

Madam C.J. Walker



Madam C.J. Walker was one of the first black women to become a self-made millionaire. She became successful by creating special hair care products for African Americans and traveling around the country to promote them by giving lecture- demonstrations.

Walker was born on December 23, 1837 on a cotton plantation in Delta, Louisiana. Her original name was Sarah Breedlove, daughter of Owen and Minerva, who were enslaved. Sarah was their fifth child who was also the first freeborn in the family. During the 1890s Sarah had developed a scalp disorder that had caused her to lose a lot of her hair. This is what started her hair care journey, looking and experimenting with home remedies and store bought treatments to help her condition. In 1906 Sarah got married to a man named Charles Joseph Walker, who helped her create advertisements and also encouraged her to use a more recognizable name which is where “ Madam C.J. Walker” comes from. As profits continued to grow, in 1908 Walker opened a factory and a beauty school in Pittsburgh and by 1910 the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company had become wildly successful, with profits that were the modern-day equivalent of several million dollars.

Madam C.J. Walker inspires me because she reminds me that black excellence can come from succeeding at anything. Being a black woman is unique as its own and our hair is something that is very special and meaningful. Our hair is one thing that can define us and make us feel confident and beautiful. It is important to remember the hard work and care that comes with it. Madam C.J. Walker was incredible because of how successful she got off of something so needed and necessary in the black community. She set a standard. She is Black Excellence.