

Scope and Content

The material included in this record group constitutes the bulk of the office files of the Central Division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, an international self-help organization founded and headed by Marcus Garvey. The records, discovered in an abandoned building on Lenox Avenue in New York City by members of a local antinarcotics organization, The Community Thing, were divided into two bodies. The portion represented herein was acquired by the Schomburg Center in late spring of 1970 and contains approximately 10,500 items. The balance was retained by The Community Thing and is held in storage at the Metropolitan Applied Research Center in New York.

The record group is composed of the office files of the Central Division of the U.N.I.A. and includes the division's administrative records, correspondence, and other related materials that were retained for various reasons. It also contains certain documents that appear to have been inherited from the U.N.I.A.'s Parent Body, originally located in New York City but subsequently moved to Kingston, Jamaica, and later to London, England. In addition to the Parent Body's material, the group contains records relating to organizations that were affiliated with the U.N.I.A. (for example, Garvey Clubs, U.N.I.A. City Council (New York), and Pan-African Community League), or were actually suborganizations within the divisions (for instance, Black Cross Nurses, Juvenile Cadet Corps, and Central Choral Singers), as well as some records of the New York Division from which Captain King split to form the Central Division.

The entire record group is divided into the following nine series:

Series A: Early Records (Inherited from the Parent Body and Other Sources) consists of miscellaneous documents and reports, generally arranged in chronological order. Two groups of items in this series deserve special attention. First, is the Daily Receipts and Disbursement Reports, which were submitted to the Parent Body by a number of significant divisions in 1922. Second, is the set of membership loan books that documents the system whereby members loaned money to the U.N.I.A. and received annual accumulations of interest from periodic installments paid by the Association. The series also includes a set of 3"x5" file cards that lists nearly all of the active divisions of the U.N.I.A. in 1926 and 1927, and gives the number of each chapter or division, along with the names and addresses of the president and secretary reported by each one. Due to limited space on microfilm, the cards have not been included but instead a typed list of the divisions is represented. The original cards are stored with the rest of the record group at the Schomburg Center and are accessible upon request.

Series B: New York Division consists primarily of scattered administrative and financial reports of the division during the time Captain King was active with it and before his departure and establishment of the Central Division in 1936.

Series C: Central Division, Administrative Records, includes records such as financial reports, attendance and dues reports, membership lists, minutes of meetings, bills and receipts, and copies of two in-house organs, the *Centralist Bulletin* and the *Harlem Sentinel*, which were edited by King. The material is arranged alphabetically by titles of the reports.

Series D: Central Division, Correspondence, contains the body of the division's correspondence, including communications between Captain King and international U.N.I.A. officials, such as Marcus Garvey, as well as leaders of other divisions and chapters across the country. The correspondence illustrates the scope of the U.N.I.A.'s interests and activities during the late 1930s and 1940s and includes the personal feelings and observations of numerous

people, both famous and unknown, who filled the ranks of the organization during the two decades following Garvey's departure from this country.

Series E: Central Division, Subject and Organization Files, consists of similar material, but most of the correspondence is simply that received from other organizations, often with no apparent response. The subject files, which are interfiled with the organizations, again illustrate the interests of the U.N.I.A. Included are files on consumer affairs, immigration and naturalization, politics, and welfare cases.

Series F: Central Division, Programs and Activities Files, contains chronologically arranged material primarily relating to the local programs of the division: leaflets describing rallies and mass meetings, lecture series, printed programs of anniversary celebrations, and calls for support of specific projects. The series also includes some material relating to the various committees, such as the one that organized the Special Memorial Service observing the death of Marcus Garvey in 1940, or the American-London Delegation that visited with the founder of the U.N.I.A. in 1936.

Series G: Scrapbook (Clippings on the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934–35) appears to be a personal project of Captain King, consisting of thousands of mounted clippings, mostly from New York daily newspapers, that follow the day-by-day developments as Italian forces moved in, overcame local resistance, and temporarily colonized Ethiopia as a part of Italian East Africa.

Series H: U.N.I.A. Affiliate Organization Files includes various records relating to other organizations under the umbrella of the U.N.I.A. such as the U.N.I.A. City Council (New York), which appears to have been a loose federation of the New York City and Brooklyn Divisions; the Pan-African Community League #808; the Garvey Club Inc.; and the Brooklyn Divisions, which cooperated with the Central Division, the Newark Division, and the City Council on a number of projects.

Series I: Miscellaneous contains everything that did not fit into the preceding eight series, including boxes of greeting cards received by the Central Division, photographs, texts of songs, engraved printing plates, as well as duplicate copies of pamphlets, leaflets, and other material that appears elsewhere in the record group. *This last series was not microfilmed.*