the institution, those who attended regularly and gave of their support<sup>2</sup> and finally those of the Community who attended meetings and functions because they were afforded socializing and educational opportunities not provided elsewhere in the larger society.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Constitution and Book of Laws. Made for the Government of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Inc., and African Communities' League, Inc., of the World. In effect July, 1918, revised and amended Aug., 1920 & 1921, New York. Hereafter referred to as Constitution.

<sup>2</sup> Membership Lists and Records, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup> Mazie Dash and Victor Phillips are two of the many persons who mentioned this. Both these persons are long-standing and active members of the Black Community. (See Biographical Notes for further details).

Bertley has shown from his study of these lists that approximately 700 names were listed for 1922, many of these being heads of families with a remarkable number of well-educated persons or professionals.<sup>1</sup>

In the years between the wars there were not many avenues of social activities open to Blacks in Montreal, who were scarcely allowed into clubs and places of entertainment. As one person expressed it "one had to talk softly and tread lightly",<sup>2</sup> indeed, it took a bold person to expose himself to rebuffs and possible abuse, hence, it was quite normal for Blacks to attend Union Church on Sunday morning and the UNIA in the afternoon. That was the place to go and "it was nothing to fill the Hall"<sup>3</sup> for UNIA functions. Furthermore, because of the variety of programs offered by the UNIA, whether educational or social, the Community generously and liberally supported these gatherings. Victor Phillips, who lived in Verdun and did not regard his family as members of the UNIA, remembers that whenever his family could do so, "they would attend UNIA functions because this was the place to go on a Sunday afternoon or whenever occasion permitted".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., pp. 123-127. There are six doctors on the roll between 1919 and 1925. These were Drs. D. D. Lewis, D. Gaspard, Samuel Wills, K. Melville, J. R. Williams and J. Horsham. Rev. C. A. Steward, Rev. Charles Este, Lawyer Spencer Pitt, G. Alberga, engineer, Rosalind Thompson, teacher, Earl Swift, graduate from McGill, and others. The majority of members he defines as "working class", i.e., comprised of porters, Red Caps and domestics. "Working class" does not always accurately describe some of these who were well-educated persons.

<sup>2</sup>Joe Sealey, in conversation. Joe is a Black Montreal gentleman who arrived from Nova Scotia around 1924 at about age 14. He has served the Community in a variety of ways. (See Biographical Notes for further details).

<sup>3</sup>Mazie Dash, tape 1980.

<sup>4</sup>Victor Phillips, tape and conversations, 1980.

UNIA Chaplain: Reverend Este

Reverend Este served the UNIA in many ways. Not only was he highly regarded as a spokesman for contact with the City, a delegate and representative when necessary for such matters as immigration, the judiciary, and other institutions, he also held a number of offices in the Division. He was Vice-President of the Literary Club, member of the Executive Board and perhaps the most highly honoured, Chaplain of the Montreal Division.

On numerous occasions Rev. Este was called upon to do battle for the UNIA. One such occasion of significance was the licence episode. The UNIA required a licence to hold social gatherings and dances in its Liberty Hall at Georges Vanier and St. James Streets. These events were a vital means of raising funds to carry out the programs of the UNIA, including such expenses as the paying of teachers, scholarships, financial assistance to students, building fund, teaching aids, books and equipment for classes, etc. Further the licence permitted those organizations which rented premises from the UNIA to hold their own fund raising events.<sup>1</sup> Rents from these organizations was thus an important addition to the UNIA funds.

At their previous address at Chatham Street, the UNIA had had such a licence, issued by Mayor Médéric Martin, who was sympathetic to the needs of the Black Community. The licence had, however, to be renewed annually,

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker, UNIA President from 1935 to 1975, now Honorary President. Tape.



but in the new location of the UNIA on Georges Vanier Street it, was in the constituency of Gabais, councilman for St. Antoine. Gabais objected to Blacks functioning in his district and in this respect he had support of the Parish Priest. Rev. Este was a member of the UNIA delegation formed to visit Gabais to achieve accommodation. The delegation had to wait some hours before being rudely received by the Councilman who was adamant in refusal. Fortunately, for the Division, President Trott was, at a later date able to obtain the licence.<sup>1</sup>

In matters of immigration or legal affairs the minister was kept particularly busy. Many a student, immigrant or domestic would be represented by him. He became so well known to judges and court officials that they would contact him whenever a Black had a legal difficulty.<sup>2</sup> Judge Leet, who held Este in great esteem advised him on many occasions<sup>3</sup> about youth, particularly those who were implicated in a case before him, and many a Black youth was remanded by the court and released to the Reverend's care and guidance.<sup>4</sup>

As Chaplain of the UNIA the Reverend had specific duties, as laid down in the Constitution, to perform. Article III, Section 63 of the

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith, tapings and conversations, 1981

<sup>3</sup>Union Church Minutes. (ACHA Archives)

<sup>4</sup>Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith.

Constitution and Book of Laws states:

All Chaplains of the UNIA and ACL shall be intelligent persons versed in the reading and interpretation of the Universal Ritual and the Scriptures.<sup>1</sup>

Este was called upon to follow this Ritual, outlined in a book entitled, The Universal Negro Ritual.<sup>2</sup> It contains "Forms, Prayers, and Offices for use in the UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION" together with a "Collection of Hymns Authorized by the High Executive Council. It was compiled by His Grace, the Reverend Dr. George Alexander McGuire, the first Chaplain-General of the UNIA and was approved by His Excellency, Marcus Garvey, President-General and Provisional President of Africa in 1921." This Ritual contains:

The Order for Divine Service.

Order for Sunday Mass Meetings.

Prayers and Thanksgiving for Special Occasions.

Baptism and Dedication of Infants.

Order for Burial Service.

Hymns.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution and Book of Laws, New York, July 1918, Revised and Amended August, 1920. Revised and Amended August 1921, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Universal Negro Ritual, 1921, (hereafter referred to as the Ritual).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; ACHA Archives, 1921.

The Order For Sunday Mass Meeting allowed for a "Musical and Literary Program" and "an Address" which will be discussed later in this Chapter. In addition to the Ritual, there was the Universal Negro Catechism,<sup>1</sup> which sets down the tenets of religion and provides some historical information and background with regard to the origins of Blacks while giving material regarding identity and racial upliftment.

Beyond his specific duties, Este was called upon to deputize on other occasions. There were times at the Sunday meeting when he had to deliver the address which would deal with themes directed towards the upliftment of Negroes.<sup>2</sup> Emphasis would be put on the need for personal betterment, perhaps illustrating this with the life of an outstanding Black man taken from the Catechism or current topical and relevant events. The need for knowledge, education and unity among Blacks would be ever recurring themes.<sup>3</sup>

The Reverend is well remembered<sup>4</sup> for the address he gave on the occasion when Garvey visited Montreal in September 1928. Arrangements had been made for Garvey to speak at Victoria Hall in Westmount, however he was arrested in Richmond Square by the Montreal police on a "trumped-up"

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<sup>1</sup>Universal Negro Catechism, (ACHA Archives), 1921.

<sup>2</sup>The UNIA Catechism contains information on historical knowledge, referring to such distinguished persons as Edward Wilmot Blyden, p. 15 and Frederic Douglas, p. 16 and so on.

<sup>3</sup>Interviews with Ann Packwood, Mazie Dash, Mr. E. J. Tucker and many others.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

charge of illegal entry.<sup>1</sup> The Montreal Community had looked forward to this trip particularly since they had kept abreast of the events that were taking place in the United States.<sup>2</sup> As could be expected, the Victoria Hall was "packed" and when Garvey did not show up rumours for his failure to do so began to circulate. No doubt the crowd was extremely disappointed and somewhat upset, especially, since quite a few Montrealers had previously met and heard Garvey.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A. J. Garvey, Garvey and Garveyism, p. 194. Mrs. Garvey said they had a 'visitor's landing card'.

Garvey had arrived with his wife via Quebec City. They had travelled over from England on the S.S. Empress of Scotland. McKenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, was also a traveller on that ship, and had appeared quite friendly towards them.

Cronon, in Black Moses, p. 150, attributes this arrest to political pressure from the U.S. Consul, a Republican representative. Garvey supported the Democrat Al Smith.

<sup>2</sup>Garvey was always a dynamic inspiration to the Black Montreal Community. News of his activities easily travelled back and forth across the border via the railway porters, Black American newspapers such as the Pittsburgh Courier, the Guardian, Negro World (UNIA paper), the Tattler, The Crisis (N.A.A.C.P.), The Oddfellows Journal, The Amsterdam News, etc., to be found in Montreal Black establishments; barbershops, tailorshops, restaurants, (see W. Israel, op.cit., pp. 223-225, and the ships that plied the Montreal and American ports.) Furthermore, representatives from Montreal, e.g. Mr. Tucker, Mrs. Florence Marshall, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Trott, Dr. Lewis, Mrs. Obrien and others visited the states and attended conventions both on private and UNIA business, (see Leo Bertley, p. 314) which kept Montrealers up to date on current events.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix 4 for personal impressions of Mazie Dash.

Black Montrealers who witnessed Este's delivery describe it as "highly intellectual", "especially moving", and "great".<sup>1</sup> One scholar has termed it "his finest hour"<sup>2</sup> and it is certainly regarded as a landmark in the minds of those still living who heard him.<sup>3</sup> The Reverend pointed out that Canada as a free and independent country, should exercise its own judgment. He commented on its disregard for the "feelings of Black Montrealers" and pointed out to Blacks that lack of respect and unity among themselves in turn engendered lack of respect at governmental and public levels. This need for self-respect and unity was a basic tenet of UNIA goals and education and was a constant recurring theme to be underlined by Black leaders.

#### Structure of UNIA Education

Education pervaded the basic philosophy of the UNIA Montreal Division as it did the parent body in the United States. Garvey's views on this subject are clearly stated:

To be learned in all that is worthwhile knowing. Not to be crammed with the subject matter of the book or the philosophy of the classroom, but to store away in your head such facts as you need for the daily appreciation of life, so that you may the better in all things understand your fellowmen, and interpret your

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<sup>1</sup>M. Dash, M. Griffith, E. J. Tucker. Conversations and tapes.

<sup>2</sup>Leo Bertley, op.cit., p. 407.

<sup>3</sup>Dash, Griffith, Tucker and others.

relationship to your Creator.<sup>1</sup>

and

Education is the medium by which a people are prepared for the creation of their own particular civilization, and the advancement and glory of their own race.<sup>2</sup>

The UNIA Constitution and Laws gives through various Articles (see Appendix 5), the thrust of the education structure. Pertinent and applicable sections are discussed herein and it will be seen that in some cases the Montreal Division adapted these sections to suit the needs of the Montreal Community and the perspectives and demands of life in a country different from the United States. The Constitution made allowances for this. One of these differences is the paramilitary training and direction which was important for the United States. In Canada this was not a priority.<sup>3</sup>

UNIA education can be viewed on two levels, formal and informal. In keeping with its philosophical tenets, it was meant to play an integral part in the "upliftment" and "betterment" of the Negro. The Montreal Division was highly ambitious and concentrated on auxiliaries and units not only to reinforce the UNIA philosophy, but also to give support and

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<sup>1</sup>Marcus Garvey, "Education", in Amy Jacques-Garvey, ed., Philosophy & Opinions of Marcus Garvey, op.cit., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., "Education", p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 280.

help in the traditional courses and subjects pursued by students in the regular public school system. The auxiliaries and units were inter-related and served to provide experience and learning in situations of leadership, organization, administration and planning, not otherwise available to Blacks. The educational structure thus included not only infant, primary and secondary classes, but also adult or continuing education classes aimed at developing skills in commerce, industry, trades and handicrafts. The role played by teachers was of prime importance to the implementation of this education, and student aid proved to be a significant factor.

Early in the history of the UNIA the Literary Club was established and in 1920 it organized classes to deal with reading skills, debating techniques, elocution and other related subjects, and a library to promote and encourage the reading of Black History.<sup>1</sup> The Club carried out many activities which will be further discussed under Chapter III the "Informal Agencies" of education.

By 1923 formal classes were in existence in Montreal. During this year a note signed by Clara de Shield asked for funds to purchase books for these classes.<sup>2</sup> According to the Constitution,<sup>3</sup> Rules and Regulations for Juveniles provided for an "Infant Class, 1-7 years," a "Class 2, Girls

<sup>1</sup>Literary Club Files, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Juvenile File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Constitution, op.cit., pp. 71, 74 & 47.

Souvenir Class and Boys Souvenir Class, ages 7-13 years," "UNIA and ACL Cadets, ages 13-16 years," and "Preparatory Nursing Class 14-18 years" and Laws for Children, Laws for Teachers and Local Staff, were also set out.<sup>1</sup>

### Kindergarten

The Infant Class or Kindergarten as it was known in Montreal was particularly important for this Community. Not only was it a means of providing preschooling activities such as song, dance, recitation and informal learning of number facts and letters, but it also afforded a much needed baby sitting service and accommodation.<sup>2</sup> The subjects as set out for infants in Article 1 of the Constitution are:

Bible Class and Prayer  
 Doctrine of the UNIA and ACL  
 Facts about the Black Star Line Steamship Corporation  
 The Negro Factories Corporation, and  
 History of Africa (in story book fashion)<sup>3</sup>

and the aim was to accommodate the needs of the children in Montreal.

Most of the mothers of the Community were employed as domestics with long hours and small pay while many fathers worked as Red Caps or Sleeping Car Porters. Mrs. Ann Packwood (de Shield) tells how the teachers would collect children for the kindergarten on their way to the UNIA Hall.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-73.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Ann Packwood, taping and conversation, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> UNIA Constitution, op.cit., p. 71.



because the mothers had to leave for work quite early in the mornings.<sup>1</sup> Since most Blacks lived within walking distance of one another in the area known as St. Antoine and its environs (see map, p. 10A) where the UNION Church, the UNIA and the NCC were located, this was relatively easy to do.

The kindergarten was extremely important in providing not only formal instruction, but was a means of teaching and reinforcing socializing habits and attitudes. Self-respect and respect for elders of the Community were greatly stressed and obedience and courtesy as specifically mentioned in the UNIA Constitution were demanded. Section 1, under Laws for Children states:

All Juveniles Divisions and Societies of the UNIA shall show high respect to all officers of the Association and respect for teachers in charge of class.<sup>2</sup>

Directives with regard to discipline are clear:

Section 2. No Juvenile shall be allowed to talk, laugh or carry on any mischief while classes are in session, but must sit at attention to instruction so as to get the benefit thereof.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Ann Packwood, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution, op.cit., Article II, Laws for Children, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

and

Section 3. Any Juvenile found using profane or bad language or becoming unruly and disrespectful to his or her officer in charge shall be reported to Superintendent, who through the Secretary, shall notify parents of child's conduct. If parents fail to correct the child and he or she continues, same shall be expelled by the Superintendent of Juveniles.

Articles XVI,<sup>2</sup> and XXIII<sup>3</sup> respectively deal with Conduct and Obedience and Courtesy, Section 1 states:

Obedience shall be the first duty of a member of the UAL (Universal African League). No body of men without discipline and strict obedience of lawful orders can accomplish much.<sup>4</sup>

and this emphasis is paralleled throughout Rules and Regulations for Juveniles.<sup>5</sup> Section 2, of Article XXIII continues,

Be courteous. Let love and appreciation of one another be the rule.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 57, Conduct.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Obedience and Courtesy, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Rules and Regulations for Juveniles, p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

Particular emphasis is laid on character formation and the need to guard against one's self as a 'knocker' or a 'shirker'.<sup>1</sup> Respect, both on the part of adults as well as children was thus encouraged in the Montreal Division, and throughout the Community.

The kindergarten training was provided by substitute mothers who looked after the young ones while their natural mothers were at work, and any adult with whom the child came into contact was regarded as a surrogate parent. This responsible attitude on the part of adults was borne out, not only in the UNIA but also in the Community. It was to be found among West Indian Blacks who encouraged their children to address all adults as "aunt" or "uncle" and to accept correction from them. The same attitude would be fostered in the Negro Community Centre when it came into existence in 1927. It engendered a spirit of caring adults and respectful and responsive children. Betty Riley tells of the great respect she had for Mr. Cooper, Mr. O. N. Daniels<sup>2</sup> and other seniors of the Community. She accepted their concern and correction as though it came from her parents. She relates the occasion when as a pre-teen she showed up at the internationally famous Rockhead

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cooper and Mr. Daniels were both members of the community. Mr. Cooper was involved both in the Church and the UNIA. He still lives in Montreal and attends the Union Church. Mr. Daniels was an elder member of the Church. He died about three years ago in 1978.

Paradise Night Club, (now a Montreal landmark of over fifty-three years)<sup>1</sup> located at the corner of St. Antoine and Mountain Streets.

Betty was authoritatively questioned by Mr. Rockhead and ceremoniously told to "get on home", for as a young girl that was not the place for her to be. Her mother was speedily informed of her whereabouts and even before Betty reached home she was there ready to support the position taken by Mr. Rockhead.<sup>2</sup> This aspect of community involvement in education provided supervision and guidance which was much needed and bore out the importance Garvey placed on obedience, courtesy and respect for one another.

#### Primary

"Class 2" ages 7-13 for boys and girls was meant to be handicraft classes as laid out in the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> The rationale was to make UNIA type souvenirs which could later be sold. In Montreal, however, the primary sections functioned on Saturdays and weekly, after the public schools were dismissed. Remedial programs, vocational courses and general academic work in accordance with the traditional pattern of education were offered. Negro Catechism dealing with stories of Blacks and their history would be selected.<sup>4</sup> At other times Mrs. Florence Tucker

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<sup>1</sup>Recently, a few years before Mr. Rockhead's death in 1981, this club changed management.

<sup>2</sup>Betty Riley, tape, 1980. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>3</sup>Constitution, op.cit., p. 71

<sup>4</sup>Universal Negro Catechism, op.cit. This gives questions and answers, e.g. p. 16 "Who is Frederic Douglas?" or "Who was Booker T. Washington?"

who was particularly gifted in the area of drama, composed relevant choral and dramatic plays which were acted out and sometimes staged for special occasions.<sup>1</sup>

Royal Arthur Primary School in the St. Antoine area<sup>2</sup> was the public primary school where most Blacks were trained. In other municipalities Blacks went to the school in the area, since there were no discriminatory laws excluding them from such institutions in Montreal or Quebec, as was the case in other parts of Canada, like Ontario and Nova Scotia where there were separate school systems. Thus Victor Phillips' family of nine children attended the Verdun schools in the primary, and the boys went on to high school whilst the girls had to find work.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Dash's children attended the Catholic school, St. Anthony's in St. Henri.<sup>4</sup> Mrs. Ghlegg, who lived in Rosemount, sent her eight children first to a private kindergarten school in the area, carried on in the home, and later they attended the primary and high schools in Rosemount.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Florence Tucker File, ACHA Archives. Also Mrs. Evelyn Braxton, her daughter-in law.

<sup>2</sup>This school, opened in 1881, was closed in 1981 by the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal due to the decreasing English population brought about by Bill 101 and other events.

<sup>3</sup>Victor Phillips, conversations and tape, 1981

<sup>4</sup>Mrs. Dash, conversations and tape, 1980.

<sup>5</sup>Mrs. Ghlegg, conversations and tape, 1980.

### Secondary

The Constitution specified training for 13 to 16 year olds would be a military training for boys, "UNIA and ACL Cadets" while the girls would be directed to a "Preparatory Nursing Class." The courses would include Negro History, Etiquette for Girls, talks on the latest topic of the day, Hygiene and Domestic Science for the girls. The girls were to be grouped in levels of 14-15, 16-17, and 18, and then to finishing class. This class would be trained by the Black Cross Nurses. After age 18 the boys could join the African Legion.<sup>1</sup>

The Montreal experience saw no need for the military training as was required in the United States, and although the Constitution<sup>2</sup> made provision for an African Legion and African Legion Band, these never developed to any great extent in Montreal.<sup>3</sup> The files show that there were instructions for setting up a "Juvenile Youth Administration",<sup>4</sup> although there was no provision for such a group in the Constitution. This group will be discussed briefly under the informal agencies of education.

The Preparatory Nursing Class for girls never crystallized. Information dealing with general health and hygiene and aimed at developing

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution, op.cit., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 49 and 56.

<sup>3</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 280.

<sup>4</sup>UNIA Juvenile Youth Administration File, ACHA Archives.

awareness in these subjects was dealt with by guest lecturers such as Drs. Melville and Wills, at the Sunday Mass Meetings and on other occasions. The Black Cross Nurses Society<sup>1</sup> which was responsible for supervising such classes, had difficulty maintaining and pursuing their own specialized goals. Thus the Preparatory Nursing Class, designed to tie in with the BCNS, did not develop in the Montreal Division.

The Secondary section was successful in functioning in a number of ways. Boys and girls pursued the regular secondary program in the public schools and the function of the UNIA classes at this level was remedial and supplementary. Those students from the St. Antoine area who were fortunate enough to pass out of the primary school went on to Montreal High School.<sup>2</sup> But Black children were often discouraged in the High Schools. They were frequently channelled to the non-academic courses, and many dropped out along the way. Children would be told they could only become porters or domestics, and it was a waste of time for them to think of other fields of study.<sup>3</sup> Ida Greaves who addressed this problem in National Problems of Canada dealing with the education of Negroes in Canada in 1929, comments:

... one handicapping factor is the low economic status of the majority of the coloured families, and the very limited careers

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter BCNS.

<sup>2</sup> Bernice Whims, Tryphena Collins, Maurice Bourne (dentist) are some of the students who attended this school. (See Biographical Notes).

<sup>3</sup> Ann Packwood, Betty Riley, Gwen and Richard Lord.

open to Negroes, no matter how good their education, give no stimulus to a sacrifice of time and money for the sake of increased attainments.

The Pastor of the Negro Church, in St. John says that while the Negroes have the same opportunities as the whites attending the same schools they do not benefit by it because they see little chance of getting employment at home after securing an education, and the possibilities of getting to America are very limited. . . a larger number are to be found in the Public and High Schools of Halifax, Montreal and Toronto, but probably the same reason explains why they are more numerous in the lower grades than in the higher.<sup>1</sup>

Forty-one years later in 1970, the Quebec Board of Black Educators would discuss this matter with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, who recognized "there is indeed an acute problem regarding treatment of some Black students in our schools," and established a committee to deal with it.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Ann Packwood tells of her difficulties with the Montreal High School.<sup>3</sup> She wanted her daughter Mai-Ruth to follow an academic stream in order to go on to university, but the Principal of the school ~~felt~~ otherwise and tried to convince her of this. Years later when Mai-Ruth

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<sup>1</sup>Ida Greaves, National Problems of Canada: The Negro in Canada, op.cit., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Director of Education and Secretary Treasurer, Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal, Correspondence dated April 24, 1970. (See Appendix 6).

<sup>3</sup>Montreal High School is one of those schools phased out in 1980 by the Protestant School Board.



graduated from High School and University and followed up with a successful career, achieving acclaim through programming with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Television,<sup>1</sup> the teacher would ask if she could attend the ceremonies designated to honour Mai-Ruth.<sup>2</sup>

However, not all children were discouraged. Some became more determined than ever to endure in spite of obstacles, and these students were encouraged by the adults of the Community. As one mother said "you're not there for the teacher to like, but to acquire an education".<sup>3</sup> Three of Mazie Dash's four children graduated from High School and continued on to McGill University where two graduated. Neither were all teachers insensitive. Betty Riley remembers that some teachers at Royal Arthur, though "strict" were primarily interested in the advancement of all their pupils and demanded a high level of performance.<sup>4</sup>

A further problem was the perspective of some adults which would oftentimes be transferred to youngsters. This resulted in negative behavior exhibited towards Black students by their peers. Mr. Charles Ashby, who arrived in

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<sup>1</sup>Mai-Ruth was the first Black to appear on CBC National News. She further hosted a CBC Children's Program. Later she worked with the Federal government and is now employed with the United Nations as Senior Information Officer, Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>2</sup>Ann Packwood, tapes and conversation, 1980.

<sup>3</sup>Mazie Dash, tapes and conversation, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>Betty Riley, tapes and conversation, 1980.

Montreal in 1911, has commented on this attitude of white peers towards Black children during the twenties and thirties:

Schools would accept Black children, but there were warnings from white parents to their children to stay away from Blacks . . . and that the minute you turned your back, someone was calling you "a nigger" or something. Black/white socializing was practically taboo . . . .

#### Adult Education

The UNIA and its whole philosophical parameters is well disposed to Adult education, or as it is called today "continuing education". Commercial expertise is considered of special importance. If Blacks were able to set-up and run their own businesses this would be a vital way of illustrating self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Furthermore, it would provide a way to assist others. The general philosophy was thus to encourage individuals or groups to develop business acumen and ability, and channel it towards entrepreneurship. In later years sections of the UNIA building were rented out to Blacks who had the desire to develop their own businesses.

This underlying philosophy anchored the educational thrust towards adult and adolescent education. Classes for adults and adolescents were held during the twenties and thirties and were open to anyone who

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Charles Ashby, ed. Vipond, Patti, "An Interview with Charles Ashby of Montreal." A Key to Canada, Part II, published by The National Black Coalition of Canada, Inc., 1976.

wished to attend since age was no barrier. Adults attended as time and energy gleaned from their demanding occupations permitted, and classes included students of all ages working together in the same classroom.<sup>1</sup>

Traditional subjects such as English Language, English Composition, Mathematics, Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra, Geometry and Advanced Maths were taught. The files contain many samples of work done. There was Spelling and Dictation, Reading and Elocution, and History, including Black History. History followed a similar pattern to that pursued in the Church and later in the NCC, dealing with contemporary Blacks such as Charles Drew<sup>2</sup> whose life and success would be held up as a role model.

Commercial subjects of shorthand and typing were offered. Daisey Sweeney,<sup>3</sup> was said to be an 'outstanding scholar' in this field. She persisted for one and a half years with one lesson a week, finally achieving her Pitman Shorthand Certificate,<sup>4</sup> this in addition to working a regular day and studying music. Her name often appeared on the advertisement publicity pamphlets put out by the UNIA to attract new students.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Education Files #1, 2, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>An American Negro who attended McGill and later went on to discover how to preserve blood plasma. (Mrs. Ann Packwood)

<sup>3</sup>Daisey Sweeney, previously mentioned. Sister to Oscar Peterson, the jazz pianist.

<sup>4</sup>UNIA Education File #3, ACHA Archives.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

A circular letter written by the UNIA Executive in 1929 and addressed to "Fellow Members" states that "we have established a Handicraft Guild for our Boys and Girls so as to keep their minds healthy and for them to be useful in the Community."<sup>1</sup> In this regard dress-making, sewing and knitting classes were established. Businesses such as the Grover, Knitting Mills, on Moreau Street, in Montreal were approached to offer help and/or equipment or samples to be used by students.<sup>2</sup>

Trade and industrial knowledge were considered of particular importance as a means of developing much needed skills and knowledge, which it was hoped would open the way to better paying occupations. Industrial classes were thus formed "for young boys and girls in order that they might become craftsmen and women."<sup>3</sup> These included courses in carpentry, masonry and cabinet-making. Machinery and equipment were obtained and it was expected that training would develop along these lines. Music, both instrumental and choral, were promoted,<sup>4</sup> and drama too had its place.

The UNIA was an ardent supporter of sports especially for the young. A variety of sporting events for all ages took place at their picnics.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNIA Education #11, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Handicraft File #11, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup> UNIA Boys' Band File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup> These are discussed at greater length under "informal agencies."

<sup>5</sup> Picnic File, ACHA Archives.

These picnics occurred during the summer, - Pine Grove Park and later Otterburn Park were popular locations, - and were exceedingly well attended.<sup>1</sup> They further gave support to individuals in conjunction with fraternal Lodges such as the Masons, and Oddfellows. One person who benefitted was Corrine Cooper. She was expected to represent Canada in track and field at the 1940 Olympics which were unfortunately cancelled because World War II intervened.<sup>2</sup>

The UNIA Philosophy was directed towards aiding Black people to use every opportunity to reinforce a sense of "self worth" and "upliftment". In a directive issued by the President General and the Executive Council of the UNIA Parent body in the United States, there is an instruction to Divisions which reads as follows: "Do not allow anyone to preach against education or educated persons."<sup>3</sup>

Within the Community there seemed to be a great respect for and belief in the need for education. Although not everyone succeeded in achieving his goal - sometimes difficulties were too great to overcome - nevertheless, these aspirations were usually present.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Victor Phillips

<sup>1</sup>Picnic File, ACHA Archives. The Archives contains an extensive photograph of one such picnic held around 1929 at Otterburn Park.

<sup>2</sup>Corrine Cooper daughter to Frank and Theresa Cooper. Frank survived his wife, and now over 92 still attends Union Church. Corrine's scrap book gives pictures and clippings re her performance.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Instructions to Divisions #1, ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone I interviewed stressed the influence and importance of education.

relates the bitter disappointment of his father, who was a teacher in Barbados and would have been in line to become a school principal there, had he remained. In Montreal he had to make his living on the trains. According to Victor, his father hated it and consistently told his children never to get a job on the trains. He never tired of telling them to apply themselves to their school work. Victor graduated from Verdun High School and went on to become a successful businessman in Montreal. His brother Fred also graduated from High School and pursued studies at McGill to become the first Black lawyer in Montreal.<sup>1</sup>

The experience of Mr. Marcus Dash<sup>2</sup> is another example of thwarted desire to further one's education. Mr. Dash had been employed with the Shell Oil Company in Trinidad as a junior assistant, before coming to Montreal in the mid-twenties. He had left home with the idea of "pursuing a great and wonderful future in Montreal." After weeks spent in fruitless search for a job and being consistently told that the job was "taken" just when he showed up, his illusions were dispelled and he sought a position as "Red Cap" at Windsor Station. He had been warned that this was the only place he could get work. Undaunted he managed to manipulate his hours so that he could take courses at McGill University with the hope of pursuing the legal profession. These plans had however to be shelved

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<sup>1</sup>Victor Phillips, tape and conversations, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Dash, tapes and conversations, 1980.

when he was transferred and his trips did not allow time for such pursuits.<sup>1</sup>

In many instances parents from the West Indies and the United States had a level of education beyond primary. Reference has been made earlier to a number of persons on the membership roll who were well educated and were university graduates. Masie Dash's education in Trinidad was beyond the British Senior Cambridge level,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Everil Griffith when she arrived in Montreal had already completed one year's nursing training at the Barbados General Hospital. Reverend Este himself, when he arrived in Montreal had already completed primary school in Antigua. Charles Ashby from Barbados came of a ship-building family, and he had these skills when he reached the City.<sup>3</sup> In the case of American Blacks coming to Montreal the situation was generally the same. A number of Blacks who were university trained had to be contented with a career on the trains, Mr. Blanchette<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Dash, tapes and conversations, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>This would be matriculation and could compare with today's CEGEP, Quebec level.

Mrs. Dash tape and conversations, 1980.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Ashby. Conversations during the early seventies, also taping session. Charles Ashby, ed Patti Vipond, A Key to Canada, op.cit., 1976. Note: Ashby was one of those who had tried to find work in accordance with his qualifications. He did manage to secure a position in his field, however the foreman objected and he was discharged. Charles finally gained permanent work as a porter on the trains. Ashby's brother who remained in Barbados became a parliamentary senator.

<sup>4</sup>UNIA, ACHA Archives. Mr. Blanchette was born in the West Indies. Moved to the United States where he studied at Howard University for three years and hoped to become a doctor which dream never materialized. He was International Field Organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

and Earl Swift were two of these. Black porters had quite a distinguished reputation on the trains. They were regarded as somewhat of an elite group,<sup>1</sup> especially suited to understanding and coping with the eccentricities of their passengers. Mr. Ashby who travelled with Prime Ministers McKenzie King, Saint Laurent and Diefenbaker was always in demand.<sup>2</sup>

### Teachers

In many families it was the custom to welcome others to the family Sunday dinner or afternoon tea where one could be sure of not only sustenance but a congenial atmosphere and a listening ear. In this way Tilly Mays, Maude Jones, and others held open house on Sundays and Reverend Este as well as anyone from the Church or Community would be welcome.<sup>3</sup> Many of the meetings of the UNIA units were conducted in the homes of members who would take turns in hosting the group.<sup>4</sup> Thus a quality of awareness and concern existed and was characteristic of many of the teachers who were UNIA members but also worked with the Church and the NCC. A number of these teachers are worthy of mention.

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Ashby, in conversation.

<sup>3</sup>Ann Packwood, Rose Jordan, Mazie Dash, in conversation.

<sup>4</sup>UNIA Minutes, also Black Cross Nurses (BCNS) Minute Book, ACHA Archives.



Mrs. Clara de Shield, formerly mentioned in connection with the Church and the Black Nursery School. She was sister to Mr. W. Trott, one of the early Presidents of the UNIA. Born and educated in New York, she was a graduate of the State Normal College. She married Ann de Shield's brother. The de Shield family functioned prominently in all three institutions, Church, UNIA and NCC. Clara was involved in the early organization of education in the UNIA and was directly responsible for the kindergarten section. Speaking of her, Reverend Este said "she was simple and impressive, a devoted mother and community worker, tolerant and broadminded and had great intellect and literary gifts."<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Florence Springer Marshall Tucker was originally from Barbados, and she came to Montreal at about age 13 via Toronto. Twice married, her second husband was Mr. E. J. Tucker, President of the UNIA 1935 to 1975. As Lady President of the UNIA she was, as laid down in the Constitution<sup>2</sup> Superintendent of the Juveniles. An ardent community worker, she participated in Union Church where she sang and directed many a choir and greatly assisted in their fund raising activities. The mezzo soprano for the UNIA Choir as well as the Church Choir, she is accredited with bringing soul music to Montreal.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Tucker also

<sup>1</sup>Newspaper Clippings, collected by Mr. E. J. Tucker, ACHA Archives, undated.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Constitution, op.cit., p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>Evelyn Braxton, 1978, Eulogy and other occasions.

worked with students in drama. She wrote and produced dramatic pageants which were enacted on special occasions and at celebrations. A Daughter of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the world, #578, the female counterpart to the fraternal Order of Elks Lodge, which is involved in providing 'good works', Mrs. Tucker's personal history is in itself a study in the perseverance and determination that characterized so many of the outstanding Black leaders of this period. She was desirous of studying beauty culture and hairdressing in Montreal, but could not gain entrance into the schools which existed in the city and had to go to New York. There she attended the "Apex School of Hairdressing and Beauty Culture," from which she graduated on October 25, 1939 at Salem M. E. Church.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Earl Swift, previously mentioned as a conscientious instructor in the Sunday school, although a graduate from McGill, never did find work commensurate with his qualifications. He became one of the employees of the CPR. He taught English Grammar, Languages and Mathematics and assisted in elocution and public speaking, at the Church, the UNIA and the NCC. He received \$5.00 per month at the UNIA. At times he became discouraged because students did not always progress as rapidly as he would have liked. He demanded a high standard of achievement and complained that students were not as devoted to their studies as they

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Florence Tucker, her graduation Diploma is among the artifacts of the ACHA Archives.

could be. On one occasion he was rather piqued because his wages 'came under fire' and the suggestion was made that they were too high.<sup>1</sup>

Mrs. Ann de Shield (née Packwood) was another outstanding community worker who made her mark in the City. In the Literary Club of 1920 she was secretary and was actively engaged in helping make a success of this Club. She too was connected with the Church and was a member and President of the Colored Women's Club. Her daughter Lucille Vaughan became the first Black to be employed as a Librarian in the wider Montreal area.

Mr. Ellis J. Tucker, President of the UNIA for over forty years promoted and established education classes. He taught the industrial class and was on the Boy's Band Committee. He played the clarinet and never tired of giving encouragement to those wishing to pursue further education and the acquiring of skills. Many students were helped and assisted by him both on a personal and institutional level.

### Students and Student Aid

Over the past sixty-one years the UNIA has had a long and distinguished history of aiding students.<sup>2</sup> The rationale for aid is entrenched in the philosophy of the UNIA and as the educational imperatives developed and took root in 1920 to 1940, so too did its aid to

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<sup>1</sup> UNIA Education File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Education #5, ACHA Archives. The last recorded date on file is 1977. Since then the presiding President Mr. E. J. Langdon, has maintained this tradition.

students. The aid took whatever form was necessary to fill the needs of students. At first it meant organizing classes, buying books and equipment and paying teachers, but with the passage of time other needs manifested themselves. Tuition fees at McGill, Concordia, François Xavier, or some other Canadian University were paid.<sup>1</sup> Other students received direct financial help. One such was Reverend J. Sabaldo T. Decker. Writing to Mr. Tucker, on September 23, 1933, from Wilberforce University, Ohio, Rev. Decker thanked Mr. and Mrs. Tucker for having entertained and fed him while he was in Montreal. He acknowledged the "monetarial assistance" and expressed the gratitude he felt at this generosity and assured them that the money would be paid back.<sup>2</sup> Yet other occasions provided the opportunity to entertain students.<sup>3</sup> There were circumstances, when, to ensure entrance into Canada, arrangements had to be made with immigration, at other times, maintenance including

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Education File #5, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Education File #13, ACHA Archives.

Over the period of sixty or more years of UNIA existence a wide range of students gained support. In the years 1974-1977 for example, fees amounting to \$10,000 were dispersed for students. (Education File #5). Many of these students came from Africa: countries such as Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria and others. This concentration of students from Africa was in keeping with the philosophy of the UNIA. Students from the Caribbean as well as Canadian Blacks were also helped.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Education File #14, ACHA Archives.

On one occasion Mr. Tucker entertained the following students: B.Sc.; A. Sagie, F. Oko, Armattoo, S. N. Ugoji, John Jones, Charles Moneke; Medicine; T. Belo Osagie; Economics; H. O. Agyeman, N. Nwanodi; Agriculture; E. U. Isang; Arts; T. Dade.

board and lodging were given. Aid could be directed towards students attending an American University, as occurred during the thirties in the case of Mr. J. Salabaldo T. Decker and Dr. Leon Smart.<sup>1</sup> Clarification of entrance requirements into universities were at times undertaken or the path of procuring a job for a student might be smoothed.<sup>2</sup> Here as elsewhere the basic philosophy of the UNIA prevailed. The small Black population made individuals very aware of one another and because opportunities in the larger society were not readily open to members of this Community help was given wherever possible. These years consolidated this broad interpretation of UNIA aid and the few inspired men and women who lived long years of service and dedication guided the organization along the destiny established in those primary years.<sup>3</sup>

The Montreal Division began its aid early. From the start Clara de Shield organized kindergarten classes and by 1920 the Literary Club was functioning vigorously. On July 15, 1923, Vivien Layne and Brenda Brown were authorized by Mrs. Clara de Shield, Lady President, and Mr. W. G. MacKintosh, Secretary, to solicit subscriptions for

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Education File #5, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Education File #5, ACHA Archives. Also Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Tucker, now 94, Mr. Henry Langdon, Present President, Mr. Marshallleck, died 1977, Mrs. Theresa Crooper, died 1976.

Juvenile classes. Between them they turned in a total of \$8.68.<sup>1</sup>

It is not stated how many others were also involved in this fund raising but presumably these funds were used to defray expenses incurred in running the Juvenile classes, possibly for books and equipment or to pay the teachers, since this was the same year that Clara de Shield requested funds to purchase books and equipment for classes.<sup>2</sup>

The various auxiliaries and units of the Division raised funds for their specific activities. The BCNS collected funds for nursing classes and first aid equipment. The Literary Club was especially efficient in providing money to support its numerous educational ventures and other related activities. The Boys' Band Committee directed fund raising towards musical instruments and teachers, and the Choir was vigorous in doing its share.

In its general fund raising campaign of May 1929, the UNIA Executive sent out a circular letter directed to "Dear Fellow Member of the Race," asking for their financial support. This letter listed the groups which in the past had received support and money from the UNIA. Among these were "Nurses classes, Juvenile classes, Literary Club, Boys' Band and Drill Classes and Choir."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Education Juvenile File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Students were also assisted on the individual level. One of those who benefitted early in the development of the UNIA was Vivien Layne. Vivien, was a talented youngster, who often participated at the piano in the Sunday Mass Meeting musical program<sup>1</sup> and has been mentioned previously in the Church Sunday-School. She tried unsuccessfully to be admitted to a hospital in Montreal to study nursing. Reverend Este, Chaplain, and Mrs. Julien, the presiding Lady President were both members of the UNIA delegation which laboured long and dilligently to find a hospital in Montreal that would accept her. Failing to do so, they turned to the United States where they were able to make arrangements for her to go to a New York Hospital.<sup>2</sup>

UNIA philosophy was directed towards enabling students to not only help themselves but more vitally to help others help themselves. Students were thus encouraged to return home to use their knowledge and experience to help in whatever capacity they could. African students were expected, for example, to return to their homeland to occupy positions where they would make important contributions, at home or abroad. They would teach, instruct or aid society, and in turn help their less fortunate brothers both inside and outside Africa to build self-help and self-reliance. Those students who were assisted and counselled

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<sup>1</sup> Juvenile File and Program and Agenda, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Tucker, and Henry Langdon, President UNIA.

were expected upon graduation to make contributions to the UNIA that would enable other students to benefit from these programs. In this way they would help build self-enrichment, self-upliftment, and self-pride.

It is unfortunate that these ideals were not to any great extent effected. Students receiving aid were always grateful and acknowledged the benevolence and aspirations of the UNIA. As time wore on however, and these students graduated to more productive and lucrative positions, earning high financial rewards, they seemed to forget their benefactor and this philosophy. The files contain numerous letters and correspondence to this effect.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Leon Smart is a case in point. Dr. Smart attended McGill University in the "dreadful thirties" when the UNIA had given him financial and other assistance. In 1937, the UNIA helped him to go to Homer G. Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, Mo. in order to do his internship. Dr. Smart in due course graduated and became very successful operating a lucrative practice. In 1959 he was approached by the UNIA to render assistance towards two deserving students from Kenya who were attending St. Francois and St. Mary's Universities in Nova Scotia. Dr. Smart who had visited Montreal a number of times during the years

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Education, ACHA Archives.



and had kept in contact with Mr. Tucker failed to respond.<sup>1</sup> Although disappointed these gentlemen were not deterred and went on to work with renewed vigor to seek other means of handling the situation.<sup>2</sup>

The formal aspects of UNIA Education guided the Division in its endeavour to give techniques, skills and expertise which were thought to be so important for the progress of Blacks. The aim was to direct energies into areas that would improve self and prepare for the future. The Division attempted to provide for all age levels; classes for the very young, supplementary and remedial help given to those who attended the public school system, as well as opportunities for teens and adults to acquire knowledge that would be of industrial or practical benefit. As Garvey said:

. . . it is for us to prepare ourselves that at anytime the great change in industrial freedom and political liberty comes about, we may be able to enter into the new era as partakers of the joys to be inherited.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Education #13, ACHA Archives. Also Mr. E. J. Tucker.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Marcus Garvey, Garveyism A Religious Ideology, Public Relations Committee of the UNIA, Liberty Hall, Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., undated, p. 5.

### CHAPTER III

#### EDUCATION THROUGH THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION (UNIA): INFORMAL AGENCIES OF EDUCATION

The philosophy of the UNIA pervaded its units; 'To be learned in all things',<sup>1</sup> to develop pride and love of self, a sense of confraternity, and the ability for self-improvement and self-betterment. In its informal aspects the UNIA Montreal Division tried to emulate the Constitution and Laws as widely as possible. When it is realized that the Black Community of Montreal in the early days of the Division was indeed very small, its programs must appear ambitious and lofty indeed.

The years of early development and formulation saw many auxiliaries or units established. The Sunday Mass Meetings, the Literary Club, the Black Cross Nurses Society, the Boy's Band, the Choir, the Orchestra, the African Legion, all played a part in the upliftment, self-improvement and self-identity of the Black man. These units, while not directly formal agencies of education in its strictest sense, nonetheless provided means and avenues of learning that Blacks did not and could not get elsewhere. They were exposed to methods of organization, brotherhood relationships, fund-raising activities, opportunities for public display of drama, elocution, oration, information and knowledge, and the acquiring

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<sup>1</sup>Amy Jacques Garvey, ed. Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, op.cit., p. 17.

of some skills and techniques. Furthermore, they provided a means for them to come to terms with the larger society and its institutions. Knowledge and insight into the workings of the municipality, the judiciary and immigration, the Province, and the international scene were acquired. These activities allowed them to comport themselves in their respective capacities, enabling them to develop a degree of individual and collective competence and efficiency. It should not be thought that the units operated exclusively of each other, there was indeed much overlapping, due not only to the limitations and small size of the Black Community, but also to its philosophy. It is in this context of education that the informal agencies of education must be understood.

#### The Sunday Mass Meeting

The Mass Meeting is a vital and important public activity of the UNIA, open to all who wish to attend. On these occasions the assembly is informed of matters pertaining to the advancement and betterment of Black people locally, nationally or internationally. During the years of the early Montreal development, special directives were sent out from the Parent Body to help Divisions develop techniques and to encourage and maintain attendance for these occasions.<sup>1</sup> The meetings were mainly of two types; the Sunday Mass Meeting and the Public Mass Meeting. The Sunday Mass Meeting followed the religious format provided

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Directives File, (ACHA Archives).

in the Order of the Universal Negro Ritual<sup>1</sup>, whereas the Public Mass Meeting took place during the week and could centre around any issue or topic of contemporary or special nature which focussed on immediate problems of primary importance. These could take the form of an 'Educational Evening'<sup>2</sup> or could be topical in nature geared to deal with current issues and organized to inform and stimulate members and friends.

The Sunday Mass Meeting was in many ways the central and high point of the UNIA in Montreal. It was a weekly get-together, not only of members and adherents but of interested persons in the Community who wished to attend. The Liberty Hall was usually filled for these meetings, and from 1920 to about 1928, the hey-day of the UNIA in Montreal, it was a regular feature.<sup>3</sup> Members of the Community would attend the morning church service at Union and in the afternoon proceed to the UNIA Liberty Hall.

The Sunday Mass Meeting was the focal point for spreading pride of self, racial uplift and showing off of talents of individuals and achievements of units, both adult and juvenile. Units made their contributions in different ways. The UNIA Choir might be featured, the

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<sup>1</sup>The Universal Negro Ritual, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Program and Agenda File, (ACHA Archives).

<sup>3</sup>Many members of the Community: Dash, Langdon, Tucker, Griffith. Wilfred Israel, op.cit., also refers to this, p. 205.

orchestra perform, or renditions by the Boys' Band given. Individuals like Lucille Vaughan who was trained by the Literary Club, or Elaine and Corinne Cooper, children of the members would recite. Youngsters like Corinne Cooper or C. Wade were encouraged to give musical solos or duets: either piano or violin as the case might be,<sup>1</sup> while outstanding speakers at the national, international or local level would be invited to speak, thus to inform, instruct or teach Blacks who attended its functions.

A variety of educational and informative topics were presented. These sometimes dealt with the message chosen from the UNIA paper the Negro World<sup>2</sup> or relevant subjects such as "Human Nature and Immoral Life", "First Things First", or "Training the Minds of Children". Other subjects dealt with "The Negro Question", "Disunity Among Blacks", "Think and Grow Rich", "Credit Unions", "Black History", etc., which were of special interest and concern to those who attended.<sup>3</sup>

Speakers, both Black and White came from many backgrounds. The President General of the UNIA, Marcus Garvey, spoke on a number of occasions, Madame de Mena, the International Lady President and Organizer, who has been described as "a brave little woman of 110 pounds, with a voice like thunder"<sup>4</sup>, Amy Jacques Garvey, and local worthies such as

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Agenda and Programs File, (ACHA Archives).

<sup>2</sup>This was the UNIA paper published by Marcus Garvey.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Agenda and Programs File, (ACHA Archives).

<sup>4</sup>Editorial, "The Late Madame MLT de Mena was one of the Greatest International Organizers," Garvey-Voice, March-April 1981, p. 5.

Dr. Wills and Dr. K. I. Melville, were persons who spoke in the Liberty Hall. This established tradition was followed in later years by personages such as Dr. Kwama Nkhumah, former Prime Minister of Ghana, (1957).

Reverend John McNabb of McGill University, (July 1958), and Mr. H. G. Hatcher, a former Superintendent of Schools and a member of the United Nations Organization, Montreal Branch, all made their contributions.<sup>1</sup>

The UNIA Sunday Mass Meeting is of such importance that the organization has a special Order, authorized by the Executive Council and compiled by His Grace the Reverend Dr. George Alexander McGuire, Chaplain General.<sup>2</sup> The Order follows the general pattern of a religious service. The opening hymn is of a processional nature, Shine On Eternal Light.<sup>3</sup> The Chaplain would then intone:

Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Except the Lord build the house, their labour is but lost that build it. Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman watcheth but in vain.<sup>4</sup>

From Greenlands Icy Mountains,<sup>5</sup> an opening hymn, would follow. This spiritually moving hymn, asked for courage and wisdom from on high to

<sup>1</sup>UNIA Sunday Mass Meeting File, Notices & Letters, (ACHA Archive).

<sup>2</sup>The Universal Negro Ritual, 1921, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12. (See also Appendix 5).

enable them to carry on life until the Creator's will is spread throughout the world. The Chaplain reads the Motto and the assembly responds with the Motto, "One God, One Aim, One Destiny."<sup>1</sup>

A series of prayers requesting God's blessing and direction for the UNIA, to fill the leaders of the Organization with blessings, is followed by a short scripture lesson, whereupon, the Chaplain invokes the Spirit of God and announces a Hymn of Prayer in which God is asked to give patience and help to overcome "the advocates of might". Once more God is asked for courage and blessings and herewith the Literary and Musical Program intervenes, as provided for by the Ritual.

Programs presented by the Montreal Division were lively and diverse, and depending on the length and appropriateness, would at times be scattered throughout the Order. These programs, throughout the years of their existence received wide publicity in the Community. Wilfred Israel, writing in 1928 was impressed by their vigor and versatility.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tucker, President from 1935, had personal cards publicizing the "Education Forum" held each Sunday at 710 Fulford Street<sup>3</sup> and he would invite many persons to visit Liberty Hall at 4 p.m. on Sundays. For these occasions, pamphlets and bulletins would be specifically printed,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred Israel, Montreal Negro Community, op.cit., p. 205.

<sup>3</sup>Agenda and Programs File, ACHA Archives.

setting forth the guest speaker or the outstanding feature for the day.

The program for Sunday, February 21, 1932<sup>1</sup> for example listed Mrs.

O'Brien, the Lady President as the principle speaker of the day, with contributing artists Miss A. Dowel and Miss Brazier, who gave recita-

tions, while Mrs. Florence Tucker, a beautiful mezzo soprano who many said "was worthy of international stardom"<sup>2</sup> rendered a vocal solo.<sup>3</sup>

The next week Milton Seal,<sup>4</sup> a member of a prominent Black family and a dedicated Union Church supporter, was the guest speaker, while Vivien Layne, a devoted youngster, previously mentioned in connection with fund-raising, was at the piano. At another function the UNIA Choir with Mrs. Gladys Este, the wife of Reverend Este, presiding at the piano, entertained the assembly. Some Sundays would be set aside for a Special Juvenile Program where the younger folk would be given the opportunity to make their contribution.<sup>5</sup>

It was usual for the Musical and Literary part of the Program to be followed by the address which would be delivered, either by the

<sup>1</sup>UNIA Agenda and Program File., ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>The Eulogy given by Evelyn Braxton during Mrs. Tucker's funeral services, 1978 at Union Church referred to her outstanding qualities and contributions.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Agenda and Program File. ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup>Milton Seal is brother to Mrs. Mildred Williams, member of Union Church.

<sup>5</sup>UNIA Agenda and Program File, ACHA Archives.



Chaplain, Reverend Este, or the invited guest speaker. Notices would then be read, followed by the singing of the National Anthem<sup>1</sup> of the UNIA, and with the final blessing by the Chaplain, the Recessional Hymn would bring the meeting to a close.

The Sunday Mass Meeting with its programs was particularly stimulating and always well received especially since it afforded members the opportunity to see their children perform and the local artists who were usually known to everyone, provided added and special interest.<sup>2</sup> The out of town guests, too, maintained contact with the wider world and kept the Community up to date with current information and knowledge in their respective fields.

#### The Literary Club

It must be considered an indication of the priorities of the UNIA membership in Montreal that one of the earliest auxiliaries formed was the Literary Club. The Constitution of the UNIA made no provision for such a unit, yet, the fact that this club was formed so early in the history of the UNIA and became very vigorous and active speaks very highly of the importance that must have been placed on literary achievement.

The Club was founded on November 26, 1920,<sup>3</sup> barely two years after

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix "Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers".

<sup>2</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 261.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Literary Club File, ACHA Archives.

the City of Montreal was getting its municipal library together.<sup>1</sup>

The copy at Appendix 9 gives a picture of the persons and the names of the first officers of this unit,<sup>2</sup> among these are Reverend Este, Vice President, and Ann de Shields, Secretary.

The Club had a definite educational thrust. It nurtured and developed skills such as drama, elocution, public speaking and debate, and it further provided a library to inform, encourage and promote reading. The Library, believed to be the first Black Library established in Montreal, contained books on African history and African heroes to tell Blacks of their heritage and contribute to their self-improvement and self-identity in keeping with the general UNIA philosophy. One of its special functions was to conduct classes to develop and up-grade reading and study skills for children. It also provided education in the dramatic arts and staged concerts and plays which were 'artistically and financially successful'<sup>3</sup> and for a while during 1922, it conducted a night school.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roger Magnuson, A Brief History of Quebec Education: From New France to Parti Québécois, Montreal, Harvest, 1980, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for picture of this club.

The officers were James Gibson, President, Charles Este (later Reverend Este) Vice-President, William H. F. Duke, Secretary, Ann de Shields, (later Mrs. Ann Packwood) Assistant Secretary, A. M. Alberga, Treasurer, L. de Shields, Librarian, (First Black Librarian in Montreal), S. M. Simons, Chairman of the Booking Committee, Evelyn Gibson, Chairman of the Advisory Board, Augustine Layne, Member of the Executive.

<sup>3</sup> Bertley, The UNIA of Montreal, 1917-1979, op.cit., p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> UNIA Education File #3 George Creese, UNIA Commissioner for Canada to Potter, March 10, 1922, ACHA Archives.

Over the years of its existence, the Club led an energetic and active life. It staged plays, organized socials, raised funds and presented many local speakers to inform and keep the interest of the Community alive. In addition, it invited outstanding and eminent speakers from abroad to come to Montreal. Among these were Richard Tobitt,<sup>1</sup> the UNIA Leader of the West Indian Region and Dr. Ferris,<sup>2</sup> the first Assistant President of the UNIA, well-known author of 'The African Abroad', and editor of the UNIA Paper Negro World from 1920-1923. Dr. Ferris was exceedingly well thought of by Black Americans and was considered quite an attraction for Montreal.<sup>3</sup>

In his capacity as Vice-President of the Literary Club, Reverend Este early established himself as a supporter of creative expression, whether written or spoken. His promotion and direction of these disciplines have been stressed in connection with Union Church. A man of great literary ability and mastery of the English Language, he was highly articulate<sup>4</sup> and esteemed for his pulpit evangelical and oratorical style.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UNIA Literary Club File, Literary Club to Montreal Division, March, 20, 1921. ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Literary Club to Montreal Division, May 13, 1921.

<sup>3</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 283.

<sup>4</sup>Reverend Frank Gabourel, taping, Union Church 1980.

<sup>5</sup>Griffith, Langdon, Rose Jordan and many others.

A strong advocate and inspiration for youth with whom he enjoyed great rapport, his encouragement was not merely verbal, but he had the ability to motivate young people to use their potential and thus he enrolled their services and energies. One of the young people he influenced was Gertrude Brathwaite who at nineteen years became his Business and Advertising Manager for the Church Digest.<sup>1</sup> He is fondly remembered for the many stories he told of people who wanted to write, thus he encouraged students to persist in spite of set backs and difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

One of the persons who was greatly influenced and highly motivated by Reverend Este was Henry J. Langdon.<sup>3</sup> Henry's great literary ambition was to be a journalist and it was Reverend Este who stimulated and urged him to write and submit articles to magazines and dailies, even though he at first met with rejection. Some of these articles appeared in the Church Digest, with encouraging editorial footnotes by Este.<sup>4</sup> With this kind of encouragement Henry developed facility in writing and public speaking. As his skill and competence grew he applied to become a press

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<sup>1</sup>Church Digest, ed. Chas. H. Este. Summer Issue, 1937 Vol. 8. No. 3., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>H. Langdon, Interviews and conversations.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>One note read: "Mr. Langdon has contributed several articles to Canadian Dailies. Let us encourage him. He is worthy of our admiration." Henry Langdon, "World Conditions", Church Digest, ed. Chas. H. Este, (Summer issue, Vol. 8 No. 3.) 1937, pp. 4-5.

correspondent for the "New York Amsterdam News," but they did not accept him. Undaunted, he persisted and later his efforts were rewarded when he was accepted as press correspondent, working out of Montreal, for the Afro-American.<sup>1</sup> This paper was published both in the United States and Jamaica, West Indies. Langdon wrote many articles for them on a variety of topics. One article he wrote in later years was a feature story on Dr. Charles Gladstone Costley, Professor of Mathematics at McGill, an expert in this line, who made contributions to "Linear Differential Equations of Space."<sup>2</sup>

Langdon went on to pursue a fulfilling and vigorous career, in spite of the many obstacles he had to overcome. He often said that "he waited ten years before he got a break." When he tried to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force but failed to be accepted, Reverend Este wrote many letters on his behalf in an effort to gain admittance. Henry had been given - as he put it - the "Royal Run-around" but persistence and determination paid off and he was finally accepted.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the War (1945) Henry was employed by Air Canada as an aircraft maintenance inspector, where he stayed for thirty-two years. In this position he was highly respected, both by management and his confreres. As elected

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<sup>1</sup>The Afro American. Published in the United States and Jamaica, W.I. In the States there were two editions; National Edition published weekly and a semi-weekly edition published Tuesday and Saturday. (See Bibliography).

<sup>2</sup>Henry Langdon, "Jamaican Maths Prof at McGill" The Star, a Jamaican Daily, Wednesday, Dec. 13, 1961. Also Afro-American, December 1964.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Langdon conversations and tapes. The humour and vivacity with which Henry recounts these incidents are a tribute to his literary style.

Secretary of "Lodge 1751 of the International Association of Machinists" which was centered in Washington, D.C., he was unanimously returned for twenty-four years and again for a twenty-fifth year after one year out of office.<sup>1</sup> In this capacity he travelled as their elected delegate to their four-year conventions, and on each occasion was selected secretary of the "Workers Education Committee" where he dealt with resolutions and records of reports submitted. His position took him across Canada and into the United States, brought him into contact with individuals of varying positions and levels when he was frequently called upon to speak at functions and conferences and to produce articles for Journals and Magazines.<sup>2</sup>

While it was in operation, the Literary Club proved to be a great success, both financially and in the interest and support it generated. Conflict however arose between the Club and the Division over its financial status.<sup>3</sup> In accordance with the Constitution,<sup>4</sup> the Division requested all money collected by the Unit be handed over to be kept in a separate account and dispersed as the Unit requested and needed funds. The Club did not favour this arrangement which set limits and controls

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., also private papers.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Langdon, private papers.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Literary File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup>Constitution, Article VIII, Sec. 12, p. 24.

on their activities that they were not prepared to accept.<sup>1</sup> The Division insisted on receiving the funds and pointed out the Constitutional violation, thus they demanded an audit and forwarding of the funds, but the Club continued to disagree. In this frame of mind, the Club moved from the UNIA premises to a CPR building formerly occupied by the Montreal Division itself, thereby escalating the conflict.<sup>2</sup> The Division became incensed for a number of reasons; firstly, the Division had vacated the CPR premises<sup>3</sup> because it felt the organization was placed in an awkward position by such close proximity to the influence of the CPR and put those members who worked for it in a difficult position; secondly, the Club would no longer be paying rent to the Division, which was in the process of accumulating funds for the purchase of their own building, and thirdly, the Club invited a real estate agent to brief them on purchasing a building.<sup>4</sup>

The Montreal Division referred the matter to the UNIA Parent Body in the United States, and the Club sent a submission to the Negro World, thus it came to the attention of Marcus Garvey. Garvey rebuked the Division for allowing the conflict to reach such unnecessary publicity and proportions.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 285.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Literary File. Letter to the Division dated Dec. 20, 1921. (ACHA Archives).

<sup>3</sup>Leo Bertley, UNIA Montreal, op.cit., p. 289.

<sup>4</sup>Resolution of Divisional Executive Meeting. April 21, 1922. (ACHA Archives)

<sup>5</sup>UNIA Literary File. (ACHA Archives)

He said it should have been resolved locally with temperance and understanding on both sides. Meanwhile, George Creese, Commissioner for Canada, of the Parent Body, was sent to conduct an investigation. He pointed out areas where both the auxiliary and the Division could have been more cooperative and understanding of each other<sup>1</sup> and he took the opportunity to indicate that the spirit of the UNIA organization was to operate with "justice, love and fairness, working for one ultimate goal, to cement ties of friendship, love and unity rather than the rigid enforcement of any law."<sup>2</sup>

The problem was finally resolved and the Club submitted its finances for audit and handed the funds over to the Division, but damage had been done and the Club executive underwent extensive change.<sup>3</sup> The Club however continued to function until 1928. In September of that year Mr. Alfred Potter, President of the UNIA, recognized the great contribution and work this unit had done and suggested at an executive meeting of the Division that the Club be resurrected,<sup>4</sup> but it never was. A subsequent circular letter for 1929 soliciting general funds made reference to this Club but after 1929 the records bear no further reference to it.

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<sup>1</sup> UNIA Literary Club File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> UNIA Minutes Book, Minutes of Executive, 1928, September, ACHA Archives.



The Black Cross Nurses Society (BCNS)  
and The Preparatory Nursing Class

The Rules and Regulations Governing the Universal African Black Cross Nurses are laid down in the Constitution and Book of Laws.<sup>1</sup> The aims and objectives of this adult auxiliary are:

. . . to give relief and aid and take preventative measure in times of disaster; such as pestilence, famine, floods, fire, etc.; to attend the sick of the Division; to issue literature to educate the public to the use of safety devices and prevention of accidents; to instruct sanitation for prevention of epidemics and to instruct in First Aid.<sup>2</sup>

Section 5 of Article IV spells out the officers needed for this auxiliary. These are "A Matron, who shall be the Lady President of the Division and Superintendent of the Auxiliary; a Head Nurse, who shall be the President of the Unit; a Secretary and a Treasurer."<sup>3</sup>

According to the Minutes of the Black Cross Nurses Society (hereafter BCNS) as it was known in Montreal, this auxiliary was inaugurated on March 29, 1921.<sup>4</sup> Meetings were held at the homes of individual members, and the first one took place at the home of the Lady President of the UNIA, Mrs. G. O'Brien. At this meeting, officers were elected: Miss Louise Hall was elected President of the Unit, and a Superintendent,

<sup>1</sup>Constitution and Book of Laws, op.cit., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>BCNS Minutes Book, p. 1. ACHA Archives.

Captain and Sergeant-at-arms were also chosen.<sup>1</sup> No name is given for the Superintendent and it is not clear why such a person would be elected since the Constitution clearly states that the Lady President of the Division would also be the Superintendent. This was the case in 1924 when Mrs. Florence Marshall was both Lady President of the Montreal Division and Superintendent of the Black Cross Nurses Society.<sup>2</sup> At the next meeting, a secretary, Mrs. Rose Lord and a treasurer, Miss Alice Hall were elected. The elections of a Captain and a Sergeant-at-arms are puzzling, since no reference is made in the Regulations for these positions in this unit.

During the decades 1910 to 1940, health needs in municipal Montreal seemed to have developed slowly. According to Terry Copp, health was not a high priority and the City of Montreal tended to apply measures primarily in times of epidemics such as typhoid and diphtheria, but failed to examine the wider and underlying implications of poor health, low wages and unhygienic living conditions.<sup>3</sup> Ames' Report of 1897 on The City Below the Hill,<sup>4</sup> was meant to focus civic attention on the need

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<sup>1</sup>BCNS Minutes Book, pp. 1 & 2.

<sup>2</sup>BCNS File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert Brown Ames, The City Below the Hill, (Montreal, 1897).

for better housing and improved health conditions, but by the twenties these were still far from adequate<sup>1</sup> and by 1929 when the population of Montreal had more than doubled, shortages in these areas were quite acute.<sup>2</sup> Health services were concentrated mainly in the hands of the Church, private voluntary services, and specialized hospital services which tended to expand their own particular spheres of activity,<sup>3</sup> rather than apply global solutions. Health problems generally focussed largely on child mortality and diseases such as tuberculosis, diphtheria and typhoid which posed obvious problems.<sup>4</sup> There was thus a real need for health knowledge and dissemination of literature among workers to sensitize them to environmental causes which contributed to the severe and often unhygienic conditions.

While the aims and objectives of the BCNS were undoubtedly laudable, they proved beyond the professional and organizational capabilities of the unit. Health knowledge and publicity were pertinent, and, whereas Montreal was not subject to famine, fires and floods could occur. Without municipal or other help from the community at large, it was therefore up to this unit of the UNIA to promote and encourage membership to reach

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<sup>1</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-93.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

its objectives. The initiative and ingenuity of the BCNS would have to provide ways and means for the necessary training and services, viz. attention to the sick, issuing of literature, education in safety devices, prevention of accidents, sanitation and first aid, etc. But the resources of the BCNS were very limited. None of the members it would seem, had the required skills or professional expertise to carry out these duties. Nursing, health care and even extensive first aid requirements were largely beyond reach. For a Black person during the twenties and thirties, to obtain the training and qualifications necessary for public health in Montreal, it was indeed difficult, for Blacks were unable to secure any type of employment or apprenticeship in hospitals. Even in the case of Black medical students who attended universities there were limitations. Greaves notes that

. . . nearly all Canadian Universities had a few Negro students, except for Nova Scotia, none of these were Canadian born but most were from the West Indies. Both private and provincial universities, stated that they did not discriminate against Negro students but some attitudes of hospitals restricted their work in clinics or even refused them admission to the Medical course.

There were about 6 or 7 coloured students at McGill.

With very few exceptions the Negro graduates in Medicine had been West Indians and some had excellent records.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ida Greaves, op.cit., p. 69.

It was however

. . . necessary to tell coloured students that if the Hospital should at any time object to their presence at clinical work they will have to go to a Negro hospital in the United States for this part of their course, this regulation is of long-standing but it has not been necessary to enforce it.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding the above

. . . the idea that there is discrimination against coloured students as such . . . seems to be firmly rooted in the West Indies.<sup>2</sup>

and a motion was made in the Bahamas Legislature

. . . to remove McGill University from the list of Colleges at which Government Scholarships were tenable and the Legislature wrote to ask if coloured students were excluded.<sup>3</sup>

Greaves goes on to relate that on a subsequent visit of M. Henri Bourassa to Trinidad the question of discrimination was brought up by a reporter, and M. Bourassa was surprised to learn "that there had been complaints in the case of one Canadian University." M. Bourassa strongly protested, and the reporter went on to say that no complaints had been made with respect to Laval or the University of Montreal, and M. Bourassa

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 69

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 69

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 69

was confident "there never would be".<sup>1</sup> The reporter did not bring up the question of whether or not there were any such students attending these Universities at the time nor does Greaves mention this.

The job of breaking down these barriers was one that would be intensely challenged by Reverend Este, the UNIA, the Negro Community Centre and Community individuals like Maude Jones. Meanwhile, those Black Montrealers like Vivien Layne, Martha Griffith and others who aspired to become nurses, had to be very dedicated souls, prepared to leave their country and go to the United States to enter a hospital there.

Vivien Layne's case is worthy of mention since it indicates prevailing sentiments. Vivien was a Black student who attended Royal Arthur Primary School. She is said to have had "a brilliant record" there,<sup>2</sup> and she wanted to become a nurse. The UNIA formed a delegation of which Reverend Este was a representative, to try to get her admitted into a Montreal hospital, but no hospital would take her. Reverend Este approached a variety of persons in the City, one of whom was Bishop Farthing,<sup>3</sup> the Anglican Bishop of Montreal. Rev. Este assumed the Bishop would demonstrate a desire to help, but the Bishop said that "White people would not want Black people to look after them. I can't help you."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-70.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker and Mr. H. Langdon.

<sup>3</sup>Bishop Farthing was Bishop of Montreal from 1909-1939.

"Try the United States," he said.<sup>1</sup> Vivien was finally admitted to the Lincoln School for Nurses, Harlem, New York, where she pursued an outstanding career in nursing. She subsequently married and settled in New York and was the nurse who attended Martin Luther King Jr., when he was stabbed in New York a few years prior to his assassination, and had to be rushed to that hospital. Vivien worked in the operating room. Both Mr. E. J. Tucker, the Honorary President and Mr. Henry J. Langdon, presiding President of the UNIA, met her in New York on different occasions where she entertained them and gave Mr. Tucker a guided tour of the hospital.<sup>2</sup>

This constant struggle by Blacks for achievement appeared to have had a unifying effect on the Community. Pressure from the larger society seemed to have caused the Community to hold more firmly together for survival. When a Black person did become successful the success was frequently regarded by most Blacks as an accomplishment of the Community and a model to which other Blacks could aspire. As Betty Riley said, "it was felt by all as though the success was also theirs,"<sup>3</sup> and so it was with Vivien Layne. She was regarded as a Community success.


Nursing was not the only sphere in which Blacks had difficulty in obtaining training. Mrs. Florence Marshall, mentioned in Chapter II, and Lady President of UNIA Montreal Division and Superintendent and

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker, Mr. H. Langdon, in conversation.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., in conversation on different occasions.

<sup>3</sup>Betty Riley, tape 1980 and conversations.



President of the BCNS during the Twenties, was another Black who had to go to New York to pursue her studies. Beauty Culture and Hair Dressing were her chosen field, but such specialization was not open to Blacks in Montreal.<sup>1</sup> She too, proceeded to New York, graduating in due course, and subsequently returning to Montreal where she practised and dedicated the rest of her life to the Community.

Failure of the BCNS to reach its objectives cannot however, be solely attributed to factors outside the Black Community. Attempts were made to help this Unit acquire knowledge and skills in first aid and elementary health care and to purchase some very basic equipment. Guest speakers such as Dr. Melville, Dr. Wills, and Dr. Gaspard were invited to give lectures or information on health and hygiene. Dr. Bristol, a Montrealer, but not a UNIA member, was asked to submit guidelines for emergency first aid, and Dr. Wills gave at least two lectures in these matters. He further drew up a list of equipment and material to be purchased. These included a "cot, two blankets, rubber and cotton bed sheets, a jug, kettle, wool, lint and bandage,"<sup>2</sup> which were all obtained as an initial supply to be kept in readiness. Furthermore the Unit was able to raise \$85.40 to obtain these supplies.<sup>3</sup> It does not however

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<sup>1</sup>Florence Tucker Files. This file contains the original graduation certificate. ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>BCNS Minute Book, p. 23, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



seem that there was any follow-up on this beginning, and the kind of training and direction needed never developed.

Reasons for the failure to reach the aims and objectives of this group have been suggested by Bertley,<sup>1</sup> and these are borne out by available records. Specialized leadership of this group was lacking and the average educational background of the group, not very high, did not help. Coupled with the long hours that most members spent on the job in factories or in domestic homes this did not allow much time for after hours activity when members would be exhausted after the long hours of work. Furthermore, meetings were conducted at night and frequently went on until eleven o'clock or later, not leaving enough time to devote to implementation and carry through of the aims and objectives,<sup>2</sup> while frequent change of membership and officers did not help. Bertley records fifty members according to the membership rolls, but he is quick to point out that these could not have consisted of the membership at any one given time. It is more likely that this number represents the total membership over the life span of the auxiliary.<sup>3</sup> Another contributing factor was the difficulty in obtaining consistent medical or health supervision and direction within the Community, especially since there were no qualified nurses on the membership roll of the unit.

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<sup>1</sup>Bertley, UNIA Montreal 1917 to 1979, op.cit., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

During its four to five-year life span, the auxiliary functioned primarily as a social unit. It provided a much needed opportunity for Blacks to come together and socialize and it proved that in spite of its handicaps this group was able to organize and carry through a variety of social and fund-raising activities in this sphere. The minutes show that bazaars were organized, concerts and plays staged, dinners held, garden parties arranged, dances and pink teas<sup>1</sup> hosted, raffles run, and even a sewing class was set up.<sup>2</sup> Not only did these activities provide a social occasion, but they were directed towards fund-raising. In contrast to the Literary Club, the funds were deposited to an account in the name of the BCNS that was held by the UNIA Montreal Division. During the years between March 1921 to May 1925, they deposited \$308.46 into this account and a further sum of \$14.90 in 1926.<sup>3</sup> Funds were withdrawn at the request of the unit and were used to finance activities such as the Marcus Garvey Defence Fund, or to cover their percentage of dues to the Parent Body.<sup>4</sup>

As late as May 1929, the Circular letter to the members of the Black Community asked for financial assistance to help implement its activities in areas to which the UNIA had directed its time and money.

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<sup>1</sup> A tea which uses a pink motif. This would be used throughout the decor, china settings, etc., and it was expected that those who attended would stress 'elegance' in attire and behaviour.

<sup>2</sup> BCNS Minute Book, and UNIA Minutes, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> BCNS File, UNIA Ledger 5, p. 114. BCNS letter to UNIA Treasurer, Jan. 18, 1922, ACHA Archives.

Mention is made of "Nurses Classes", but it is not known how long these classes continued, but the records show that the BCNS endured for at least five years.<sup>1</sup>

#### Preparatory Nursing Class

Whenever the UNIA Constitution made provision for an adult group there was a corresponding Juvenile Section, and the Regulations for the junior section of the BCNS was entitled "Preparatory Nursing Class for ages 14 to 18."<sup>2</sup> This Class has already been referred to under the heading Rules and Regulations for Juveniles. The Constitution<sup>3</sup> specified that this Juvenile Class was to have three levels "levels 14-15, 16-17, and 18 years to finishing class," and it was to "be trained by the Black Cross Nurses".<sup>4</sup>

This Juvenile Section was placed under the direction of a Black Cross Nurse, but we have seen that such direction from the adult unit was not forthcoming, thus this type of training did not materialize. The age category of this Class would invariably have presented a problem in restricting numbers. Fourteen to eighteen plus was the age when young women would be needed to work wherever possible, in order to contribute

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<sup>1</sup>ACHA Archives, BCNS Minute Book.

<sup>2</sup>Constitution, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

the so much needed supplement to wages and income of the home,<sup>1</sup> or these young women would be needed to stay at home to care for younger ones in the family when the mothers and fathers were away at work. The Preparatory Nursing Classes therefore failed to be implemented. Juvenile Classes there were, and these concentrated on other aspects of education such as Negro History, topical interests, etc., previously discussed in this thesis which was a part of the general education program examined under "Formal Agencies of Education, Chapter II," but Preparatory Nursing Classes per se were not formed.

Music: The Choir, The Orchestra and The Boys' Band

Frequent reference throughout the UNIA papers has been made to the Choir. This auxiliary of the UNIA was very vigorous and dynamic and always made a vital contribution to the SMM and other functions. The program for Sunday September 25, 1932<sup>2</sup> for example, lists two selections in which the Choir was featured, while on another occasion, February 21,<sup>3</sup> of the same year, Mrs. Florence Tucker was the vocal soloist on the program.

The Choir, was, like the Orchestra, established in the early days

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<sup>1</sup>Terry Copp, op.cit., pp. 44 and 45. Members of the Black Community bear this out; Victor Phillips, Martha Griffith and others.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Agenda and Programs File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

of the UNIA Units, around 1920-1921 and there were special guidelines and regulations laid down for it. It was made up of men and women of the UNIA, and its object was to

. . . furnish vocal talent in the form of solos, duets, trios, quartettes, choruses, etc., for the various meetings and services held by the organization as may be expedient.<sup>1</sup>

A special section in the Constitution established the Rules for the Universal Negro Improvement Association Choirs.<sup>2</sup> It dealt with officers and their duties.

The Choir should have a President, a Secretary-Librarian, a Treasurer and a Musical Instructor. It should consist of a leading soprano, a mezzo-soprano, a leading alto, a first tenor and basso profundo and a pianist and assistant instructor.<sup>3</sup>

The duties of the various officers were set out as were the "Terms of Office" for officers. As in all the UNIA units, special attention was given to decorum and any member misconducting himself would be reprimanded, suspended and subsequently dismissed if behaviour warranted it.<sup>4</sup>

This emphasis on discipline, pride and courtesy was to be maintained here as elsewhere in other units.<sup>5</sup> Other Articles dealt with the

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution, Rules For the Universal Negro Improvement Association Choirs, pp. 74-76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

uniform, music, and the preservation of harmony with all other UNIA units, in keeping with the UNIA Motto "One God, One Aim, One Destiny."<sup>1</sup>

Both the Choir and the Orchestra lasted well into the thirties and the depression years. Not only did the Choir perform on numerous occasions at the SMM but also for other public occurrences. Mrs. Florence Tucker, was often spoken of in terms of the great contribution she made. With her beautiful voice and dramatic talent she was very helpful in training and organizing the Choir which often appeared on fund raising drives, sometimes in conjunction with the Church, throughout the City of Montreal. Donations of funds, as previously stated were at times directed towards students attending High Schools in Montreal, to help defray fees and other expenses.

Mention is made of the Choir in the UNIA fund raising circular of 1929 to the effect that funds had been given to the support of this group.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Orchestra

The UNIA Orchestra was comprised of those adults who were capable of or interested in learning to play an instrument. The Constitution specified under 'Music', that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Choir File. ACHA Archives

Each division shall maintain a band of music or orchestra which shall be used at all meetings or gatherings of the organization in whole or in part, as also a well organized choir.<sup>1</sup>

and in Montreal it was expected that this group would be available to play for the Sunday Mass Meetings and any other occasions for which music was required, such as public appearances or fund raising dances held by the units or the Division. In this capacity the Orchestra played for the Christmas dance in December 1922 and for that held by the Literary Club in the same year. Occasionally, the band helped raise funds for fuel or other expenses in support of Union Church when called upon to do so.<sup>2</sup>

The Orchestra was probably formed during 1921. In July of that year Mr. Charles Dyall, the Musical Director,<sup>3</sup> wrote the President of the Division asking for funds to purchase "new music" in order to carry out the Sunday afternoon programs. He was asking for \$5.00 which would procure music "for several weeks", presumably this was sheet music which was obtained, for the files contain such music for the Negro National Anthem<sup>4</sup> by J. Rosamond Johnson with orchestra by Jas. Harrington.<sup>5</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> Constitution, Section 58, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> UNIA Minutes, ACHA Archives, also Mr. Tucker in conversation.

<sup>3</sup> Orchestra File, ACHA Archives, see also Appendix for National Anthem.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

music is for piano, 1st and 2nd trumpet, trombone, drums, cello, bass, flute, viola, 1st clarinet in b flat, and 1st and 2nd violin.<sup>1</sup> Among the adults who participated in this band was Mr. Tucker. He played the clarinet.<sup>2</sup>

Among the officers of the Orchestra, there was in addition to the Musical Director, a Secretary, Mr. R. Murray, who filled this position during 1922.<sup>3</sup> The Orchestra was comprised of at least fifteen instruments, and at its peak was highly successful. Wilfred Israel tells us that

Early in February 1928, a brass band with fourteen instruments held regular practices at the UNIA Hall on Chatham Street.<sup>4</sup>

and that

. . . there were entertainment programs for one year with meetings every Sunday . . . with special interest addresses.<sup>5</sup>

Up to that date (1928)

Montreal Division of the Association has taken a leading part in the life of the local Negro Community for the last nine years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tucker in conversation. His clarinet is among the artifacts of the Archives.

<sup>3</sup> UNIA Orchestra File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup> Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 205.



Although the Orchestra prospered vigorously at times, it progressed on an uneven keel, experiencing "highs and lows", nevertheless, it lasted until well into the later years of the depression when Mr. Charles Dyll left Montreal "to seek better opportunities in Detroit"<sup>1</sup> and many families moved out of Montreal in search of better employment.

#### The Boys' Band

The UNIA has always had a special regard for music. . Not only was it considered a pleasurable achievement, but music was considered a necessary accompaniment to all UNIA meetings and gatherings.<sup>2</sup> Reference has been made above to the adult band or orchestra, and in keeping with UNIA philosophy that stressed the necessity for 'Juvenile' involvement at all levels, the Boys' Band was an important element of the Montreal Division. The records show that there was an adult band in existence by 1921, but the Boys' Band or Junior Orchestra, was not formed until July 14, 1926.<sup>3</sup> In that year a Boys' Band Committee<sup>4</sup> was set up to organize the Band, look after fund raising activities, and deal with disciplinary and other related problems.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Orchestra File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>Constitution, p. 47

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Boys' Band Committee File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>4</sup>The Committee was comprised of a President, Israel Sealey, Secretary, J. A. Mohamed and Treasurer, E. Langdon, (Father to Henry J. Langdon).

<sup>5</sup>UNIA Boys' Band Committee File, ACHA Archives.

The Committee organized a campaign to raise the sum of \$2,000 with the intention of purchasing 50 instruments "to train boys and girls to be instrumentalists" and provide music for the Sunday Mass Meetings and other public entertainments".<sup>1</sup> The campaign was not a success and fees of \$1.00 per month had to be charged each student, but as costs and expenses mounted this went up to \$1.50 and later even more.<sup>2</sup> It was further expected that the Black Community would subscribe to help defray the fees of music teachers and other expenses.

The Band started out with twelve students,<sup>3</sup> and by 1927 they had acquired "12 pieces of brass instruments"; trumpets, clarinets, drums, symbols, etc.,<sup>4</sup> and as it developed it played for the Sunday Mass Meetings and other public appearances.<sup>5</sup> It was regarded with great "pride and joy" by the UNIA. The 1929 executive circular described it as "a leading feature" and it was assumed that it would appear regularly

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Also Minute Book 1, pp. 74-75.

<sup>3</sup>UNIA Boys' Band Committee File, ACHA Archives. Among these were D. Peterson, Henry Langdon, Allan Husband, Donald Potter, G. Warner, and George de Shield. Later Daisey and Oscar Petterson, and Joe Sealey joined the group.

<sup>4</sup>UNIA Boys' Band Committee File, ACHA Archives. See also Appendix for photograph of the band.

<sup>5</sup>UNIA BBC File and Agenda and Program File, ACHA Archives.

at various events especially for young people.<sup>1</sup> The Band lasted for ten years and it finally came to an end during the later years of the thirties when the UNIA Montreal Division was experiencing one of its low periods.

Although the Band made appearances both at the SMM and other public occasions during its ten-year life span, it never quite lived up to the high expectations of parents and members. Difficulties were experienced in a number of areas. It was difficult to obtain permanent and dedicated teachers, two teachers, (Smith and Prevost), left suddenly without giving notice, to pursue their own individual interests.<sup>2</sup> Their successor, an Italian music instructor and not a UNIA member was said "to show more interest in his charges" but it is not known how long he remained. A further problem related to the way students handled the instruments. These were expensive, and careless treatment led to increased maintenance and replacement costs, thus by the end of 1926 the UNIA had spent more than \$500 on these instruments.<sup>3</sup> Finally, students were not as conscientiously devoted as had been expected and did not develop as fast as parents and members anticipated.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Minute Book #1, ACHA Archives, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker, Secretary of the Boys Band Committee, from 1928.

Some students were however, quite talented. From the Band the three Petersons went on to become highly successful. Montreal's Oscar developed an outstanding musical career where he achieved international fame as a renowned jazz pianist. In later years he won many awards including the 1980 Canadian Emmy Award for Jazz. His sister Daisey pursued her talents in this area and not only helped to train her brother Oscar in his early years at the piano, but became in her own right, an outstanding music teacher of the Community. She maintained herself by conducting her own music school while for many years her concerts and graduation ceremonies at the Negro Community Centre, and in her own school, were anticipated as special events.<sup>1</sup> Others not so talented, acquired an appreciation of music. Allan Husband, a highly respected Grand Master of the Mount Moriah Lodge of the Prince Hall Masons, maintained his interest throughout his life time involvement with the Masons and the Union United Church. Until his sudden death in 1979, he was responsible for the annual sponsorship by his Lodge of one or more musical students, who participated in Canada-wide musical competitions, which they frequently won.<sup>2</sup> Joe Sealey, present member of the Union United Church, Lodgemaster and Member of the Mount Moriah Lodge, became promoter and Manager of the "Colored

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 13.

<sup>2</sup> Allan Husband, in conversation, 1977-1978.

Modernistic Band"<sup>1</sup> which existed for a while after the dissolution of the UNIA Band. This Band was tutored by Mr. Winfield from Demerara<sup>2</sup> during the depression years. They used the instruments and facilities of the UNIA. One of the members of this Band, Allan Wellman, went on to become a professional trumpet player in Montreal, another Leon Jacobs, has also played the trumpet professionally and is presently teaching psychology at Dawson CEGEP in Montreal.<sup>3</sup> Appendix 10 shows a picture of part of this group, featuring Harry Jones, Joe M. Sealy, (known as "Poppa Joe", because he was solicitous and responsible for others),<sup>4</sup> Mac Barnett and Ted Thompson. Sealy has maintained his interest in this field as an ardent player of the saxophone and piano.

Mr. Tucker, who was a member of the adult Orchestra and the Secretary of the Boys' Band Committee from 1928, never lost his zeal for helping youngsters with musical ability. In this respect he provided a piano<sup>5</sup> to channel and develop the musical talent and ability of Trevor

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA BRC File, ACHA Archives. Also Joe Sealy in conversation 1980-81. See Appendix 10 for photograph.

<sup>2</sup>Joe Sealy. Demerara, now Guiana, on the northern coast line of South America is often grouped with the Caribbean Islands.

<sup>3</sup>Joe Sealy.

<sup>4</sup>Mrs. Hilda Lockhart, 1980-1981, who has known Joe as a boy, from the time he came to Montreal from Nova Scotia during the twenties.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. E. J. Tucker.

Payne, whose parents could not afford to do so. Trevor eventually graduated from McGill University as Bachelor of Music. He currently teaches music at John Abbott CEGEP in St. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, and was for a number of years, Choir Director of Union Church Choirs, as well as Director of the Montreal Black Youth Choir, which has performed throughout the City of Montreal and across Canada, as far west as Victoria, British Columbia.

#### The Youth Administration

The Universal Negro Youth Administration (UNYA) was directed towards bringing together the youth of the UNIA. It was designed to be an autonomous group including both men and women from age 16 to 30 years, who were encouraged to carry out the spirit and aims of the UNIA Philosophy, covering racial uplift, history, and opinions and philosophy of Marcus Garvey. Its aim was to educate Black youth in qualities of leadership and confraternity both at the national and international levels. It was to engender a sense of "social, moral and economic responsibility" and create recreational youth centres for physical and sportsmanlike training.<sup>1</sup>

Constitution By-Laws made provision for seven officers as follows: one Male Youth Director, one Male Youth Assistant, one Lady Director, one International Organizer and a Chaplain General. The President of the Montreal

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<sup>1</sup>UNIA Youth Administration File, ACHA Archives.

Division would be the adviser and be responsible for the harmonious operation of the unit.<sup>1</sup>

These Constitution By-Laws consist of Articles numbered 1 through 8,<sup>2</sup> but no reference could be found relating to the establishment of the UNYA and it is presumed that such a group was never formed. The existence of such By-Laws, however, suggests that they were drawn up by the Montreal Division and leads one to conclude that the executive of the UNIA Montreal Division must have perceived the need for such a group and therefore took action in that direction or were acting in accordance with a directive issued from the Parent Body. The UNIA Constitution and Laws, dated July 1918 and Amended August 1920 and 1921, does not make provision for or refer to such a group.

This Chapter has dealt with the informal aspects of the UNIA education as carried out in Montreal. The Division tried its best to establish as many units as possible in accordance with the Constitution and the philosophy "to be learned in all that is worth knowing".<sup>3</sup> The Sunday Mass Meeting and the Literary Club met with a great deal of success during the early and vigorous days of the Division, while the Choir and Orchestra which were formed later, also enjoyed a measure of success. Units such as the BCNS and Preparatory Nursing Class were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>UNIA Youth Administration File, ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Marcus Garvey, ed. Amy Jacques Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions, op.cit., p. 17.

never firmly established, although the BCNS did function for a while primarily as a social unit which helped to raise funds. However, as the Division declined and the depression set in, UNIA membership and auxiliaries were seriously affected. By 1927 when the NCC opened its doors many of the UNIA units had already gone out of existence.



## CHAPTER IV

### EDUCATION THROUGH THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE (NCC).

With the onset of the depression new problems evidenced themselves in the Black Community. Where before jobs for Blacks were limited, now they were practically non-existent. Numerous Blacks were out of work and the young were particularly vulnerable. As needs became more acute, the Negro Community Centre evolved.

#### The Negro Community Centre is Formed

Long before the Negro Community Centre was formed, the Church had been involved in community work. Mention has been made of the Colored Women's Club which worked closely with the Church, the Willing Workers Club organized in 1909 as a church unit functioning primarily as a Ladies Aid Society to raise funds for needy causes, and the Women's Charitable Benevolent Association, another community group which aligned itself with the Church to succor the needy.<sup>1</sup> Sisterhoods and Brotherhoods centred at the Church had units scattered throughout Montreal and sought to render community services wherever possible.<sup>2</sup> Reverend Este was himself extensively involved in community work. His role as a minister demanded his performance in a variety of situations but

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<sup>1</sup> United Church Record, Toronto, 1935, op.cit., p. 12g.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., "Reports of Church Organizations", p. 12d.

the nature of the man himself, was open to proffer help and succour wherever it arose. His concern went far beyond the confines of the Church and the Black Community, so that many of those who sought and were given aid; came from all over the City; Black or White "the whole world did not have a heart as big as Reverend Este."<sup>1</sup>

Adjustment to life in the City involved the perennial problems of housing and job hunting, to which were often added immigration and other legal difficulties, all of which accentuated the frustration of Blacks who lived in Montreal. As one lady put it, "No one ever told me Montreal was no place for Blacks."<sup>2</sup> In both a spiritual and a temporal sense the Church was the community centre, and it was from here that the Negro Community Centre evolved. One important function served by the Church was bringing together the ladies of the Community in a social atmosphere. They would meet during the week to sew, knit, plan entertainment or prepare meals for a variety of activities. The long room at the back of the Church traversing its length fulfilled many purposes. It was the play area, the school setting, and the communal centre.<sup>3</sup> The large basement area below the stairs with its adjoining kitchen was used for annual meetings and large dinners, luncheons or

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<sup>1</sup>Martha Griffith, tape 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Everil Griffith, in conversation, 1981.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith, taping 1981.

teas. It became a beehive of activity accommodating the multiple purposes for which it was utilized.<sup>1</sup>

At the social gatherings which took place, small donations of one to ten cents would be collected,<sup>2</sup> in accordance with what the individual could afford, and the money would be pooled to purchase materials and equipment needed or to defray expenses of events to be organized. At times, in place of money, a contribution of food or other commodity would be made, in this way those who had, shared with those who lacked.

As the years of the early twenties passed on towards the depression years, the demands became more acute and individuals contributed to pay rent, buy food, help the sick, arrange social activities or cope with any eventuality life demanded. It was during the Fall of 1927 that a number of concerned individuals; Mr. Golden Darby, Mrs. Israel Sealey, Mr. E. F. Taylor, Mrs. Clara de Shield, Mr. Mac McClain, Mrs. Hattie Olley and Mrs. Mamie Morris,<sup>3</sup> led and motivated by Reverend Este met together at the home of the Reverend to explore what could be done to relieve and provide assistance for Blacks in order to ease the hardships confronting them and harness the energies of the young towards a worthwhile future.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Martha Griffith, taping 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Hilda Lockhart, 1971-1981.

<sup>3</sup>UNITED CHURCH RECORD, op.cit., "Racial Uplift" "Origin and History of the Negro Community Centre, Toronto, 1935, p. 12g. Also Souvenir Program, 65th Anniversary, contains "A Short History of Union Church" by Betty Riley, pp. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12g.

As the necessity for a centre became evident, the subject was broached to the congregation at Union Church. Some negative responses were raised by those persons who feared the Centre would further isolate Blacks from the White Community and thus help maintain the prejudice and discrimination already evidenced in the society. This was probably in opposition to the reflected opinion of some Blacks who worked for the railroads. The railroads, in their self-interest, were favourably disposed towards having a Centre because they felt that by "so doing it would tend to prevent the Negro from getting into industry . . . and the railroads would then be at a loss to get porters."<sup>1</sup> The foresight of the group supporting a Centre prevailed and the Centre was initiated. The members were assessed \$2.00 per annum and encouraged to solicit further membership support. Reverend Este and Mr. Darby were mandated to contact the business men of the City to arouse their interest in this venture,<sup>2</sup> and the original founders became the first board members.<sup>3</sup>

The Centre, at first known as the Negro Community Association,<sup>4</sup> aimed at protecting the human rights, the dignity and worth of the

<sup>1</sup> Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 221.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, "Origins and History of the Negro Community Centre," op.cit., p. 12g.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Phills, President of the Board, The Negro Community Centre in Action - A Red Feather Service, Montreal, January 1960.

<sup>4</sup> L. Sitahal, Executive Director's Report, Annual Report 50 Years of Community Service, 1976-1977, p. 11.

individual and the seeking of solutions to the many difficulties and problems that affected Blacks and their quality of life in Montreal. They would strive for equal opportunity and self-determination and allow for leadership and the shouldering of responsibility by its individuals.<sup>1</sup> Of particular concern was the breaking down of barriers to aid in the employment of Blacks. This was one of the most important and acute areas of need for without jobs life was indeed perilous for Blacks. Department stores such as Eaton's and Morgans (now le Baie) and Simpsons had an explicit policy that Blacks not be employed.<sup>2</sup> Hospitals did not accept any. The Centre was therefore naturally directed towards establishing and organizing services and programs for youth, and adults, and representing the Negro in the Montreal Community in many ways, breaking down the barriers to hiring and employment, seeking better housing accommodation and working with other agencies and government groups and officials in order to correct injustices wherever they appeared.<sup>3</sup> The Centre wanted to improve the conditions under which all people work, live and spend their leisure time, and seek a community morale which would bind all together, and give sus-

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<sup>1</sup>S. Clyde, "The Negro Community Centre Inc., Past, Present and Future," Expression, a Quarterly published by the Negro Citizenship Association Inc., Montreal, Que., November 1965, pp. 14-16.

<sup>2</sup>M. Dash, H. Langdon, M. Griffith, and many others.

<sup>3</sup>Lawrence Sitahal, Executive Director's Report, The Negro Community Centre Annual Report, 1976-1977, 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting, Montreal, 1977, p. 2.

taining power to each individual and the Community as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the Centre was thus a vigorous response of Black people to the needs of its own Community. However in this regard it did not exclude the wider community. One of its tenets was "to break down barriers and thus provide an environment" to encourage a spirit of sympathetic understanding between the white and colored races<sup>2</sup> and so foster discussion of individual problems to find solutions. Thus it was early recognized that the white community needed to be positively informed about Blacks, and that Blacks were prepared and willing to work with the wider community for better understanding and for their mutual benefit.

During the week of June 10-17, 1927 a financial campaign with Mrs. D. Gaspard in charge<sup>3</sup> was launched, as a first commitment to the year's budget. The members of the Board approached the businessmen of Montreal and the response was concrete and positive both monetarily, "\$1465 was raised, the two railroads contributed \$1000 to the amount",<sup>4</sup> and with the necessary expertise to help put the Centre on a firm footing. Among those of the wider community whose persistent efforts

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Lawrence Sitahal, Executive Director's Report, Annual Report, 1977, op.cit., pp. 1-2.

<sup>3</sup>United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12g.

<sup>4</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

were greatly valued were: Messrs. James McKeown, John Frosst, Roland Gomery, H. M. Long, George S. Mooney, J. J. Miller and others<sup>1</sup> who would be instrumental in helping achieve acceptance for the Centre as an agency of the Financial Federation.

By 1928, a Board of Directors made up of "public spirited white and colored citizens" was formed.<sup>2</sup> This provided "an opportunity for the groups through close contact to understand and appreciate the needs of each other more thoroughly."<sup>3</sup> This interracial Board was comprised of twenty directors "of whom ten shall be Negro citizens residing in Greater Montreal" and "ten white citizens" to advise the Managing Body.<sup>4</sup>

In 1929, the Centre became a member of "The Council of Social Agencies and Financial Federation of Montreal", later called the "Welfare Federation" under the banner of the Red Feather Service,<sup>5</sup> thus participating in financial drives and sharing in the contributions and donations. After World War II in 1949, the Centre was incorporated

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<sup>1</sup>United Church Record, Origin and History of the Negro Community Centre, op.cit., p. 12h.

<sup>2</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>4</sup>Negro Community Centre, Inc., By-Laws, III Board of Directors, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>J. A. Phills, President of the Board, The Negro Community Centre in Action, 1960, pp. 2-3.

under Provincial Charter and the By-Laws were amended to allow for the acceptance of non-Negroes for membership.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Golden Darby, one of the original founders and the first Executive Director of the NCC is well remembered by Mr. E. J. Tucker for his devotion and dedication "to the cause" at which he worked ardently and voluntarily.<sup>2</sup> Darby, a sociologist and a counsellor was very committed to advancing the lot of Blacks and channelling the energies and resources of adults, youth and children in positive directions, he however, did not remain very long in Montreal, but returned to the States, where he was born. There he became involved, as Assistant Administrator and Consultant Director to the Southside Community Committee, in setting up the Bronzestown Black Community Project of Southside Chicago.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. A. Phills, President of the Board, The Negro Community Centre in Action, 1960, op.cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Tucker, in conversation 1978. Mr. Darby presented Mr. Tucker with an autographed copy of Bright Shadows in Bronzestown, which copy is in the ACHA Archives.

<sup>3</sup>Bronzestown was in a Black Community with an exceedingly high rate of juvenile delinquency. There he set up "a program of neighbourhood betterment into thirty different areas in the metropolitan district for under privileged youth" The Story of the Southside Community Committee: Bright Shadows in Bronzestown, published by the Southside Community Committee, 1949, pp. 10-15 and Dedication page.

See also Appendix 11 for photo of Darby.



When Darby left, Reverend Este took over this position and ably assisted by Clara de Shield carried on the administration and direction of the Centre,<sup>1</sup> until Mr. George Woodson was recruited as Executive Secretary, with Mrs. Hattie Olley as Assistant and Mrs. G. Potter part-time worker.<sup>2</sup> In 1931, Mr. Dudley Sykes, also from the States, followed on as the new Director. He too was a UNIA member and served the Centre well for many years, retiring in 1947 to be replaced by Stanley Clyde, who died in office at the end of twenty-three years.

The Centre rapidly developed from the early membership of seven to seven hundred in 1935, carrying out eighteen different activities including a luncheon program and averaging a monthly attendance of 1,100.<sup>3</sup>

#### Programs Offered by the Centre

A diverse number of programs gradually developed at the Centre around the needs of the children and those who sought to use its facilities. There was a regular winter school program and in the summer, recreation was provided for the children. A Summer camp was conducted at St. Antoine and Aqueduct Streets where the Canadian Pacific Railways

<sup>1</sup>United Church Record, "Origin and History of the Negro Community Centre", op.cit., p. 12h.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 12h.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12h.

allowed the use of its property.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the children would be taken on foot, under the supervision of volunteer parents, to places of interest such as historical sites and parks around the City, where they engaged in outdoor sports, games, track and field and picnics.<sup>2</sup>

The nursery program catered for children aged three to five, both boys and girls, and was open for two sessions from nine to twelve in the morning and twelve to five in the evening. This involved play acting, socializing behaviour, incidental learning and some formal learning of number facts, phonetics, reading, singing and dancing.

Like the UNIA, the NCC offered "after school" programs that were supportive and remedial to the regular public school courses. By 1927 it will be remembered, the UNIA had already passed its zenith and some of its programs had begun to wane.<sup>4</sup> The NCC remedial and supplementary after school programs, for older children who attended primary and secondary schools and followed the regular public school program were of a formal nature. Their ages ranged from six to fifteen, through to seventeen. Help with lessons included: reading, writing, public

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

<sup>2</sup>Martha Griffith, conversation and taping 1981.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith (1981), and Ann Packwood (1980), conversations and tapings.

<sup>4</sup>The Literary Club, for example, no longer carried out its wide range of programs.

speaking, recitation and arithmetic, while supplementary and reference material were provided with supervised study. Other more informal programs offered were piano classes, arts and crafts, and puppetry. The classes included learning to sew, needle craft, knitting and cooking.<sup>1</sup> Gym classes for boys and girls were also part of the physical development in addition to sports such as badminton and track and field which were organized.<sup>2</sup> An area of activities which allowed for special interest developments were the range of clubs that came into being. These included: Junior Hostesses, Ballet and Tap Dance Classes, Junior Buddies, Teen Clubs, and Children's Choir.<sup>3</sup> For the young adults over 18 years' old there were formed the Sepia Girls Club, Buddies Club, Nursery Mothers Club, Arts and Crafts, Rainbow Club, Bridge Club and so on. Other social activities covered dances, socials, rehearsals for dramatic presentations, plays and concerts.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the students who benefitted from the NCC had attended UNIA classes and had been helped in the Church; Percy Rodriguez, Betty Riley, Martha Griffith, Henry Langdon, Oscar Peterson, to name some of those

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Griffith.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12h. Also Martha Griffith.

<sup>3</sup> Betty Riley, Martha Griffith, Henry Langdon.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

who enjoyed the facilities of all three institutions. The foundation laid in those days would continue to expand and develop throughout the years providing uninterrupted service into the eighties, not only to the Black Community but also for the benefit of the White.<sup>1</sup>

Adult groups also made use of the Centre to hold meetings or other activities; The Colored Women's Club, The Negro Theatre Guild, The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, The Woodworkers Union, and the Walker Credit Union are some of these. Clubs were formed around bridge, badminton, cricket, whist, dramatics and games. Sewing groups and arts and crafts which indulged in knitting, tatting, quilt making, patchwork and mats were organized, and even Clubs for older folk were included. Other groups in the Community made use of the facilities at the Centre. There was an "All French" Club called "Circle de Gaieté", which was run by all French women. They listed thirty-six members and would meet every Tuesday. "It was their night out,"<sup>2</sup> White English women too had a Club. This provided an opportunity for them to get away from their husbands, who would drop them off with

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<sup>1</sup>Note: During the fifties and sixties, the Centre would be used as "a learning centre" and a "teaching agency" by McGill School of Social Work. *Expression*, op.cit., p. 16, and by the eighties, it was one of those organizations under the shelter of Centraide.

<sup>2</sup>Martha Griffith, conversations and taping 1981.

their food, and pick them up when it was time to return home. Older folk too, found a place at the Centre and enjoyed its facilities, not only Blacks but whites, especially women, and so a variety of Clubs and activities grew up which catered to the growing social requirements of all levels of the wider community.<sup>1</sup>

One of the long standing Clubs which evolved over the years was the Excelsior Debating and Dramatic Club. This Club, it will be remembered came into existence in the Church under the persistent efforts of Reverend Este. Its aim was to bring about a "revival of intellectual and social activity among the young people."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Earl A. Swift, who worked on the trains was an instructor. He helped train students in the oral arts as well as choral and dramatic presentations, conducting debates, producing Shakespearan and other plays, and he demanded high calibre of work which culminated in functions held twice annually.<sup>3</sup> According to the United Church Record, his dedication was shared by the members who gave a good account of themselves and "are a source of enjoyment to themselves and their friends" while many of its members went abroad to finish their education.<sup>4</sup> Membership, at first only ten,

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Griffith, conversations and taping 1981.

<sup>2</sup> United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12i.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 12c.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

went up to twenty-five, of very committed students, which laid the foundation for what would in later years become known as the Negro Theatre Workshop and Guild which continued to flourish at the NCC. It was able to stage performances, one of which took place at Her Majesty's Theatre, and in LaSalle, gaining community wide publicity in Montreal.<sup>1</sup>

One of those who was associated with this Club is Victor Phillips. Victor learnt and pursued his interest in drama, which he has maintained to the present. Much of his knowledge has been put to use in helping to produce and direct plays in the Community where he often contributes worthwhile criticism and guidance towards the success of members of the Black Theatre Workshop which today performs at the Centaur Theatre.

Two products of the Sepia Girls Club are Betty Riley, who has been mentioned throughout this paper, and Joyce Elcock. Joyce is presently employed by Northern Electric and recently received her Bachelor of Commerce Degree, from Concordia University.<sup>2</sup> Another product of the Community is Sharon Whims. Sharon is the granddaughter of Rose Jordan. Her mother Bernice was well known in the Community for her singing and entertainment ability. Sharon is today "the first Black - man or woman - to be accepted to become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine," and has

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Henry Langdon, Mrs. Mildred Williams.

<sup>2</sup>Afro-Can., September 1981, p. 7.

gained the degree of Director of Wild Life and Fisheries Management from McGill (Macdonald College).<sup>1</sup>

Serving as the centre for these activities was not the only function of the Community Centre. Of special interest and appreciation was the counselling which touched many areas. Job interviews would take place when the Centre would act as an intermediary between a company or institution and an individual, or the individual would be briefed with regard to the type of job and its demands. The counselling might be directed towards facilitating housing, citizenship, family problems or perhaps immigration.<sup>2</sup> The objectives of the Centre specified that "Any Negro residing in Greater Montreal may become a member"<sup>3</sup> and many Blacks who came to Montreal sought out this institution where they would be informed about current activities, board, accommodation and services, and information which existed to render help. Students, nurses, domestics or other immigrants from the Caribbean, Maritimes, the United States, or Africa, sought and were given assistance. Like the Church and the UNIA, those who had difficulties regarding immigration, legal problems, employment, etc., could be sure of a sympathetic ear from its personnel.

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<sup>1</sup>Victor Phillips, "Black Girl Qualified as Vet.", Afro-Can., September 7, 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Martha Griffith, Henry Langdon. Henry has served as Board Secretary of the NCC.

<sup>3</sup>Negro Community Centre, Inc. By-Laws.

### Teachers

Mention has been made of the dedicated persons who surrounded and supported Reverend Este and those who worked in the Negro Community Centre proved to be no exception. Many persons involved in the Church and the UNIA were also to be found in the NCC which was conveniently located in the Church for the first twenty-seven years of its life, except for a short period at 245 St. Antoine Street. This made it relatively easy for those units and groups such as the Nursery School, the Drama and Debating groups, the social clubs and others which evolved from the Church to be incorporated into the NCC.

In the formative years of the Centre, persons who contributed to its administration and direction of programs were solely volunteers. Funds collected were limited and these were primarily channelled into programs, services and equipment. Reverend Este gave unstintingly of his energies with part-time support from persons who volunteered their help. Clara de Shield, frequently active in the Church and UNIA, had a hand in shaping the NCC and was one of those persons who helped to make it work.<sup>1</sup> It was her nursery school which had been established in Union Church that formed the basis of the NCC Nursery group,<sup>2</sup> and she, together

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<sup>1</sup>Reverend Este, Newspaper Clipping, UNIA, Mr. Tucker, Union Church, ACHA Archives.

<sup>2</sup>Evelyn Braxton.



with Mr. Darby, were responsible for much of the inspiration and work in setting up the Centre with beneficial and creative programs.<sup>1</sup> She was highly respected as one of those who made consistent efforts to lessen discrimination, giving public lectures and radio appearances. Reverend Este described her as "a brilliant platform speaker in great demand, and a lecturer on race problems" who helped to focus the attention of the wider Montreal community, through interviews and radio exposure, to the work that was being done at the NCC, and call attention to problems faced by many Blacks in the Community.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Hattie Olley, mentioned on the first Board of Directors, was one of its early workers. Like all others who were involved with the Centre in those early years the work was voluntary and no one received monetary rewards. Parents did not pay for the services rendered to the youngsters and anyone who was interested could lend a hand to serve the area in which he or she was capable. Mrs. Palmist, another of the early staff, was among the first of the volunteers to receive a small remuneration. She worked in numerous ways with the children, organizing, supervising and helping in various capacities. Together with the Executive Director, Dudley Sykes, they worked hard to maintain and develop the Centre.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Reverend Este, Martha Griffith.

<sup>2</sup>Reverend Este, Newspaper Clipping, ACHA Archives, undated.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith, taping 1981

Mrs. Maude Jones, though not a Board member, was a highly regarded patron and community worker in the Black Community. She was to be found wherever her help and assistance could be utilized. A trained elocutionist, she understood the need for discipline and direction, particularly with respect to conduct and deportment. She taught the young ladies and gentlemen, "how to speak properly", "how to eat properly" and "how to speak and conduct one's self with dignity and respect."<sup>1</sup> She stressed enunciation, pronunciation, and the delivery of literary works, poems, drama and so on. She was to be found patronizing the choral groups, the dramatic productions, the public speaking and any activities that enabled the individual to present an image of the highest quality.<sup>2</sup> She was said to be "fantastic"<sup>3</sup> and was one of those who was very aware of the image of Blacks, and was not afraid to do something about it. She willingly gave her support and worked consciously to counteract areas of discrimination. On one occasion she approached Morgans Department Store, (now le Baie) to have them remove a "topsy doll" which depicted a derogatory stereotype of Blacks, from their show window. The doll was removed.<sup>4</sup> She gladly worked with Reverend Este, and others, to

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Griffith, Mazie Dash, Ann Packwood.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Martha Griffith

<sup>4</sup> Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith, Mazie Dash.

get the large Department Stores to change their hiring policy to include Blacks.<sup>1</sup>

Many others helped contribute to making the Centre work. The Spencer family; Olga, Thelma and Gladys, gave of their talents. The three sisters were gifted entertainers who could sing, dance and perform, while Olga played and taught the piano and ballet. Unfortunately, with the advent of World War II, they were enlisted to go overseas to entertain the troops.<sup>2</sup> Charles Griffith,<sup>3</sup> a Black Montrealer, made his contribution in the area of tap dancing, and in later years was able to open his own tap dancing studios in Montreal and Verdun. Irene Graham, who today works with the Centre, teaching sewing, was a student who learnt her craft there. Martha Griffith, a long time community worker, first acquired many of her skills at the NCC, and over the years has acted in a variety of situations including secretary and volunteer worker. She is currently still giving dedicated service to this institution. From the day she arrived in Montreal at age 12, during the twenties, she has been associated with the Centre. She records her arrival in Montreal "on Saturday, the

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Langdon, Martha Griffith, Mazie Dash.

<sup>2</sup>Martha Griffith, Bernice Whims, Evelyn Braxton.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith.

following Sunday, at three o'clock she was at the UNIA Hall, at 7 o'clock at the Church, then on Monday, she was at the Community Centre,"<sup>1</sup> and has served all three institutions.<sup>2</sup> She developed her love and appreciation of poetry and recitation, and acquired her deportment under Maude Jones. Her skills in sewing, knitting, tatting, arts and crafts, cooking have attracted many a youngster, to whom she has endeavoured to pass on something of what she learnt through the programs, working with varying levels of students, at first as an unpaid volunteer and more recently a salaried worker.<sup>3</sup>

### Students

From early in its history those who attended the Centre were drawn from both Black and White homes, demonstrating the general need for the kind of assistance and help given by this institution to the wider community. Numbers varied over the years, according to Martha<sup>4</sup> with White children attending "in droves". Sometimes there would be about 60% Black children and 40% White, the next year there might be 40% Black and 60% White, another year the ratio could be 50% Black and 50% White.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Martha Griffith, 1981 taping.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. In August 1981 she was honoured with a luncheon as a gesture of appreciation towards her up-coming age of retirement.

<sup>4</sup>Martha Griffith, taping 1981.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

White children attended from a young age right up until they reached the age of dating, when it was very noticable that at this age, they drifted away. Both boys and girls from fifteen, sixteen and through seventeen, as they neared the marriageable age, lost interest in the Centre and sought to marry within their own group.<sup>1</sup>

The range of students began at age three and went right through to adulthood; these were the nursery school, those at elementary level who came primarily from the Royal Arthur and around the area, teenagers and young adults, adults and senior citizens. Many of those already mentioned who attended the UNIA and the Church were also to be found in the NCC; Juan Rodriguez, Betty Riley, Martha Griffith, the Peterson family, the Phillips family, the Whims are some of these. Most Black children who grew up in the St. Antoine Area came under its influence.<sup>2</sup> Daisey Sweeney, was not only a student, but as an adult made a contribution through teaching music to the children.<sup>3</sup>

Reverend Este's inspiration and energy were to be found here as in the other institutions. Never tired of counselling students of all ages to study, both adults and children were encouraged to better them-

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Griffith, taping 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Betty Riley, conversations and taping.

<sup>3</sup> Daisey Sweeney, conversations and taping 1980.

selves in whatever way they could, while he was very active in trying to "open doors" for Blacks. He often took follow-up measures, whether with immigration, the courts, the municipality or business, and his contacts with small business men of the wider community, who were much more receptive to employing or helping Blacks than the larger concerns, enabled him to channel students in these ways.<sup>1</sup> One of the areas that presented problems as we saw in the Church and the UNIA, was health and sanitation.

#### Health and Sanitation

During the years under study, health and sanitation in Montreal presented a city wide problem. Houses could be closed by the city Health Department if complaints of unsanitary conditions were made,<sup>2</sup> but health inspection was limited, diseases were common and landlords seemed more interested in profits than hygiene.<sup>3</sup> Israel recounts the instance of a family who tried to clean a flat only to be hospitalized with pneumonia and typhoid. The children survived but the mother died.<sup>4</sup> The flat was subsequently renovated and rented by the landlord at an

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Langdon, conversations and taping 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Terry Copp, op.cit., pp. 70, 71, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 211.

increase of 57% over the original rent.<sup>1</sup>

The Federal Government's Board of Inquiry Into the Cost of Living,<sup>2</sup> highlighted the conditions in Montreal which

. . . have degenerated and there is a decided lack of working man's dwellings with proper conveniences at low rental. Rents have increased by fifty per cent in the last seven years leading to a doubling up of families in the same apartment or house causing ill health<sup>3</sup>

and during the years before the World War I experts from the "Philadelphia Housing Commission" who were invited to Montreal for an opinion commented that

. . . whole families were living in a single room some eight beds in a room, rooms without windows, rooms where plumbing was defective and the floor covered with filth . . .<sup>4</sup>

The Secretary of the Commission related how he

. . . saw toilets, old open toilets, seven of them in one narrow little court surrounded by houses occupied by ten families.  
. . . You have no real sanitary inspection here . . .<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 211.

<sup>2</sup>Board of Inquiry Into the Cost of Living, Ottawa, 1913, p. 483.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>B. J. Newman, "Housing Evils and Their Causes", Addresses Delivered Before the Canadian Club of Montreal, 1912-1913, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

The Black Community was very aware of these poor health conditions, and regardless of their limited funds and resources tried to deal with the problem. The Eureka Association referred to in Chapter I was one of the means taken to provide better housing,<sup>1</sup> while the Church, the UNIA and the NCC all tried to provide training, and distribute information to counter these conditions, by setting up classes wherever possible. In this respect the Church played an important pioneering role. Health classes were arranged, clinics organized, and Doctors retained or "invited to give courses or talks on these matters."<sup>2</sup> Dr. K. Melville, in 1935, commended the Church for the work it had done and was doing in the area of health to the Community,

It would be superfluous to list the various talks or lectures or what not, which the United Colored Church has fostered or encouraged from time to time.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Eureka Association, Supra, Chapter I, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>United Church Record, op.cit., p. 12j.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Melville was a graduate of McGill University. He arrived in Montreal at age 18 as a student from Jamaica. He obtained a Bachelor of Science and Medical Degree at McGill where he won the Holmes Gold Medal for highest academic standing. Melville had an outstanding career and published many papers and articles.



and he made a special point to single out Reverend Este for special applause

It is fitting to . . . to congratulate the Reverend Charles Este and those who have worked so assiduously with him in the past, upon these various problems and to hope that the Church will continue during the years to come, to give its valuable support and assistance in the war against disease.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Black doctors was Dr. D. F. Gaspard, a graduate of Laval University and a World War I veteran. He had served overseas in the Royal Canadian Medical Corps, and was a resident of Montreal where he had a practise consisting of both Black and White clientele.<sup>2</sup> There was also Dr. Wills formerly mentioned in connection with the UNIA.<sup>3</sup>

The NCC tried valiantly to give help and assistance in this respect. In the late twenties a Negro Clinic in co-operation with the City Department of Health was set up, to inform and give help in the Community at the time of the typhoid epidemic.<sup>4</sup> In a further attempt to get young people involved, the Victoria Order of Nurses (VON) organized in 1928 a "Little Mothers' League." The group was given instruction in the care of "the

<sup>1</sup>K. I. Melville, M.D., "Public Health Education in the Church," United Church Record, op.cit., pp. 12j and 12k.

<sup>2</sup>Ann Packwood, Daisey Sweeney, Mazie Dash. A branch of the Canadian Legion is named after Dr. Gaspard, "The Dr. Gaspard (Quebec) No. 50 Branch, Royal Canadian Legion."

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Wills had set up a "sanatorium" in Caughnawaga, for which he was well known.

<sup>4</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 218.

baby", "personal hygiene, home sanitation and communicable diseases" and had its own twelve year old chairman and ten year old secretary.<sup>1</sup> The Montreal Star published an account of their graduation which took place on May 3, under the caption "Little Mothers Receive Diplomas."<sup>2</sup> It is not clear what value was ascribed to these Diplomas and if those students gained any material benefit other than to focus attention on their area of knowledge and its usefulness in the home and surroundings.

Health classes and sessions were useful because they provided health and sanitation information to the Black Community, but they did little for those who desired to pursue nursing as a career. Conditions for receiving this training in Montreal remained illusive for Blacks. Reverend Este continued to work assiduously with others through the Church, the UNIA and the NCC to get this attitude changed and have Blacks accepted into hospitals but it wasn't until the World War II that conditions began to change. The difficulties encountered by Vivien Layne have been recounted in Chapter III but there were other cases.

It was in 1920 that Mrs. Everil Griffith (née Rollock) from Barbados tried to enter a Montreal hospital to complete her nurses' training. Everil had already finished one year in training at the Barbados General

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<sup>1</sup>Wilfred Israel, op.cit., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Montreal Star, May 4, 1928.

Hospital, but "Blacks could not even get into the hospital to clean the floors" she said, "they just were not accepted."<sup>1</sup> She then applied to a hospital in the States and was told, "She would be accepted because she already had some training". She however did not have the money to maintain herself while studying there.<sup>2</sup>

During the thirties, Martha Griffith, and Beulah Brown, tried with Vivien Layne for admittance to a Montreal Hospital. Vivien's parents were originally from the States, Martha was born in Jamaica and Beulah was born in Montreal. Hospital representatives from the Royal Victoria and the Montreal General were invited by the Minister, to the Church, to explain conditions to those who wished to become nurses. Having pointed out that, according to them, "white folk would not like to have Negroes nurse them" and "that Blacks did not get sick" as reasons why they could not be accommodated, the representatives suggested applying to the United States. Vivien Layne they said, would need credits in chemistry and biology, Beulah needed to have her general level of education raised, and Martha would have to go back to Jamaica and apply to the States from there.<sup>3</sup> As earlier mentioned in Chapter III Vivien went to New York and enjoyed a very successful nursing career there. Martha

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Everil Griffith, in conversation 1981.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith, tape 1981.

and Beulah remained in Montreal. For them the prospect of journeying to the United States included not only financial support in a foreign country, but exile from Montreal upon graduation, since it was unlikely that employment in Montreal would be available when that stage was reached.

Nonetheless, Reverend Este and his able supporters continued their fight. Many Montreal Blacks have thanked God for World War II,<sup>1</sup> which gave them the opportunity to obtain positions previously impossible. Ammunition factories were opened up, but the 'goodly' Reverend Este did not consider this adequate and continued to pressure companies to get Black girls out of the ammunition factories and into clerical positions in offices. Rita Terelong Lewis, was one of those to benefit in this manner,<sup>2</sup> and those who secured positions accepted the challenge and worked so well and conscientiously, employers were reluctant to replace them<sup>3</sup> and as the demands of the war years speeded up more were able to find positions.<sup>4</sup>

The Reverend again tried to get acceptance into hospitals. At this time the Royal Victoria said "No". The Montreal General said they would

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<sup>1</sup>Martha Griffith, Roger Ryan and many others.

<sup>2</sup>Everil Griffith, in conversation 1981.

<sup>3</sup>Martha Griffith, Henry Langdon.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

put the request before the next Board Meeting and the Queen Mary said "Yes".<sup>1</sup> Later when the Montreal Hospital introduced the "Argyle training" but wanted to set up two classes, one for Whites and one for Blacks, Reverend Este would not hear of it, and persisted in getting a combined class.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulty in obtaining work in the Department Stores was another barrier to be broken down. The opportunity for sensitizing Department Stores arose in later years, after the War, when a candy bar wrapper bearing the caption "Negro Snipes" and sold by Eaton's, came to the attention of Mr. Clyke, the Executive Director at the Centre. The Board discussed it and Mr. Henry Langdon, the incumbent Secretary of the Board, was directed to write a letter to Eaton's outlining the displeasure felt by the Black Community at this derogatory label. It was further pointed out that in spite of the patronage of Blacks, this Department Store did not have one single Black person on its staff of workers. Eaton's acknowledged the correspondence and was prepared to correct this situation, indicating they would hire anyone recommended by the Centre, which eventually took place.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Everil Griffith.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Langdon.

From its inception the NCC was able to gain the attention and support of the larger community. In this way the need for programs and activities which developed were understood by both communities. The Board members enlisted assistance from members of the wider community, and this enabled the Centre to promote facilities that profitted not just Blacks, but Whites as well. As programs materialized, they were utilized by both Blacks and Whites in the Community, indicating a need in the wider society, and contributing to an awareness that eventually operated to help in the erosion of discrimination.

## CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this thesis to examine the role of the Black Community in educating Blacks during the thirty years from 1910 to 1940. The three institutions under study; the Union United Church, the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Negro Community Centre, early recognized education as a worthwhile force that would lead to the improvement of life for the Black person. These institutions endeavoured to answer the needs of the Community by providing auxiliaries, units and programs to meet those needs.

The Church worked steadfastly at nurturing the spiritual relationship with God and neighbours, while catering to a practical realization of the human requirements, by encouraging members of the Community to toil diligently at harnessing whatever resources were at its disposal in order to live a successful and worthwhile life. The UNIA played a special role by focussing on historical importance, 'self-identification' and 'self-image', and helped to keep alive talents, skills and the very 'raison d'être' of existence by fostering both formal and informal agencies of education to acquire skills as well as preserve 'self-identity'. The NCC provided an institution to expand and develop programs that would be of economic advantage, protect human rights, but would also provide opportunities for encouraging contacts and understanding with the wider community and so resolve problems to their mutual benefit.

Economic advancement alone cannot explain the energies that directed the Community to strive in its various capacities, especially when such goals did not readily appear within reach. Many of those who were in leadership positions understood the philosophy of education, and working with Reverend Este focussed on the improvement and advancement of those of the Community by endeavouring to inspire others with their perceptions and actions.

At a period in Canadian history when Black people conducted their activities very much outside the concern and seeming disinterest of a large part of the greater society, isolation from the wider community undoubtedly operated to pressure the Black Community into channelling and developing facilities and activities that would have been otherwise out of reach. The dynamics of the larger society precluded individuals of the Black Community from functioning to their fullest capacity within the larger framework and worked as incentives to utilize talents and abilities within their own environs. But central to these needs were the people who recognized the importance of education for 'self-advancement' and were influenced by the philosophy, "to be learned in all that is worth knowing for the daily application of life" and preparation for any change that might come about.

Those in leadership positions attempted, as far as they could, to provide knowledge, skills and techniques to answer the Community



needs in as many areas as possible. Although ambitious, some programs and units could not be maintained as envisaged. Failure to achieve success can be attributed to a number of factors; there were not enough teachers, resources and expertise in many cases were unavailable, equipment and money were often in short supply, and the effects of the depression, causing fewer jobs and movement of Community members to other cities in their attempt to find employment, all took their toll.

There were however many positive aspects to the attempts made and solutions found, by these institutions. They all helped to create and maintain an attitude towards self and education, particularly at a time in their history when the benefits did not appear immediate. They contributed to a desire to achieve and acquire knowledge, skills and training that could be used at some future date. Partly due to the closeness of the Community the need to find ways of coping with problems, and find solutions in order to resolve them, created a sense of awareness and a desire to help one another in the Community.

Even though the units, auxiliaries and programs of these institutions at times did not have the equipment, resources or expertise to carry out the high ideals which had been set, nonetheless these agencies of education performed an important function in the Community. Perhaps in some respects these institutions were trying to reach beyond the capacities afforded by the small Black population, yet those units

such as the UNIA Literary Club, which was very effective while it functioned and the Black Cross Nurses Society and others, which survived for a limited number of years, did render important service during their years of existence. They flourished for a while, providing skills and knowledge where possible, and developing leadership and organizational abilities. Thus they kept the basic thrust alive "to be learned in all things."

Others such as the Church groups and auxiliaries, the UNIA Educational Forums, Student Aid and Counselling, NCC activities and programs continued to provide for the needs of the Community. With the advent of World War II conditions for Blacks in Montreal began to break down and a labour shortage demanded help in areas where previously Blacks were excluded, thus the wider society began to absorb many of the best educated and most talented that the Black Community had to offer, ironically weakening the smaller society.

Those who benefitted from this Community used it to progress and advance themselves at the local, national and even the international level when the opportunity arose. The issuing of war bonds enabled Blacks to save their pennies and placed them in a more secure financial position, such that after the War, many were able to purchase homes outside the St. Antoine Area. When new opportunities opened up, those Blacks who had profitted filled positions. Talented persons such as Juan Rodriguez, Oscar Peterson, Juanita Chambers (née de Shield), Mai-Ruth Vaughan (daughter to Ann Packwood), and many others made a place

for themselves, but they were also those less talented persons who were able to fill positions in hospitals, offices, industry, and so on. Some moved across Canada, or worked in the United States, in the Caribbean or in Africa. Furthermore, children and grand-children were inspired to work and branch out into new areas.

Reverend Este, himself, gave forty-five years of service as Minister. Although he had many offers to move to richer areas, he turned them down, preferring to minister to the Community which he felt still needed his guidance and help. He lived to attend the 65th Anniversary of the Church, when he was honoured by the establishment of the "Charles Este Bursary Fund." This fund is open to any Black student in the Montreal area, and has provided financial assistance since its inception to numerous individuals throughout the area. At his retirement in 1968, he was made "Pastor Emeritus" of Union Church. In 1977 Reverend Este died, leaving behind a monument throughout the Community to his memory.

The Montreal Black Community thus performed a vital role in the education of its members, during the thirty years, 1910-1940, as evidenced by the leadership of Reverend Charles Humphrey Este and those able persons who worked in the Church, the UNIA, and the NCC. These institutions continued to render service throughout the years, adapting to changing times and conditions. The year 1982 commemorates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Church, while the UNIA has existed for sixty-three years and the NCC for fifty-five years, of catering to the needs of this Community.

In researching this paper my interest has been aroused to query the experiences and difficulties faced by other groups in the Canadian mosaic during crucial periods of their existence. To what extent are such experiences similar and comparable, and is the Canadian mosaic a 'mosaic of solitudes'. Such questions could provide the basis for other studies.

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Ashby, Mr. Charles. Born Barbados, W.I. Died Montreal 1976 at age 85. Arrived Montreal 1911. Came of a shipbuilding family in Barbados. Ardent member of Union Church. Canadian Pacific Porter, Community worker and Ship Builder. He served the Church in many offices and capacities including Chairman of Stewards from 1935. Interview, taping, 1970 and conversations.

Blanchette, Mr. A. R. Born W. I. 1910. Died Montreal. C.P.R. Porter. Attended Howard University. International Field Organizer, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.



Braxton, Mrs. Evelyn. Married to George Braxton. Formerly married to Marshall. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Member of UNIA and NCC. Daughter Elk. Member of the Colored Women's Club. Daughter-in-Law of Florence Tucker. Conversations.

Braxton, Mr. George. Born United States. Arrived Montreal during the 1920's. Married to Evelyn. C.P.R. Porter now retired. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Resides on the South Shore. Conversations.

Collins, Mrs. Tryphenia. Married to Charles. Attended Royal Arthur School and Montreal High School. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Member of Colored Women's Club. Resides Verdun.

Cooper, Mr. Frank. Came to Montreal from Jamaica. Longstanding Member of Union Church and UNIA. Now over 93 years. Resides in Montreal.

Cooper, Mrs. Theresa. Married to Frank. Born Jamaica. Died Montreal January 1976. Member of Union Church and Longstanding Secretary of the UNIA Montreal Division. Directress of Education, Beaver Temple, Elks, #578. Daughters Corrine and Elaine.

Cooper, Corrine. Daughter of Frank and Theresa, born Montreal. Potential Olympic Star of 1940-1945, but War intervened. Presently resides in B.C.

Cooper, Elaine. Later Mrs. Pierre. Daughter of Frank and Theresa. Born Montreal, presently resides in Detroit.

Daniels, Mr. Othni, Nathaneal. Born Barbados, W.I. Died Montreal 1978, over 80 years. Staunch Member of Union Church. Member of the Oddfellows.

Dash, Mr. Marcus. Born Trinidad. Arrived Montreal in 1920's. Married to Mazie. C.P.R. Porter. Resides Montreal.

Dickinson-Dash, Mazie. Born Trinidad. Arrived Montreal 1927. Married to Marcus. Longstanding Member of the Union Church. Attended UNIA Sunday Mass Meetings and other Meetings and functions. Vice-President and Longstanding Member of NCC. Past-President of Colored Women's Club. Community Worker. Presently resides in Montreal. Interviews, taping, 1980 and conversations.

De Shields, Ann. Became Mrs. Vaughan and later Mrs. Packwood. Wife of Mr. Edward M. Packwood. Born Bermuda. Arrived Montreal before or after W.W.I. Longstanding Union Church Member. UNIA Member. Community Worker. Past-President of Colored Women's Club. Daughters: Lucille Vaughan (married Cuevas), Mai-Ruth Vaughan (married Hodges-Hass, now Scarsfield). Presently resides in Montreal. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

De Shield, Mrs. Clara, née Trott. Born July 31, 1895, New York City. Arrived Montreal 1912. Died Montreal. Sister to Mr. Trott, Past-President of UNIA, Montreal Division. Member of Union Church, Member of UNIA. Co-Founder of Negro Community Centre. Daughter Elk of (Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks) Beaver Temple No. 578. Mother of Juanita De Shield (now Dr. Chambers), Marian, and son George.

Durant, Mrs. Shirley, née Williams. Daughter to Mildred Williams. Married to Marcus. Born Montreal. Member of Union Church from birth. Presently Church Secretary. Has occupied this position for a number of years. Resides Lasalle. Conversations.

Este, Mr. Clarence. Brother to Reverend Este. Born Antigua. Long-standing Member of Union Church. Member of Oddfellow Lodge. Presently resides Montreal. Interviews, taping 1978 and conversations.

Este, Mr. David. Born Montreal. Grandson of Clarence Este. Greatly influenced by Great Uncle Reverend Este. Interests directed towards social work. Presently studying at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Conversations.

Este, Reverend Dr. Charles Humphrey. Born Antigua. Arrived Montreal 1913. Died Montreal, January 1977, over 80 years.

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Gabourel, Rev. Frank. Born British Honduras. Minister of Union United Church 1968-1980. Presently resides in Toronto. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Gaspard, Dr. F. Dominic. Studied, practised and died in Montreal. Graduate of Laval University. Medical Doctor in Montreal. World War I Veteran. Warrant Officer. Royal Canadian Legion named after him. "The Dr. Gaspard (Quebec) No. 50. Branch Royal Canadian Legion." Member of Union Church and of UNIA.

Ghlegg, Isola. Born Jamaica. Arrived Montreal 1920's. Member Union Church. Resides Rosemount. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Griffith, Mrs. Everil, née Rollock. Born Barbados. Arrived Montreal 1920. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Attended UNIA, SMM and other Meetings and Functions. Presently resides in Montreal. Conversations.

Griffith, Mrs. Martha. Born Jamaica. Arrived Montreal in 1920's. Longstanding Member of Union Church, UNIA and Negro Community Centre. Community Worker. Resides Montreal. (Married to Darnley from Barbados). Interviews, taping 1981 and conversations.

Husbands, Mr. Allan. Born Canada. Died Montreal June 1979. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Student at UNIA. Community Worker. Grandmaster of the Mount Moriah Lodge of the Prince Hall Masons. C.P.R. Porter, Secretary of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees. Conversations.

Jones, Mrs. Maude. Born Southern United States. Lived and worked for many years in Montreal. Nephew is Buddy Jones who presently resides on the South Shore. Christian Scientist. Community Worker and Patron of Arts. Fought against racial discrimination. Returned to U.S.A. before her death, where she died.

Jordan, Mrs. Rose, née Yearwood. Born St. Kitts W.I. February 11, 1892. Died Montreal July 6, 1981, 89 years. Arrived Canada, St. John, New Brunswick 1914. Married 1916 to Austin Jordan from Barbados at Union Church. Daughters Bernice and Evelyn. Granddaughter Sharon Whims. Grandson Rupert Whims. Early Member of Union Church, and Negro Community Centre. Daughter Elk, Beaver Temple No. 578.

Langdon, Mr. E. Born Trinidad. Arrived Montreal in 1920's. Father to Henry J. Staunch UNIA Member. Died Montreal.

Langdon, Mr. Henry J. Born Trinidad. Arrived Montreal 1924. Attended Royal Arthur School. Longstanding Member of Union Church. Royal Canadian Air Force. Present President of UNIA, Montreal Division. Former Secretary of NCC. Retired Air Canada Aircraft Maintenance Engineer. Resides in Montreal. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Lockhart, Mrs. Hilda. Born Jamaica. Arrived Montreal early 1920's. Early and Longstanding Member of Union Church. Qualified and Licensed Electrician. Former proprietor with husband of: Lockhart's Electric, Electrical Contractors, Installation and Repairs, Montreal. Learnt to be electrician from husband. First Black Québécois woman to be so qualified. Resides in Montreal. Conversations.

Mays, Mrs. Matilda (Tillie). From Southern United States. Came to Montreal at turn of century. Age at death in Montreal over 100 years. Member of Union Church. For many years Supervisor of Kindergarten Sunday School.

Packwood, Mr. Edward M. Born Guiana. (Formerly British Guiana.) Arrived Montreal 1920's. Married to Ann De Shield. Longstanding Member of Black Community. Businessman, Editor of "The Free Lance" Newspaper from 1934-1938. Associated with Union Church. Member of the Eureka Club and Association. Resides in Montreal. Conversations.

Phills, Dr. J. H. Born Canada, New Brunswick. Son of Issac and Mrs. Phills (Order of Canada). Past-President of NCC. Presently resides in U.S.A.

Phillips, Mr. Victor. Born Montreal. (Father from Barbados, 9 children). Longstanding Member and Official of Union Church. Attended UNIA, SMM Meetings and Functions. Past Member of NCC Board. Chairman, Excelsior Dramatic and Debating Club. Montreal Businessman and Proprietor of "Victor" Clothing and "Liberation Book Store". Resides in Montreal. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Potter, Mr. Albert. Born Jamaica. Past President of UNIA. Two sons, Harold and Donald. Died Montreal.

Riley, Miss Betty. Born Maritimes. Arrived Montreal as a small child where she grew up. Member of Union Church. Student of Union Church, UNIA, NCC. Attended Royal Arthur School. Community Worker and T. V. Media person. Presently attending Windsor University. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Rockhead, Mr. Rufus, Nathaniel. Born Jamaica 1888. Died Montreal September 23, 1981. 93 years. Descendant of Maroons. Montreal Entrepreneur, Proprietor and Restaurateur of Rockhead's Paradise and Night Club at St. Antoine and Mountain Streets. Veteran of W.W.I. No. 2 Construction Battalion (The Canadian Expeditionary Force) formed in Nova Scotia 1916. Chartered Member of the Dr. Gaspard (Quebec) No. 50 Branch, Royal Canadian Legion. Community Supporter and Employer of 55 persons at one time. Of international fame his club has been patronized by many celebrities. One son and two daughters.

Sealy, Mr. Joe. Born Nova Scotia. Survived the Halifax Explosion. Arrived Montreal 1920's. Longstanding Member of the Black Community, and of Union Church. Student and teacher of UNIA. Grandmaster of Mount Moriah Lodge of the Prince Hall Masons. Resides on the South Shore. Conversations.

Sweeney, Mrs. Daisey, née Peterson. Born Montreal. Member of Union Church. Student of UNIA. Teacher of Music NCC. Operated own music school. Sister to Oscar. Resides in Montreal. Interviews, taping 1980 and conversations.

Swift, Mr. Earl. Born Antigua. Arrived in Montreal with Reverend Este in 1913. Died in Montreal September 21, 1981. Graduate of McGill University. Member of Union Church. Associated with UNIA and NCC. C.P.R. Porter.

Tucker, Mrs. Florence née Springer. Also married Marshall. Born Barbados 1891. Died Montreal April 1978. Wife of Ellis J. Tucker. Arrived in Montreal 1904 via Toronto at age 13. Member of Union Church. Lady President of UNIA. Daughter Elk IBOPE (Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks.)

Tucker, Mr. Ellis J. Born Jamaica 1888. Arrived Montreal 1907 where he lived until 1979, (over 72 years). Now over 94 years. Returned to Jamaica 1979. Longstanding Member of the Black Community. UNIA President 1935-1975. Present Honorary President. C.P.R. Red Cap. Early supporter of Union Church. Community Worker and Educator. Resides Jamaica, W.I. Interviews, taping and conversations.

Vaughan, Mai-Ruth. Became Hodge's-Haas, now Mrs. Sarsfield. Born Montreal, Daughter to Ann de Shield. Educated Montreal; primary, Montreal High, McGill University. C.B.C.-T.V. News Broadcaster. Hostess C.B.C. children's program. Canadian Foreign Affairs. Presently (1982) with United Nations stationed in Nairobi, Kenya. Senior Information Officer for U.N. Ecological Program.

Wellons, Mrs. Mattie. Born Southern United States. Came to Montreal around turn of the century. Died 1979, over 100 years. Staunch Union Church Member. Longstanding Member of the Willing Workers Club.

Whims, Mrs. Bernice. Born Montreal. Daughter to Rose Jordan. Member of Union Church. Attended Royal Arthur School and Montreal High School. Resides Montreal. Conversations.

Williams, Mrs. Mildred née Seale. Born Barbados. Staunch Member of Union Church since 1912. Pianist, Sunday School Teacher, Community Worker. Served in a variety of capacities at Church. Daughter Mrs. Shirley Durant. Resides Lasalle. Conversations.

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## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Reverend Dr. Charles Este, Minister of Union United Church from 1923 to 1968.
- Appendix 2. Reverend Este Officiates.
- Appendix 3. Extract from: Union Congregational Church Constitution.
- Appendix 4. Mazie Dash's Description of Marcus Garvey.
- Appendix 5. Extracts from UNIA Constitution and Book of Laws.
- Appendix 6. Extract of Correspondence from Quebec Board of Black Educators. (QBBE)
- Appendix 7. UNIA National Anthem.
- Appendix 8. Negro National Anthem.
- Appendix 9. UNIA Literary Club.
- Appendix 10. The UNIA Boys' Band, Montreal Division No. 5, 1926 and Modernistic Band.
- Appendix 11. Golden Darby, one of the founders of the Negro Community Centre.
- Appendix 12. Activities conducted at the Negro Community Centre in the early days.
- Appendix 13. Daisey Sweeney teaching music at the Negro Community Centre.

APPENDIX 1

REVEREND DR. CHARLES ESTE, MINISTER OF  
UNION UNITED CHURCH FROM 1923 TO 1968



APPENDIX 2

REVEREND ESTE OFFICIATES.



Caption: Rev. Este and Mr. Charles Ashby, Church Elder, officiate at the Burning of the Church Mortgage 1958, Assisted by (left to right) Rev. Campbell Wadsworth, Rev. McMillan, General-Superintendent, United Church of Canada.

### APPENDIX 3

#### EXTRACT FROM: UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS

##### Article V - Officers

Section I - The Officers shall be a Pastor, not more than five Deacons, seven Deaconesses, a Clerk, a Treasurer, a Superintendent of the Sunday School and an Auditor. The election of the Superintendent of the Sunday School shall be by a two-third vote.

Section II - The Pastor, the Deacons, the Deaconesses, the Superintendent and the Clerk shall constitute an examining committee.

Section III - The Clerk, Treasurer and seven persons chosen by ballot, shall constitute a prudential committee.

Section IV - The duties of the several officers shall be those usually appertaining to these officers, with annual detailed reports in writing, covering the preceding year, from the Clerk, the Superintendent of the Sunday School and the Treasurer, whose report shall be properly audited.

. . . . .

. . . . .

Section IX - The Superintendent of the Sunday School shall appoint all teachers, to be approved by the examining committees. The teachers will choose an Assistant Superintendent and such other officers as they may deem advisable. The selection of books for the Sunday School library shall be subject to the approval of the examining committee.

#### APPENDIX 4

##### MAZIE DASH'S DESCRIPTION OF MARCUS GARVEY

Garvey made an indelible impression on those who heard him. Mrs. Dash's description of him is worthy of record and is included here.

Mrs. Dash first learnt of Garvey from her grandmother in Trinidad, before her advent to Montreal. Her grandmother had been involved with the "Mechanics" and the "Masons" Lodges where most of the groups were also Garveyites. They attended their Lodge meetings which were followed by the Garvey meetings. They read whatever literature or news they could get about Garvey and felt that he was "some man", and "he must be a Moses." But they had not met him. Mrs. Dash first met him during one of his visits to Montreal in the late twenties and her record is given in its entirety in her own words. She manages to capture the spirit of the man.

It was like a dream coming true. My Grandmother had never met him . . . just the portrayal of his works . . . some people had seen him in the U. S. and had come down to Trinidad and talked about it.

This man was so dynamic . . . she was able to fix in her mind the type of man he was. A glamorous image or a Messiah, all that was right. I myself felt him, . . . felt his presence, . . . a small person, a small man, very relaxed, not at all greedy or spiteful. Everything was like love, and I can't even describe him, but what I am trying to say, here was a man that was just being attacked from all ends and from all

sides and things not going right, but here was a guy standing up there talking to you and telling you how to turn the other cheek. In other words you're not supposed to fight anger with anger, you're supposed to fight it with a sense of where you are coming from and what you should do. And the two occasions he spoke here, I was down there - no flashy clothes - no words . . . He spoke in small language, simple language, anyone could understand it. He spoke of his beatings from his people like almost Christ would say, . . . he forgave them you know, . . . even people who mistreated him and who sold him down the river. He wasn't vindictive about it. He just thought that it should make us stronger to sort of combat these things and we should expect it. We shouldn't expect that everybody would be generous or even wholeheartedly be in keeping with what he had to say and that it was an expected fact.

Of course he was a disappointed man in a lot of instances and underneath it all you could see here was a man that was suffering from ill health because, I noticed . . . now years later what I noticed then, it passed over me, but now after years I think he had some kind of a health problem because he would have to stop occasionally but I thought it was just for thinking, now I know that there was a bit of health problem there too.\*

He was a dynamic speaker. He was a dynamic man. Not to look at but to hear. If you heard him you knew that he was what . . . all that you read about. But if you saw him you wouldn't think that would be the man that you would read about because he was so unassuming. And so little ego, very (emphasis hers) little ego, but you could feel the worth. He didn't even get abashed at anyone asking disparaging questions. There is always somebody at the back who is going to say something.

And in those days when he spoke it was nothing to fill the hall, whether it went through one ear and out through the other, the halls were always filled when he was there . . . and even . . . in the Sunday afternoons many times when I would go it would be filled.

He would stress that it was important for us to be together and pointed out how easy it was to get maligned and misinformed. At that time he had troubles with the Black Star Line.

---

\*Garvey did suffer from asthma.

<sup>1</sup>Mazie Dash tape 1980.



## APPENDIX 5

### EXTRACTS FROM UNIA: CONSTITUTION AND BOOK OF LAWS

Sections of the Constitution and Book of Laws indicating the scope relevant to this structure are listed below:

#### CONSTITUTION

Article I "Jurisdiction"

Article II "Laws"

Article XII "A Civil Service" including examinations for such.

#### GENERAL LAWS

Section 58 - Music

Section 60 - The Legion Band

Section 62 - Juveniles

#### RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL AFRICAN LEGIONS

Article IX

Examinations for Office

... ..

The subjects shall be chosen from the following:

Geography of Africa  
Topography  
Mathematics  
Languages  
Writing  
Reading

Signalling, including Morse, Semaphore Telegraphy  
Any other subjects that are necessary for the  
fulfillment of the duties assigned to the position  
for which he applies.

Each officer shall be required to obtain 75 per cent  
marks for graduation in his ability test. Each officer  
shall also bring with his application 75 per cent marks  
for good conduct, i.e., 75 out of a 100 ability and  
75 out of a 100 good conduct.

Article XIV - The Universal African Legion's Band

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE UNIVERSAL AFRICAN BLACK

CROSS NURSES

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR JUVENILES

RULES FOR THE UNIVERSAL NEGRO IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION CHOIRS

Article XVI - Conduct

Article XXIII - Obedience and Courtesy

Section 1. Obedience shall be the first duty of a  
member of the U.A.L. (Universal African Legion).

No body of men without discipline and strict obedience  
of lawful orders can accomplish much.

## ARTICLE XXII

### Banking Funds

Section 1. Each Unit of a Division or Brigade shall bank all funds or monies through the local Treasurer of the Division with the Banking Ac-

count of the Division. The Quartermaster shall receive from the said Treasurer a duplicate of all monies paid in: one to be kept on his file and a copy to be delivered to the Colonel. Two receipt books shall be kept for this purpose.

That fifty per cent. of the proceeds of all entertainments given by Auxiliaries be turned over to the Division, after all legitimate expenses incurred for such entertainments have been paid. No Auxiliary shall give any entertainment without the permission of the President of the Division.

Sec. 2. All Auxiliaries shall be required to deliver to the Treasurer of the Division all monies derived from entertainments at the first meeting following each entertainment.

Sec. 3. All monies or checks to be drawn through, or from the said Treasurer of the local Division shall have three signatures; the Commander's, the Colonel's and the Quartermaster's. All drafts for monies or checks shall be attested in regular meeting of the Unit before being signed. The Treasurer of the Local shall acknowledge all such legal documents and pay by cash or check to the bearer.

## ARTICLE XXIII

### Obedience and Courtesy

Section 1. Obedience shall be the first duty of a member of the U. A. L. No body of men without discipline and strict obedience of lawful orders can accomplish much.

A lawful order is a command given by a superior Officer relative to the service and not to self.

A superior Officer shall not only be considered by his relationship to the members, regular squadron, platoon or regiment, but of any squadron, platoon, regiment or Staff, or otherwise of the Universal African Legion when in uniform.

Sec. 2. Be courteous. Let love and appreciation of one another be the rule.

For men in the ranks to be discourteous to an Officer is a misdemeanor.

Guard yourself against the enemy. Your greatest enemy and the Organization's greatest enemy is a knocker or a shirker. He can hurt and will hurt you quicker than a hostile enemy. Guard yourself against a knocker or a shirker. Do your duty with a smile on your face. Be courteous.

Sec. 3. Any member subjected to the discipline and control of the U. A. L. found guilty of "disobedience of orders" shall, for first offense, suffer a penalty of twenty-five cents fine in the case of a Private; fifty cents in the case of a non-commissioned Officer; and One Dollar in the case of a commissioned Officer. These fines may be more or less based upon the gravity of the case and the discretion of the presiding Officers of the court-martial. All such fines shall be the property of the Parent Body of the U. N. I. A.

Sec. 4. Any member subjected to discipline and control of the U. A. L. found guilty of "insolence and gross insubordination," shall be liable to a fine of Two Dollars in the case of a Private; Three Dollars in the case of a non-commissioned Officer, and Four Dollars in the case of a Commissioned Officer. The person so fined shall not be permitted to appear in uniform for a fortnight. All such fines shall be the property of the Parent Body of the U. N. I. A.

If a Legionary feels himself wronged by a Corporal, he shall apply to his Sergeant for redress; if wronged by a Sergeant, he shall apply to his Platoon Commander; if wronged by a Platoon Commander, he shall apply to his Company Officer; if wronged by his Company Officer, he shall apply to his Regimental Commander; and if wronged by his Regimental Commander, he shall apply to the Minister of Legions.

## ARTICLE XXIV

### Disciplinary Powers of President-General

Section 1. The President-General of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League shall have the power after due inquiry by the general membership to instruct the Commander of a local division, through the Minister of Legions, or, in his own discretion, to suspend, disband, or in any other manner discipline any Brigade of the Universal African Legion, or any auxiliary or unit created by the Universal Negro Improvement Association; if such auxiliary disobeys the Constitution or fails to live up to the rules and regulations issued from the Headquarters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League for their guidance.

Sec. 2. No auxiliary, unit, brigade, member or members thereof on trial before a local division shall have a voice in the voting as to the conclusion or outcome of such trial.

**The Preparatory Nursing Class  
(Age 14 years to 18 years)**

**TRAINING:**

Making uniforms for Juveniles; Negro History; Etiquette; Talk on latest topics of the day; Elementary principles of Economy; Negro Story Writing; Hygiene and Domestic Science.

This Class shall be taught in three Divisions or Classes; namely 14 years to 15 years; 15 years to 17 years; 17 years to finishing class. It shall be trained by the Black Cross Nurses.

**ARTICLE II**

**Laws for Children**

Section 1. All Juveniles of Divisions and Societies of the U. N. I. A. shall show high respect to all Officers of the Association and respect for teachers in charge of Class.

Sec. 2. No Juvenile shall be allowed to talk, laugh or carry on any mischief while classes are in session, but must sit to attention to instruction so as to get the benefit thereof.

Sec. 3. Any Juvenile found using profane or bad language or becoming unruly and disrespectful to his or her officer in charge shall be reported to Superintendent of Juveniles by teacher in charge and Superintendent, through Secretary, notify parents of child's conduct. If parents fail to correct child and he or she continues, same shall be expelled by Superintendent of Juveniles.

**ARTICLE III**

**Laws for Teachers**

Section 1. Teachers must meet once a week previous to meeting of general body of Juveniles to receive instructions, to familiarize themselves with the working of their class and department.

Sec. 2. All teachers shall be appointed by the President of the local Division.

Sec. 3. The Juvenile Department shall operate under the jurisdiction of the Division.

Sec. 4. The Superintendent of Juveniles shall see that all reports are kept properly so as to avoid disputes. The Superintendent shall also have an assistant to aid in the working of its department.

Sec. 5. The First Assistant shall be held responsible to the Superintendent for working of the department and meetings over which she presides. The Superintendent shall be held responsible to the President of the local Division.

**ARTICLE IV**

**Local Staff**

Section 1. The Superintendent shall be a Lady Vice-President. The First Assistant shall be a loyal member. The Secretary shall be one of the best learned Juveniles (male or female). The Teachers shall be loyal members of local Divisions. Cadet Class Teacher shall be a member of the Legions and shall know all military tactics. The Preparatory Nurse Class shall have two teachers and one shall be a trained Black Cross Nurse and a responsible lady.

The Lady President of the local Division shall be the "Honorary Superintendent of the Juveniles."

Sec. 2. There shall be a Treasurer of each local Division. All monies raised by the Juveniles shall be handed over to him (or her) through its Secretary to be turned over to the Treasurer of the Division through the Secretary of the Division to be deposited in the bank of said Division.

The Juvenile Treasurer shall not keep in his possession monies belonging to the Juveniles for a period exceeding twenty-four hours.

## Rules for the Universal Negro Improvement Association Choirs

### ARTICLE I

#### Names and Objects

Section 1. This Auxiliary shall be known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association Choir. It shall consist of men and women who are active members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League.

Sec. 2. Its object shall be to furnish vocal talent in the form of solos, duets, trios, quartettes, quintettes, choruses, etc., for the various meetings and services held by the organization as may be expedient.

### ARTICLE II

#### Officers and Their Duties

Section 1. The officers shall be a President, a Secretary-Librarian, a Treasurer and a Musical Instructor, who shall not be the President.

Sec. 2. Besides the foregoing officers mentioned in Section 1 of this Article, there shall be a leading soprano, a mezzo soprano, a leading alto, a first tenor and basso profundo, and a pianist and assistant instructor.

Sec. 3. The duties of the musical instructor shall be to instruct the choir in music.

Sec. 4. The duties of the President shall be to supervise at all meetings, rehearsals, services and other functions, and manage all affairs pertaining to the choir and its obligations to the organization.

Sec. 5. The duties of the Secretary-Librarian are to keep a record of the members of the choir, their attendance to rehearsals, services, etc., for the information of the President of the Division. He shall write all notices, attend to the general correspondence and keep a record

of the properties of the Choir. He shall receive all contributions and moneys of the Choir and turn same over to the Treasurer. He shall be solely responsible for the distribution and collection of all music designated for use on any occasion.

### ARTICLE III

#### Term of Office

Section 1. The term of office for all officers shall be as long as they give satisfactory services to the membership.

### ARTICLE IV

#### Decorum

Section 1. The strictest decorum must be observed by each member of the choir during all services and other functions. Any member misconducting himself shall be reprimanded by the Musical Instructor for the first offense, suspended for one month for the second offense and dismissed altogether from the choir for the third offense.

Sec. 2. Any member absenting himself or herself for three consecutive weeks or failing to attend six rehearsals consecutively, except through sickness, forfeits automatically his or her membership in the choir.

Sec. 3. Members failing to attend rehearsals may sing at the service, or concert rehearsals only by special permission from the Musical Instructor. If not granted they must not sit with the choir at that particular service or concert.

Sec. 4. Any insubordinate to an officer shall be charged with disorderly conduct, especially if that officer be at the time discharging his or her duty.

Sec. 5. Officers are expected to conduct themselves with propriety in the execution of their duties and shall not molest members of the choir unnecessarily.

Sec. 6. Any officer absenting himself or herself from three consecutive rehearsals except by permission of the President of the Division or on account of sickness, shall forfeit automatically his or her office.

#### ARTICLE V

##### Sickness

Section 1. Any member taken sick shall immediately see, if possible, that the Secretary-Librarian is notified either by letter, by announcement or otherwise.

Sec. 2. The Secretary-Librarian shall announce all sick members at meetings, rehearsals or services, and a committee shall be appointed to visit them.

Sec. 3. Members shall make it their duty to visit individually all sick comrades and to spare no pains to do anything to alleviate their sufferings, regardless of whatever aid they may receive from the Association.

#### ARTICLE VI

##### Uniform

Section 1. All members having surplices must wear them. The uniform appearance of the Choir must be preserved. Non-observance of this rule will be regarded as a misconduct.

#### ARTICLE VII

##### Music

Section 1. The Local Division shall furnish the music to be used by its Choir on all occasions (except solo work for salaried soloists), such music to remain the property of the organization.

#### ARTICLE VIII

Section 1. The members of the Choir shall do their utmost to promote and preserve the harmony with all the other auxiliaries comprising the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League, bearing in mind at all times that there is but One God, One Aim, One Destiny.

#### HYMN FOR OPENING OF MEETING

From Greenland's icy Mountains

From Greenland's icy mountains,  
From India's coral strand,  
Where Afric's sunny fountains  
Roll down their golden sand;  
From many an ancient river,  
From many a palmy plain,  
They call us to deliver  
Their land from error's chain.

#### II.

Shall we whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high,  
Shall we to men benighted  
The lamp of life deny?  
Salvation, O Salvation  
The joyful sounds proclaim,  
Thill earth's remotest nation  
Has learned Messiah's name.

#### III.

Waft, waft, ye winds His story,  
And you, ye waters, roll,  
Thill, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.  
Thill o'er our ransomed nature  
The Lamb for sinners slain,  
Redeemer, King, Creator,  
In bliss returns to reign.

## PRAYER FOR OPENING OF MEETING

Dedicated to the Universal Negro Improvement  
Association of the World

By JOHN E. BRUCE-GRIT

### A Prayer

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,  
saith the Lord of Hosts.—Zach. 4, v.

God of the right our battles fight,  
Be with us as of yore,  
Break down the barriers of might,  
We rev'rently implore.

### II.

Stand with us in our struggles for  
The triumph of the right,  
And spread confusion ever o'er  
The advocates of might.

And let them know that righteousness  
Is mightier than sin,  
That might is only selfishness  
And cannot, ought not, win.

### III.

Endow us, Lord, with faith and grace,  
And courage to endure  
The wrongs we suffer here-a-pace,  
And bless us evermore.

## PARTING HYMN FOR JUVENILES

### Now the Day is Over

Now the day is over,  
Night is drawing nigh,  
Shadows of the evening  
Steal across the sky.

Jesus, give the weary  
Calm and sweet repose;  
With Thy tend'rest blessing,  
May our eyelids close.

Grant to little children  
Visions bright of Thee;  
Guard the sailors, tossing  
On the deep blue sea.

When the morning wakens,  
Then may I arise  
Pure, and fresh and sinless,  
In Thy holy eyes.



APPENDIX 6

CORRESPONDENCE FROM QUÉBEC BOARD  
OF BLACK EDUCATORS (QBBE)

Extract from letter dated April 15, 1970 from the Quebec Board  
of Black Educators to the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal.

... ..

The Black community has always been concerned about the type of treatment meted out to its students in educational institutions of this province. With the significant increase in the number of Black students over the past few years and the accompanying intensification of such treatment, this concern became even more marked. One result has been the formation of the Board of Black Educators, the membership of which includes several parents, guardians, and highly qualified and experienced teachers.

This body wishes to bring to your attention a pressing problem which must be alleviated without delay. We refer to the rather consistent practice of placing Black students in various "special", "practical", and "general", classes of your primary and secondary schools. Many teachers, both Black and White, have testified to the validity of the complaints arising from such a practice.

Our files contain numerous examples to illustrate the points we are raising.

... ..

Follow-up correspondence admitted there was a problem and indicated official corrective action would be taken to deal with the problem. The reply from the Chairman of the Protestant School Board dated

April 24, 1970 stated:

... ..

I would advise that we agreed some weeks ago with the Montreal Teachers' Association that we would establish a parity committee to look into the whole issue of real or apparent discrimination in our schools. I believe that your letter should be considered by this Committee and I have therefore arranged with ... that this be done.

and that of April 24, 1970 from the Director of Education and Secretary-Treasurer:

... ..

I am equally ready to admit that there is indeed an acute problem regarding treatment of some Black students in our schools.

This matter has engaged our attention for some time now and, as a first preliminary towards official action, there was established at the end of last month a parity committee of teachers and administrators for the purpose of reviewing this particular situation.

... ..

## APPENDIX 7

### UNIA NATIONAL ANTHEM

#### THE UNIVERSAL ETHIOPIAN ANTHEM

(National Anthem of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities' League)

Poem By BURRELL and FORD

##### I.

Ethiopia, thou land of our fathers,  
Thou land where the gods loved to be,  
As storm cloud at hight sudden gathers  
Our armies come rushing to thee,  
We must in the fight be victorious  
When swords are thrust outward to glean;  
For us will the vict'ry be glorious  
When led by the red, black and green.

##### CHORUS

Advance, advance to victory,  
Let Africa be free;  
Advance to meet the foe  
With the might  
Of the red, the black and the green.

##### II.

Ethiopia, the tyrant's falling,  
Who smote thee upon thy knees  
And thy children are lustily calling  
From over the distant seas.  
Jehovah the Great One has heard us,  
Has noted our sighs and our tears,  
With His spirit of Love he has stirred us  
To be one through the coming years.  
CHORUS—Advance, advance, etc.

##### III.

O, Jehovah, thou God of the ages  
Grant unto our sons that lead  
The wisdom Thou gave Thy sages  
When Israel was sore in need,  
Thy voice thro' the dim past has spoken,  
Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hand,  
By Thee shall all fetters be broken  
And Heav'n bless our dear mother land.  
CHORUS—Advance, advance, etc.

APPENDIX 8

NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

Lift every voice and sing,  
Till Earth and Heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise,  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of faith  
That the dark past has taught us;  
Sing a song full of the hope  
That the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till Victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod;  
Felt in the days when Hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat  
Have not our weary feet,  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed.  
We have come over a way,  
That with tears have been watered;  
We have come treading our path through the  
blood of the slaughtered.  
Out from the gloomy past,  
Till now we stand at last,  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by thy might,  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places;  
Our God where we met Thee;  
Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world  
We forget Thee,  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God, True to our native Land.

APPENDIX 9

UNIA LITERARY CLUB  
ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 26, 1920



A. M. Alberga  
Treasurer

W. H. F. Duke  
Secretary

Ann de Shields  
Asst. Secretary

S. M. Simpson  
Chairman,  
Booking Committee

L. de Shields  
Librarian

Evelyn Gibson  
Chairman  
Advisory Board

Charles Este  
Vice-President

James Gibson  
President

Augustine Layne  
Member of the  
Executive

APPENDIX 10

THE UNIA BOYS' BAND: MONTREAL DIVISION NO. 5, 1926  
AND MODERNISTIC BAND



Joe M. Sealey  
(Poppa Joe)  
2nd from left

Harry Jones  
Far left



Mac Barnett  
3rd from left

Ted Thompson  
4th from left

# APPENDIX 11

## GOLDEN DARBY, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE

Golden Darby,  
(6 from left), one  
on the founders of  
the NCC with Mayor  
and former mayors  
of Bronzeville,  
and Southside  
Community Centre.



Board Members of the Negro  
Community Centre with

(Middle Row 2nd from left)  
Mr. Eddie Elliott  
(Middle Row 5th from left)  
Mr. Dudley Sykes  
(Front Row 2nd from left)  
Mrs. Irene Morris



APPENDIX 12

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED AT THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE

IN THE EARLY DAYS



SEWING AND CRAFT GROUP

Left to Right: (1) Bella Johnson (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) Ann Packwood (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (6) Mattie Wellons  
(7) Irene Morris



STUDY GROUP

Left to Right: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Florence Davidson (3) Beryl Dash  
(4) Jacqueline Rockhead (5) Iris Livingston



APPENDIX 13

DAISEY SWEENEY TEACHING MUSIC AT THE  
NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE

le 16 mai 1955

LE PROGRES DE L'OUEST

*Jazz Taught: To Negro Community Centre Kids*



Courtesy "The Gazette"

QUITE A LARGE CROWD WAS ON HAND AT THE NEGRO COMMUNITY CENTRE, Friday evening last, when lovers of old and modern jazz all had an opportunity to hear and see this kind of music played by children, some of which are still very young and nevertheless talented. Here we see Mrs. Daisy Peterson Sweeney, a sister of world-famous Oscar Peterson, with 10-year-old Rosam Lewis, who is being watched attentively by Janice Whims, aged 7 and Eileen Davison, also seven.