

Warrior Mother of
Africa's Warriors
of the Most High
God

Laura Adorkor
Kofi





Nina Simone

1:13

Laura Adorkor Kofi

- I am a representative from the Gold Coast of West Africa, seeking the welfare of Africa's children everywhere.
- God called me out of Africa to come over here and tell you, His people, what He would have you to do. I travelled from place to place in Africa trying to keep from answering the Call.
- I could not get away from that All-Seeing Eye. He prevailed with me wherever I went. He finally afflicted me with a fearful sickness unto death three times until I said Here Am I Lord sent me.... I have come to bring you a message of good news and glad tidings.... Your kings and leaders of Africa who are your fathers and your native people who are your brothers and sisters have also given me a MESSAGE to ask you: They say you have been a long time away from home, why have you not made PREPARATIONS to come home? They say, if you want to come let we [sic] know, and if you don't want to come let we know. In the Gold Coast of West Africa there is a DOOR (to all Africa) OPEN to you and a hearty welcome waiting you there.

This Far By Faith

*Readings in
African-American
Women's Religious
Biography*



edited by Judith Weisenfeld
& Richard Newman

Beginnings

- She was born outside of Accra present day Ghana in the late 1800's
- Laura Kofey first appeared in the South in 1927, the last year Garvey served in Atlanta Penitentiary before his release and deportation. According to local residents, she "came up out of nowhere," although, in fact, she seems to have entered the United States from Canada and became active in the Detroit branch of the UNIA. Amy Jacques-Garvey remembers her as a particularly effective organizer.

This Far By Faith

*Readings in
African-American
Women's Religious
Biography*



edited by Judith Weisenfeld
& Richard Newman

Rise in the U.N.I.A

- During the mid-1920s, Kofey toured the United States and Central America, speaking at several UNIA divisions on Africa and African culture and displaying African art and artifacts
- From 1926 to 1927, she traveled throughout the U.S. South, establishing new UNIA divisions in Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida. In Tampa alone, more than three hundred men and women joined the UNIA under Kofey's direction during the summer of 1927
- On August 1, 1927, she visited Garvey in federal prison in Atlanta in the company of several Miami UNIA members who had recommended the Princess to Garvey as "worthwhile."

SET THE WORLD ON FIRE

**BLACK NATIONALIST WOMEN
AND THE GLOBAL STRUGGLE
FOR FREEDOM**



KEISHA N. BLAIN

Jealousy In U.N.I.A

- Within months, she becomes the most popular figure in that group, except for Marcus Garvey,” says White. “They send her throughout the Deep South. Mississippi, Alabama, and everywhere she is going she’s attracting, five, and ten, and fifteen thousand audience members, something that had never been seen before.
- Kofey’s position of prominence, however, was short-lived. By the end of 1927, her reputation became severely tarnished when a group of Garveyites grew suspicious of her immediate success. Sometime around August 1927, rumors began to circulate that Kofey was using her newfound success in UNIA circles to raise funds for her own purposes—to purchase, among other things, her own set of ships to relocate African Americans to West Africa.
- Source: <https://myfloridahistory.org/frontiers/article/106>

Garvey's Vanishment of Laura Kofi

- complaints of her money-raising to buy a sawmill and ships for an African exodus reached Garvey.
- Garvey pointed out that he had given her no authority to collect funds; he assumed she was involved in a scheme using his name to extract money from a "dense" public, and he advised that she be reported to the police. In October, Garvey revoked the charter of Division 286 which was entertaining her and inserted a warning notice in the Negro world.

THE MARCUS GARVEY AND UNIA PAPERS

[*Address:*] Leonard Smith,
1516 Russell St., Detroit, Mich.
[*Handwritten endorsements:*] OK JWS.

AFRC, AP. ATG, on Western Union postal message blank, straight telegram, collect.

Marcus Garvey to J. A. Craigen

Atlanta, Ga., Sept. 20, 1927

I have given Mrs. Kofey¹ no authority to collect funds from members for any kind of African exodus. I know nothing of her proposition for saw mills and ships[.] I shall not be held responsible for her activities in that direction. If the people have been defrauded they have legal recourse. I authorized no one to give her authority to collect funds for such a purpose. If the people are so dense as not to be able to protect themselves I can do no more. I know nothing of the affair[.]

MARCUS GARVEY
President General

[*Address:*] J. A. Craigen, Representing
Universal Negro Improvement Association,
Richmond Hotel, 422 Broad St.,
Jacksonville, Fla.

[*Handwritten endorsements:*] OK JWS.
W.U. [\$]1.20.

U.N.I.A Investigation of Kofi

- ✦ In their investigations, Garveyites claimed to discover Laura Kofey to be, in reality, a native of Athens, Georgia, who had worked for the American Red Cross, travelled to New York, England, and Africa, and who had taught school in New Orleans before her advent in Florida.

This Far By Faith

*Readings in
African-American
Women's Religious
Biography*



edited by Judith Weisenfeld
& Richard Newman

Kofi leaves and founds the African universal church.

- Some members of the UNIA began creating disturbances at Kofi's presentations, and she feared that her life was in danger at the hands of Garvey's inner circle.
- Kofi relocated from Miami, where she felt threatened, to Jacksonville. She announced her split from the UNIA, and established the African Universal Church. As leader of this new spiritual movement, she became known as "Mother Kofi."
- Miami Daily News (March 9, 1928), 6.
- Daily Gleaner of April 3, 1928.



Murder of Mother Kofi.

- On a subsequent evening, March 8, while preaching in Liberty Hall at N.W. 15th Street and Fifth Avenue, someone fired a pistol through a crack in the door direction of the pulpit, a distance of about fifty feet. Two shots struck Laura Kofey in the head. She died instantly

The Tampa tribune
Tampa, Florida
Fri, Aug 17, 1928 – 5

'Nubian Princess' Buried As 10,000 Negroes Look On

JACKSONVILLE, Aug. 16.—(A.P.) —With 10,000 mourners looking on, the "Nubian princess," Adorka Laura Koffey, 35-year-old negro, was buried by members of her African Universal church congregation here today.

The "princess" was shot to death by a negro in the pulpit of her church at Miami on March 8 and the killer was slain by members of the congregation. Her body had been kept here since as the result of a controversy between the St. Petersburg, Tampa and Jacksonville congregations, the two former wishing to return it to her native Africa.

She was the leader in a "back to Africa" movement among southern negroes and organized several

U.N.I.A Member Murdered on the spot for the Murder of mother Kofi

- The Princess's enraged followers seized Maxwell Cook, a Jamaican who was a captain in the uniformed branch of the local UNIA, and beat him to death on the spot.
- Claude Green, president of the Miami UNIA, and James Nimmo, the Colonel of Legions (military head of the branch).
- They were found not guilty
- Source: RICHARD NEWMAN, This far by faith

NEMO AND GREENE CASE IS RECESSED

Hawthorne Says Important Witness
Is on Way Against Alleged Kill-
ers of "Princess"

Trial of James B. Nemo and Claude Greene, negroes, said to be agents of Marcus Garvey, of Back-to-Africa fame, was recessed at 11 a. m. Saturday until Monday morning. The defendants are charged with the murder of **Laura Kofey**, said by followers to have been an African Gold Coast "princess." The case was called in circuit court Thursday.

The recess was ordered on the request of Vernon Hawthorne, state attorney, who claimed the state had an important witness on his way here from Georgia. After this witness tes-

Aftermath of Her death.

- Following the assassination, funeral rites for the thirty-five-year-old Laura Kofey were conducted in Miami. The body was then moved to Palm Beach where another service was held.
- August 17. Laura Kofey's body was draped in silk and linen and laid to rest in a mausoleum especially constructed by her disciples
- Source :RICHARD NEWMAN This far by faith
- [The Miami News](#)
Tue, Mar 20, 1928 - 4

**KING KNESIPHI
IS SAID COMING
TO SIFT DEATHS**

Father of "Princess,"
Negro War Victim,
Expected Here

A flare-up of Garvey and anti-Garvey feeling at a negro church here March 8, which resulted in two deaths and numerous arrests, will be investigated by King Knesiphi from the famed Gold Coast of Africa, according to cablegrams received here by members of the majority faction of the church who have started civil suit to get possession of the property, according to members of the law firm of Collins & Collins, their attorneys.

The king, the cablegram said, is the father of "Princess" Laura Kofey,

Adorkaville and Teachings

- The aims of Adorkaville were to create a memorial to Laura Kofey a vehicle for cooperation, an opportunity to educate the group's children
- a means for cooperation with the political state
- Provide a way to live an African-American existence. A school was established that taught African history, languages, geography, and culture. Plans were drawn for an African International Center where there would be vocational and cultural training, all for the purpose of greater cooperation between Africa and the United States, including a dormitory for visiting Africans.
- Interview, Robert E. Keyes, Jacksonville, Florida, December 2, 1975.



Confirmation of Kofi identity

- Ernest Sears's trips to Ghana have settled the question of the authenticity of Laura Kofey's African origin. Also, Sears holds a letter dated April 24, 1969, from the Ga Mantse, Paramount Chief of the Ga (Accra) State, which says, "The late Adorkor Cofie hailed from Sempe Division of the Ga (Accra) Traditional area."
- Sears's visit also disclosed that before her coming to the United States, Laura Kofey was pastor of a church in the village of Asofa and that she had a mission in Kumasi. Her original scheme appears to have been to travel to America and then return to spread her nationalist-religious-commercial program throughout Africa.

This Far By Faith

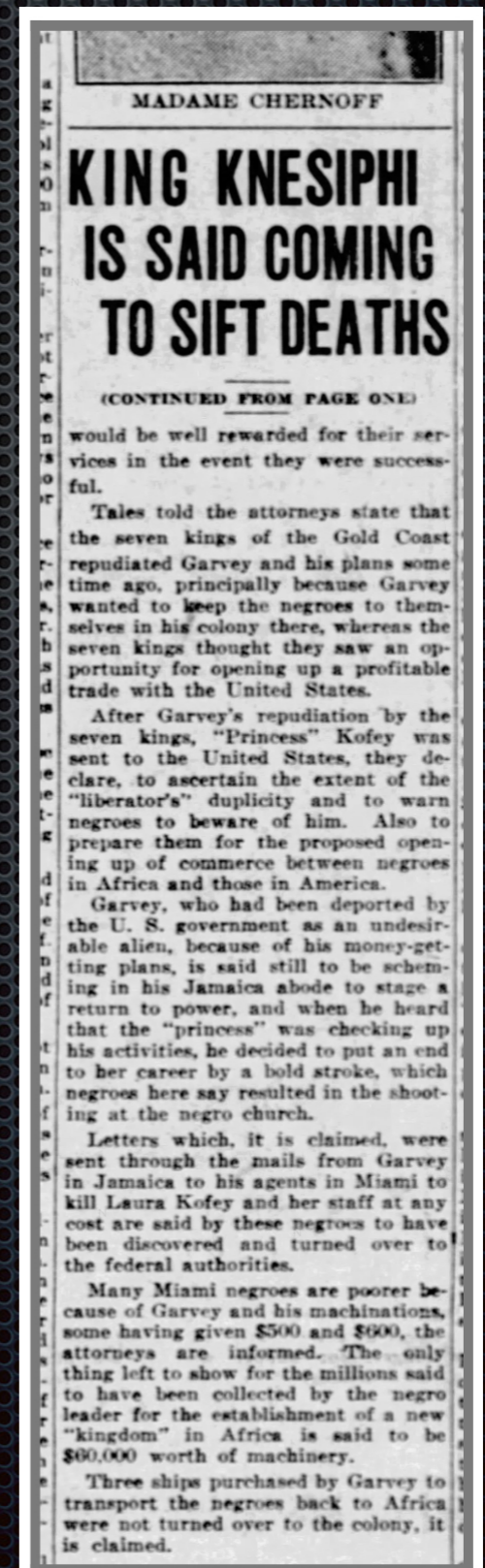
*Readings in
African-American
Women's Religious
Biography*



edited by Judith Weisenfeld
& Richard Newman

Confirmation of Kofi...

- The Miami News (Miami, Florida) · 20 Mar 1928



U.S.A.



1893



IN MEMORIAM

AFRICA



1928

Princess Laura Adorkor Kofi

"Affectionately known as Mother Kofi"

The martyred African Princess of Asofa, Ghana
(Gold Coast West Africa). Assassinated in the
pulpit on March 8, 1928, Miami, Florida.

"Let not your heart be troubled..."

(John 14:1)

Founder of the African Universal Churches