



Madam C.J. Walker



Madam Walker and several friends in her automobile

Sarah Breedlove (December 23, 1867 – May 25, 1919), known as **Madam C. J. Walker**, was an American entrepreneur and philanthropist, regarded as the first female self-made millionaire in America.^{[1][2]} She made her fortune by developing and marketing a successful line of beauty and hair products for black women under the company she founded, **Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company**.

1 Early life

Sarah Breedlove was born on December 23, 1867 in **Delta, Louisiana**.^[3] She was one of six children; she had a sister, Louvenia, and four brothers: Alexander, James, Solomon, and Owen Jr. Her parents and elder siblings were slaves on Madison Parish plantation, owned by Robert W. Burney. She was the first child in her family born into freedom after the **Emancipation Proclamation** was signed. Her mother died, possibly from **cholera**, in 1872. Her father remarried and died shortly afterward. Sarah, orphaned at the age of seven, moved in with her older sister Louvenia and brother-in-law Willie Powell. At the age of 14, she married Moses McWilliams to escape Powell's mistreatment, and three years later her daughter, Lelia McWilliams, was born.^[4] When Sarah was 20, her husband died, and Lelia was just 2 years old. Shortly afterward she moved to St. Louis, where three of her brothers lived. They were all barbers at a local barber shop. She managed to get a job as a washer woman. She barely earned more than a dollar a day but was determined to make enough money so that her daughter would be able to receive a formal education.^[5]

2 Career

Sarah experienced scalp disorder and lost a lot of hair primarily because of harsh products like **lye** that were included in soaps used to cleanse the hair.^{[6][7]} Because most Americans lacked indoor plumbing, central heating and electricity, they bathed and washed their hair infrequently. Initially she learned about hair care from her brothers, who owned a barber shop in St. Louis.^[8]



Madame C.J. Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower in the permanent collection of The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.^[8]

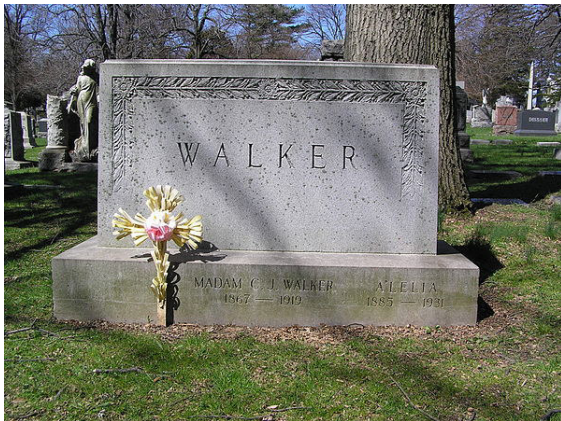
Around the time of the 1904 World's Fair, she became a commission agent selling products for **Annie Turnbo Malone**, an African American hair care entrepreneur. While working with Annie Malone, she adapted her knowledge of hair and hair products. She moved to Denver to work on her hair care products, and married Charles Joseph Walker, a newspaper advertising salesman. She emerged with the name **Madam C. J. Walker**, an independent hairdresser and retailer of cosmetic creams. After their marriage Charles Walker provided advice on advertising and promotion, while Madam C. J. Walker trained women to become "beauty culturists" and to learn the art of selling. In 1906, Madam Walker put her daughter A'Lelia (née McWilliams) in charge of the mail order operation while she and her husband traveled throughout the southern and eastern United States to expand the business.^{[6][7][5]}

Inspired by the model of the **National Association of Colored Women**, she began to organize her sales agents into local and state clubs. In 1917 she convened her first annual conference of the **Madam Walker Beauty Culturists** in **Philadelphia**. During the convention she gave prizes not only to the women who had sold the most products and brought in the most new sales agents, but also to those

who had contributed the most to charity in their communities. She stressed the importance of philanthropy and political engagement.^[6] This had a huge impact on expanding her business. She also started her own mail order business to keep up with the booming business, placing her daughter A'Le'lia Walker in charge of it.^{[7][9]}

While her daughter Lelia (later known as A'Le'lia Walker) ran the mail order business from **Denver**, Madam Walker and her husband traveled throughout the southern and eastern states. They settled in **Pittsburgh** in 1908 and opened Lelia College to train "hair culturists." In 1910 Walker moved to **Indianapolis** where she established her headquarters and built a factory, hair salon, and beauty school to train her sales agents. She later added a laboratory to help with research.^[7] Sarah, now known as Madam C. J. Walker, was becoming very successful. Her business market expanded beyond the United States to Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, Panama, and Costa Rica.^{[6] [5]}

She began to teach and train other black women in women's independence, budgeting, and grooming in order to help them build their own businesses. She also gave lectures on political, economic and social issues at conventions sponsored by powerful black institutions. In 1917 she started the Walker Hair Culturists Union of America convention, which ended up being the first national meeting of American women brought together to discuss business and commerce. She became involved in political matters, joining the executive committee of the Silent Protest Parade. It was a public demonstration of more than 8,000 African Americans to protest a riot that killed 39 African Americans.^[5]



The grave of Madam C. J. Walker

In 1917, she commissioned **Vertner Tandy**, the first licensed black architect in New York State and a founding member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, to design a house for her in Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, Villa Lewaro.^[10] The house cost \$250,000 to build.^[10] She moved into Villa Lewaro in May 1918 and hosted an opening event to honor Emmett Scott, then the Assistant Secretary for Negro Affairs of the United States War Department.^[6]

Just before her death she pledged \$5,000, the equivalent of about \$65,000 in 2012, to the NAACP's anti-lynching fund. Madam C. J. Walker died at Villa Lewaro on Sunday, May 25, 1919,^{[4][10]} from complications of **hypertension**. She was 51. In her will she directed two-thirds of future net profits of her estate to charity; she bequeathed nearly \$100,000 to orphanages, institutions, and individuals.^{[5][11]} At her death she was considered to be the wealthiest African-American woman in America. According to Walker's *New York Times* obituary, "she said herself two years ago [in 1917] that she was not yet a millionaire, but hoped to be some time."^[10] Her daughter, A'Le'lia Walker, became the president of the **Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company**.^[6]

3 References

- [1] "Madam C. J. Walker". *The Philanthropy Hall of Fame*. Philanthropy Roundtable. Retrieved 1 March 2015.
- [2] "Madam C.J. Walker History". *Madame C.J. Walker's*. Retrieved 1 March 2015.
- [3] Bundles, A'Le'lia. "Madam C.J. Walker". *Madame C.J. Walker*. Retrieved 25 February 2015.
- [4] "Madam C.J. Walker". Indiana Historical Society. Retrieved 28 February 2015.
- [5] Bundles, A'Le'lia (February 2012). "Madam C.J. Walker: Business Savvy to Philanthropy". *eJournal USA* (U.S. Department of State) **16** (6): 3-5. Retrieved 1 March 2015.
- [6] A'Le'lia Bundles, *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker*, New York: Scribner (2001).
- [7] Ingham, John N. "Walker, Madame C.J."; American National Biography Online Feb. 2000.
- [8] "Madam C.J. Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower product container". The Indianapolis Public Library. Retrieved 2 March 2015.
- [9] Evans, Harold. *They Made America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2004
- [10] "Wealthiest Negress Dead". *New York Times*. May 26, 1919. Retrieved 1 March 2015.

4 Further reading

Nonfiction Biographies (which are based on primary source documents)

- A'Le'lia Bundles *Madam Walker Theatre Center: An Indianapolis Treasure*. Arcadia Publishing, 2013. ISBN 1-4671-1087-6

- Bundles, A'Lelia *Madam C. J. Walker: Entrepreneur* Chelsea House/Facts on File, 2008. ISBN 978-1-60413-072-0
- Colman, Penny *Madam C.J. Walker: Building a Business Empire*. The Millbrook Press, 1994.

Fiction/Novels (which include fictionalized information)

- Due, Tananarive *The Black Rose: The Dramatic Story of Madam C.J. Walker, America's First Black Female Millionaire*. Ballantine Books, 2001. ISBN 0-345-44156-7

5 Video links

- Madam Walker Bio Channel Interview
- Madam Walker's Political Activism and Philanthropy
- C-Span Book TV Madam Walker
- Madam Walker Research at the National Archives on YouTube
- Madam Walker History on YouTube
- U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis discusses Madam Walker on YouTube
- Madam Walker's Irvington-on-Hudson, NY home Villa Lewaro on YouTube

6 External links

- Madam C. J. Walker Biography

7 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

7.1 Text

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Overcoming abject poverty to become America’s first female self-made millionaire is indeed noteworthy. To accomplish such a feat in the midst of Jim Crow is unusual. To have been the daughter of ex-slaves, orphaned at 7, educated only through the third grade, married at 14, a widowed single parent by twenty, and to nevertheless become, by the age of 46, the owner of a Corporation- which enabled thousand of other African-American women and men to raise themselves up out of poverty’s grip- is, to say the least, extra-ordinary!

Therefore, we at Madame C.J. Walker Enterprises, Inc. would be remiss in our duty to uphold and perpetuate this phenomenal legacy if we failed to acknowledge and commemorate the Centennial Anniversary of the corporate genesis of Madame C.J. Walker’s Manufacturing Company.

Tracing the Footsteps. . .

Madame Walker moved her ever-expanding “Special Correspondence Course” business, founded on her System of Beauty Culture, to Indianapolis, Indiana on February 19, 1910. She then purchased and paid for her home, adjoining which was a factory and laboratory, “ located at **640 N. West St.** She endeared herself to the citizens of Indianapolis when she contributed outright \$1,000.00 to establish the **Senate Avenue Y.M.C.A.**” It is reported that she was the “only woman to make such a donation”, Madame Walker herself, when referring to the Y.M.C.A. donation had this to say: *“In referring to that gift of \$1000.00, I don’t want you to lay so much stress on it and do not say that I am the only one. You might say that I was the first and caused others to awaken to the sense of their duty in helping deserving causes for the benefit of the race.”*

Not long after her move to Indianapolis, Madame Walker also became a member of **Bethel A.M.E. Church**, one of the oldest and most influential churches in the black community to which Madame Walker “contributed generously.”

In less than two years after moving to Indianapolis, on September 2, 1911, Madame C.J. Walker petitioned the Indiana Secretary of State to become incorporated and on **September 19th, 1911**-exactly one year and seven months since her arrival in Indianapolis- **the Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company of Indiana Incorporated was established, Madame Walker naming herself President and sole owner of all 1000 shares of stock.**

After Madame’s 1919 passing, her Hair Care Manufacturing Corporation was used as collateral to secure the finances needed to build what is today known as the Madame Walker Theatre Building. Completed in late 1927, the **Walker Building Beauty Salon** continues to operate there and to sell Madame C.J. Walker’s original hair care products.

Years later in 1982, the Trustees of Madame Walker’s Trust would deposit a large portion of the Madame C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company’s business records, historical documents, pictures and memorabilia with the **Indiana Historical Society** who took on the task of painstakingly organizing and preserving the Madame Walker legacy.

Seventy-four years after the Incorporation of the Madame Walker Company, in 1985, the 1000 shares of capital stock of Madame’s corporation were sold to a man named Raymond L. Randolph, making him the first person since Madame Walker herself to own all 1000 shares of stock in the Madame Walker Company. A graduate of **Attucks High School**, Mr. Randolph had never dreamed that he would become the owner and caretaker of this phenomenal legacy. In honor of Madame C.J. Walker, Mr. Randolph placed Madame Walker’s image back on the jars of all her original hair care products with the words “since 1911” placed underneath it.

Doing business today as Madame C.J. Walker Enterprises, Inc., the hair care company founded by Madame C.J. Walker continues to manufacture and sell her original quality products, ensuring that the legacy of this remarkable woman never dies!

Tracing the Footsteps of a Legacy of this magnitude brings new meaning to “having large shoes to fill” but nevertheless it is indeed a path worth walking!



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The Crispus Attucks Museum is where the history and legacy of Madame Walker is on permanent display, along with displays of other prominent African-American Indianapolis natives.

2



THE WALKER BUILDING BEAUTY SALON

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3



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5



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4



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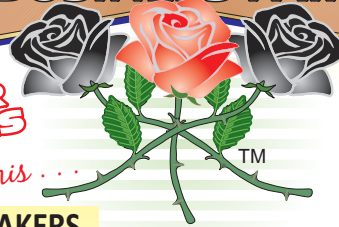
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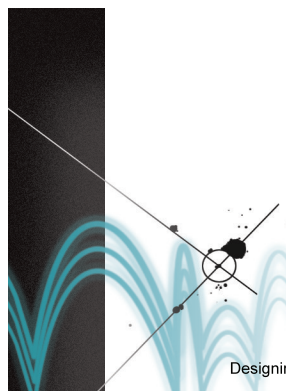
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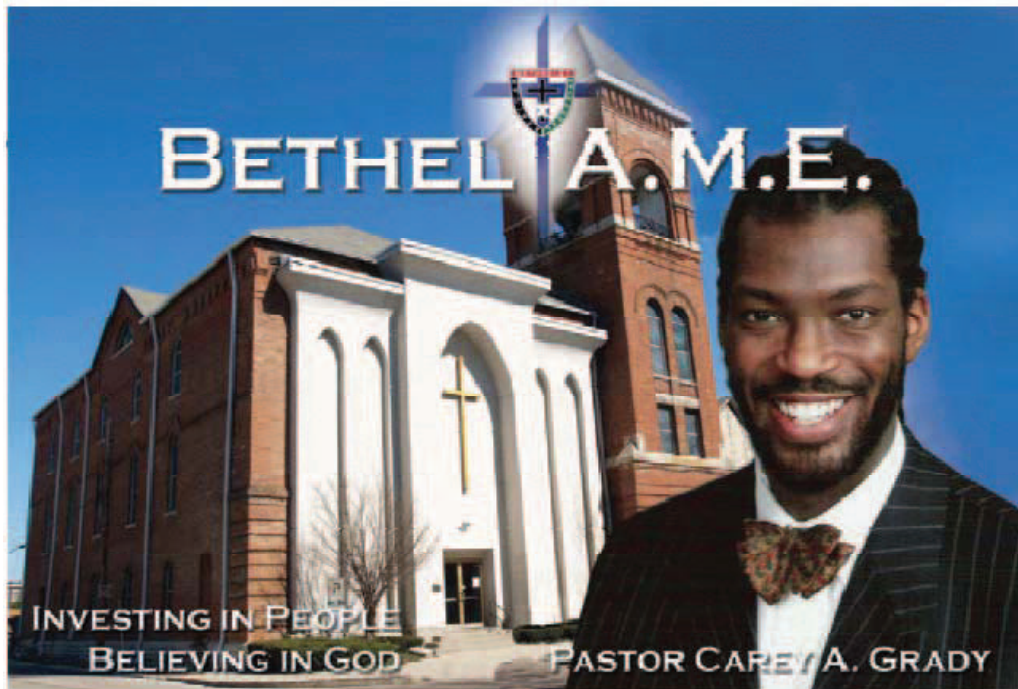
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Madame C. J. Walker's

BURFORD'S CORPORATION RECORD

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE MADAM C. J. WALKER MANUFACTURING COMPANY OF INDIANA.

SECTION I. Name: That the name of this organization and separate shall be the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company of Indiana.

SECTION II. Objects: That the objects of this organization and separate shall be to manufacture and sell a hair growth, beautifying and scalp disease-curing preparation and clean the hair.

SECTION III. Amount of Capital Stock: That the amount of capital stock shall be Two Thousand (\$2,000) Dollars, which is divided into One Thousand (1,000) shares of Two (\$2.00) Dollars per share.

SECTION IV. The Term of Existence: That this organization shall continue in being for a term of fifty (50) years.

SECTION V. Directors: That the Board of Directors shall consist of three (3) members, and the names of those who shall remain in office shall be: M. J. Walker, C. J. Walker, and Lelia Ransom.

SECTION VI. The Principal Place of Doing Business: And that the principal place of business of this said Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company of Indiana is and shall be at the city of Indianapolis, State of Indiana.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we the undersigned incorporators of the Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company of Indiana have on this day of September A.D. 1911 hereunto in duplicate subscribed our names and acknowledge the above certificate to be a true and correct copy of the articles of incorporation.



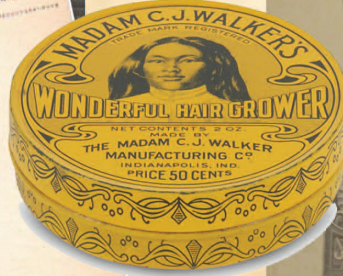
Charter Presented

proceed with the transaction of business. A copy of Company's petition for incorporation and charter dated September 2nd, 1911, granted by Secretary of State on the 19th day of September, 1911 and filed in _____ was presented, read, and, on motion duly made and carried, was accepted.

The Secretary was directed to record the same in the record book of this company immediately preceding the minutes of this meeting.

A set of proposed by-laws for the government of the company, and the relation management of its affairs was presented, and after being read, was on motion duly made and carried adopted section by section, and as a whole, and the Secretary was directed to record same in record book of this company immediately after the minutes of this meeting.

On motion duly made and carried, it was resolved that the seal of this company should be of circular design with the words Madame C. J. Walker Mfg. Co. of Ind. around the inner edge thereof, and the words "Incorporated" and etc. figures "1911" across

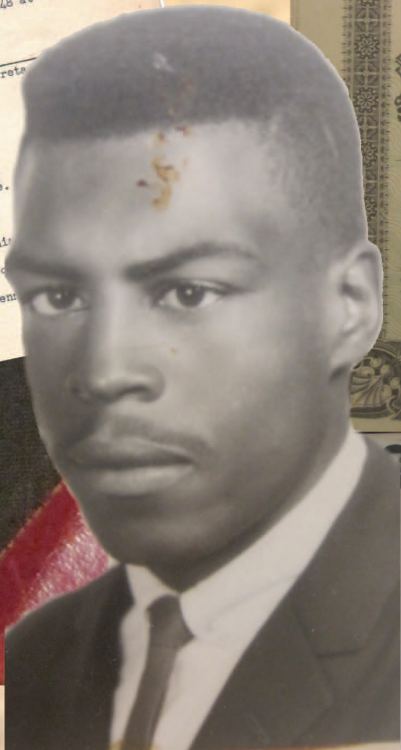


NOTICE OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

The regular meeting of the Board of Director's of The Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company, Inc. will be held in the office of the General Manager in the Walker Building, 617 Indiana Indianapolis, Indiana - Saturday, September 13th, 1948 at _____

Mrs. Violet D. Reynolds, Secretary

- Copy of above letter sent to:
- Mr. M. R. Perry - 213 West North St.
 - Mr. F. E. DeFrantz - 2628 Indianapolis Ave.
 - Mrs. Sus Knox - 435 Douglas St.
 - Miss A'Leia Ransom - 828 North California
 - Mr. Willard B. Ransom - 828 North California
 - Mr. Robert Lee Brokenburr - 46 North Pennsylvania



Raymond Randolph

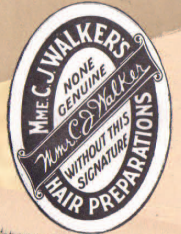


MADAME C. J. WALKER

1911 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 2011



FINANCIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT
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 The Treasurer of the Young Men's Christian Association hereby acknowledges with thanks the receipt from *Mme. C. J. Walker* of *Two Hundred Fifty* DOLLARS, for the purpose of assisting in the erection of a new building for the Colored Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association of Indianapolis. *H. C. Atkins* TREASURER



CERTIFICATE (# 13)
 FOR 666 2/3 SHARES
CAPITAL STOCK
 OF THE
MADAME C. J. WALKER MFG. CO.
 Indianapolis, Ind.
 ISSUED TO: Trustees of the Sarah Walker Estate
 DATED: November 3, 1985
 Duplicate Certificate

For value received, we hereby sell, transfer and assign 2 Raymond Knudsen and Jeffrey Paulsen the Shares of Stock within mentioned and hereby authorize to make the necessary transfer on the Books of the Corporation.
 Witness in hand and seal this 20th day of December 1985
 Witnessed by: *William B. Ransom* WILLARD B. RANSOM - SEC. - TREAS.
S. Henry Bundles S. HENRY BUNDLES C.E.O. *William T. Ray* WILLIAM T. RAY, DIRECTOR

CAPITAL STOCK \$10,000
 INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF INDIANA
 NUMBER 666 2/3 SHARES
Madame C. J. Walker Mfg. Co.
 Indianapolis, Ind.
 This Certifies that The Trustee of the Sarah Walker Estate are Six Hundred and Sixty-six and 2/3 (666 2/3) Shares of the Capital Stock of the Madame C. J. Walker Mfg. Co. as the owner of transferable only on the Books of the Corporation in person or by Attorney in accordance of this Certificate.
 In Witness Whereof, the duly authorized officers of the Corporation have hereunto subscribed their names and caused the same to be signed this 3rd day of December 1985.
S. Henry Bundles S. HENRY BUNDLES C.E.O.



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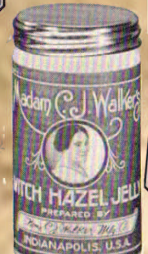
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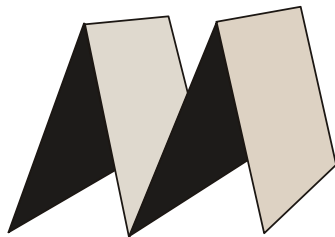
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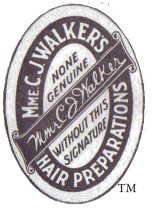
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TRACING THE FOOTSTEPS OF A LEGACY

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE INCORPORATORS
AND SUBSCRIBERS TO THE CAPITAL STOCK

OF

The Madame C. J. Walker Manufacturing Co.
(Name of Company)

The minutes of the proceedings of the first meeting of incorporators and subscribers to the capital stock of *The Madame C. J. Walker Manufacturing Co.*
(Name of Company)

was held at *640 - N. West Street*
(Place of Meeting)

Indianapolis, Indiana, on the *1st* day of *Jan.*
(City) (State)

19*12*, pursuant to *notice duly served on* * the incorporators of said Company as well as each subscriber to the capital stock

The meeting was called to order by *Madame C. J. Walker*, who stated its object.

Upon motion duly made and carried *Madame C. J. Walker* was elected Chairman, and *Lelia Robinson* Secretary of this first meeting of stock holders.

The Chairman appointed _____

_____ a committee to examine proxies, and report upon the number of shares represented in person and by proxy. The committee reported

_____ shares represented, constituting a majority of whole number subscribed for, to-wit:

_____ shares, and the Chairman thereupon declared the meeting competent to proceed with the transaction of business. A copy of Company's petition for incorporation and

charter dated *September 2nd*, 19*11*, granted by *Secretary of State*

on the *19th* day of *September*, 19*11* and filed in _____ was presented, read, and, on motion duly made and carried, was accepted.

The Secretary was directed to record the same in the record book of this company immediately preceding the minutes of this meeting.

A set of proposed by-laws for the government of the company, and the regulation and management of its affairs was presented, and after being read, was on motion duly made and carried, adopted section by section, and as a whole, and the Secretary was directed to record same in the record book of this company immediately after the minutes of this meeting.

On motion duly made and carried, it was resolved that the seal of this company should be a circular design with the words *The Madame C. J. Walker Mfg. Co. of Indiana* around the inner edge thereof, and the words "incorporated" and the figures "19*12*" across the

*Insert "notice duly served on" or "a written call and waiver of notice signed by" according to the fact in particular the case.