



WORKING PAPER 202409: 20 September 2024

Afro-Caribbean Human Capital in America: Immigrant Success in Early Twentieth Century Philadelphia

Johann Smith

Student Fellow, Hoover History Lab

I want you to remember these words and apply the philosophy of them in your daily life. Most of us go through life blaming our stars, attributing our disappointments, our setbacks to some one or to some invisible cause—superstition. Brutus blamed the stars, he thought his star was one of ill omen; so he blamed everything on his ill-luck, to the fate in his star. But we have Shakespeare’s advice—“it is not in our stars, but in ourselves”

— Marcus Garvey

Critics of the American dream fixate on the nation’s checkered past to explain the disparate outcomes of today. A prejudicial system, critics contend, mires helpless Americans in poverty and hopelessness, the victims of socioeconomic structures beyond their control. The American dream, however, is not dead. Nor has it been out of reach for disadvantaged groups in the past. Black Americans, Caribbean, Chinese, Japanese, and Jewish communities have demonstrated that self-reliance, not government-dependence, provides the pathway to climbing the socioeconomic ladder. What can we learn from their exemplary lives and community-resilience? How can their self-sufficiency provide a model for empowering Americans in the 21st century?

The support given today must lead to independence tomorrow. The U.S. government can and should prioritize creating sustainable pathways to self-sufficiency rather than perpetuating dependency through handouts or unearned loans. The past illuminates the path forward.

This study examines an overlooked chapter in the narrative of immigration to the United States: the story of Afro-Caribbean immigrants (from the British West Indies and U.S. possessions in the Caribbean) in Philadelphia in the early twentieth century.ⁱ Arriving before the significant legislative changes brought by the Immigration and National Act of 1965, Afro-Caribbean immigrants excelled in comparison to their contemporary Philadelphians. This study draws on historical census data and archival records to show how a combination of selectivity among immigrants and specific cultural practices facilitated their socioeconomic rise during a period marked by considerable racial prejudice and systemic barriers. In turn, the historical success of Afro-Caribbean immigrants—characterized by their education, ambition, work ethic, intact families, faith, and community solidarity—offers actionable lessons for public policy.

By understanding how this group achieved socioeconomic success, policymakers can develop targeted policies to replicate positive outcomes. To apply these lessons to today, we must focus on educational opportunities, updating the current immigration system, government-sponsored vocational training and skill development programs, supporting small family businesses, and incentivizing marriage and intact families. These policies must also be marketed effectively to reach the masses. By implementing these policies, we can attempt to mirror the conditions that allowed Afro-Caribbeans to thrive in early twentieth-century Philadelphia for both immigrant families and native-born Americans.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The West Indies, located in the North Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, share a long history with the United States, dating back to America's colonial era as part of the British Empire.ⁱⁱ By the eighteenth century, Philadelphia had become a notable point of entry by West Indian émigrés.ⁱⁱⁱ Following emancipation in 1833, free black West Indians trickled into Philadelphia and notably held occupations such as composers, caterers, and barbers. Post-Civil War, the foreign-born black population (almost entirely Caribbean in origin) in the U.S. experienced a fivefold increase, from 4,067 to 20,336, between 1850 and 1900.^{iv} These late-nineteenth-century Afro-Caribbean immigrants, skilled in professions such as craftsmanship, teaching, law, and medicine, established a reputation for intelligence and competence. As Hubert Harrison (known as Harlem's "Black Socrates") put it: "It was taken for granted that every West Indian immigrant was a paragon of intelligence and a man of birth and breeding."^v

The migration rate accelerated dramatically as "the number of black people, especially Caribbeans, who migrated to the United States increased dramatically, from a trickle of 411 in 1899 to a flood of 12,243 per year by 1924, the high point of early black migration."^{vi} As word spread of opportunities to succeed beyond their respective islands, the drive to leave their homes greatly increased among the people of the West Indies.

The harsh conditions in the Caribbean, coupled with the expansion of the U.S. economy at the turn of the twentieth century, triggered this mass exodus from the islands. The average agricultural worker in the impoverished West Indies lived "hand to mouth without reserves for times of scarcity and illness," struggling even to afford to buy milk.^{vii} The British Caribbean lost its status as the major sugar supplier of the world to Cuba and Brazil, severely cutting male employment in the sugar industry.^{viii} This

period also saw Afro-Jamaican peasants and farmers grappling with land consolidation, disparate land prices, deteriorating labor conditions, urban migration, and regressive taxation. Jamaica's would-be middle class was further affected when the government decided in 1911 to eliminate the competitive Civil Service Exam at which black youths had been excelling, practically putting an end to "the dark-skinned bright children of the peasantry...entering the service."^{xix} A nepotistic appointment system replaced the exam, which favored the children of whites and lighter-skinned blacks, making social mobility markedly more difficult for the peasant and working-class population.

Amid widespread poverty, Afro-Caribbeans still strove to obtain an education. The literacy rate in Jamaica soared from 31.3 percent in 1861 to 62.3 percent in 1911, and grade school enrollment for children between the ages of five and fourteen notably increased.^x The increase in literacy and education, alongside a lack of opportunity, however, made remaining in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean a bleak prospect.

In Barbados, constrained by its small size, scarce land, low wages, and declining sugar industry, about 150,000 people emigrated between 1861 and 1921, nearly equal to its entire population from 1861.^{xi} Natural disasters, disease, and outright starvation further pushed people to flee the West Indies. Barbados, St. Kitts & Nevis, Montserrat, and Antigua suffered from economic hardships so severe that malnutrition became widespread, infant mortality increased, and starvation was common. Adding to the despair, the West Indies were ravaged by droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and cyclones with unusual frequency and intensity between 1880 and 1920. Outbreaks of diseases, such as typhoid and dysentery, followed in the wake of many of these disasters. These dire circumstances compelled West Indians, from the poor to the aspiring middle class, to seek greener pastures, including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

At the turn of the century, Philadelphia's population grew in size from half a million to 1.5 million between 1890-1910, driven by immigrants from Europe and African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South. Philadelphia was a massive improvement from the Jim Crow South. Still, blacks would inhabit a segregated city, in which racism limited employment opportunities. Thanks to large-scale industrialization and succeeding waves of immigration, Philadelphia became the third most populous city in the nation in the first half of the twentieth century.^{xii} The Mid-Atlantic's major industries, including textiles, locomotive manufacturing, shipbuilding, iron and steel production, and sugar refining, were all centered in the City of Brotherly Love. Philadelphia was fittingly dubbed "The Workshop of the World," and it was in this highly competitive environment that Afro-Caribbean immigrants would find themselves.

EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

From their arrival in the early 1900s, black newspapers and community leaders recognized Afro-Caribbeans in Philadelphia as a distinguished and notably educated group. Many of their black contemporaries believed that their education was a key factor in their socioeconomic success. In Philadelphia, men and women "from the West Indies were [initially] received with open arms ... and most of them became leaders in church, educational, and industrial fields."^{xiii} Such a reputation led the black-owned newspaper, *The Philadelphia Tribune*, to declare, "Right here in Philadelphia, we can point with

pride to the West Indians whom we have proudly followed because of their profound knowledge and advanced methods of teaching in the field in which they work.”^{xiv} Their education not only signaled competency and reliability but also made them highly valued. It is for this very reason, according to the Pennsylvania newspaper *The York Daily*, that “American business houses, as a rule, are glad to employ British West Indian[s]” ... They are well educated, [and] trained on responsibility from [their] earliest youth.”^{xv} They may not have had the knowledge of the typical American clerk, but they had skills the American lacked, which, in their employer’s eyes, more than compensated.^{xvi}

Take literacy as an example. Using literacy rates as a proxy for educational attainment (as the latter was not recorded in the twentieth century’s first three censuses) reveals that black West Indians had literacy rates of 83%, 100%, and 85% in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 United States Census, respectively.^{xvii} In addition to this, the literacy rate in later years for black West Indians was higher than that of native-born black Pennsylvanians and on par with native-born white Pennsylvanians. By the 1930 Census, Afro-Caribbeans living in Philadelphia had a literacy rate of approximately 100%, while native-born black Americans living in Philadelphia were at approximately 96%; native white Pennsylvanians approximately 99.62%; native black Pennsylvanians were at approximately 98%; and approximately 96% of native-born black southerners living in Philadelphia were literate.^{xviii} The same trend was observed in New York by James Weldon Johnson when, in 1930, he said that there was practically “no illiteracy among [immigrants from the British West Indies],” with many having “a sound English common school education.”^{xix}

The literacy rates of these West Indians in Philadelphia, however, stood in stark contrast to the compatriots they left behind on the various islands. According to the Education Commission of 1932 (barring Jamaica), over 40% of the West Indian population was still illiterate.^{xx} In Jamaica, as late as the mid-twentieth century (according to the 1946 West Indian census), the illiteracy rate for those over the age of ten was 23.9%.^{xxi} The Virgin Islands had an illiteracy rate of 16.1% in 1936, according to the 1942 Britannica Book of the Year.^{xxii} In this regard, the group that left for the United States certainly did not reflect the average West Indian.

Afro-Caribbeans carried with them to Philadelphia the strong belief in the importance of education. Economic opportunities were poor in the West Indies. It was the norm to keep children in school so that when they graduated, they would be in the best possible position in the job market.^{xxiii} Furthermore, a highly valued education was the best, if not the only, way to “[atone] for the blackness of one’s skin” in an environment plagued by colorism.^{xxiv} Historical data confirms this observation. In the 1940 and 1950 censuses, enumerators were instructed to record the approximate equivalent grade in the American school system if respondents had completed their formal education in a foreign country.^{xxv} In the Middle Atlantic region (New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania), black West Indians had a higher level of education than many European immigrants.^{xxvi} For instance, in the 1940 Census, black West Indians stood out with the highest percentage of individuals who had completed five or more years of college compared to British Isle immigrants from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.^{xxvii} In 1950, Afro-Caribbeans had completed four years of college at a higher rate than the Scottish, Irish, Polish, and Greeks.^{xxviii}

The black West Indians who migrated to Philadelphia, aware that their college degrees might not be fully recognized, leveraged education opportunities in the United States. In the early 1900s, West Indian immigrants and their children matriculated to American schools in large numbers. Their children not only absorbed American culture in their educational institutions but also built influential networks by “making contacts that [would] serve to impress them with the grandeur and benevolence of America and

Americans.^{xxxix} West Indians developed a reputation for high standards and overly strict discipline of their children, which gave their offspring little choice but to succeed.^{xxx} Universities such as Howard, Meharry Medical College, Columbia University, Lincoln, Hampton, Tuskegee, Wilberforce, and Northwest University in Chicago were “outstanding alma maters for hundreds of West Indian professionals ... enjoying lucrative practices throughout the country.”^{xxxi} West Indians understood the social benefits of higher education.

Their occupations before and upon arrival demonstrate that Afro-Caribbeans, while strong proponents of educational empowerment, did not typically occupy the highest-paying jobs. In the early twentieth century, the West Indies had a large growing number of clerks and various artisans such as mechanics, painters, carpenters, and cobblers, but they were outnumbered by the “great army of unskilled [laborers]” as roughly “half of the occupied population [was] engaged in agriculture and just under two-fifths in commerce, transport, and industry.”^{xxxii} Despite a decrease in agricultural workers in Jamaica, there was an increase in the number of rural workers who entered into the roles of domestic service, petty trading, and often prolonged unemployment.^{xxxiii} It was primarily this section of the population— where male agricultural laborers earned from “1 shilling per day in the Windward and Leeward Islands to 18 shilling[s] per week in Jamaica”^{xxxiv} and wages for clerks, shop assistants, druggists, artisans, and other classes of workers were “inadequate and [could not] be justified” – who migrated to the United States.^{xxxv} Following the decline of the sugar industry, the poverty-stricken islands began to disgorge upon the mainland of the United States “their working population, laborers, mechanics, and peasants.”^{xxxvi} This migration reflects a broader economic desperation rather than a mere pursuit of better opportunities by the highly educated.

While emigrants were not composed of merely the wealthiest or most academically accomplished, contemporary observers saw this phenomenon as a plus for the individual leaving but a negative for the island population as a whole. Those leaving St. Kitts and Antigua were described as “bright, enterprising young men,” indicating that a type of brain drain was taking place.^{xxxvii} While education is a vital aspect of human capital, it is not the case that human capital is solely acquired within formal educational institutions. This became evident among Afro-Caribbeans once they arrived in Philadelphia.

Although they came to the United States as an overwhelmingly literate group, their educational backgrounds did not catapult them into high-paying jobs as soon as they landed on the Mid-Atlantic shores. These newcomers incurred short-term deficits, and only with time and hard work did they learn the ropes and reap the benefits of their abilities. They usually started off in the same working- and lower middle-class jobs they had had in the West Indies. In fact, many West Indians came to the Atlantic seaboard without the security of a job offer. Most of the time, Afro-Caribbeans came to the United States poor, leaving the West Indies with “five or six dollars in [their] pocket[s] and not the slightest notion of what [they were] going to do, or where [they were] going to look for a job.”^{xxxviii}

Afro-Caribbean immigrants, whether well-educated or not, often adapted to their new environment by taking on various jobs, such as peddlers, hucksters, and salesmen who went door-to-door to sell goods.^{xxxix} Work was, if not at the top, high on the agenda for Afro-Caribbeans despite the label attached to menial jobs. Afro-Caribbeans realized that in order to make ends meet, they could not be picky. One Afro-Caribbean stated he had “worked in a brickyard, washed dishes, carried hod, was the first Negro huckster in Camden, N.J, worked as a pick-and-shovel man and a dockhand at Norfolk, Va., a salesman in Pennsylvania, a fraternal organizer, porter and messenger.”^{xl} Such jobs were initially the norm

for the West Indian immigrant. These roles illustrate not only their willingness to work in unfamiliar fields but also the economic realities of the time. The absence of minimum wage laws until the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and its substantial influence after 1950 provided Afro-Caribbeans a unique window of opportunity for diverse employment, as employers were not restricted by wage regulations.^{xii}

The backdrop for labor flexibility and opportunity, despite its challenges, played a critical role in the economic integration of Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Hubert Harrison describes their humble beginnings: "At first, they furnished the elevator operations, janitors, hall-boys and porters, maids and washerwomen."^{xiii} According to the United States Census, between 1900 and 1950, the most common occupations for West Indians living in Philadelphia were laborers, longshoremen/stevedores, cooks, servants, lead and zinc mine operatives, roofers and slaters, iron molders, founders and casters, waiters/waitresses and porters.^{xiiii} Some took these jobs while simultaneously obtaining an education in Philadelphia, before achieving any type of success.

Frederick McDonald Massiah, born in Barbados, West Indies offers one example of someone who advanced himself in this manner. Massiah immigrated to Philadelphia in 1909, worked as a laborer during the day, and studied architecture at night. The young Barbadian attended the Pennsylvania School of Fine Arts and went on to earn a degree in civil engineering from Drexel Institute (now Drexel University). At a time when it was almost unheard of for minorities to obtain financing, insurance, and acceptance into trade unions, he established a business and became one of the first successful black contracting engineers in the United States. As a result of his outstanding work, he went on to win the William E. Harmon Foundation Medal. His successful 45-year career included various private and government contracts.^{xlv} Massiah is an example of those black West Indians who, once settled into their new environment, started off as "tradesmen and skilled workers [but then] thrust themselves forward into better positions and [broke] the trail for the Negro-Americans to follow."^{xlv}

A notable number of West Indians plied their trade as longshoremen and stevedores at America's second busiest port in the 1900s. Dock work, a grueling and dangerous job, required a man fit and desperate enough to take on the brutal manual labor necessary to load and unload heavy items around the dock and on and off ships. That Afro-Caribbeans flocked to the docks in droves demonstrates their status upon arriving in Philadelphia. Initially, an education offered no advantage in this unskilled, irregular, and low-paying line of work.

Unlike other parts of the country, Philadelphia's docks were integrated, partly due to the influence of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). In November 1918, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) reported that membership of Local 8, a Philadelphia branch of the IWW, was "increasing daily, owing to the influx of a large number of West Indian negroes."^{xlvi} The IWW's appeal to Afro-Caribbeans stemmed from their past experiences with exploitative labor conditions in the Caribbean, which led to widespread unrest and strikes. The British Sugar Commission of 1930, for example, examined the "unsatisfactory hygienic conditions of many factories" in Jamaica on behalf of the consumer and the equally unsatisfactory conditions "from the point of view of the health and safety of the workers employed in them."^{xlvii} It was said that "the West Indies hardly [knew] the meaning of the term 'industrial legislation'" and that "workmen's compensation, health insurance, restriction of child labour, factory inspection, old age pensions, etc., are matters which in most places [found] no place [in] the statute book."^{xlviii} The IWW would have been a godsend to Afro-Caribbeans, even with its entrenched racism, as they compared the abysmal working environment they knew back home to what was presented to them in Philadelphia.

West Indian women, generally better educated than their African-American peers, arrived in the United States with aspirations for better economic opportunities. However, these expectations were shattered by the reality of the job market. Despite their educational backgrounds and aversion to domestic work, most West Indian women who immigrated to Philadelphia took on servant roles and domestic responsibilities, including being cooks, chambermaids, housekeepers, and caregivers.^{xlix} West Indian women disdained domestic roles as even working-class families in the Caribbean employed uneducated servants. This reality clashed with their aspirations in opportunity-rich America.

When other employment options were scarce, many Afro-Caribbean women became entrepreneurs in food vending, one of the long-standing trades of black Americans in Philadelphia. On the streets of Philadelphia from colonial times to the 1940s, one would hear, “Pepper pot! All hot! Makee back strong! Makee live long! Come buy my pepper pot (sic)!” from the Pepper Pot Women of the Caribbean.^l These occupations offered an accessible entry point into the American job market and essential incomes for new immigrant people. Despite having “little of the splendid opportunities [African American women] have had, say in the North,” reported the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Afro-Caribbean women maximized whatever chances presented themselves.^{li} However, these were “makeshift” positions in the mind of the Afro-Caribbean woman who “felt that as a woman certain positions ought to be open to her.”^{lii} Viewing these makeshift positions as temporary, these determined women leveraged their meager economic benefits to seek employment better aligned with their education and ambitions.

Cultural and social norms can hinder the progression of newcomers in a foreign country. And so, averse to domestic work, many Afro-Caribbean women left Philadelphia altogether if they could find no alternative. Despite the slow start, for those who stayed, their socioeconomic rise was impressive as they adjusted to Philadelphia’s fast-paced environment and made progress in the business and professional world.^{liii} Afro-Caribbeans had a unique amalgamation of pre-literacy, willingness to engage in low-level employment, and a strong commitment to furthering their education at universities in the United States. This synergy resulted in the accumulation of a great amount of human capital.

By 1940, economic data for black British West Indians in Philadelphia showed a notably high percentage, 39.37%, earning \$1560 annually. This income level was significantly higher than the average annual earnings of African-American and Irish workers at the time. When the data set was geographically expanded to include the Middle Atlantic region, a similar trend appeared.^{liiv} This could lead to the preliminary conclusion that, within this data set, West Indians outearned the African American and Irish groups at that particular income threshold, and possibly overall. However, this observation relies on an extremely limited West Indian sample size, which raises questions about the data’s representativeness. These findings suggest potential disparities, but they must be understood in the context of the broader limitations of the available data and the need for a more comprehensive analysis. Nevertheless, the data suggests that black West Indians were achieving socioeconomic growth over the years in Philadelphia.

Through their various occupations, West Indians garnered a reputation for being dependable, hard-working, and predisposed to success. Despite immersing themselves in the midst of the fierce competition of Philadelphia’s industrial boom with limited finances and no concrete plan, they became a real force in the city. As an author in *The York Daily* attested: “I have closely followed the careers of hundreds of West Indians who have come over here, and I have known very few of them to fail and go back home.”^{liv}

West Indians followed a clear trajectory. They would take any available jobs (typically in the working class) despite what their education signaled (those not highly educated and who left working-class jobs in the West Indies did not wrestle with this psychological dilemma). In the U.S., they were prepared to experience downward mobility to start anew. They then saved diligently and invested in the future of their children rather than their own immediate benefits.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

West Indians, educated under the Church of England in the Caribbean, became key leaders in Philadelphia's religious communities, notably the A.M.E. Church and Baptist denominations. Many of the West Indies' oldest colleges were originally established with a theological or religious emphasis. A religious education offered a platform for leadership, service, and social mobility and was often the highest form of education attainable for Afro-Caribbean individuals in the late 1800s and early 1900s living in their respective islands. The opportunity for socioeconomic growth presented by the church in the Caribbean translated into significant roles for West Indians in Philadelphia's religious community. In Philadelphia, "some of the ablest churchmen and missionaries in the A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) Church and Baptist denomination" were West Indian.^{lvi}

Churches were central to Philadelphia's black community in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, serving as hubs of social, educational, and leadership development. Church was more than a place of worship, as W.E.B. DuBois put it: "The Negro churches were the birthplaces of Negro schools and of all agencies which seek to promote the intelligence of the masses; and even to-day [sic] no agency serves to disseminate news so quickly and effectively among Negroes as the church."^{lvii} This was especially true for Afro-Caribbeans in Philadelphia. In fact, St. Simon Episcopal Church served as a way station for newly arrived Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Philadelphia, assisting them in integrating into the city's social fabric.^{lviii} Afro-Caribbeans ranged from Baptists to Episcopalians, and from Methodists to Catholics and Presbyterians. The leaders of these powerful, influential institutions were much more than their position revealed on paper. In reality, the black preacher was more an executive officer than a spiritual guide.^{lix}

Afro-Caribbeans were especially prominent in the Episcopal Church from Boston down to Palatka, Florida, particularly between 1880 and 1920. West Indian ministers held "regal sway" as Episcopalian ministers.^{lx} In Philadelphia, Episcopal churches were led by figures like George Alexander McGuire, who, starting in 1901, became the rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church and advocated for the advancement of blacks in the city. After his education at Mico College in Antigua and medical studies in the U.S., McGuire's leadership in Philadelphia was marked by his efforts to elevate the black community's socioeconomic status. Similarly, the Jamaican-born Henry L. Phillips, as rector of the Church of the Crucifixion, launched the nation's first penny savings bank and Philadelphia's first gym for black Americans. He expanded the Home for the Homeless (the only shelter in Philadelphia open to needy women and children of all races) and became the first president of the Association for the Protection of Colored Women (APCW) – an organization that sought to protect black women who had recently migrated from the south from being trafficked into prostitution.^{lxi} Phillips also opened a private school in Philadelphia's predominantly black 7th Ward. Reverend Richard Bright, another notable figure, became

the first black Episcopal archdeacon in the Savannah Episcopal diocese in Georgia and established the first private kindergarten and primary school for blacks in Georgia. He then moved to Philadelphia, became the rector of St. Monica's Episcopal Church, and stressed the importance of education, furthering the community's development. These religious leaders, among others, played pivotal roles in enhancing the social and economic conditions of West Indians and other black Americans in Philadelphia.

CULTURE & FAMILY

A strong nuclear family was another integral component of Afro-Caribbean socioeconomic success in Philadelphia. It was said that “next to the church, the home is the West Indian’s most precious sanctuary.”^{lxii} Though they were at odds with one another at times, Afro-Caribbeans and native black Americans nevertheless formed stable family units through intermarriage. Black American women “adore[d] West Indians and [married] them because they [were] brave and ambitious and make excellent family men,” while West Indian men adored black American women “because of their charm and culture, and their excellence in home economics.”^{lxiii}

As a host of economic data bears out, groups that use the institution of marriage to maintain strong two-parent family structures achieve far more prosperous economic outcomes than groups that do not. In Philadelphia, in the census years 1900, 1920, and 1940, the marital status of black British West Indians reflected their belief in the institution of marriage. According to each of those censuses, black British West Indians consistently exhibited high marriage rates and intact family structures, surpassing both native-born blacks and white Americans in Philadelphia. While the Irish had slightly higher rates in 1900, West Indians led in marriage rates, including over the Irish, by 1920 and 1940 (see Table 1 for detailed data).^{lxiv} Of interest here as well, according to census data, native-born black Americans in Philadelphia had a higher rate of intact families than native-born white Americans in 1900, 1920, and 1940. As W.E.B Du Bois observed in his pioneering sociological study, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), a weak family structure and lack of respect for the marriage bond had such negative effects as unattended children being allowed on the street day and night, bad household economy, inadequate family governance, and inappropriate language and behavior among children.^{lxv} Afro-Caribbeans, with their high marriage rates and reputation for strict discipline, created advantageous environments for raising children.

Year	Marriage Status	Black British West Indians		Irish		Native-Born BA		Native born WA	
		Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
1900	Married, spouse present	2.00498753	50.12	490.080043	51.81	183.961197	30.51	2,548.87	27.64
	Married, spouse absent	0.997506234	24.94	35.9653344	3.8	44.0421286	7.3	188.966312	2.05
	never married/single	0.997506234	24.94	274.926357	29.06	309.003326	51.24	6,038.12	65.47
	widowed			145.028266	15.33	65.9933481	10.94	437.0388201	4.74
	divorced							10.0122527	0.11
1920	Married, spouse present	4	57.14	334	54.4	584	41.86	3,891	30.91
	Married, spouse absent			22	3.58	94	6.74	290	2.3
	never married/single	3	42.86	131	21.34	603	43.23	7,712	61.27
	widowed			125	20.36	110	7.89	662	5.26
	divorced			2	0.33	4	0.29	32	0.25
1940	Married, spouse present	3	72 (Ancestry.com) 100 (IPUMS)	207.277969	53.28	864.199076	34.38	5,076.93	35.6
	Married, spouse absent			19.4147469	4.99	287.410147	11.43	444.510554	3.12
	never married/single			79.90711	20.54	1,124.04	44.71	7,830.28	54.91
	widowed			82.4002732	21.18	225.916759	8.99	790.153801	5.54
	divorced					12.4362704	0.49	119.123955	0.84

Table 1. Marital status by race for 1900, 1920, and 1940.

Source: [IPUMS](#)

Alt text for table: This table shows the marital status by race for 1900, 1920, and 1940, as abstracted from IPUMS census data.

Due to their race and foreign origins, Afro-Caribbeans faced prejudice, but collective empowerment was yet another factor that allowed them to outmaneuver discriminatory obstacles. Afro-Caribbeans were known for exceptional cooperation within their community, fostering a high degree of trust among members. They strongly supported one another socially, economically, and educationally and assisted newcomers with the cultural adjustment to Philadelphia. Afro-Caribbean immigrants had a sense of both entrepreneurship and kinship, which saw them open businesses and hire fellow Afro-Caribbeans. Historian and “Father of Black History” Carter G. Woodson explained what had become well known: “Wherever you find a native of the West Indies, you will probably be able to interest him in doing something for another native of one of these Islands...Wherever you find a native of the West Indies starting some sort of enterprise, you are more than apt to see his average fellow country-men coming to his support, giving him every chance to do the thing as it should be.”^{lxvi} Research suggests that such an attitude is vital to a group’s socioeconomic success.

Samuel Alfred Haynes, a black Belizean activist and poet, observed in 1930 that “the success of West Indians in business and the professions in centers like New York, Brooklyn, New Orleans, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Va., and Mobile, Ala. had incited the same jealousy and misapprehension that the Jews, Chinese, and Italians occasion in Negro communities.”^{lxvii} Jamaicans were dubbed “Jewmaicans” by Afro-Americans, and a running joke was that as soon as a West Indian got “ten cents above a beggar,” he opened up a business.^{lxviii} Their entrepreneurial spirit is verified by the fact that Afro-Caribbeans had a significantly higher percentage of self-employment (15.29%) compared to both native-born black Americans (2.74%) and the Irish (1.80%) in Philadelphia by 1940.^{lxix}

The socioeconomic success of West Indians, fueled by their active pursuit of business ownership and economic independence, coupled with cultural mores inherited from the British, such as formality, decorum, an emphasis on academic achievement, and a healthy respect for authority, may have contributed to perceptions of arrogance and superiority.^{lxx} They faced intra-racial and virulent interracial hostility in Philadelphia.^{lxxi} Much like the Chinese and Jews, however, Afro-Caribbeans forged strong bonds to ensure one another's success. In Philadelphia "and other cities along the Atlantic seaboard ... [West Indians] [clung] together, and [made] a point of hunting up new arrivals from the West Indies and helping them find their footing among a strange people in a strange land."^{lxxii} This was crucial to their success because "in most instances the immigrant Negro comes from a primarily agrarian community into the secondary urban organization of modern industry."^{lxxiii} Arriving at the second busiest port in the United States, many of these immigrants from small islands were understandably overwhelmed. However, to counteract this feeling, communities or groups with strong, cohesive bonds benefitted their members by embedding them in networks of information and influence. These social organizations became pivotal in the lives of Afro-Caribbeans in Philadelphia by providing resources that built connections, promoted advocacy, and supported their integration.

The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914, quickly established a significant presence in the United States, particularly in Philadelphia, where Division 47 became the nation's second-largest chapter by 1919. The UNIA in Philadelphia, which Garvey lauded as a stronghold, transcended its West Indian roots, attracting black newcomers from the South with its message of racial pride and economic self-sufficiency. In 1920, the Black Cross Nurses (BCN), an auxiliary of the UNIA, was established in the city, offering healthcare training and services amidst high racial barriers, symbolizing the organization's broader impact on the African American community. Furthermore, Afro-Caribbeans in Philadelphia actively participated in various fraternal orders, including the Masons, Odd Fellows, Mechanics, and Elks. Additionally, social clubs, notably the Caribbean Cricket Club, created a cohesive community network that facilitated the cultural integration and upward social mobility of the West Indian community.

ANALYSIS & POLICY

Faced with such obstacles, we must try to explain the unusually large contribution made by West Indians to the development of the black race in the United States.^{lxxiv} Their success can be attributed to selectivity along with specific norms and values that emphasize education, community support, and self-sacrifice. The term "selectivity" refers to "the distinction between movers and non-movers, on measurable job-related characteristics like education or on hard-to-measure characteristics like ingenuity."^{lxxv} Selectivity can be positive (e.g., the selected individuals are better educated and more ambitious than the average citizen in their country) or negative (e.g., the selected individuals are less educated and less ambitious).^{lxxvi} Selectivity Theory posits that the subset of West Indians who chose to migrate will naturally tend to have higher levels of the characteristics necessary to make that migration successful. The same would have been true of black Southerners who migrated to Pennsylvania in the early twentieth century. If the destination of the migrant has plus factors, such as higher-paying job opportunities, then movers will tend to be positively selected for the traits necessary to take advantage of

such factors, as well as for the very desire to migrate to a place where such conditions are plentiful in the first place.

Given the West Indies' destitution, leading men to prefer the hazardous and disease-ridden work in Panama, and considering Philadelphia's superior safety, education, job prospects, and stability, economic theory dictates that positive selection would, therefore, be high. In the words of one Barbadian living in Philadelphia in 1903, growing poverty made it impossible to get ahead in the West Indies, and so "naturally all the bright, enterprising young men come [to the United States] ... and every West Indian is firmly convinced that there are plenty of dollars to be picked up here, while he is dubious about England."^{lxxvii} As evidenced by their experience and livelihoods, it is clear that many West Indians in Philadelphia possessed an abundance of hard-to-measure characteristics that bolstered their chances of socioeconomic success, such as ambition, intelligence, amicability, and diligence.

Factors such as migration costs and intervening obstacles exert a heavy influence on selectivity. The greater the obstacles, such as distance from destination, the monetary cost of migration, the strictness of immigration rules, or the number of dependents reliant upon the immigrant, the higher the quality of the traits that are selected. All these factors were at play, as escaping the Caribbean and successfully immigrating to the United States was no easy feat. To take one example, the Jamaican planter class was "jealous of the emigration of able-bodied laborer[s]," and so in a bid to inhibit their laborers from leaving for Panama and the United States, the colonial state introduced the Emigrant Laborers Protection Law in 1893. The law required individuals to obtain a permit before they emigrated to specific countries. In 1895 and 1904, the law became much stricter, and in 1904, amendments mandated that emigrants deposit funds for repatriation.^{lxxviii} These departure fees or exit visas (the cost of which continually increased with time), along with the cost of a ticket on a steamship to Boston, New York, or Philadelphia amid a low-wage environment, invariably increased migration costs, making the barrier to entry prohibitive for many.

The 1924 Johnson-Reed Act severely restricted West Indian immigration due to the time and effort required to obtain a visa, with the result that only the most clever and determined individuals succeeded in migrating.^{lxxix} It is often mistakenly understood that the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act did not affect the British West Indies; in reality, the "Johnson-Reed [Act] placed the 'non-self governing' colonies of the Americas (e.g., the British West Indies but not Canada) under quota control for the first time."^{lxxx} Literacy screened out immigrants deemed undesirable or potentially incapable of assimilating into American culture. In 1903, a St. Kitts newspaper decried "the continual exodus of our respectable people to the States and Canada."^{lxxxi} If immigration was confined to the "ne'er-do-wells," explained one Barbadian man, "it might be thought a mercy that they should leave their country for their country's good." But in the West Indies, he continued, "the dregs remain" while the United States finds room for the most ambitious men and women.^{lxxxii} This supports selectivity theory: those who stay behind (minus the upper class) are usually unexceptional compared to those who migrate. However, selectivity theory does not fully explain the complex interplay of individual exceptionalism and the myriad cultural factors that determine how immigrants operate within any given society.

Individual movers may have both greater "easy-to-measure" and "hard-to-measure" job-related characteristics than non-movers, but both operate through a set of cultural maxims specific to their place of origin. Afro-Caribbeans succeeded through community support, not just individual effort. Afro-Caribbean immigrants, driven by "a profound interest in self-government," successfully navigated the

American landscape, an achievement underpinned by cultural institutions that fostered resilience against formidable challenges.^{lxxxiii} This ethos of self-governance, or agency, was evident in letters between Afro-Caribbeans in St. Kitts and Nevis to the U.S., where advice often included the necessity to “stoop and conquer” amid racial discrimination—a strategy many West Indians employed to great effect.^{lxxxiv}

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In drawing on the past successes of groups like Black West Indians, public policy must focus on fostering self-reliance while avoiding the creation of government programs that lead to dependency. Initiatives should empower immigrant and domestic populations alike to thrive independently, ensuring that they can leverage their inherent capabilities and resilience to succeed in America.

To optimize the quality of incoming immigrants, the United States must first update its immigration system and implement policies that prioritize applicants with specific skills and educational backgrounds needed in the economy. There are several ways to make the immigration system more efficient: for example, it should limit the paperwork; shorten application forms; digitize the system; implement remote video visa interviews; and create a centralized immigration agency position. The U.S. could also implement measures such as a point-based system with factors such as age, work experience, and educational qualifications, prioritizing individuals who are likely to contribute significantly to the economy and society.

West Indian immigrants’ education in Philadelphia aided their early adaptation and long-term success in America by improving communication, cultural integration, problem-solving, networking, and upward mobility, even from low-paying beginnings. To support immigrants’ educational success, it is essential to implement policies that enable access to diverse schooling options, such as charter and magnet schools, alongside voucher programs and Educational Savings Accounts. Such measures can break the cycle of being trapped in receiving a low-quality education simply because of district boundaries.

Policymakers already have successful models to emulate. For example, under Ian Rowe’s leadership, Vertex Partnerships Academies in the South Bronx have set a precedent for academic excellence with a values-based approach and an International Baccalaureate program to prepare students for diverse futures, whether in college or direct entry into rewarding careers. Similarly, Public Prep, a network of tuition-free, single-gender charter schools, encourages students to achieve their highest potential.^{lxxxv} The impact of charter schools is significant: of the two thousand public schools in the South Bronx (District 8), only 2% of students were college-ready upon graduation in 2019. Conversely, charter school students from third through eighth grade recorded a 62.4% proficiency rate in math and 57.8% in English Language Arts, compared to their public school peers who had proficiency rates of 30.2% and 32.4%, respectively.^{lxxxvi} School choice should be implemented and provided.

While educational vouchers and tuition tax credits are sometimes touted as solutions, they must be approached with caution. These well-intentioned programs have been criticized for potentially undermining public education systems by diverting funds to private sectors without stringent oversight. Additionally, they sometimes fail to fully cover private education costs, adding financial strain on families

without consistently improving educational outcomes. A balanced approach that includes careful implementation and rigorous evaluation of voucher programs could help ensure that they effectively contribute to providing quality education, thereby giving children the best chance to succeed. Lastly, establishing rigorous scouting programs and nationwide testing can identify and cultivate hidden talents among all children, ensuring that the gifted and exceptional do not slip through the cracks due to socioeconomic circumstances or minor distractions. Policies must ensure immigrant and native-born families have every opportunity to access such quality educational resources.

In terms of the occupations of West Indian movers vs. non-movers, there does not seem to be as drastic a difference. The overwhelming majority of West Indian non-movers toiled in working-class occupations such as manual labor. For instance, as late as the 1943 Jamaica Census, 46% of black Jamaicans were working in agriculture, 19% in professional service/public administration/personal service, 9% in construction/transportation/communications, and 6% in retail trade.^{lxxxvii} Similarly, West Indians who lived in Philadelphia initially had working-class jobs and participated in manual labor.

To enhance economic mobility, several policies could be implemented. First, government-sponsored vocational training and skill development programs should be tailored for these occupations to improve qualifications and earning potential. The United States should look to Germany and emulate its vocational programs. Although Germany has a relatively low percentage of the adult population completing a tertiary qualification (approximately 28%), over 40% of adults in Germany have completed a vocational education and training program. While Germans with vocational apprenticeships earn about two-thirds of what those with a bachelor's degree earn and 92% of the average German wage, Americans with only a high-school education earn about 70% of the average American wage.^{lxxxviii} Expanded access to adult education and job placement services could help trained individuals obtain higher-paying jobs, making early workforce entry a viable and attractive option.

The entrepreneurial success of Afro-Caribbeans, indicated by their high self-employment rates historically, highlights the potential for economic advancement within a free-market system. To fully realize this potential, policy should aim to provide access to private loans for businesses, ensure a low barrier to entry for family businesses, and create sustainable employment opportunities. This would minimize regulatory hurdles and foster a business-friendly environment. Policy measures should include deregulation, particularly in occupational licensing and work-from-home regulations. Such policies would not only support individuals in starting and growing their own businesses but also in finding employment that provides a family-sustaining income. This approach encourages a system where hard work and market-driven initiatives are sufficient to sustain a family, thereby reducing the need for extensive government intervention and promoting economic self-reliance.

Beyond pro-business initiatives, policies should be put in place in the United States to incentivize marriage and intact families. As research data has shown, including this case study in particular, the children of intact families fare better in life than their counterparts in single-parent households. The potent advantages offered by the “two-parent privilege” make it clear that fostering stable two-parent households should be a cornerstone of policy.^{lxxxix} Tangible economic benefits could be offered to married couples with children for a set period. Newlyweds could receive a small reduction in income tax for the first few years after their wedding and access government loans. Subsidies or low-interest loans could be offered to married couples purchasing their first home. Additionally, this could include grants for home

renovations that accommodate growing families, encouraging long-term stability. These policy ideas aim to support the socioeconomic success of both immigrant and native-born families.

But crafting these policies is not enough. They must be marketed effectively enough to reach their intended targets. Often, opportunities are promoted through agency websites like the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but these efforts fall short. To improve outreach, the government should utilize data to focus on where their target audiences are most engaged, particularly through digital platforms. Social media, TV, and YouTube ads, as well as promotion at high schools, sporting events, and on public transportation, can mirror the marketing strategies of private companies. Additionally, sharing compelling facts—such as the financial benefits of marriage or higher education—can further incentivize participation.

In early twentieth century America, trivial characteristics, such as skin color and birthplace weighed, far more heavily than they should have in a merit-based society. Afro-Caribbeans were judged to be deficient on both fronts, an undeniably unjust state of affairs. However, education, ambition, and hard work also propelled economic achievements. The Afro-Caribbean experience proves that values that maximize human capital can surmount adverse circumstances. This case study illustrates how nonracial factors influenced socioeconomic outcomes. Policy must recognize the pragmatic aspect of individual agency, where people make personal decisions that they believe are optimal concerning marriage, employment, education, and lifestyle. Therefore, our strategy should focus on maximizing opportunities and setting aspirational goals.

We should steer clear of ambiguous, open-ended, and unrealistic goals, given the inherent differences in individuals and their circumstances. It is crucial to acknowledge that even partial improvement, such as a 25% betterment of current conditions, represents significant progress. Should we be constrained to prioritize a singular policy initiative, it would unequivocally focus on policies that incentivize marriage and intact families. Were the scope permitted to include a second priority, it would expand to encompass policies that improve educational opportunities. These strategic choices are designed to leverage incremental but tangible advancements in economic mobility.

West Indian migrants to Philadelphia exemplified the power of community, education, and resilience, setting a profound example of socioeconomic success despite formidable barriers. Their experiences underscore the need for policies that support education access, economic opportunity, and community networks. By reinforcing these pillars, we can foster environments where immigrants and all community members can thrive. Policies that prioritize education, support entrepreneurial initiatives, and strengthen family structures in a nondependent manner create a framework for social mobility. Reflecting on the historical success of the West Indian community in Philadelphia reveals that integrated policy approaches should attempt to harness the potential of diverse communities, ensuring collective and individual resilience and collaborative efforts lead to lasting achievements.

ⁱ The British West Indies includes Jamaica, Anguilla, Antigua-Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, the Leeward and Windward Islands, Belize/British Honduras, Guyana/British Guiana, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, which include St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas. This study attempts to exclude the Dutch, French, and Spanish-speaking islands. The terms “West Indian,” “black West Indian,” and “Afro-Caribbean” will be used interchangeably throughout this paper, and all refer to the people from the set of islands listed. When the term “British West Indies” is used, it will refer only to the islands of Jamaica, Anguilla, Antigua-Barbuda,

Bahamas, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, the Leeward and Windward Islands, Guyana/British Guiana, and Belize/British Honduras.

ⁱⁱ Also known as the Caribbean (the two terms will be used interchangeably throughout this paper).

ⁱⁱⁱ Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania: Slavery-Servitude-Freedom, 1639-1861* (Washington, D.C.: The American Historical Association, 1911), 9.

^{iv} Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population of the United States, 1790-1915* (Washington, D.C.: Governmental Printing Office 1918), 61.

^v Dr. Hubert H. Harrison, "Du Bois a West Indian, Declares Dr. H. H. Harrison: Prejudice Growing Less And Co-operation More, Says Student of Question," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, January 29, 1927, A7, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/201875653> (accessed July 21, 2023).

^{vi} Winston James, "Explaining Afro-Caribbean Social Mobility in the United States: Beyond the Sowell Thesis," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 2 (2002): 220, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3879446>. Adapted from *Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor, 1899-1937* (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration).

^{vii} International African Service Bureau. 1936. *The West Indies to-day*, 15.

^{viii} It also did not help that Europe had found a cheaper substitute for cane sugar in beet sugar.

^{ix} Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (1998), 38.

^x Gisela Eisner, *Jamaica, 1830-1930: A Study in Economic Growth* (1961), 332-333, Table LXVII.

^{xi} James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 30.

^{xii} U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Tables from 'Population of the 100 Largest Urban Places: 1900-1950,'" Internet Release date: June 15, 1998, <https://www.census.gov/library/working-papers/1998/demo/POP-twps0027.html>.

^{xiii} An Old Timer, "No Cause for Bitterness of Expression," *Philadelphia Tribune*, September 25, 1920, 1, <https://access-newspaperarchive-com.stanford.idm.oclc.org/us/pennsylvania/philadelphia/philadelphia-tribune/1920/09-25/>

^{xiv} An Old Timer, "No Cause for Bitterness of Expression."

^{xv} "The West Indians Flock Here to America Their Mecca: Rarely Fail to Achieve Success Although Coming with Almost Nothing-Winning of Sweetheart Sometimes the Intention to Victory- No Financial Inducements to Remain at Home Fellow Countrymen Here to Help Them," *The York Daily*, August 22, 1903, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/77022291/?terms=British%20West%20Indian&pqid=JmgKXpl7tOxKqxMwyDMqCA%3A162968%3A596944546&match=1> (accessed July 22, 2023). 6.

^{xvi} "West Indians Flock Here to America."

^{xvii} Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V12.0>. It is worth noting that some alternative sources, such as the Ancestry.com 1910 United States Federal Census [database online], indicate different figures. For example, this raw database calculated by the author indicates a West Indian literacy rate of 94.95% in 1910.

^{xviii} Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Danika Brockman, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>

^{xix} James Weldon Johnson, *Black Manhattan* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1930), 153, as cited in Winston James, "Explaining Afro-Caribbean Social Mobility in the United States: Beyond the Sowell Thesis," *Department of History, Columbia University*, 232.

^{xx} *The West Indies Today*, published by the International Africa Service Bureau, 13.

^{xxi} Jamaica. 1948. *West Indian Census 1946*. Kingston: Govt. Printer, 44, Table N.

^{xxii} Edward Albert Odell, *Outlook in the West Indies* (New York: Friendship Press, 1942), 23.

^{xxiii} Although education was held in high regard, the quality of the facilities in the West Indies were anything but first-rate. In 1931-32, the Education Commission visited the West Indies and reported that "the primary education in the West Indies was the least progressive of any which he had encountered in the British Empire ... also that school buildings are the worst he had ever seen." (International African Service Bureau. 1936. *The West Indies to-day*, 18.)

^{xxiv} J. A. Rogers, "J. A. Rogers Discusses West Indian Women: Native of Jamaica Says Lack of Educational Advantages Drop Them Behind American Women in Achievement; Too Keen on Color Customs and Prejudices of Old Country Live Longer With Them Than With Men; Marry Their Own Countrymen," *The Pittsburgh Courier* (1911-1950), Feb 26, 1927, City Edition, accessed August 1, 2023, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/i-rogers-discusses-west-indian-women/docview/201878311/se-2>.

^{xxv} IPUMS USA, "1940 Census Enumeration Instructions," IPUMS USA, https://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/source_documents/enum_instruct_1940_tag.xml#76.

^{xxvi} Due to the limited sample size of the educational attainment of black West Indians in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in 1940 and 1950, additional data was sourced from the mid-Atlantic region. The educational attainment information for the mid-Atlantic region was extracted from the U.S. Census data of 1940 and 1950 using IPUMS USA, a trusted source for microdata analysis. The expanded dataset allowed for a more comprehensive examination of educational trends among black West Indians in the broader geographic context of the mid-Atlantic region.

^{xxvii} Calculations based on data from Ancestry.com. 1940 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1940. T627, 4,643 rolls; and Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, Erin Meyer, Jose Pacas, and Matthew Sobek. IPUMS USA: Version 12.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V12.0>

^{xxviii} IPUMS USA, "1940 Census Enumeration Instructions."

^{xxix} S. Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm Between West Indians, U.S. Negroes: Admits Many West Indians Are Unbearable in Effort to Impress; the American Negro Resents Being Termed 'Monkey-Chaser,'" *Philadelphia Tribune*, July 31, 1930, 15, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/west-indian-journalist-analyzes-chasm-between/docview/531065294/se-2>.

^{xxx} Ira De Augustine Reid, *The Negro Immigrant, His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 144-145.

^{xxxi} Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm," 15.

^{xxxii} *The West Indies Today*, 7.

^{xxxiii} Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 15.

^{xxxiv} According to the Bank of England- when adjusting for inflation, £1 in 1937 would be approximately £56. This means 1 shilling would be around \$3.42 (a day in the Windward and Leeward Islands) and 18 shillings would be around \$61.72 (per week in Jamaica). ("Currency Converter," XE, accessed [September 22, 2023], <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/convert/?Amount=50.4&From=GBP&To=USD>; "Inflation Calculator," Bank of England, accessed [September 22, 2023], <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>.)

^{xxxv} *The West Indies Today*, 15-16.

^{xxxvi} Harrison, "Du Bois a West Indian," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, A7.

^{xxxvii} "West Indians Flock Here to America."

^{xxxviii} "West Indians Flock Here to America."

^{xxxix} S. Haynes, "Negro Should Buy from Own Race: Depression Has Forced Thousands into Streets to Sell Wares, Army Needs Support," *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 17, 1932, 9.

^{xl} Reid, *The Negro Immigrant, His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment*, 211.

^{xli} Thomas Sowell, *Basic Economics*, 5th ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 169: "The practical impact of the Fair Labor Standards Act was initially measured. Wartime inflation during the 1940s effectively nullified the act of unintended wage floors, as market wages for even unskilled workers rose well above the legislated minimums. It wasn't until after 1950, following significant revisions and increases in the federal minimum wage, that the act began to exert a substantial influence on the labor market."

^{xlii} Dr. Hubert Harrison, "Du Bois a West Indian," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, A7.

^{xliii} United States Census. (1900-1950). Census Data for Philadelphia. Retrieved from Ancestry.com (provided by The National Archives and Records Administration), calculations by author in September 2023, www.ancestry.com; Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Danika Brockman, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS USA: Version 13.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V13.0>

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- ^{xliv} Frederick and Edith L. Massiah Papers, UPT 50 M417, University of Pennsylvania Archives and Records Center, <https://archives.upenn.edu/collections/finding-aid/upt50m417/>.
- ^{xlv} Harrison, "Du Bois a West Indian," *The Pittsburgh Courier* A7.
- ^{xlvi} ONI, "Investigation of the Marine Transport Workers," 31-32; Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 183-84.
- ^{xlvii} International African Service Bureau. 1936. *The West Indies to-day*, 16-17.
- ^{xlviii} *The West Indies to-day*, 17.
- ^{xliv} J. A. Rogers, "J. A. Rogers Discusses West Indian Women: Native of Jamaica Says Lack of Educational Advantages Drop Them Behind American Women in Achievement; Too Keen on Color Customs and Prejudices of Old Country Live Longer with Them Than with Men; Marry Their Own Countrymen," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 26, 1927, City Edition, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/j-rogers-discusses-west-indian-women/docview/201878311/se-2>.
- ^l Charles L. Blockson, *African Americans in Pennsylvania: A History and Guide* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1994), 49.
- ^{li} Rogers, "J. A. Rogers Discusses West Indian Women," 2.
- ^{lii} Rogers, 2.
- ^{liii} Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm," 15.
- ^{liv} Steven Ruggles, Sarah Flood, Matthew Sobek, Daniel Backman, Annie Chen, Grace Cooper, Stephanie Richards, Renae Rogers, and Megan Schouweiler. IPUMS. USA: Version 15.0 [dataset]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>
- ^{lv} "West Indians Flock Here America."
- ^{lvi} Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm," 15.
- ^{lvii} W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Oxford: The Oxford Press, 2007), 147.
- ^{lviii} Henry L. Booth, "100, Master Plumber and Landlord," *The Philadelphia Tribune*, accessed September 12, 2023, https://www.phillytrib.com/obituaries/henry-l-booth-100-master-plumber-and-landlord/article_b2e98b10-8167-5cae-865e-900752efaf71.html.
- ^{lix} Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro*, 146.
- ^{lx} Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 59.
- ^{lxi} Archdeacon Henry L. Phillips, "The African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, Ninth Rector (1912-1914)," accessed September 5, 2023, <http://www.aecst.org/phillips%209threc.htm>.
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- ^{lxiii} Haynes, 15.
- ^{lxiv} IPUMS 1940 AND 1950 1% Data.
- ^{lxv} Du Bois, *The Philadelphia*, 49-50.
- ^{lxvi} Carter G. Woodson, "Tells of the Contributions of 'West Indian Negro' to U. S.: Will Discuss Topic at Big Historical Meeting in New York," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, October 31, 1931, City Edition, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/tells-contributions-west-indian-negro-u-s/docview/201939113/se-2> (accessed September 15, 2023).
- ^{lxvii} Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm," 15.
- ^{lxviii} Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 55.
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- ^{lxx} A. M. W. Malliet, "Segregation Race's Greatest Menace," Says West Indian Writer: 'Inferiority Complex' Most Dreaded Spectre American Negroes Must Try to Crush; Writer Pays Tribute to British Subjects Who Helped Put Over Victory Life in New York, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, July 23, 1927, City Edition, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/segregation-races-greatest-menace-says-west/docview/201877108/se-2> (accessed September 15, 2023).

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- lxxii Haynes, "West Indian Journalist Analyzes Chasm," 15.
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