Dear Carlo,

I'm sorry to be so late in getting you this report, but I had to move the next day. That's why I wrote that penciled letter. Please forgive me.

Below you can read what happened to the party. If the people who I have been nice to in Harlem would have turned out as my real friends did downtown the party would have been a big success. However I'm glad that it didn't turn out worse.

You wore the sweetest thing in the world when you could see that the investment was going to be a lose. However I swear by my life that I will pay every cent that I owe in time.

Yours sincerely.

Taylor

The Payed GUES at the PARTY.

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Total: $147.00

Expenses: $157.20
Recites: $147.00
Losses: $10.20
Expenses account.

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**Total** $157.20
PROGRAM

I. Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel?
   My Lord's A-Writin' All De Time
   Swing Low Sweet Charriot
   Keep A-Inchin' Along

II. Go down, Moses
    I Got a Home In-a Dat Rock
    (Arranged by Lawrence Brown)
    My Lord What a Mornin'
    All God's Chillun

INTERMISSION
10 MINUTES

III. Nobody Knows De Trouble I See
    Git On Board, Little Chillen
    (Arranged by Lawrence Brown)
    Deep River

IV. Lit'le David Play On Yo' Harp
    Singin' Wid a Sword In Ma Han'
    What Yo' Gwine To Do When Yo' Lamp Burn Down
    Witness

"J. Rosamond Johnson and Taylor Gordon ought to hire the Hippodrome twice a week and demonstrate to aspiring young singers of spirituals how it is done. These gentlemen sang, modulated and harmonized beautifully; their rhythms were superb; above all they recreated the essence of the old time religious spirit of a vanished generation."—New York Sun.

"Both men are artists in the best sense of the word."—New York Herald-Tribune.

"The audience rioted in ecstasy over everything it heard."—New York Evening Telegram.

KNABE PIANO USED—COURTESY OF WM. KNABE AND CO.,
439 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE VIKING PRESS,
"THE BOOK OF AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS"
WILL BE ON SALE IN THE LOBBY FOR THE BENEFIT OF CHRISTODORA HOUSE.

GARRICK THEATRE
65 W. 35th St., N. Y. C.

Boxes (seating 6) . . . $19.80
Orchestra . . . . . 2.20
Balcony (first 4 rows) . . 1.65
(remainder) . . . . . 1.10

I enclose $_______ (Cheque or Money Order) for
which please send me ______ tickets in ____________

NAME

ADDRESS

Sunday, Dec. 6, 1925
This season they make a coast-to-coast tour, giving three New York recitals, three Boston recitals, two Chicago recitals, in addition to appearances before the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn, and important engagements at Columbia University and in Detroit, Canton, Louisville, Denver, Nashville, Los Angeles, San Francisco and throughout the country.

Mr. Johnson was born in Jacksonville, Florida, and began his study of music under his mother at the age of four. Later he went to the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and still later he completed his musical training in Europe. He studied the piano with Charles F. Denne and Mme. Dietrich Strong, organ with George Whiting, harmony with Carl Rieisser and Davenport Kerrison and voice with William Dunham and Clarence B. Ashenden. He made his professional debut in Boston and then became supervisor of music of the public schools of Jacksonville. Mr. Johnson toured the United States and Europe and for a time was director of music of Hammerstein’s Opera House in London. He returned to New York to become head of the Music School Settlement for Colored People in New York City. He was director of the singing orchestra for Mrs. Emelie Hapgood’s Colored Players in New York. Mr. Johnson served in the service as Second Lieutenant. He is the arranger of many negro spirituals and has composed more than 300 popular songs. In collaboration with his brother, James Weldon Johnson, he arranged the Book of American Negro Spirituals now having a large sale and which has attracted wide attention. In 1917 he received the honorary degree of Master of Arts from Atlanta University.

Mr. Taylor Gordon was born in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. He got his first inspiration for crooning Negro Spirituals from his mother, who, back in the seventies, was regarded as the greatest leader of camp-meeting songs on Poinsette Farm, Lexington, Kentucky. Mr. Gordon came to New York in 1915 and began study with Mr. J. Rosamond Johnson at the Music School Settlement for Colored People, where Mr. Johnson’s work was sponsored by Elbridge L. Adams, Natalie Curtis-Burlin, David Mannes, Maud Powell, David Bispham, Walter Damrosch and many other prominent musicians and teachers. In a special article on “The Guardian of the Spiritual,” referring to the work of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gordon, H. Serwer said: “It is my humble opinion that Johnson rendered the spiritual better than it has ever been rendered. He is the first singer to give me a real thrill out of them. He recognizes the proper voice for their singing. Taylor Gordon is a robust tenor with one of the best natural voices it has been my fortune to hear—of absolute pitch, which Johnson has been cultivating steadily. I prophecy great things for Gordon, even if his struggle has been an arduous one; but he is in capable hands and has no need for fear.”

NEW YORK SUN, SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1926

Music Novelties of the Week

Rosamond Johnson Is the Outstanding Personality—Spirituals Revitalized.

By W. J. HENDERSON

There was a look of unalloyed pleasure on many faces.—The Evening World, November 16, 1925.

At the conclusion of their songs an occurrence took place such as I have never seen in an American theatre. The program was concluded, but not a person in the audience that reached to the doors stirred from a seat. Not one moved. Five encores were sung and not a dozen started towards the exits. Johnson and Gordon scored a veritable triumph.—The World, November 16, 1925.

The audience rioted in ecstasy over everything heard.—The New York Telegram, November 16, 1925.

No one should miss hearing these singers, who bring to their performance a devotion, an emotional simplicity, a direct intensity, which is unique among the more sophisticated entertainments to be found in this day and city.—The New York Herald-Tribune.

The two voices rose and fell, met and parted in that glory of song which is controlled freedom. The spirit of the race and the spirit of music were alike upon them.—H. T. Parker in the Boston Transcript, January 11, 1926.

“After an evening more spiritual than many church services, more dramatic than many plays, more truly musical than most concerts, it would be surprising if there were any one in the audience who is not now eager for the speedy return of these artists.”—The Boston Globe, March 29, 1926.

(Following their third public recital in that city.)
July 20, 2006

Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave N.W
Seattle, WA 98177

Mr. Doig:

Marcella Sherfy suggested that I might contact you concerning a research project about Taylor Gordon that I’m working on. I met Marcella a few weeks ago, when she was finishing up her work on the Montana Heritage Project, and while I was visiting the Montana Historical Society archives and looking at the Gordon manuscript collection.

My project is a book-length biography of Taylor, which I hope will also include a substantial amount of space devoted to his sister Rose, whose story is not only fascinating in and of itself but also (I feel) an important part of Taylor’s story. My own interest in the Gordons comes out of my general interest in African American experience in the American West, a research topic that I have been exploring for 5-10 years now, and one which is always rewarding me with new discoveries. In the manuscript that eventually became a book that I published with the University of Oklahoma Press (Black Masculinity and the Frontier Myth in American Literature), I first made myself acquainted with Taylor through a chapter on his Born to Be autobiography.

That chapter eventually got cut from the book, but I have continued to be interested in him, eventually revising the chapter as a stand-alone article. When the Western Literature Association held its annual conference in Big Sky in 2004, I thought that would be a good opportunity to acknowledge Gordon’s contribution to western literature, and I got in touch with the folks at the Montana Historical Society and asked about the possibility of organizing an exhibit on Gordon’s life. Primarily through the efforts of Jodie Foley at the MHS, a tabletop exhibit was created that we displayed at the conference, and which I introduced as part of a panel discussion devoted to Gordon and to Born to Be. Corresponding with Jodie about the exhibit inspired me to make a trip to Helena and look at the Gordon materials held in the archive, which, in turn, convinced me that enough primary source material existed from which a biography could be created and that there was a story there that shouldn’t be left untold.

After my most recent two-week visit to Helena, I’m back home in Maine, where I teach in the literature program here at UMF. I’ve finally had a chance to sit down and read Prairie Nocturne, which I enjoyed quite a bit, particularly in seeing the way you’ve transformed Taylor into a fictional character who has his own separate existence. Part of
the fun of the book for me was in noting the points of correspondence and divergence between the lives of Taylor and Monty. I also enjoyed the singing scenes, lessons as well as performances. I also had not been aware of a Klan presence in Montana. I guess I shouldn’t be surprised at the omnipresence of the Klan in the 20th-century. They were even a strong presence here in Maine, but their focus here was the French ethnic population, and they nearly succeeded in suppressing the French language and erasing Franco-American culture. Only in the past ten years has there been a resurgent effort by parents to see that their children are taught to speak French.

Anyway, I just wanted to send this letter to introduce myself. As I continue to work on this project, especially given my geographic distance from Montana, I think it’s important to make contact with people who know some of the history of the Gordons and especially who know the region and its history better than I do. Any assistance or suggestions you might offer regarding my research would be greatly appreciated.

Just f.y.i., I’ve enclosed a couple of articles that I have written, one, a photocopy of my article on Born to Be that was published in the anthology Moving Stories, and the other an offprint from an African American Review article about another western African American writer, Oscar Micheaux.

And best of luck with The Whistling Season. Marcella mentioned that you would soon being going out on a book tour to promote it. I am looking forward to reading it.

Best wishes,

Michael K. Johnson
michael.johnson@maine.edu
Moving Stories
MIGRATION AND THE AMERICAN WEST
1850 – 2000
EDITED BY SCOTT E. CASPER AND LUCINDA M. LONG
PUBLISHED BY THE NEVADA HUMANITIES COMMITTEE RENO AND LAS VEGAS A HALCYON IMPRINT
Migration, Masculinity, and Racial Identity in Taylor Gordon’s Born to Be

Michael K. Johnson

In Blazing Saddles, Mel Brooks’s movie spoof of the western genre, the primary running gag in the movie hinges on the fact that the new sheriff, played by actor Cleavon Little, is African American. Like the citizens of Brooks’s fictional town, Rock Ridge, we as film viewers don’t expect to see a black man as the hero of a western, and Blazing Saddles plays for comic effect on the expectations established by the Hollywood western. Although black people have been part of every migration to every American frontier and have always been involved in the history of the settling of the American West, that participation has been mostly invisible to Hollywood, to literary criticism, and, more generally, to the writing of the history of the American West.

Movement westward after the Civil War was the first mass migration by free African Americans. Between 1870 and 1880, for example, the black population of Kansas increased by 26,000 people. Historian William Katz notes in The Black West that between 1870 and 1910 the black population in “the mountain states of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada increased thirteen fold,” while the black population in the western coastal states “increased five times.” Although such writing has received little critical attention, a number of black writers either have documented the experience of black migration westward or have used that experience as source material for fiction and drama. Nat Love in his autobiography The Life and Adventures of Nat Love, Better Known in the Cattle Country as “Deadwood Dick” (1907), Oscar Micheaux in his autobiographical novels The Conquest (1913) and The Homesteader (1917), Taylor Gordon in his autobiogra-
Although Love's representation of himself as a "raceless" cowboy perfectly assimilated into a community of (primarily) white cowboys may seem strange to the contemporary reader, Love's desire to transcend the limitations of race was not untypical of African Americans of his era who migrated west. Paul Bontemps, father of Harlem Renaissance writer Arna Bontemps, moved his family to Southern California in 1906 (when Arna was four). Douglas Flamming notes that this move symbolized "a conscious break from the past, from the South, and even, to some degree, from his race." "Success," as Paul Bontemps saw it, "required a certain colorlessness, a conscious abandonment of ethnic culture." Although the cost of such success may not have seemed so great to many turn-of-the-century African Americans, a later generation would prove more resistant to abandoning ethnic culture and identity.

That hoped-for success was also tempered by the reality of continuing racial oppression. Restrictive "black laws moved westward with the pioneer's wagons," as Katz notes, and such legal restrictions were often accompanied by the anti-black terrorism that African Americans hoped had been left back east. Black migration patterns begin to change during the early part of the twentieth century, and we see increasing movement from rural areas to primarily northern urban areas. Such urban centers as Chicago, Detroit, and Cleveland experienced large influxes of African Americans. From 1910 to 1930, New York alone saw its black population increase 250 percent (to 327,763 people). Whereas turn-of-the-century writers such as Nat Love and Oscar Micheaux migrated west to a frontier environment, we see in the 1920s (the period of the Harlem Renaissance) such black writers as Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps, Taylor Gordon, and Wallace Thurman (all born in the West, products of earlier migrations) reverse that journey and migrate away from western states to Harlem. Arna Bontemps experienced in his father's "conscious break from the past" a sense of loss. Life in the American West "felt strangely like a severance of heritage and created in him a longing for the identifiably black aspects of African American culture." For Arna Bontemps, the African Americans who lived in the East and the South "possessed what he had lost growing up in the West ... an undeniable sense of self." For this second generation of black western writers, the dominant migration experience is eastward, and the dominant desire sparking that movement is to discover— not transcend—a race-based sense of identity.

The pattern of movement sketched out in Taylor Gordon's autobiography Born to Be (1929) coincides with this shift in the history of African American migration. Unlike earlier narratives by black western writers such as The Life and Adventures of Nat Love that explore the possibility of transcending race, Gordon's book focuses on the discovery of "what it means to be black." Gordon migrates from the western environment of Montana to the eastern United States—and from a "natural," racially unmarked identity to a race-based sense of self that he regards with more ambivalence than do Bontemps and other Harlem Renaissance writers.

Born to Be describes Gordon's early life and adolescence as a member of the only black family living in White Sulphur Springs, Montana, his association with circus impresario John Ringling and his journeys as Ringling's private porter into the eastern and southern United States, and his rise to fame as a singer during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s.
The various journeys described throughout the book also symbolize shifts in identity. In Montana, race is one aspect of his sense of self, but he does not represent his skin color as the primary determinant of the way that anyone (including himself) regards him. His journeys eastward and southward introduce him to racial prejudice. To be black in America is to be assigned the status of "non-being," "invisibility." Blackness also means possessing a unique heritage, one that in the context of the Harlem Renaissance's celebration of black cultural accomplishments offers Gordon a means of making a name for himself as a singer, of securing a measure of fame and autonomy by embracing his ancestry. Gordon's discovery of "what it means to be black" alternates between these two opposing positions—an awareness of blackness as a negation of identity, and an awareness of blackness as a source of agency and as the basis for a positive sense of self. Gordon's book addresses—but does not accept easy answers to—difficult questions about the relationships between self, society, place, gender, and race.

Montana

I knew I was black and different in appearance from most of the kids I played with, but my being so never changed the values of the game we might be playing. I got a chance to pitch or bat at the time my merits won for me either of the positions. It was Colored people that put the fear of nature in my head. I wonder if they would have had this fear in their hearts if they had been given the chance to play the game of life that I had had in playing ball? (233)

Gordon's ambivalent representation of African American identity is figured in his response to African American literary tradition—in particular, his use of motifs drawn from the male slave narrative. As critic Sidonie Smith notes, slave narratives were a popular form of nineteenth-century literature, "especially after 1831 when the antislavery crusade began operating full force. Thousands of narratives came into print." Smith argues that these narratives "established certain prototypical patterns, both thematic and structural, that recur again and again in subsequent black autobiographies." Frederick Douglass's The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845) begins with the statement, "I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot county, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age." Douglass goes on
to observe that his "father was a white man. . . . The opinion was also whispered that my master was my father; but of the correctness of this opinion, I know nothing." Booker T. Washington follows this pattern in the opening sentences of his autobiography, *Up From Slavery* (1901): "I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth." Washington notes a similar uncertainty concerning his paternity: "Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man."55

If Washington and Douglass establish from the beginning of their narratives the question of their origins, their lack of knowledge about their paternity, Gordon states, "First I'll tell you about my father and mother" (3). His father, Gordon informs us, claimed Zulu ancestry. At the age of eighteen, his grandfather had gone to England, where he was employed as a domestic servant for a Scottish family. After immigrating to America, the family lost money "and sold everything they had," including Gordon's grandfather. After the Civil War, Gordon's grandfather and father ended up in Ohio, where his father learned "domestic science." After marrying Gordon's mother, "Miss Annie Goodlow of Licking River, Kentucky," he began moving west (4). He found work as chef for the Higgins House Hotel in White Sulphur Springs and then went to Canada to serve as a cook for the railroad—where he was killed in a wreck around the time of Gordon's birth.

Gordon's mother "was born a slave on Pondexter's Plantation near Lexington, Kentucky. She didn't know anything of her parents" (5). If Gordon's description of his mother's birth is reminiscent of the familiar slave narrative opening paragraph, he employs that tradition to provide a contrast to his knowledge of his origins. Of his own birth, Gordon writes, "I was born between six and seven o'clock on Saturday morning, April 29th, 1893, at White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in a little three room shack with two gables, two doors, four windows and a cloth ceiling" (6). Unlike his mother (and unlike Douglass and Washington) who was born in slavery, Gordon knows the exact date and time of his birth. "The first thing I can remember," Gordon asserts in the first sentence of the autobiography, "is my home" (3). Gordon enters into the world with a sense of identity based on a knowledge of a maternal and a paternal history; with a sense of self based on a connection to a place (a "home") that does not belong to someone else ("Pondexter's Plantation"); and with a connection to a geography where, he observes, "If God ever did spend any time here on earth, that must have been His hang-out, for every little thing that's natural and beautiful to live with is around White Sulphur" (4). Although his use of the "I was born" trope indicates an awareness of African American literary tradition, his use of that trope sets up a contrast between his family and his own birth history and his mother's in order to demonstrate how a life begun in the West differs from one begun either in slavery or in the East or South.

Robert Hemenway observes in his introduction to the 1975 edition of *Born to Be* that Gordon invents "an ingenious strategy for protesting prejudice, one of the frequent themes of Black autobiography." Knowing that white America might consider a black writer's exposure of racism as "proof that one's personality has been distorted by it," Gordon claims for himself a persona formed outside of society, "the role of the romantic child of nature." Gordon adopts that persona as a means of demonstrating that his psyche has not been shaped by the limitations that a racist society places on black subjectivity. His pose as a "raceless innocent" enables him to expose "institutions of prejudice without appearing to be self-serving" and without appearing himself to have been damaged or altered by those institutions. That persona, while enabling his exposure of white racism, also creates a dilemma—how to reconcile his sense of connection to other black Americans with a rhetorical strategy that often emphasizes his difference from them: "It was Colored people that put the fear of nature in my head. I wonder if they would have had this fear in their hearts if they had been given the chance to play the game of life that I had had in playing ball?" (233). As with Gordon's use of motifs drawn from the African American tradition of the slave narrative, his take on the theme of protesting prejudice asserts both a connection to and a difference from other black writers.

Gordon's connection to life in the American West is a "natural" one. Race makes no difference in Gordon's relation to the landscape, as appreciation of beauty and a sense of wholeness with the natural world are as available to him as they are to anyone else—including God. "Over this range in the winter—January and February—at night come the flashes of the most beautiful Northern lights," writes Gordon, who continues, "It's nature's grand opera season. Ah! many a night have I had a beer-box seat in that valley while the Grand Mistress of Art displayed her greatest kinetopic plays" (10). Gordon associates the West with beauty and innocence, and he accepts as his own birthright a place in this environment: "What a lucky bird I am to have been laid on top of the Rocky Moun-
tains, hatched out by the Broiling Sun, a suckling of Honey Bluebacks and educated by the Grizzly Bear, with all the beauty and fresh air Nature can provide for her children. If "all the beauty and fresh air" are not entirely outside the boundaries of white ownership, such ownership does not prevent Gordon from seeing in the mirror of the natural world a reflection of his own sense of self.

Gordon describes life in the West in terms of a fluidity of social relationships as well as in terms of a unique geography and natural beauty. Race does not affect his social relationships, Gordon asserts: "I knew I was black and different in appearance from most of the kids I played with, but my being so never changed the values of the game we might be playing." Although his various nicknames (Snowball, Zip, Blacky) reveal that difference in "appearance" is marked, "they called Jimmy Keen 'Blacky' too, and really the only thing black about him was his hair." White Sulphur Springs is a mining town marked by class differences, but Gordon describes himself as someone who can cross the boundaries of social relations. "I played all over town," he observes. He works for or hangs out with female prostitutes, male saloon and bowling-alley owners, gamblers, Chinese laundry owners, as well as such "hundred percent Yankee" wealthy landowners as C. H. Sherman, a former New Yorker who owned "one of the largest farms in the county." Gordon's description of life in the West may depend on a selective memory. We might compare his experiences in White Sulphur Springs to those of members of the black community in turn-of-the-century Helena, Montana. Historian William L. Lang notes a "relative lack of racial conflict in Helena," which he attributes to the moderate size of the black community (at its height, 420 people, 3.4 percent of the city's total population) and "the absence of residential segregation." In contrast, however, to Gordon's description of life in White Sulphur Springs, Lang reports very little social mixing between blacks and whites in Helena. Discrimination also regularly occurred in Helena's legal system. African Americans "frequently faced charges for gambling, disorderly conduct, and other disturbances, but whites usually escaped punishment for the same activities." Even in Gordon's White Sulphur Springs, as Hemenway notes, "Gordon's sister was once prevented from singing spirituals in church, and only ten years before he was born four Black students were expelled to preserve the all-white local high school." Given that African Americans in Montana and elsewhere in the American West during this period experienced discrimination, we must regard Gordon's description of racial harmony in White Sulphur Springs as a rhetorical device constructed to support his "innocent" persona rather than as a necessarily realistic portrayal.

If the whores do not exactly have hearts of gold in White Sulphur Springs, Gordon paints them as colorful western characters whose business acumen he admires. One of his earliest jobs is working for the brothels. He delivers messages for prostitutes, whose customers "were not all miners and bachelors. I fitted right in the network perfectly on account of the pigment of my skin. I was accepted both high and low, never questioned why or what I was doing in conspicuous places." In White Sulphur Springs, Gordon asserts, "my face was a passport stamped in full." Gordon finds race more advantage than detriment, for his blackness provides him a "passport" into the wealthier parts of town. His descriptions here also indicate the existence of racial stereotypes. As Hemenway notes, Gordon "understood at an early age white assumptions about a Black man's place." His "passport" is not so much his "face" as his awareness of white beliefs about what activities represent appropriate black behavior. Although his rhetorical strategy depends on an opposition between the East and the West, he nonetheless provides evidence that the difference between the two may not be as marked as he asserts.
Gordon's attempt to represent himself as both a black man and a "raceless innocent" creates a contradiction that the book hopes to overcome by establishing an essential opposition between life in the East and life in the West. That opposition cannot be successfully maintained. Even in the Eden of White Sulphur Springs, Gordon demonstrates a knowledge of the fallen world of black and white racial relations.

**East of Eden**

While looking out of the window of the day coach, watching the blue peaks of the Rockies disappear behind me, my mind turned to the last instructions Mother and friends had given me. Many of them I neglected, but one thing Mother told me I heeded, that I didn't need my forty-five in the city, so I had left it behind. . . . I began to feel alone. I always felt safe anywhere with Blue Steel Betty by my side: she gave me courage and protection at home when I was alone. They had pictured nothing but trouble in the city, still they convinced me that my forty-five would mean the worst. My nerves grew shaky.

Had I been on a saddle-horse at that moment, I might have turned back. But instead, I had to look at the fast moving ground and bid farewell. (65)

As Gordon describes his youth and adolescence, he continues to portray White Sulphur Springs as a community that will not place race-based restrictions on his ambitions. Gordon's concept of manhood, his understanding of the signifiers that represent masculinity, is shaped within this context. We see him as an adolescent imitating the men around him, performing the role of "man" by adopting the appropriate costume: "I had reached the point in life where all boys wanted to be men. I acted as much so as possible. I got high-heeled boots, a six-horse-roll on my pants, leather cuffs, Stetson hat, with a package of Bull Durham tobacco in my breast pocket and let the tag hang out, always chewing a match in company" (42).

"Education" for Gordon consists of the development of practical skills, the various tasks involved in farming and horse-riding. As a youth, Gordon attends school, "always the only black boy in my room," but he discovers "more interesting things out of school" and eventually abandons a formal education for one involving "the outdoor life" (15). His primary teacher is wealthy landowner C. H. Sherman, of whom Gordon writes, "I was seen so much with him on some of his saddle-horses, people thought I was one of his adopted sons" (43). From Sherman, Gordon learns various masculine skills as well as a cultural knowledge important to his western identity: "He taught me riding, driving, branding, de-horning cattle and putting up hay. He knew a lot of cowboy songs and many a tale of the wild and woolly west" (43). Sherman also aids Gordon's entry into a system of economic exchange as an agent, a wage earner: "The first pay I got for a farm job from him was for driving the derrick during the haying season" (43). In the White Sulphur Springs that Gordon describes, there are no restrictions on his ability to work as he chooses, to develop the skills and knowledge that signify manhood.

After working for John Ringling during the circus owner's visit to Montana, Gordon uses that connection to find employment with an associate of Ringling's, L. N. Scott, who hires him to come to St. Paul, Minnesota, to be his chauffeur. As Hemenway notes, "The snake entering the idyllic valley was the automobile," for Gordon's introduction to the auto sparks an interest in seeing more of the world, and his skills as a mechanic and driver provide him with the means to do so. "I shall miss the bark of the pistol," writes Gordon, but what Gordon will miss is the sense of freedom and manhood that "bark" symbolizes, a developing masculine identity that he abandons before it is completely formed (65). Although he has acquired such signifiers of manhood as a Stetson hat and a package of Bull Durham, Gordon is still a boy when he leaves the West,
ward, Gordon observes that "I naturally wanted to be a man, and chew on the job," but after swallowing too much tobacco juice, he wryly observes, "you have never seen a sicker boy than I was" (43).

Gordon's story reads like an inversion of Nat Love's *Life and Adventures*. Both books devote roughly one quarter of their pages to stories of boyhood and adolescence. The end of boyhood is signaled in each book by a significant journey. Whereas Love goes west, Gordon goes east. At the end of this first significant journey, each protagonist experiences an "initiation." The teenage Love meets up with a group of cowboys in Dodge City, Kansas. Thinking him a "tenderfoot," the cowboys put Love on a particularly ferocious horse as a test of his riding abilities. To the surprise of the gathered cowboys, Love rides the horse, wins their acclaim, and is offered a job with the outfit. Through his demonstration of ability, Love makes a break with the past, the cowboys' acceptance of him symbolizing his transformation from racially marked ex-slave to "raceless" cowboy. Whereas Love represents the result of his initiation as an erasure of racial marking, Gordon's eventual initiation (at a diner in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he is refused service) results in an awareness of himself as racially marked. Gordon, "a real greenhorn," journeys east of Eden (or White Sulphur Springs represented as Eden) and enters into a fallen world of complex racial relations that he must learn to negotiate in order to survive (70).

His initiation into eastern ways occurs soon after his arrival in St. Paul. After driving Mrs. Scott to an appointment, Gordon decides to pass the time before returning to pick her up by visiting a restaurant: "I sat at the counter while the waiters ran up and down by me like white mice in a cage. It was in this restaurant I learned that the magic power of Uncle Sam's money didn't respond to me" (67). One "white mouse" finally responds to his presence: "'We don't serve colored people in here,' That was the first time I had ever heard that phrase, and I really didn't quite understand him, so I answered, 'Just pie and milk'" (68). The waiter, infuriated, throws Gordon's money back at him, yelling, "Get to hell out of here. Don't you understand? Niggers can't eat in here" (68). Gordon emerges from his initiation scene transformed, with an awareness that he has "earned" a new name that signifies an unsettling new identity. Afterward, Gordon observes that "I wasn't myself" (69). Gordon's loss of manhood here is underscored by his response. He reaches for "old Betty," his pistol, a signifier of masculinity that he has sacrificed to come east, and he realizes for the first time what he has lost: "She wasn't there! I can't describe the lonely feeling that came over me. I have never felt like it since. It seemed as though everyone whom I knew had died at once" (68).

The names attached to him reveal the differing effects of racial marking in the West and in the rest of the country. Gordon writes: "All the grand things I had planned to be were pipe-dreams. They couldn't be done! Then all my nicknames came to me—Snowball, Zip and Blackey . . . Besides, with all my nicknames, none of them made any difference about where I ate or slept. It baffled me to think that the mask that aided me so much at home, was all against me in the cities I dreamed of" (76-77). If Gordon's western names make no "difference about where I ate or slept," his names in the east—nigger, colored, spade—do. His postwestern identity is signified by racial slurs, by a renaming that sets limitations on his actions and abilities. To survive in this new environment, he must refashion himself, must find a new "mask," a new "passport." We are privy to Gordon's thoughts and wry observations about racist incidents, and we are aware of the active mind that he learns to hide from other eyes. Gordon's method of protesting prejudice involves in part making the reader aware of the disjunction between the individual whose identity has been shaped in the West and the mask he uses to conceal that identity in the East.

Identity and safety in the East depend on his association with a powerful white man, John Ringling. After a series of adventures in Minnesota, Gordon is ready to continue eastward. He contacts Ringling, who sends him a ticket to New York. He must, however, travel under the assumed name "Mr. William Moran—the pass read that way" (97). Armed with a new "passport," Gordon indeed passes all the way to New York without incident, even though he must give up his own name to do so. From New York, Gordon travels south with Ringling as the porter on his private rail car. Shortly after arriving in Sarasota, Florida, where "John Ringling and his brothers were big men," Gordon becomes quickly known as "Ringling's Niggah. Niggah didn't mean anything, but to be a rich man's niggah—that established the amount of liberty the individual niggah was to have" (105). The liberty that Gordon enjoyed by "passing" as Mr. William Moran—a name given him by Ringling—is replaced by a more limited freedom, granted as well because of Gordon's association with a rich man. Like Moran, "it wasn't my name," but unlike the name "nigger" alone, the new appellation enables Gordon to "pass" where he otherwise might not be able to go (98). His passport is no longer his face but his
Under the aegis of Ringling, Gordon sees and experiences more of the country than he would have otherwise. As Thadious Davis notes regarding Gordon’s rail journey to Minnesota, riding a train is unlike riding a horse in that it is not “subject to his bidding.” Gordon’s experiences with train travel throughout the book establish a contrast “between the individual’s control of his horse (and therefore his own mobility) and the lack of control in a world of mechanical vehicles.”¹¹ As Gordon makes clear, the “mechanical vehicles” (automobiles, trains, and private rail cars) in this world are owned by whites who are able to assert individual control. Although Gordon is excluded from such overt control himself, he is nonetheless able to exercise a degree of freedom of movement—as long as he maintains the appropriate “passport.”

Joining Finance with Love

Gordon employs the slave narrative tradition in part to establish his difference from other African Americans. He also borrows motifs, perhaps unconsciously, that reveal not his difference from but his affinity to other black writers. The relationship between African Americans and “property” is complicated by a history of slavery that designates the black individual as property. In such eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave narratives as The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (1789) and the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, the difference between slavery and freedom is figured as the difference between “being owned” and “owning.” The literary critic Houston Baker argues that Vassa’s narrative traces his realization “that only the acquisition of property will enable him to alter his designated status as property.” As does Vassa, Douglass “eventually converts property, through property, into humanity” by entering into an agreement with his master that allows him “to hire his own time and to keep a portion of his wages.” Vassa earns enough money eventually to purchase himself, his ability to accumulate wealth a central factor in his freedom.¹²

In the male slave narrative, we often see two important symbols of manhood (and humanity) achieved—property ownership and marriage. According to critic Ann duCille, for African Americans “recently released from slavery and its dramatic disruption of marital and family life, marriage rites were a long-denied basic human right—signs of liberation and entitlement to both democracy and desire.” Near the end of his Narrative, Douglass includes “an exact copy” of his marriage certificate, documentary evidence of his humanity and mature manhood. Gor-
Michael K. Johnson

don likewise recognizes the importance of “property” and “marriage” as evidence that one has achieved “manhood.” By the end of the autobiography, Gordon remains lacking in money and unmarried. There is a sense in the book, not completely articulated, that key to Gordon’s failure to marry (and thereby to enter fully into adulthood and manhood) is the racism that restricts his ability to earn and spend money and that limits his choice of a mate. If Gordon’s “innocent” persona depends on a psychology formed in the natural freedom of the West, he underrates that adopted role by revealing how his sexual identity is shaped within the context of the racial restrictions of the East and South. The difficulty he describes in joining finance with love (and the central importance he places on those two symbols of manhood achieved) indicates a similarity between his life and the lives of other African Americans that he otherwise takes great pains to deny.  

If the train and the automobile represent serpents in Gordon’s Edenic West, also signifying the loss of Eden is Gordon’s developing sense of sexual identity, which coincides with his move eastward. Gordon asserts that a “pagan” approach to sexuality is not only acceptable but also a part of both his racial and geographic background. “Nature” should not be denied, and tales of his sexual adventures are an important part of his narrative. “Nature,” however, is compromised by existence in a fallen world, one that limits sexuality as it does other aspects of Gordon’s being. Unmarried at the end of his narrative, Gordon is clearly aware that such a status (as does his financial instability) indicates a lack, an element of masculine identity that he has not achieved: “My stumbling blocks have been my inability to earn the amount of money I would like to have, which is nothing, and win the love I would like to have, that seems to be everything. I don’t think I will ever call myself a success in life until I can move both of those stones. . . . Now I know that the greatest kick in my life will be when I reach the point where I have joined finance with love” (234). Despite his assertion of difference from other African Americans (whose psyches have been shaped since birth by white racism), Gordon narrates a series of incidents that link his financial and romantic difficulties to the existence of prejudice. Those incidents also reveal that Gordon’s psyche has been shaped as much by social relations in a fallen world as by “nature.”

Manhood in Montana means doing “a man’s job” on horseback or in the fields, and Gordon gives little indication of sexual self-awareness in that part of his narrative. His mother’s understanding that he is growing toward sexual maturity, and her observation that he “was getting too big to work around the girls,” ends his job carrying messages for prostitutes (27). As for Gordon himself, “the Grand Mistress of Art,” nature personified, is his most constant feminine companion in the West. Soon after arriving in Minnesota, Gordon discovers that “if I wanted to call myself a man, living right, I had to get a gal” (77). His first romantic efforts, however, are thwarted by the color line. A friend, a white woman, invites Gordon to her bedroom to look at her photo album. Setting “in a large plush chair big enough for two,” Gordon and his friend are startled by a knock on the door: “Something told me . . . I should not get caught in Margret’s bedroom” (80). Gordon escapes through a window and “disappear[s] in the darkness” (81). The knock at the door reminds us of Jean-Paul Sartre’s analogy of the keyhole. In the scenario described by Sartre, as one is looking through a keyhole, one realizes that he or she is likewise being looked at by another and that his or her actions are being judged by that Other. Gordon realizes that his innocent act of looking (at the photo album) is about to be observed by an Other who will judge that act. This situation forces upon Gordon a recognition of how his actions will (or could) be interpreted by the Other. The “something [that] told me,” the voice of warning in Gordon’s head, indicates a subconscious awareness of the limitations on African American behavior. However innocent his actions in the bedroom may have been, his individual actions and intentions will be invisible to white eyes, which will see only his blackness and the woman’s whiteness. The darkness of the night cloaks Gordon’s physical body as his individuality likewise disappears against the background of cultural beliefs about the meaning of “blackness.” That disappearance, which occurs under his own volition, symbolizes his recognition of his place in the world of Others in which he finds himself.

Despite the power of John Ringling’s name, Gordon finds himself in and out of trouble in the South, with that trouble often involving women. In Florida, Gordon teasingly jokes to a white man who is asking him to set up a date with a black woman, “You’ll bring a couple of white gals along with you, too, won’t you” (108). Afterward, when the angry white man walks away looking “like a man who had been firing a furnace and it bursted,” Gordon observes that “I shouldn’t have said that to him” (108). When the Ringling group follows the circus to Oklahoma, a conversation inside the private rail car between Gordon and one of his fellow employees is overheard by a white woman walking past: “It was his luck to be saying, ‘Man, she’s a peach,’ speaking of the [African American
woman they were discussing), when this white woman was going down-town past the car" (115). Only the fact that Mabel Ringling overheard the same conversation and could vouch for them prevented the "Oklahomians [from having] some teeth and toe-nail souveniers [sic] of a Yankee Nigghah" (115). If calling himself a man depends on his getting "a gal," Gordon discovers that racial restrictions make achieving such a name difficult indeed, as even the most innocent act of speaking can be misinterpreted.

Of his relationship with an "enchanted woman I had almost lost my mind over," Gordon describes their first meeting in five weeks—a separation forced by her revelation to her parents "that a man of another race was her headache" (178). Having received that news, her father "threatened to murder her if she left the house again for anything" (178). Even Gordon's association with a black woman in Florida is disrupted. He receives a crude message, "a letter showing a sketched picture of an automobile dangling by its hind wheels off a bridge, and a Niggah hanging to a tree" with a warning that "THIS WILL BE A PICTURE OF YOU," sent by a group of white men, one of whom was interested in the woman Gordon had been seeing (125). Even though Ringling "told them he'd burn the damn town down if they touched me," Gordon observes to himself, "whata hell ofa [sic] country for me. I can't look at a white woman, and they'll kill me for entertaining a brown one" (126).

As his attempt to eat at the St. Paul restaurant demonstrates, Gordon's choice of how to spend his money is as limited as his romantic choices. "As for the lady on the quarter," Gordon realizes, "in a white man's hands she was a goddess, but in my hand she was a bogus bitch" (69). Gordon's gendering of money as feminine reveals his understanding of the link between possessing "money" and "women" as signifiers of masculine identity in a patriarchal society. Although Gordon asserts that because of his frontier upbringing "the Race Question has never been the big ghost in my life," he nonetheless provides evidence that prejudice causes the biggest stumbling block in achieving his two unrealized desires, and the autobiography ends with Gordon unable to establish his manhood (as do Vassa and Douglass) by joining together economics with conjugal union.

The later sections of Born to Be follow Gordon's rise to fame as a singer of black spirituals, a change in status from porter to celebrity. His partner, J. Rosamond Johnson, whose Book of American Negro Spirituals (1925) provided the basic material for Gordon's tenor performances, accompanied him on the piano and arranged bookings throughout the United States and overseas. Through his partnership with Johnson, Gordon regains his name and wins a measure of autonomy and freedom in the East that does not depend on his association with Ringling—and on subsuming his own identity and ambitions under Ringling's name. Through singing spirituals, Gordon also discovers "what it means to be black" in a different sense than earlier. "When I sing to people," Gordon writes, "ten thousand sing to me" (191). Gordon's singing connects him to a history of African Americans in the United States, and he brings that history to life for himself and his audience. His singing success does not, however, provide him with a sense of manhood achieved.

Gordon's desire to journey east is sparked in part by his admiration of John Ringling, whose actions while visiting Montana "showed me very plainly that Easterners were people of power and conviction" (55). After observing Ringling, "I made up my mind then that the West was fine, but I wanted to be an Easterner" (55). The death of his own father, perhaps, leaves a symbolic absence that he fills with white father figures such as Ringling. In his arguments with his mother about following Ringling back east, Gordon writes that "no matter how bright I could paint my picture, Mother could always spot it out with a kettle of black" (55). What Gordon does not realize (but his mother does) is that "blackness" indeed will "spot out" the bright picture he has of himself as an "Easterner," will prevent him from finding in Ringling as father figure an image of identity that he can make his own.

John Ringling, Gordon notes, "was a fine man," and "I might never have left him if Will Marion Cook hadn't of filled my head with the music idea" (142). In the fallen world of racial relations, however, such white fathers both invite and deny identification. Gordon clearly desires to imitate Ringling's success (which is one of the reasons he wants to sing), but Ringling's response to that desire is ambivalent, providing Gordon with rehearsal space (on his yacht) but not actively encouraging his ambitions (nor, as Gordon wishes, financially supporting those ambitions). Asks Ringling, "What do you want to sing for, when you can cook sautéed kidneys so well?" (138). Ringling's invitation to identity necessitates Gordon accepting Ringling's definition of him (cook, not singer) as his own.

If Gordon's celebrity status doesn't help him achieve his goal of joining "finance with love," the regard for his singing talent does provide him with several adventures and travels, including a singing tour of En-
gland and France described in a chapter entitled “My Trip to Heaven.” Freedom for Taylor Gordon is symbolized upon his arrival in France by his ability to spend money when and where he chooses: “the image on the franc . . . was no bogus bastard” (201). Instead of being faced with scurrying “white mice” studiously ignoring his presence, Gordon notes that “men in neat uniforms solicited my trade to spend money for food and dance if I chose to” (201). Gordon ends the chapter with his return to America—and with a description of his being immediately reminded of the restrictions: “Don’t bother the women,” a man tells him when he disembarks in New York, “You are in America now” (218). Mobility alone does not serve as a sufficient signifier of manhood achieved for Gordon, for that mobility brings only interludes of unencumbered freedom.

Conclusion

Gordon’s book asks: What does it mean to be black? What does it mean to be a man—and in particular, to be a black man in America? Hemenway argues that “the normal initiation motif of the Black autobiography” involves the representation of a defining moment “where innocence is shattered” by an awareness of racial prejudice. That motif is “left incomplete” in Born to Be. Rather than building from his discovery of bigotry “a voice of experience, an expression of self that permits one to function in a hostile environment with pride and dignity,” Gordon remains fixed “forever within an idealized Western nature.” Gordon’s failure to move from innocence to experience is symbolized by his inability to achieve the masculine identity he desires. Gordon’s understanding of manhood is shaped primarily by white role models, but his ability to perform that masculine identity is restricted by the white society he finds outside Montana, and he is unwilling or unable to model his own sense of self on the articulations of black male identity found in works by writers such as Frederick Douglass. He is likewise unable to find in the other black men he encounters alternative models of masculinity. Or, when he does try to follow one of those models (such as Jack Johnson), representatives of the dominant culture force his return to the role that they deem appropriate for him. As with Gordon’s use of other themes drawn from the African American autobiographical tradition, his response to the “initiation motif” is ambivalent. To accept that his discovery of racial prejudice has caused a loss of innocence would undercut his primary rhetorical strategy for protesting against racism—and would likewise undercut his assertion of his difference from other African Americans.

Gordon’s rise to fame as a singer places him in a position of defining his “blackness” in a way that counters the dominant culture’s representation of blackness as a lack of identity. Nonetheless, singing does not provide him with an alternative initiation scenario. Gordon writes: “I have grown to really enjoy singing [spirituals], even if I do have to concentrate hard on dead people (chiefly my mother) so I can get their interpretation” (191). In a performance in Louisville, not far from his mother’s birthplace, “I called her out of the grave to sing the songs for the people that once held her in bondage. A queer electric halo seemed to hover over the audience, as they listened to dead slaves, whose forms seep through walls” (221). Although Gordon recognizes the power of the slave songs, he associates those spirituals with the maternal, with his mother on whom he must concentrate to “get their interpretation.” The sense of incompleteness at the end of Born to Be may result in part from Gordon’s inability to reconcile his concept of manhood with the maternal sources of his artistry.

In The Life and Adventures of Nat Love, mobility and a name change coincide to signal Love’s transformation. At the climax of his first journey west, he becomes known as “Red River Dick.” Later, Love earns another name by winning a roping contest in Deadwood, South Dakota, the name of ‘Deadwood Dick,’ a name I made even better known than ‘Red River Dick.’ And a name I was proud to carry and defend, if necessary, with my life.” If Nat Love’s story likewise fails to follow “the normal initiation motif of black autobiography,” he uses other initiation scenarios to represent his sense of humanity and manhood achieved. Migration in Born to Be also symbolizes a shift in identity—or at least a shift in persona. As he moves from place to place, Gordon shifts from name to name (and from mask to mask). He is Emanual Taylor Gordon, Mannie, Snowball, Zip, Blacky, Colored, Nigger, Spade, Greenhorn, George (“‘George,’ I said to myself, ‘that’s what the porters say a real Mr. Eddie an’ Miss Ann calls a portor—George!’”), Mr. William Moran, Ringling’s Niggah, and sometimes simply “Ring-lun” (89). Gordon slips from name to name (and place to place) in his narrative, with no one name in particular signifying his completion of his search for self. The book ends not with a statement of identity and manhood achieved but with a question: “I wonder what I was born to be?” (235).

Although written during the height of the Harlem Renaissance, Born to Be takes a philosophical position somewhere between those ideas expressed by Paul and Arna Bontemps, a father and son whose generational difference represents a historical shift in the development of Afri-
can American beliefs about questions of identity. An earlier generation, following the philosophies of Booker T. Washington, emphasized "racelessness" through imitation of white middle-class culture as a means of achieving success and acceptance in American society. Emerging during the 1920s is a different ideological perspective. As Alain Locke writes in his introduction to The New Negro (1925), an important and influential anthology of black writers and artists, the work of Harlem Renaissance writers is marked by a "deep feeling of race," a "wider race consciousness," and by a self-conscious effort to build on that sense of racial identity as a means of becoming "a collaborator and participant in American civilization." Like Paul Bontemps, Gordon wishes to maintain a belief in the American West's difference from the rest of the country, a belief in the possibility of racelessness. Arna Bontemps traveled from west to east in order "to discover" and embrace "his own identity as a black American." Although Gordon made a similar journey, he is more ambivalent about his connection to a "wider race consciousness." In the end, what is perhaps most intriguing about Born to Be is that Gordon does not find easy answers to the complex questions he addresses.17

NOTES


4. Gordon, Born to Be. Subsequent references to this work will be given parenthetically in the text.


8. Hemenway, introduction to Born to Be, xxvii.

9. Ibid., xi.


11. Thadious M. Davis, introduction to Taylor Gordon, Born to Be (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), xii.


14. Hemenway, introduction to Born to Be, xxxi.

15. Love, Life and Adventures, 77.

16. Born to Be follows Gordon's life up through the age of thirty-six. For a discussion of Gordon's life from that point until his death in 1971, see Hemenway, introduction to Born to Be. Using a variety of sources ranging from Gordon's later unpublished writing to interviews with Gordon and with his relatives and neighbors, Hemenway provides an essential discussion of the economic and psychological struggles that marked the last half of Gordon's life.

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HALCYON SERIES

As the ancient bird, the halcyon, calmed the waters in the face of winter gales, so can the humanities calm our fears and make safe our voyage and our young.

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Jean Baptiste, the protagonist of Oscar Micheaux’s novel *The Homesteader* (1917), first appears in the narrative struggling against a howling blizzard on the plains of frontier South Dakota. Micheaux’s depiction of this storm, which transforms the plains into “one endless, unbroken sheet of white frost and ice,” is both a realistic winter landscape description and an allegorical representation of Baptiste’s social situation—a black individual who has left behind African American communities in the East to seek economic opportunity in a predominately white western frontier settlement (38). As Baptiste observes, there were “Germans from Germany” and “Swedes from Sweden” as well as Danes, Norwegians, “Poles, and Finns and Lithuanians and Russians,” all homesteading in the area surrounding Gregory, South Dakota, “but of his race he was the only one” (64). This opening sequence of a solitary heroic black man advancing “resolutely forward” through snow, sometimes “directly against” the “fine grainy missiles that cut the face,” effectively condenses into a single naturalistic image much of the action that follows as Baptiste struggles to succeed in an America dominated by white people (21).

This image may also figure Oscar Micheaux’s own situation as a black writer working with the Western, a genre associated with white writers. The Western, the story of life on the American frontier, with its “imperial plot of valorizing white men” (Ammons 216), seems a particularly alien genre for the African American writer. How then does Oscar Micheaux negotiate the difficult task he has set for himself—to tell a story of specifically African American experience through a genre associated with advancing an ideology of white superiority and imperialism? On the one hand, Micheaux writes a Western that is perfectly in keeping with the ideology of the genre. In *West of Everything* (1992), Jane Tompkins points out that in the Western, the “West functions as a symbol of freedom, and of the opportunity for conquest” (4). *The Homesteader* is just such a story of conquest, of transforming wild and savage land into civilized productive farmland. “Jean Baptiste had come West,” Micheaux writes, “and staked his lot and future there, doing his part toward the building of that little empire out there in the hollow of God’s hand” (107). In American myth, the West is the place of transformation and self-making, or, as Micheaux renders it, “the place for young manhood,” where with “indefatigable will,” “firm determination,” and a “great desire to make good,” the unknown man who “had no heritage” except for his “French name” could find a level playing field of virgin soil and undeveloped resources and the opportunity to “work out his own destiny” and build his own lit-
As in many white-authored frontier adventures, Jean Baptiste's story also justifies and celebrates the conquest and redistribution of Native American lands and territories—for such activities are necessary precursors to the building of empire and the bringing of civilization to a "savage" land. In *The Homesteader*, Micheaux neither condemns nor critiques the dominant culture myth of manifest destiny but rather claims a share of the spoils for the enterprising black man.

On the other hand, however, *The Homesteader* carefully revises the Western as Micheaux filters elements of the genre through his own experience as an African American, through his understanding and response to hegemonic cultural beliefs of his day, through his reading of African American literature generally, and through his specific knowledge of the writing and philosophies of W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. Micheaux dedicated his first book to Washington; the thinly-veiled autobiography entitled *The Conquest* provides a blueprint for *The Homesteader*. As Pearl Bowser and Louise Spence note, Micheaux believed in "Booker T. Washington's ideal of pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps," and he believed along with Washington that the majority of African Americans "needed models, heroes, to mold public opinion and for the elevation of public sentiment" (19-21). One such hero is Jean Baptiste, whose comments on racial uplift reveal that he shares his creator's beliefs: "If I could actually succeed, it would mean so much to the credit of a multitude of others.—Others who need the example" (109). Micheaux's admiration for Washington and his belief in the goal of racial uplift inform and guide his revision of the Western.

*The Homesteader* is divided into four "epochs." Epoch one follows one year in Baptiste's life, from winter through spring planting to the fall harvest in which Baptiste reaps a successful crop and declares his love for Agnes Stewart, the (presumably) white woman who saves him from freezing to death in the novel's opening sequence. Epoch two begins with Baptiste's decision to "sacrifice" his love for Agnes in the name of race loyalty. "Examples they needed," ruminates Baptiste, "and such he was glad he had become; but if he married now the one he loved, the example was lost" (147). Already in possession of 320 acres, Baptiste purchases still more land to expand his holdings: "If he or any other man of the black race could acquire one thousand acres of such land it would stand out with more credit to the Negro race than all the protestations of a world of agitators in so far as the individual was concerned" (132). In order to reach that number, he needs an African American fiancée on whose behalf he can make a claim. The story of Baptiste's courtship of and troubled marriage to Orlean McCarthy follows. This epoch ends with the death at birth of their first child, a coinciding drought that threatens to destroy Baptiste economically, and with Orlean's returning to Chicago with her father (Rev. Newton Justine McCarthy) as Baptiste helplessly watches.

Epoch three describes Baptiste's fall from grace, his descent into bitterness, and his anger at his father-in-law's manipulative efforts to destroy his marriage. Nearly ruined financially and emotionally, he pulls himself up by his bootstraps in epoch four, and writes the story of his life, which he publishes, sells, and distributes himself. The autobiography's return restores both his economic and his emotional health. He eventually triumphs over the McCarthy family, and the distraught Orlean murders her father and then kills herself, clearing the way for Baptiste to marry the woman he has loved from the beginning. When Agnes Stewart turns out to have African ancestry (as readers have long suspected), the barrier between the hero and his beloved is dissolved,
and some 400 pages after his "sacrifice," Baptiste triumphs. At the novel's end, he brings in a successful harvest, pulls himself out of debt, and is able both to marry the woman he loves and to remain the "example" his race needs.

Baptiste's difficulties in the central sections of the book reflect Micheaux's troubles as a writer trying to create a fiction that adapts dominant culture mythology to African American experience. Baptiste's racial uplift goals, in fact, undermine his efforts to become a successful homesteader. The promises of freedom, conquest, empire, and transformation offered by the Western seem available to a black man only if he thoroughly assimilates whiteness and abandons any sense of responsibility to other blacks. Dan Moos argues that Micheaux chooses a "pioneer over [a] racial identity" and "subordinates almost all issues of race to those of a progressive and civilizing frontier" (358, 360). I want to suggest, however, that The Homesteader registers a great deal of ambivalence about that choice; rather than subordinating racial issues, Micheaux foregrounds the conflict engendered by Baptiste's efforts to be both an African American hero and a Western one.

In the pages that follow, I argue that The Homesteader is a generic hybrid, part Western, part racial uplift saga, that is filled with contradictions, doubles, and doppelgangers. I argue that Micheaux adapts the central structuring opposition of the Western—the essential difference between the civilized East and the wild West—to articulate Baptiste's sense of double-consciousness, his conflicting desires to maintain and to erase his racial identity, to remain connected to the African American East and at the same time to strike out on his own into the white world of the western frontier. At times, the novel seems to pull itself apart as Micheaux tries to bring both plots—of frontier conquest, of racial uplift—to successful completion. Only the melodramatic concluding events (the murder-suicide, the "surprise" revelation of racial ancestry) enable Baptiste's happy ending. This generic twoness is reflected by other incidents of doubling throughout the novel. For example, the virtues and behaviors that the book celebrates (practicality, determination, property ownership) and those it condemns (weakness, frivolity, vice) are personified through opposing characters. Micheaux uses contemporaneous notions of gender as a way of naturalizing positive and negative character qualities as manly or unmanly, womanly or unwomanly. The West is "the place for young manhood," while the East is the home of Baptiste's other and opposite, the Reverend McCarthy with his "womanish smile" (268).

1. The East and the West

To me it was like living back in ages gone, this way of meeting my friend, this choice of a stream so far and lonely that its very course upon the maps was wrongly traced. And to leave behind all noise and mechanisms, and set out at ease, slowly, with one packhorse, into the wilderness, made me feel that the ancient earth was indeed my mother and that I had found her again after being lost among houses, customs, and restraints. (Wister 323)

In the Western, Tompkins writes, the West is the symbolic place of freedom that offers "escape from the conditions of life in modern industrial society: from a mechanized existence, economic dead ends, social entanglements, unhappy personal relations, political injustice" (4). In the myth of the West, freed from the constraints of civilization, the individual returns to an Edenic state of existence—to natural ways of being and behaving. For the black pioneer, the West symbolizes escape from those "conditions of life" specific to African American existence in the East and the South (segregation, anti-black violence, Jim Crow laws). Baptiste's western freedom involves being a "man like any other man" unencumbered by race restrictions or class distinctions. The West offers the
African American man the possibility of full participation in a social system where individual qualities will be recognized and rewarded.

The developing romance between Agnes Stewart and Jean Baptiste symbolizes the possibilities of freedom on the frontier once individuals have escaped from the arbitrary restrictions of civilization. Epoch one concludes as we expect a Western hero has concerns that his white counterparts do not, and thus Micheaux adapts the genre's conventions to address those concerns.

The blizzard that begins the novel is a variation on the classic Western scene of the heroic individual struggling against a savage environment, but Baptiste's immersion in the whiteness of the storm also represents his social situation as the lone African American "in this land where others than those of the race to which he belonged were the sole inhabitants" (68). This sequence, which involves Baptiste's love for each other amid the Edenic beauty of an "enchanted garden" where "harvest birds twittered" and where Baptiste's "lips found hers, and all else was forgotten" (139). In the West where nature rules over custom, "He was as a man toward the maid now" (138). A new Eden, however, is not easily attained by the African American pioneer. Agnes's "halfwitted brothers" return from the fields and recall the two lovers to social reality: "It was only then that they seemed to realize what had transpired and upon realization they silently disembraced. What had passed was the most natural thing in the world, true; and to them it had come because it was in them to assert themselves, but now before him rose the Custom of the Country, and its law" (145). Although the "custom" and "law" that govern interracial romantic relations may indeed be as "halfwitted" as the two brothers who personify them, they strongly influence behavior—even in the wild West. The primary deterrent, however, is not the pressure of custom and law (which can be defied) but Baptiste's sense of ethnosexual responsibility—the fact that "he liked his people" (147). The black Western hero has concerns that his white counterparts do not, and thus Micheaux adapts the genre's conventions to address those concerns.

While Micheaux advocates migrating west and assimilating whiteness, his hero maintains "race loyalty," an unwillingness to submerge himself completely in the white world that almost drags him under.

driving two wagons loaded with symbolic coal through the storm, concisely establishes several points. We learn much about Baptiste's character. He is "just passed twenty-two—and vigorous, strong, healthy and courageous," possessed of "indefatigable will" and "firm determination" (22-24). The story is also a Washingtonian parable of gaining the acceptance and respect of one's white neighbors through "useful work." For delivering the coal, Baptiste earns not only a profit for himself but also accolades from his white neighbors: "That coal to everybody was a godsend, yet think of the risk you took" (65). As another townsman observes, "That Baptiste is some fellow" (52).
the spread of civilization and the interests of the American nation would topple racial barriers and bolster their claims to citizenship and respectability" (345). For Micheaux, Baptiste’s actions prove that blacks can contribute to civilization and thereby can accomplish more to the credit of “the Negro race than all the protestations of a world of agitators” (132). His character, his strong will and self-control, his practicality and work ethic, mark his civilized status according to the middle-class mores of the era. Although Micheaux inscribes the occasional racist incident on the frontier, for the most part Baptiste’s neighbors willingly accept him into the American family once he has proven that he is worthy—that he is indeed “some fellow."

The quality of Baptiste’s character functions to counter white stereotypes of black behavior. However, The Homesteader (like much of Micheaux’s work) also employs those same stereotypes in the representation of African American characters other than Baptiste. As Pearl Bowser and Louise Spence observe, “Part of the means by which [Micheaux] built the appearance of success included singling out those of the Race whom he characterized as immoral, or without ambition and perseverance, and censuring them for impeding the progress of the Race, and therefore holding him back” (25). Baptiste observes that his race seemed “to progress rather slowly. He had not yet come fully to appreciate and understand why they remained always so poor” (107). As a race, “their standard of morals were not so high as it should be” and they were “possessed with certain weaknesses” and “were given still to lustful, undependable habits” (160-61). The hard-working Baptiste observes “that the most difficult task he had ever encountered was” not transforming the wild prairie into farmland but rather “convinc[ing] the average colored man that the Negro race could ever be anything” (107). For Baptiste, other African Americans are like his homestead—full of potential but wild, savage, primitive, in need of development and civilization. “His race needed examples,” Baptiste, in a contemplative mood, thinks to himself, “they needed instances of successes to overcome the effect of ignorance and an animal viciousness that was prevalent among them” (109). The drama, or melodrama, of the novel involves in part the tug of war between Baptiste and “the average colored man,” as his efforts to increase the speed at which the race progresses are stymied by recalcitrant refusals to be uplifted. Rather than lifting up the race, Baptiste by the middle of the novel finds himself in danger of succumbing to the weaknesses, vices, and “undependable habits” he otherwise condemns.

Typical of the Western, Micheaux uses two primary settings to create an opposition between the West and the East that reflects the values and qualities the novel celebrates or condemns: South Dakota-Chicago; white people-black people; freedom and opportunity-vice and poverty; integration-segregation; practicality-frivolity; Jean Baptiste-the McCarthy family; Agnes Stewart-Orlean McCarthy; manly and womanly virtue-unmanliness and unwomanliness. The key difference between East and West is not so much geography as race. For Baptiste, the West symbolizes escape not only from race prejudice in the East but also from the qualities of “animal viciousness” he associates with “the average colored man.” Micheaux writes that Baptiste “had virtually run away from those parts wherein he had first seen the light of day, to escape the effect of dull indolence; the penurious evil that seemed to have gripped the populace, especially a great portion of his race. In the years Jean Baptiste had spent in the West, he had been able to follow, unhampered, his convictions” (269). However assimilated and successful, though, Baptiste is unwilling to sever his connection to black America. If we return to the opening scene of the novel, to the image of Baptiste strug-
gling through the white storm with two wagons "loaded with coal, which towered above his head and shoulders," we might argue that the coal symbolizes the burden of blackness—the "towering" weight of racist attitudes that he must struggle against (21). The coal also tropes the burden of racial uplift—the collective weight of those African Americans whose "ignorance" and "animal viciousness" prevent Baptiste's full integration into American society. The struggle of dragging these twin burdens through the surrounding world nearly kills him.

In perhaps his most significant revision, Micheaux adapts the central trope of the Western and of frontier literature—the essential difference between the East and West—in order to represent geographically what W. E. B. Du Bois describes as "double-consciousness." The African American, writes Du Bois, "ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings" (5). At the same time that Micheaux sees and advocates the opportunities afforded by migration and assimilation, his hero also maintains a sense of "race loyalty," an unwillingness to submerge himself completely in the white world that nearly drags him under in the novel's opening scene. Thus, he condemns the example of a black man who "had taken a white wife" and "decided to claim himself as otherwise than he was," as someone of "Mexican" rather than African descent (146). "Even to merely claim being something else," Micheaux writes, "was a sort of compromise" that Baptiste will not make (146). Baptiste would not (to quote Du Bois) "Africanize America," nor would he "bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism" (5). He simply wishes, as Du Bois writes, "to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American" (5). For Baptiste, though, merging these identities becomes increasingly difficult.

Gerald Early comments that Du Bois "saw blacks as being caught, Hamlet-like, between the issue of" living as "an assimilated American" or "an unassimilated Negro" (xx). Micheaux uses the novel's two primary settings, South Dakota and Chicago, to symbolize these two states of being. South Dakota is the place of the assimilated American, Chicago of the unassimilated Negro—of "Darktown proprietor," the very "center of the Negro life" (147-48). The physical movements in The Homesteader illustrate Baptiste's efforts to overcome his sense of twoness, as he travels back and forth between South Dakota and Chicago, between a sense of racial isolation in the West and a contrasting sense of racial belonging in the East. His marriage to a Chicago-born African American woman, Orlean McCarthy, represents both a joining of West and East and a resolution to double-consciousness. Baptiste's desire is not to abandon his race but to bring them with him—morally and (if necessary) physically. His transportation of Orlean to South Dakota represents his effort to remake the race—as Orlean's frontier transformation signifies that a beneficial change in geography can improve the character of even the least likely of candidates. Torn between a need to succeed in terms of the white narrative of frontier conquest and empire building, on the one hand, and a sense of racial solidarity and responsibility, on the other hand, Baptiste finds the effort he expends in pursuit of both goals spreads him too thin. Bowser and Spence observe that Micheaux "challenged white definitions of race without actually changing the terms... [or] demanding new definitions of Race from within Black America" (26). For Baptiste, resolving double-consciousness means remaking those others who represent his sense of identity as an unassimilated black man. Perhaps the difficulties Baptiste must face result from his inability or unwillingness to see his fellows from a perspective that does not cast them as "others" who must be changed.
2. Manliness and Womanliness

So it came that you sacrificed the real love to be loyal to the race we belong to? ... It was manly. ... I admire your strength. (Micheaux, The Homesteader, 433)

Elsewhere I argue that in The Conquest Micheaux highlights the exceptional qualities of autobiographical protagonist Oscar Devereaux (a precursor to Jean Baptiste) by "creating a contrast between his hero's 'manly' behavior and the 'unmanly' behavior of other black men" (Johnson 238). In both The Conquest and The Homesteader, the character who exemplifies the unmanliness that impedes the progress of the Race is the protagonist's father-in-law, named McCrane in the earlier book and McCarthy in the later one. 12

The Rev. N. J. McCarthy is described as "the rock of unreason," as a man who was "by disposition, environment and cultivation, narrow, impractical, hypocritical, envious and spiteful" (209, 228). A domineering figure, a despot in his own household, he requires that those around him reinforce his own sense of self-importance: "If you would get along with papa, then praise him—you understand, flatter him a little. Make him think he's a king" (210). 13

"Not only was he the father of two illegitimate children," Baptiste discovers, "but he had taken another man's wife to become so—and all this while he was one of the most influential men in the church" (311). McCarthy's inability to control his passions—his temper, his sexual desires, his need for dominance—denotes his unmanliness.

The women in the McCarthy family also allegorically represent undesirable feminine traits. Ethel, the older sister, is a "disagreeable person, ostentatious, pompous, and hard to get along with" (175). Like her father, Ethel has an "evil temper" (176). She dominates her husband and refuses to perform such true womanly tasks as preparing his dinner. She is condemned among women, not because she is a woman with masculine traits but rather because the excessiveness of those qualities indicates her lack of self-control. As Ethel is too masculine, Orlean, like her mother, is too feminine—timid, obedient, and subservient. "Orlean isn't a woman," laments Baptiste, "and that is what I've been trying to make

In Manliness and Civilization (1995), Gail Bederman notes the connection in late 19th and early 20th century America between theories of white superiority and beliefs about gender roles—notions of true manhood and true womanhood that developed from the Victorian concept of separate spheres (domestic and private for women, public and workplace-oriented for men). True womanhood emphasized the qualities of piety, purity, maternity, submissiveness, virtue, and domesticity. True manhood involved having a strong manly character exemplified by self-control and self-restraint. All men, turn-of-the-century Americans believed, were possessed of passionate and potentially violent natures that had to be kept in check. The strength of character—or, manliness—capable of controlling those urges was a racial trait specific to white men. Black men and women (according to this racist turn-of-the-century discourse) lacked the civilized qualities of self-restraint, virtue, and chastity that constituted true manliness and womanliness. 11 Claudia Tate points out that early 20th-century African American writers felt that repudiating accusations of unmanly and unwomanly sexual behavior "was crucial to black people's changing their subjugated social status" (10). Thus, black writers of the period often use dominant conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity as evidence that African Americans were indeed men and women deserving of the same political and civil rights as white men and women. Baptiste's sacrifice of his love for Agnes Stewart is just one example of his civilized self-control, his ability to contain and transcend his own passionate impulses.

SELF-CONTROL AND VIOLENT PASSION IN OSCAR MICHEAUX'S AFRICAN AMERICAN WESTERN
A surrealistic dreamlike sequence early in the novel foreshadows the relationship that will develop between hero and villain. At the first mention of the name of Orlean's father, Baptiste's head begins "throbbing" as his brain "struggles with something that happened a long time before" (163). For the superbly controlled Baptiste, this symptomatic headache foreshadows the return of repressed memory as he drags back to consciousness an incident from childhood concerning himself and McCarthy. This incident, involving a conflict between an adult male and a boy-child over the attention of an adult woman, has clear Oedipal overtones and also foreshadows the nature of the relations that will develop between Baptiste, his wife, and his father-in-law. The five-year-old Baptiste, "his mother's baby boy," first encounters McCarthy in his parents' home in Illinois as they host a dinner for a group of male preachers and female teachers (163). Baptiste cannot recall "how many preachers there were, except that there were many," and they "were all large and tall and stout" (165).

Forbidden from the dinner table until the adults have finished eating, the young Baptiste watches through a window as the preachers "eat, and eat, and eat. He saw the quail the boys shot disappear one after another into the mouths of the big preachers" (165). The big preachers have big uncontrolled appetites that symbolize their unmanliness. Miss Self, one of the teachers, is particularly kind and attentive to Baptiste, and he recalls "how beautiful and sweet he had thought she was" (165). The teacher lifts the boy onto her lap and treats him to half her quail, and Baptiste "fell to eating, feeding his mouth with both hands for he was never before so hungry" (166). Feeling the "angry eyes" of McCarthy upon him, the child realizes that "his crawling upon the teacher's lap had spoiled" the Reverend's flirtation with her (166-67). Responding to McCarthy's remark that the boy is impudent and deserves to be spanked, the child "extended his little face forward, close to the preacher's, as he poured" out an enraged diatribe: "Now you goin' eat it all and leave me none when I'm hun-
gry. You're mean man and you make me mad" (167-68).

McCarthy's victory over the child consists of making him lose control and become so "strangely angry" that his mother punishes him for the outburst (167). As she whips "him longer than she had ever done before," he falls "into a slumber while the blows continued," only to wake up later, his body "sore all over," and to hear his teacher comment, "And to be punished so severely because he wanted to eat is a shame" (168). The child wants to satisfy his desire, his hunger, but is prevented from doing so by the overindulgence of the other men. We might argue that this incident, placed in the narrative almost immediately after Baptiste sacrifices his love for Agnes, comments as much on that frustrated desire as on the child's hunger for dinner. His position on the teacher's lap and McCarthy's flirtation link eating and hunger with sexuality and heterosexual desire. The return of this memory may express Baptiste's suppressed rage over the necessity of his sacrifice. As the child observes, "He had done nothing wrong, yet had been severely punished" (169).

Angry at this treatment, young Baptiste slips out of the house and ventures "deep into the forest" (169). As he walks, the "forest grew deeper, the trees larger, and the underbrush more tangled" (170). Confronted with a log bridge over "muddy waters whirling below," the boy "closed his eyes, and thought of the whipping he had received and the preacher he hated, opened them, and with calm determination born of anger, crossed safely to the other side" (170). There is a deep, deep anger inside of the adult Baptiste—an anger perhaps at the restrictions placed upon him by the "halfwitted" customs and laws of white society but that hedisplaces onto the figure of the Reverend McCarthy, his African American other whose uncontrolled and unnatural appetite prevents him from satisfying his own natural hungers. Ironically, that repressed anger is part of what drives Baptiste, feeding his will, courage, and determination to succeed.

Deep in the woods, Baptiste remembers stories of "something evil in the forests," a catamount that has been attacking and destroying livestock (171). Hearing a terrible cry, he "crouched in a hole he had found where only his shoulders and head were exposed" (171). From the hole, he can "see the eyes plainly" of the beast that stalks him, "red eyes" that "shone like coals of fire" (172). The beast springs and the boy strikes it with a large stick: "Again and again he struck until the head was like a bag of bones. When his strength was gone, and all was quiet, he became conscious of drowsiness. He sank down and laid his head upon the body of the dead animal, and fell into a deep sleep" (172). The description of the catamount's eyes reminds us of the dinner table scene when "the eyes of the other were upon him, and they were angry eyes," connecting the beast in the forest with the "animal viciousness" of McCarthy (166). Perhaps through the attack on the animal, Baptiste enacts the revenge against the Reverend that he otherwise can't. Baptiste's deep anger can only be safely released in the wilderness—against a savage beast that serves as a substitute for the object of his hatred. The threatening existence of this beast enables—in fact necessitates—the release of his suppressed anger and rage. In the context of the novel as a whole, we might argue that Baptiste's relationship with McCarthy reveals his anger at the burden he must assume for the sake of racial uplift. Only in a wilderness space can he indulge the anger that he must otherwise suppress because of his sense of social responsibility.

Baptiste responds to his attack on the animal in the same way he responded to being beaten by his mother—by falling into a deep sleep. Once the anger that has propelled him through the forest has been released, the boy collapses. We might argue,
rather than directly substituting for McCarthy, that perhaps the beast represents Baptiste's own anger that he must subdue and control. Does the "something evil" encountered in the woods exist without or within? Is the attack in the wilderness a release of anger directed against another, or does it symbolize a method of regaining mastery over an anger that has been dangerously set loose? If so, that method is ironic and contradictory—controlling anger through a violent attack that unleashes rather than contains passion. Such a momentary passionate outburst of violence, while typical of the Western, is so contrary to the novel's philosophy that Micheaux must return to and rewrite this scene later in the narrative. Although he repeats the scenario of stalking and being stalked by the beast (McCarthy) in the wilderness (the streets of Chicago), he must find a way of defeating the beast without the passionate outburst that for Micheaux signifies unmanly rather than manly behavior.

3. Between Man and Man

It had come to that point where there was no way out, save only the ancient, eternal way between man and man. It is only the great mediocrity that goes to law in these personal matters. (Wister 399)

The turning point in his life had come. At last his manhood had returned, and he was ready to fight. (Micheaux, The Homesteader, 438)

In Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film (1996), Lee Clark Mitchell argues that as familiar to the Western as the climactic gunfight are scenes in which the male hero is severely beaten. Westerns reveal an "almost obsessive recurrence of scenes of men being beaten— or knifed and whipped, propped up, knocked down, kicked in the side, punched in the face, or otherwise lacerated, clubbed, battered, and tortured into unconsciousness" (Mitchell 169). As a spectacle, the Western employs scenes of men being beaten primarily "so that we can see men recover, regaining their strength and resources in the process of once again making themselves into men" (Mitchell 174). The hero's recovery from a beating symbolizes his superior masculinity—his ability to rise up from the most severe punishments. In The Virginian, Wister introduces a scenario that eventually becomes as conventional to the Western as the shootout. Molly Wood discovers the Virginian, wounded during an Indian attack and unconscious in the wilderness. Following this discovery, the narrative focuses on the long process of the Virginian's convalescence as Molly nurses him back to health. Mitchell argues that such a "feminine presence" is a necessary "catalyst" for the man's recovery, for the "restorative female 'gaze' at the male body" acts as a civilizing influence that ensures that the hero will recover both physical health and manly self-control (Mitchell 178-79).

Few characters in Westerns are beaten as often as Jean Baptiste. In epoch one, he is twice rendered unconscious, first by the storm and second by a kick in the head from a horse. In both cases, Agnes Stewart's "feminine presence" ensures the return of his manly control. Baptiste also lapses into unconsciousness when severely beaten by his mother, as the flashback to his childhood depicts. Whenever he lacks a civilizing feminine presence (his mother, after all, is the one who beats him), he responds by delving deeper into savagery—into the wilderness where "something evil" lives. Although McCarthy's removal of Orlean from South Dakota does physically assault him, Baptiste's response indicates that he has been emotionally beaten in both his body and mind. With the bond of matrimony severed (and resolution to double-consciousness undone) by Orlean's return to the East, Baptiste becomes consumed with the fear that he would "lose his mental balance unless he journey to Chicago and see his wife" (287). Micheaux
writes that “in the days that followed the real Jean Baptiste died and another came to live in his place. And that one was a hollow-cheeked, unhappy, nervous, apprehensive creature” (316). In Chicago, unable to find a way through the barrier McCarthy has erected around Orlean, “all the manhood in him crept out” (347). He soon engages in male behaviors he earlier condemned: “stud[y]ing the various forms of vice about,” listening to “ragtime music,” and drinking too much (348).

In the absence of a civilizing feminine presence, Baptiste becomes unbalanced and his actions increasingly unmanly. If heterosexual marriage symbolizes a harmonious rather than conflicted sense of twoness, the dissolution of that marriage means that Baptiste must find another way to resolve the opposing demands of his “unreconciled strivings.” Narrative events create the expectation that he will resolve inner and outer conflict in time-honored Western fashion—through violent action.

Perhaps the defining characteristic of the Western is the climactic show-down, usually a gunfight. “The most salient fact about the Western,” Tompkins comments, is that “it is a narrative of male violence” (28). The Western often tells a story that not only justifies the hero’s violent actions but that also insists that such actions are necessary—that the only way for a man to remain a man is through an act of murder. Early Westerns address a growing turn-of-the-century fear that white American men had become too civilized, that too many years of manly restraint had atrophied male passion and feminized white manhood.

Westerns from the early part of the twentieth century by white writers (such as Wister’s The Virginian) emphasize the importance of a “balanced” masculinity. “A man,” the Virginian comments, “any full-sized man, ought to own a big lot of temper. And like all his valuable possessions, he’d ought to keep it and not lose any” (188). If being a man means controlling one’s temper, Wister’s novel also asserts that manhood turns on knowing when to let one’s passions explode. In Wister’s world, unmanliness appears in two opposing figures, the man who cannot control his passions and the man whose life of civilized restraint has so buried those passions that he has become effeminate. The Virginian stands between these two extremes—filled with male passion that he can release when needed but otherwise always carefully in control of himself.

At one point, a character named Balaam savagely beats a horse, provoking a strong, angry response from the Virginian: “Then vengeance like a blast struck Balaam. The Virginian hurled him to the ground, lifted and hurled him again, lifted him and beat his face and struck his jaw” (264). Certain circumstances (defending the defenseless from truly savage behavior) justify the exercise of male passion. Ultimately, justice—the defense of his manly honor against Trampas, the villain who has slandered his name—demands that the Virginian gun his enemy down.

In the Western, passionate masculinity erupts in the form of violent actions, gun battles, fistfights, and so on, but murder and manliness cannot be reconciled as easily for Micheaux as they are for Wister. As Baptiste reflects, for any man, “the sight of one who has wronged him might cause him for a moment to forget all his good intentions and manly resolutions,” and that loss of hard-earned manliness is the one thing that Baptiste cannot afford (312). To murder would be to enact black manhood as white society conceives it, would be to defeat the goal of racial uplift by becoming like a member of that class of blacks he supposed-ly has risen above. When the conventions of the Western conflict with the goals of the racial uplift saga, Micheaux departs from the formula.

That departure is signaled by a change in place—as we shift away from South Dakota to Chicago, which becomes the dominant setting for the last half of the book. In the Western, the white hero
must prove his manhood through a justifiable—indeed necessary—act of violence. For Micheaux, the black hero must prove his manhood through just the opposite action—by demonstrating his ability to refrain from a savage act of violence, no matter how tempting or justifiable that act might be.

Despite this change in the location, *The Homesteader* still evokes the expectation of a climactic showdown. In language that recalls the killing of the catamount, Baptiste wanders through the streets of Chicago thinking to himself that “the only justifiable action would be to follow the beast to his lair and kill him upon sight” (312). “I feel as if it would do me good,” Baptiste comments, “to get drunk tonight and kill somebody” (313). As he contemplates the wrongs done to him, “Wrath became his. . . . He wanted to go forth and slay the beast” (352). As Baptiste as a boy killed the catamount, we suspect that Baptiste the man will indeed “slay the beast” that is McCarthy. During his unmanly descent into the underworld of urban vice, he even visits a prostitute, who tells him, “I can just see that someone has done you a terrible wrong, and that when you rose now you would have gone forth and killed him. . . . But try to refrain from that desire” (352). On the verge of succumbing to the “animal viciousness” he has fought against, Baptiste finds in the most unlikely of places a womanly woman who helps restore his manly self-control just when he needs it.

The novel’s final (and most explicitly violent) beating scene counters the expectations otherwise evoked by the narrative. Baptiste does not face McCarthy in a man to man showdown that settles their conflict. Rather, the emotional climax of the novel occurs in a scene that repeats the key elements of Baptiste’s flashback to childhood. Baptiste loses his temper while speaking to McCarthy over the telephone, and Orlean (like his mother in the earlier scene) responds by furiously beating him. Baptiste grasps the telephone and pushes Orlean “roughly aside,” and we hear “his loud voice screaming over the phone” as he cries “savagely” at his enemy on the other end of the line (382). The equally enraged Orlean begins to strike him: “He made no effort to protect himself. He allowed her to strike him at will and with a strength, born of excitement, she struck him in his face, in his eyes, she scratched him, she abused him so furiously until gradually he began to sink. . . . As he lay with eyes closed and a slight groan escaping from his lips at her feet, she suddenly raised her foot and kicked him viciously full in the face. This seemed, then, to make her more vicious, and thereupon she started to jump upon him with her feet” (383). As in the childhood dinner table scene, Baptiste becomes “strangely angry” with McCarthy and is subsequently punished so severely for his outburst that he loses consciousness: “How long he lay there he did not know” (383).

The primary threat represented by McCarthy is his ability to provoke in Baptiste (even over the telephone) an uncontrollable rage—and, by so doing, to unman him. The point of *The Homesteader* is not simply that good and bad behaviors exist but that the very existence of unmanliness threatens the achievements of civilized African Americans such as Baptiste, whose success derives from his strong will and self-control. The exemplary figure of racial uplift, Baptiste becomes his own double, slipping into the behaviors that place him among “the others who need the example,” his downfall brought about by the very others he has hoped to lift up. Even worse, as the boy Baptiste responds to his mother’s example by in turn savagely attacking the catamount, so does Orlean—the project he was supposed to develop into a woman—respond to his unmanly example with unusual and uncharacteristic viciousness of her own. Rather than lifting her up, he has provoked her to worse behavior. All Baptiste’s efforts for manly self-control, romance, homesteading, and racial
uplift, collapse in conjunction with his passionate outburst and his subsequent beating at the hands of his estranged wife. As Mitchell notes, however, the Western employs beating scenes in order to indulge in the drama of the hero’s recovery—so that we can admire the superior masculinity that enables him to rise from the physical (as well as, in Baptiste’s case, moral) low to which he has fallen.

4. Conclusion

“I don’t think he wants Orlean any more, and I don’t blame him after what she has allowed to happen to him through her lack of womanhood. Nawsiree, Baptiste didn’t come into Chicago this time crying, he came here like a man, and it’s the man in him with which you’ll have to fight now.” (Micheaux, The Homesteader, 455)

For Micheaux, masculine and feminine represent complementary rather than opposing qualities. Adherence to traditional gender roles appears primarily in terms of work assignments, housekeeping, cooking, and raising children for women, working in fields for men. The qualities he most admires (self-control, strong will, practicality) exist equally in both sexes. Admired womanhood is adventurous as well as compassionate, as Agnes Stewart exemplifies when she rides out into a blizzard alone and discovers the fallen Baptiste. Agnes’s rescue of Baptiste from the ravages of the blizzard in the novel’s opening scenario illustrates what Micheaux sees as the proper relation of the sexes. When the forces outside of the individual’s control that are arrayed against him (the coal-black burden he must carry, the surrounding whiteness against which he must struggle, the forces of nature within and without) become too much, it’s woman who rescues him—who lifts him up and who through proper feminine behavior (tender care, nursing) restores his health and manhood. Agnes’s adventurous spirit places her so that she can save Baptiste, but her womanly care returns him to himself. In the other beating scenes, unwomanly behavior—both Orlean’s and his mother’s physical attacks against Baptiste—contributes to the hero’s loss of self-control.

Brought low in Chicago by his own unmanly behavior (and by Orlean’s response to it), Baptiste fortunately encounters a series of womanly women, beginning with Mrs. Merley (who had tried to reunite husband and wife), who “bathed his wounds . . . and bandaged his face carefully” in the wake of his beating (386). He visits a young woman named Jessie in southern Illinois and finds that “her kind sympathy” serves “to revive in a measure his usual composure, and when he left a few days later, he was much stronger emotionally . . . [and] determined to try to regain his fortunes” (396-97). He decides to publish and sell his autobiography himself: “He secured orders for fifteen hundred copies of his book in two weeks . . . and in sixty days . . . had deposited twenty-five hundred dollars to the credit of the book in the banks” (410). The money earned from the book enables Baptiste to stall his creditors and delay foreclosure proceedings. While traveling the country selling the book, he contacts Irene Grey, a marriage prospect earlier in the novel before circumstances led to his proposal to Orlean. Irene, he discovers, is “the kind of girl” and the Greys “the kind of family his race needed” (422). Unlike McCarthy who wants to be treated like a king, Irene’s father, Junius N. Grey, is one, the so-called (because of his vast and successful farm) “Negro Potato King” (426). Through the Greys, Baptiste comes into contact with uplifting examples who inspire him to renew his “great desire to make good” (24).

When news arrives that Orlean has sold her claim for pittance, Baptiste realizes that “the turning point in his life had come. At last his manhood had returned, and he was ready to fight” (438). Although in The Virginian Wister asserts that “It is only the great medi-
ocity that goes to law in these personal matters,” Micheaux relocates the Western showdown from the wild streets of the frontier town to a Chicago courtroom (399). His decision to seek justice in the court rather than on the street signals Baptiste’s victory over his own passionate impulses. The trial places Orlean in the position of saving her father by “falsifying to the court,” an action that frees McCarthy but that ultimately unhinges Orlean (486). Despite McCarthy’s success, “in the minds of every man and woman in the crowded court room, N. J. McCarthy stood a guilty man,” resulting in a public relations victory for Baptiste (488). When Baptiste is falsely accused of causing the violent deaths at the McCarthy household, Agnes Stewart re-enters the narrative to rescue Baptiste once again. She hires a Pinkerton detective who establishes his innocence in court. Coinciding with Baptiste’s release, Agnes discovers a letter from her mother written many years ago that reveals her African ancestry. The story ends with Jean and Agnes happily married on their own homestead and with the news that Baptiste had sold his crops “at a price so high that he had sufficient to redeem at last the land he was about to lose and money left for future development in the bargain” (529).

Although Baptiste triumphs, we might ask the cost of that victory. Gerald Early writes that for W. E. B. Du Bois, “To be an assimilated American and to be an unassimilated Negro were both real and, more importantly, equally or near equally appealing choices” (xx). In the Western, life in the West is always better than in the East. Unwilling or unable to overturn this opposition, Micheaux represents double-consciousness not as a choice between equally appealing options but as a choice of superior (assimilated western American) and inferior (unassimilated eastern Negro) ways of life. At the end of the court proceedings, Baptiste reflects: “It seemed that a great burden had been lifted from his mind, and he closed his eyes as if shutting out the past now forever. He was free. Never would the instance that had brought turmoil and strife into his life trouble him again. Always before there had seemed to be a peculiar bond between him and the woman he had taken as wife. Always he seemed to have a claim upon her in spite of all and she upon him” (490). Freed of the “peculiar bond,” Baptiste puts an end to the “turmoil and strife” of twoness by declaring himself free from the mutual “claims” of husband and wife—and free as well from the bond between the individual and the larger collective that their marriage symbolized. As a resolution to the problem of double-consciousness posed by the novel, the conclusion seems unsatisfactory. Those characters who represent an unassimilated cultural identity conveniently kill themselves off, and although Baptiste keeps his vow to marry within the race, he chooses a woman of African ancestry who has lived her entire life as a member of the dominant culture. “One ever feels his twoness,” Du Bois writes, “two un reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (5). The difficulty of joining West and East, assimilated and unassimilated, of reconciling “two warring ideals,” seems too much, and Baptiste abandons the effort.

McCarthy, Baptiste’s double, the inferior other who cannot remain part of his consciousness, must be defeated and driven out of the story before the hero can enjoy the happy ending promised by the Western. As Bowser and Spence observe concerning Micheaux’s work in general, “By setting himself up as a model of one who had risen above the prevalent notion of the Negro as ‘inferior,’ he was inadvertently reinforcing the very attitude he imagined he was overcoming—the idea that the morality, ambition, and abilities of the Negro was ‘the problem’” (25). Instead of explicitly addressing how racial bigotry (white “law” and
the use of pejorative stereotypes, the absence of explicit black protest against white bigotry—have no doubt contributed to the relative lack of critical attention given Micheaux's written work.15 As I hope my discussion of The Homesteader has established, Micheaux is a writer capable of producing complex and intriguing texts. Even when he does not entirely satisfy the expectations of contemporary readers of African American literature, Micheaux creates compelling works worthy of more discussion, analysis, and debate.

1. Between 1913 and 1947 Oscar Micheaux published seven books, including The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer (1913), The Homesteader (1917), The Wind from Nowhere (1944), and The Masquerade: An Historical Novel (1947). Within approximately the same span of years, Micheaux produced and directed around 40 films, beginning with his first silent movie in 1919, The Homesteader (based on his novel). Micheaux's film work has garnered more critical study than his books. For recent studies, see, for example, J. Ronald Green's Straight Lick: The Cinema of Oscar Micheaux (2000); Pearl Bowser and Louise Spence's Writing Himself into History: Oscar Micheaux, His Silent Films, and His Audiences (2000); Jane M. Gaines's Fire and Desire: Mixed Race Movies in the Silent Era (2001); Pearl Bowser, Jane Gaines, and Charles Musser's Oscar Micheaux and His Circle: African American Filmmaking and Race Cinema of the Silent Era (2001), an anthology of essays; Gerald R. Butters's Black Manhood on the Silent Screen (2002). For a discussion of Micheaux's novels, see Jayna Brown's "Black Patriarch on the Prairie: National Identity and Black Manhood in the Early Novels of Oscar Micheaux." For a thorough discussion of all Micheaux's novels, see Dan Moos's "Reclaiming the Frontier: Oscar Micheaux as Black Turnerman," which is particularly useful for an extended discussion of one of Micheaux's final novels, The Wind from Nowhere.

2. As an example of the white supremacist ideology of the Western, Barbara Will notes the xenophobic and racist views put forth in an 1895 essay "The Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," by Owen Wister, author of the popular and influential Western, The Virginian (1902) (309). For Will, the essay explicitly states the racial philosophies that underlie the Western genre. Quoting from the essay, Will argues that Wister "glorifies the triumph of the racially pure, 'untamed Saxon' cowboy over the "encroaching alien vermin, that turn our cities to Babels and our citizenship to a hybrid farce"" (Will 309). For Wister, the East is the place of hybridity, a racially mixed "Babel" that horrifies the pure Anglo Saxon who fantasizes an American West where the white cowboy naturally rises to the top and triumphs over all others.

3. Although I refer primarily to the general tendencies of the Western, I will occasionally refer to Owen Wister's The Virginian as a specific example for comparison. I have chosen to use The Virginian for several reasons, including that it falls roughly within the same time period as Micheaux's novel. Also, the popular The Virginian is widely regarded as a foundational text in establishing the genre's conventions. Finally, Micheaux was apparently familiar enough with the book to make a comparison with The Homesteader potentially revelatory in examining the way he revised this source material (Bowser 9).

4. Minor characters in the novel make occasional jokes about our hero's "French name," referring to him as John the Baptist or as St. Jean Baptiste. The choice of name also points to the history of African American participation in westward expansion, to Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, the pioneer settler (originally from Haiti) who established the first permanent settlement in what is now Chicago.

5. Of the students (including himself) studying at Hampton Institute, Booker T. Washington comments, "The great and prevailing idea that seemed to take possession of every one was to prepare himself to lift up the people at his home. No one seemed to think of himself" (36). Washington, while encouraging individual success in Up From Slavery, emphasizes (as does Micheaux) that individual actions contribute to the collective good of "lifting up the people at his home.

6. In his philosophical position on "the race question," Micheaux is by no means an anomaly among African American writers of this period. In fact, Micheaux's uplift plot has much in common with the black women writers (such as Frances Watkins Harper, Pauline Hopkins, and Amelia E. Johnson) of the post-Reconstruction period (1877-1915) whom Claudia Tate discusses in Domestic Allegories of Political Desire (1992). These women, Tate states, "repeatedly wrote novels about the
moral development, spiritual maturation, professional aspirations, and economic advancement of... social justice for black Americans," goals that were frequently inscribed "within the familiar marriage plot of nineteenth-century white women's sentimental fiction" (11). As in The Homesteader, the "successful marriage" in these works symbolizes not only individual fulfillment but also the possibility of "society's reform" (11).

7. According to Pearl Bowser and Louise Spence, Micheaux constantly recreated an image of self, a "biographical legend," that "was neither sole nor unitary. Perhaps Micheaux himself was searching for a unifying vision of his life through narratives of achievement" (Bowser and Spence xix). Although The Conquest and The Homesteader are both based on events in Micheaux's life, the two heroes of these books are clearly different characters created to achieve particular effects. Oscar DeVereaux in The Conquest is a tenderfoot character unprepared for life on the frontier, and Micheaux traces his gradual development of the character and skills necessary to his success. The opening scene of The Homesteader reveals a key difference in the fictional hero Baptiste and the more autobiographical persona of DeVereaux. Baptiste is no tenderfoot. He has already learned the ropes and is presented to us as a heroic rather than as a necessarily realistic or autobiographical figure.

8. A comparable example from Up From Slavery involves Washington's decision to teach the trade of brick-making at Tuskegee Institute. Washington comments, "The individual who can do something that the world wants done will, in the end, make his way regardless of his race. One man may go into a community prepared to supply the people there with an analysis of Greek sentences. The community may not at that time be prepared for, or feel the need of, Greek analysis, but it may feel its need of bricks and houses and wagons" (91).

9. Such behaviors relate to environment and disposition and are not innate racial traits, according to Micheaux's philosophies. He provides examples of white characters who also have "undependable habits" (161). He likewise includes African American characters who embody the qualities he admires. For the most part, these characters are peripheral to the central plot, which focuses on Baptiste's efforts to reform "the average colored man [and woman]" (107).

10. For a discussion of twoness in Micheaux's films, see J. Ronald Green's Straight Lie: The Cinema of Oscar Micheaux. Green argues that Micheaux's films have a "non-assimilative style" that reflects rather than glosses over "the turmoil of [the] struggle" of double-consciousness (49). Twoness in Micheaux's films is symbolized by the tension created by the desire to both emulate Hollywood films (with their high production values) and to reject the "glossy illusionism" of those films in favor of what Green calls an "aesthetics of moderation," a rougher but intentionally less spectacular style of film making (48, 29).

11. See Bederman, Manliness and Civilization, especially the discussions of African American prize fighter Jack Johnson (1-10, 20-23, 41-42) and of Ida B. Wells's anti-lynching campaign (45-78).

12. Both McCarthy and McCraline are based on Micheaux's actual father-in-law, an Elder in the African Methodist Church, N. J. McCracken. For a discussion of the relationship between events in Micheaux's life and his recreation of those events in his artistic work, see Betti Carol VanEpps-Taylor, Oscar Micheaux, A Biography: Dakota Homesteader, Author, Pioneer Film Maker (1999). I should note as well that The Conquest and The Homesteader, while sharing numerous plot elements, are nonetheless quite different books. Although I follow the argument made in an earlier article that Micheaux was more at ease exploring the relationship between DeVereaux and McCraline in The Conquest, I emphasize here those elements of The Homesteader that differ substantially from The Conquest, such as the flashback to the incident in Baptiste's childhood, the more careful development of Orlean's character, the scene where Orlean physically attacks Baptiste after he shouts down McCarthy on the telephone, and the events that follow that incident. (The Conquest ends with DeVereaux losing his temper during a telephone conversation with McCralline.)

13. As Bowser and Spence note, in the various incarnations of his biographical legend, "there are contradictory, even multiple, Micheauxes" (39). We might observe here that Baptiste's refusal to flatter McCarthy and "make him think he's a king" contrasts sharply with Micheaux's own actions (210). Bowser and Spence note that "to survive in business, Micheaux drew upon all his considerable resourcefulness. He acted shrewdly, often with guile and not infrequently with subterfuge" (17). To "outwit his foes" (such as white-dominated censor boards), he used "calculated flattery and psychological trickery" (17). Baptiste's condemnation of such tactics may reveal him as an idealized version of his author, or we might interpret Baptiste's unwillingness to resort to "calculated flattery" as a character flaw. Orlean, distraught and emotionally fragile in wake of the death of their first-born child, is left alone with her father—who continually works to poison her opinion of her husband. The pressure of being pulled in opposite directions by husband and father causes her condition to worsen. Jean Baptiste, we're told, "could have settled matters... by sacrificing principle" (261). Although "he could have sentimentally appealed his father-in-law," Micheaux writes, "Jean Baptiste at no time sacrificed his manhood for any cause," not even, we might add, for the sake of his wife's emotional and physical health (262).

14. Although Micheaux writes the novel in third person and occasionally switches between different narrative perspectives, much of the book is filtered through Baptiste's consciousness as we see events from his point of view. We might argue that Baptiste's perspective presents to the reader a distorted view of the events surrounding his marriage. We might interpret those events in terms of a delayed working through of Baptiste's own Oedipal conflict—with Orlean substituting for the desired mother and McCarthy for the forbidding father. Baptiste's unnatural desire for his mother is displaced...
onto the relationship between Orlean and the Reverend—which the novel clearly represents as emotionally incestuous. The submerged sexual nature of that relationship is implied by the murder-suicide—in which Orlean enters the Reverend's bedroom and stabs him in his bed before killing herself. For further discussion of Micheaux and Oedipal conflict, see J. Ronald Green's Straight Lick: The Cinema of Oscar Micheaux, especially pages 15-17.

15. The developing body of scholarship devoted primarily to Micheaux's films is much more extensive than criticism devoted to his literary work. Although most book-length analyses of Micheaux's movies include discussions of his writing, only Joseph Young's Black Novelist as White Racist: The Myth of Black Inferiority in the Novels of Oscar Micheaux (1989) emphasizes Micheaux's books over his films, and Young's thesis that Micheaux is (as the title indicates) an African American version of a white racist needs to be updated and re-examined (see also Green's critique of Young's argument, pages 193-224, in Straight Lick: The Cinema of Oscar Micheaux). In the cinema, Micheaux is pioneer in a way that he is not in the field of literature, a fact that may explain to a large degree the critical attention his films have received. Also, his films demonstrate a greater willingness to address the problem of white racist attitudes and actions. For example, the controversial Within Our Gates (1920) is sharply critical in its depiction of a white lynch mob; in The Symbol of the Unconquered (1920), a story of the frontier that takes several plot points from The Homesteader, the role of the villain is filled primarily by the Ku Klux Klan. A poster advertising the film emphasizes the spectacle of the "MURDEROUS NIGHT RIDE" of the Klan as they try "to drive a BLACK BOY off of Valuable Oil Lands" (as printed in Bowser and Spence 158). We might regard The Homesteader, in some ways, as a transitional work in Micheaux's development as an artist. The elements of racial protest that Micheaux will foreground in his films may be already present in The Homesteader but in submerged form—in, for example, the naturalistic image of the black hero struggling to survive in the cold, violent, white world of the blizzard. Not yet willing to indict directly white actions (such as vigilante violence) that impede African American success and survival, Micheaux displaces social critique into descriptions of the natural phenomena.

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Ivan,

I'm enclosing Mom's entire file on Rose Gordon. She keeps a scrap book on funerals. Mainly to answer questions from relatives.

I'm also enclosing a copy of Rose's death certificate. That, of course, gives both birth and death dates.

Sorry we missed you last Summer. Whenever you have time, please stop to say "Hi".

Never mind the compensation. Anyone who can make the "hard hearted ole Undertaker" cry (House of Sky) is entitled to a few amenities.

My best to Carol,
Ken
Dear Ken--

You've come through again. Thanks, and to your mom too, for all the Rose Gordon material. I might as well tell you what I'm up to. This novel I'm finishing takes place around Dupuyer and Choteau, not dear old WSS, but on its dedication page (to Carol) I want to have as an epigraph something Rose said to us when we tape-recorded her and Taylor in the summer of '68. It'll read:

"You got to make your way
in this old pig iron world."

--Miss Rose Gordon (1885-1968)

It ain't much, but Rose and Taylor deserve some memento in history.

Hope you're not done in by the winter. Just remember, spring in Montana is only six months away.

hurriedly,
Certification of Death

Deceased — Name: Rose Beatris Gordon

Race: Negro

Age: 83

City, Town, or Location of Death: White Sulphur Springs

Sex: F

State of Death: Montana

County of Death: Meagher

Date of Death: November 19, 1968

Immediate Cause:

Hemorrhagic Shock + Renal Shutdown

Other Significant Conditions:

Upper Gastrointestinal Hemorrhage

Possible Esophageal Varices

Autopsy: Yes

Certification:

John West, M.D.

Certificate of Death:

White Sulphur Springs, Montana

Burial:

Mayn

Date: November 23, 1968

Funeral Director or Mortician: Kenneth Burchel

Local Registrar: Donald Beers

Date Received by Local Registrar: November 26, 1968
Taylor Gordon, noted singer, author, laid to rest at Mayn Cemetery

On Tuesday, May 11, funeral services were held for Emmanuel Taylor Gordon in the Twichel Chapel. The Rev. James Anderson of the Grace Episcopal Church officiated with Mrs. Sue Musgrove offering a message in song. Mrs. Musgrove sang “Lead Kindly Light” and “Sweet Chariot.” Pallbearers were Jack Mathis, Keith Peterson, Marshall Hanson, Grant Schmid, Bob Bailey and Marvin Corkill. Burial was in the family plot of the Mayn Cemetery.

Mr. Gordon was born in White Sulphur Springs on August 29, 1893 to John and Mary Gordon. His mother had been a slave and yet he went on to become famous as an outstanding tenor and the author of the book “Born to Be,” which is now highly sought after as a rare edition. His father came to this area by steamboat and worked here as a chef and baker. He had come to this country from Scotland with a family named Gordon and had adopted that name. Mrs. Gordon was a slave in Kentucky before she met and married Taylor’s father. They came to this area while the town was a thriving cowtown.

John Ringling, of circus fame, often visited his ranch here and young “Manny” as he was then called, learned to drive and repair cars from the Ringling chauffeur. He later became a chauffeur for an official of the Minneapolis Opera Co. and his musical career was launched. He held many jobs, however, before he settled permanently on music, with Ringling helping him on several occasions. He appeared in many musicals on the East Coast, including one with Fred Astaire and made many tours of the nation and Europe. He retired in 1960, returning here to live with a sister Rose, who died in 1968. His last concert was in Great Falls in 1961.

He was preceded in death by his sister Rose, and three brothers, Robert, George and Francis. There are no survivors.

E. T. Gordon Rites Tuesday

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

— Emmanuel Taylor Gordon, 77, a well-known singer, died Wednesday at Mountain View Memorial Hospital in White Sulphur Springs.

Funeral services will be conducted at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Twichel Funeral Chapel in White Sulphur with father James Anderson officiating. Burial will be in the family lot in the Mayn Cemetery here.

Gordon was born Aug. 29, 1893, in White Sulphur, the son of John and Mary Gordon. He received his education here and voice training from John Ringling. He made his debut in Carnegie Hall and several tours of Europe, and a command performance before royalty in England. He was also a successful author.

He was preceded in death by one sister, Rose and three brothers.

Gordon gave many concerts throughout the state, retiring in 1969 when he returned to White Sulphur to live with his sister.

Caroline E. Brown dies after lengthy illness

Caroline E. Brown died in the local hospital Saturday, June 5, after a lingering illness. Funeral services were held Tuesday, June 8, in the Grace Episcopal Church where she was a member, with Father James Anderson officiating. Sacred organ music was played by Mrs. William Ellison. Pallbearers were Grant Schmid, Marion MacKay, Marvin Corkill, Russell Edwards, Jack Mathis and Jim Clay.

Mrs. Brown was born in Madisonville, Kentucky on September 29, 1886, to John and Nancy Qualles. She married Sidney A. Brown in Bisbee, Arizona in 1919. Brown worked as a mining engineer until his retirement in 1959 when they came to White Sulphur Springs to make their home. Mr. Brown passed away last year.

Mrs. Brown is survived by her daughter Mrs. Robert (Thelma) Johnson, two grandchildren, Mrs. Gerritt (Marga) VanOmmen of White Sulphur Springs and Marshall Johnson of Livingston and three great grandchildren as well as one brother in law, two sisters in law and numerous nieces and nephews.

Interment was in the Masonic section of the Mayn Cemetery beside her husband.

Mrs. C. E. Brown Rites Tuesday

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS

— Mrs. Caroline E. Brown, 84, died Saturday in a hospital here following an extended illness.
Letters to the Editor...

Tributes to Rose Gordon

Dear Verle L. and Patricia M. Rademaker, Publishers:

May I tell you that your column “Verle’s Views” in the Meagher County News of November 21, 1968 surmised many columns I have ever read as an “obituary.”

I commend you because you have only been in the past forty or sixty years, to cooperate in “verse” and paint a mental picture of her life, in your column for others to read... makes you an outstanding man in your newspaper industry.

Two memorials have been suggested to honor Rose B. Gordon: One for her denomination “Grace Episcopal Church” and one at the “Mountainview Memorial Hospital” both of White Sulphur Springs, Montana.

If either of them materialize, I hope one, at least, will include the 4 stanza of “Our Rose In Memory” by Friends, on it.

May I tell the people of White Sulphur Springs and Meagher County that they have been joined in sorrow and praises for Rose from coast to coast and Canada to Florida, her acquaintances were legion.

Thanks to Dr. John S. Meist and his staff at the Mountainview Memorial Hospital who worked untiringly to save Rose. My praise goes to James Anderson, Vicar of the Grace Episcopal Church; Rev. Neil Chisholm, of St. Bartholomew’s Cathedral Church and Rev. James Forbes, Pastor of the Presbyterian Community Church, all of White Sulphur Springs, Montana.

Also to Mrs. Walter Musgrove, who sang two of Rose’s favorite songs.

These men achieved a “noble deed” in their affiliation, for her service. Rose B. Gordon was really held dear by all who knew her well.

I am more than grateful to have Mr. Kenneth Twichel and his Mother perform their “art” in preparing the dead for burial.

Few in their profession can excel them.

It was good to have pallbearers who were good friends: Keith Peterson, Gerald Edwards, Pete McCabe, Merritt Smith, Jack Mathis and Marvin Corkill.

I hope you all realize you have given me great consolation at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Taylor Gordon

Dear Editor:

Rose B. Gordon has made her transition from the physical to the spiritual body. She will be greatly missed by her family and many friends who knew her and loved her as a fine lady.

Rose was a Christian in the true sense, spending her life in loving service that brought joy and comfort to the people whose lives she touched. She was unselfish, a good listener and confidant, a true friend to all.

Goodbye, dear Rose, till we meet again.

Olive King

Julia Klaus and Family

Mr. and Mrs. Thos.

McClelland and Sherman

Mr. and Mrs. Craig

Thorn and Steven

Mrs. Jack Allen

To the Editor:

On Saturday the community paid a magnificent, well earned tribute to one of our most highly respected Senior Citizens.

Rose Gordon had lived most of her 85 years in this community. Living a most exemplary life, conforming to the highest ethics of law and order, and deep devotion to her Christian convictions.

I have known Rose as long as I can remember and never did I hear her speak a derogatory statement about a fellow human being. Can any of us say as much?

Yes: Rose we shall miss you because the vacancy created by your leaving us will not and cannot be filled.

Sincerely,

Art Watson

Dear Editor:

I was also saddened to read about the passing away of Rose Gordon. It was a beautiful tribute that was given to her memory in your paper and one she well deserves as she was a very good person and a true friend to everyone. She has a place in my heart.

Thank you,

Mildred Robertson

I had the enclosed “Memory Lane” for Rose Gordon written before we received the Meagher County News. This seems very anti-climatic after the wonderful tribute paid to her in your paper.

If you don’t want to print this, or haven’t the room, dear Verle, about it. I felt as if I were talking to her, and nothing will change that, whether it appears in print, or not.

I’ve known her since I was a baby, and last spring wrote to her commending her on her courage in writing the article concerning the trials of our day and that God had made all colors.

She will not soon be forgotten. While I’m at it, I’m taking this opportunity to tell you how much we enjoyed your editorial prior to election, concerning your stand on the sales tax. It was excellent.

Very sincerely yours,

Mrs. Isabel Choquette

A Farewell to an Old Friend...

You’ve written so many tributes to friends who have slipped away from us, and now you have gone into that unexplored world into which we all must pass. The town will never be the same without you, Rose. I guess I sort of thought you’d live forever. You were a great lady.

You’ve left a store of memories to each of us who know you.

I remember... buying penny candy in the store you and your Mother operated; your singing with a Chautauqua group in the old auditorium. (I was so impressed, knowing someone in show biz!) your gaiety and your comic pantomimes, and your wonderful sense of humor; your delicious chicken dinners and your playing “The Waltz You Saved for Me” on the antique piano:

the day you cut a 3 inch button-hole in a little pair of overalls you’d just completed at the WPA sewing project... the ensuing panic, the hilarity, and the meticulous repair job; that magic you had of making a person feel prettier, smarter, more glamorous than she really was;

the toast, to the “Good Old Highs”... your riding so regally in the Centennial parade...

I know there’s been a special place prepared for you in our Father’s house of many mansions. Farewell, my friend, until we meet again.

Isabel Choquette
Dear Editor:

I am giving you the story of my mother's life and of her struggle to raise her family of five children. In her heart was a song. She had a clear soprano voice.

My mother was a slave. She was bought by the wealthy Poindexter family. They were distillers and race horse people....

In the evening when we had finished our work which was always late I would sit down on a little stool by her side. She would tell me about slavery. I was young and her stories filled me with misery and made me very sad to think life had to be that way....With all these sad memories mamma loved Kentucky, the blue grass and all its scenic beauty....

During the war it was Mamma's duty to keep the fine race horses hid in the hills so the soldiers who were marching through the country would not take them....

Mamma told me of her experience of having a number of Northern soldiers riding up to their plantation. They had been separated from their unit. They were looking for food. They dismounted from their horses and came to the house. The people were all frightened as they did not know what the northern soldier was like. The captain said to Mamma who had cooked there for many years, "My men are hungry and we want something to eat." They gave them food which consisted of corn bread, pork and vegetables. They were very grateful but insisted on having some food to take with them. Mamma said, "We have no food, hardly enough for ourselves." The captain said, "You look well fed." Mamma said, "Tom and I are just old and fat." They searched all their buildings but found no food. The food was kept in caves and buried in the ground in boxes....

When Mamma was very young she married John Francis Gordon. They went to Cairo, Illinois, to live. They lived there some time, where my brother Robert James Gordon was born....In 1881 Papa started west leaving mother in Cairo till such time as he could send for her....

One day she was weeping and thought she could not stand the ordeal, when a large brown skinned woman appeared on the scene and said, "Child, what are you crying about?" Between sobs mamma tried to tell her what it was all about. The stewardess said, "Laws a massy, child, you are going to a tough country and you must nerve up."... (Incident happened on river steamer en route to Ft. Benton)
Rose Gordon, 85, Well Known White Sulphur Resident, Dies

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS — Rose B. Gordon, 85, daughter of a pioneer family here and a resident for many years widely known as a practical nurse and restaurant operator, died Tuesday at a local hospital after a short illness.

Her mother was a Kentucky slave and her father was a trained chef.

Funeral services will be held at St. Bartholomew Catholic Church Saturday. Miss Gordon was an Episcopalian but the Catholic Church is the only church large enough to accommodate the number of persons expected at her funeral. The Rev. James Anderson of Grace Episcopal Church will officiate.

Miss Gordon was born June 2, 1883 in Barker and shortly afterward came to White Sulphur Springs where she attended school and was valedictorian of her high school class in 1904.

She spent a short time in Spokane studying physiotherapy and later worked a dispensary nurse in Louisiana for about five years. But most of her life was spent here.

Following her father's death, she and her mother ran several restaurants in White Sulphur Springs until her mother died in 1924 and at that time she worked as a physiotherapist.

Her father was a trained chef who worked for a mining company here before marrying her mother in Cairo, Ill. After the family moved to White Sulphur Springs he was employed as chief of a Canadian passenger train and preceded her in death, having been killed in a train wreck in 1883.

Miss Gordon also was preceded in death by three brothers.

She is survived by one brother, Taylor, widely known as a singer and composer who performed in Europe and writer of history books. He worked for John Ringling as a chef and died at one time.

Burial will be in the White Sulphur Springs Cemetery near the burial place of some of her brothers.

Rose B. Gordon Buried Saturday Afternoon

Funeral services were held on Saturday, November 23 for Rose B. Gordon who passed away on November 19, 1958 in the Mountainview Memorial Hospital.

Rose was born in Barker, Montana, June 2, 1883 and has been a resident of White Sulphur Springs for eighty-five years.

She graduated from a course in physiotherapy and practiced the profession since, giving her last treatment earlier this month.

She was a member of the Grace Episcopal Church and the funeral service was conducted by Rev. James Anderson of that church assisted by Rev. James Forbes of the Community Presbyterian Church and Rev. Neil Guichard of St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church. Services were held in the Catholic church according to rites of the Episcopal church.

Miss Walter Musgrave presented a message in song:

Rose's brother Taylor is her lone survivor. Miss Gordon was buried in the Mayu Cemetery near the burial place of some of her brothers.

VERLE'S VIEW...

The community is saddened by the death of Rose Gordon, a friend to all. And, as a friend to all, her community wishes to express its sentiments to her. We think that possibly, this is the best way ...

In this paper, Rose Gordon wrote many tributes about people of her community when they passed on. Now, who is to remember Rose? In our hearts, we all remember Rose. Her helpful hands that eased an aching body, her understanding words that comforted an aching heart, her gentle spirit that soothed a troubled soul, her humor and laugh and soft voice—oh, we all remember Rose.

OUR ROSE IN MEMORY

Dress all crisp and white as snow
Soothing voice so soft and low
Gentle hands, to ease all pain
Gentle heart, to calm all strain —

Our Rose.

Aroma of chicken and trimmings sans measure
Wood-burning warmth and cozy pleasure;
Familiar hum of melodious tune
A superb meal—but ended too soon —

Our Rose.

Summer nights and weather fair
Or blizzard and cold beyond compare.
Come theater night she lived the plot
In agony or ecstasy—we've not forgot —

Our Rose.

A year long gone—a concert of Songs
This above all in our memory belongs
When the worldly gave way to ethereal tone
"Swing Low Sweet Chariot" comes to "Carry Her Home."

Our Rose.

Friends.

May God bless the soul of a true Christian lady.
EARLY 1926-1927 SNAPSHOTS

"Grip the hearer with their simplicity and with the fervor with which they are rendered."—Chicago Daily News, Oct. 12, 1926.

"Those lovers of fine things who withheld their presence lost of a certainty one of the major opportunities of the season. There is no doubt of their towering importance in the list of worthwhile artistic things that have originated on this Continent. A man such as Mr. Johnson, who can make these things plain, is a great man doing an important work. Many times in their program one is completely lost in the power of what these men are doing."—Detroit News, Oct. 5, 1926.

"They make each song, through the simplicity of their style and the fervor and emotional intensity of their reading, stand forth in all its earnestness and power."—Detroit Free Press, Oct. 5, 1926.

"It was a rare treat and one that will never be forgotten by those who heard them."—Canton Daily News, Oct. 8, 1926.

"One's heartstrings respond with involuntary emotion—sung and played with rare taste and feeling."—Louisville Times, Oct. 18, 1926.

"Johnson-Gordon recital is rich emotional and musical experience."—Detroit News.

"No greater tribute could have been given these artists than the absolute stillness with which the large audience followed the songs."—Louisville Courier, Oct. 18, 1926.

"Spirituals offer beauty and thrills."—Glenn Dillard Gunn.

J. Rosamond Johnson
(SEATED AT PIANO)
and
Taylor Gordon
"In a Programme of Negro Spirituals"

"The most thrilling musical experience we have had in many a day."
—Boston American, February 15, 1926.

KNABE PIANO USED.

Management: RICHARD COPLEY, 10 E. 43rd St., New York City.
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE
Health Center, Christodora House

J. Rosamond Johnson
ARRANGER OF
"THE BOOK OF AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS"
and
Taylor Gordon

IN A PROGRAM OF NEGRO SPIRITUALS
ARRANGED FOR VOICE AND PIANO BY MR. JOHNSON

GARRICK THEATRE
Sunday Evening, December 6, 1925
8:40 P. M.

PROGRAM

I. Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel?
   My Lord's A-Writin' All De Time
   Swing Low Sweet Chariot
   Keep A-Inchin' Along

II. Go down, Moses
   I Got a Home In-a Dat Rock
   (Arranged by Lawrence Brown)
   My Lord What a Mornin'
   All God's Chillun

INTERMISSION
10 MINUTES

III. Nobody Knows De Trouble I See
    Git On Board, Little Chillen
    (Arranged by Lawrence Brown)
    Deep River

IV. Lit'tle David Play On Yo' Harp
    Singin' Wid a Sword In Ma Han'
    What Yo' Gwine To Do When Yo' Lamp Burn Down
    Witness

"J. Rosamond Johnson and Taylor Gordon ought to hire the Hippodrome twice a week and demonstrate to aspiring young singers of spirituals how it is done. These gentlemen sang, modulated and harmonized beautifully; their rhythms were superb; above all they recreated the essence of the old time religious spirit of a vanished generation."—New York Sun.

"Both men are artists in the best sense of the word."—New York Herald-Tribune.

"The audience rioted in ecstasy over everything it heard."—New York Evening Telegram.

KNABE PIANO USED—COURTESY OF WM. KNABE AND CO., 439 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

THROUGH THE COURTESY OF THE VIKING PRESS,
"THE BOOK OF AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS"
WILL BE ON SALE IN THE LOBBY FOR THE BENEFIT
OF CHRISTODORA HOUSE.
Program
CONCERT
By
TAYLOR GORDON
TENOR

In another program of Spirituals, Classical and Secular Songs
MILDRED JONES AT THE PIANO

Saturday Night, July 2nd, 1960 at 8:30 P.M.

I

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel..................................................
Singin' Wid a Sword In Me Han'...........................................
Do Don't Touch-a My Garment, Good Lord..............................
Roll Jordan Roll...............................................................

II

Walk Together Children......................................................
By an' By...........................................................................
Lit'le David Play On Yo' Harp............................................... Stan' Still Jordan...........................................................

***

The Songs above are from "The Book of American Negro Spirituals. Arrangements by J. Rosamond Johnson. Published by "The Viking Press" New York City, N.Y.

III

Little Gray Home in The West....... Arr. Herman Lohr......
Because............................................. Arr. Guy D'Hardelot...
La Donna Mobile.............From "Rigoletto" G. Verdi...........

"Woman is changeable, Light as a feather, False as fair weather, Who can believe her?-----Always a beautiful face so beguiling, Weeping or smiling, Is a foolher!
Oh it is misery Fondly can'tiding, Tamely abiding her fickle fancies! Yet true felicity Mocks the pursuer, When as her wooer Love ne'er entrances!"

IV

Without a Song............................................. Arr. Vincent Youmans...
The Lonesome Road............................................. Arr. Nathaniel Shilkret.
Water Boy...................................................... Adapted by Taylor Gordon.
Colored folks work on the Mississippi, Colored folks work while the White folks play, Pullin' does boats from a dawn to sun-set, Gettin', no rest till de judgement day.
Don't look up an don't look down, you don't das' make the white boss frown; Bend yo' knees an' bow yo' head an' pull dat rope until you're dead. Let me go way from de Miss-sis-sip-pi. Let me go'way from de white men boss. Show me dat streem called de r river Jordon, Dat's de ol' streem dat I long to cross.

Ol' man river, dat ol' man river, He mus' know sump-in', but don's say nothing; He jus' keeps roll-in', He keeps on roll-in'; a long.-------

He don't plant 'ta-ters, He don't plant cotton, An' dem dat plants 'em is soon for-gotten; But o'! man river he jus' keeps rollin', along.----

----- You an' me we sweat and strain, Body all achin' an' an rack with pain "Tote dat barge!" "Lift dat bale", Git a little drunk an' you land in jail... Ah gets weary an' sick of tryin'; Ahm' tired of livin' an' ske-ered of dyin.' But Ol' man river he jus' keeps roll-in' a long.

---------------------------------------------------------------------

Because.

Because you came to me with naught save love, --And hold my hand \& lift mine eyes above,-- A wider world of hope an joy I see, Be cause you come to me.

Be cause you speak to me in accent sweet, I find the roses waking round my feet, AndI am led through tears and joy to thee, Be cause you speak to me.------

Be cause God made thee mine, I'll cherish thee----- Through light and darkness/ through all times to be , And pray His love may make our love divine, Be cause ---- God made thee mine.
PROGRAM

*** CONCERT ***

BY

TAYLOR GORDON
TENOR

IN a PROGRAM of SPIRITUALS, CLASSICALS and SECULAR SONGS
MARY L. NELSON at the PIANO
THE OLD SCHOOL GYMNASIUM, WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, MONTANA.

SATURDAY NIGHT, FEBRUARY 27th, at 8.30 P.M.

I

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel-------------------- J. Rosamond Johnson
Done Foun' My Loa' Sheep ----------------------- J. Rosamond Johnson
O, Wasn't Dat a Wide River---------------------- J. Rosamond Johnson
De Band O' Gideon--------------------------------

Encore

Joshua Fit De Battle Ob Jepico--

Oh Didn't IT Rain------------------------------- H. T. Burleigh
All Gods Chillun Got Wings---------------------- J. R. Johnson
Deep River ------------------------------------- H. T. Burleigh

III

Short'nin' Bread------------------------------- Jacques Wolfe
Little Mother of Mine-------------------------- H. T. Burleigh
Vesti la giubba "Pagliacci"---------------------- R. Leoncavallo

IV

Saint Louis Blues----------------------------- W. C. Handy
River, Stay 'Way From My Door----------------- Harry Woods
Camptown Races "Stephen C. Foster"------------- Max Hirschfeld
Witness---------------------------------------- J. R. Johnson

Encors---- Ol' Man River ---- Jerome Kern
EE""EE""EE"" "Ah Sweet Mystery of Life-- Victor Herbert
EE"EEEEEEEE " Swing Low Sweet Chariot... J. R. J.
NYT, Nov. 22, 26 23:2
Song N° Spills
F. W. & T.G. gave their 1st NY recital at Adelina Hall last eve. The program of N° Spills included several new & new 2.
-audience. No balance consisted of the mo had already seen facet.
Neither f-singers has a voice new word attract attention b- usual
concert program, sio b-plat f-spills they too mad a place 4
themselves. This 4 earnest, the single-minded, semi-religious
eunature 1st opg clean-up, symph of an audience, without looking
so much 4 act as emotion.
- Spills stand as a perfect memorial 2. tributes to a race & a
- contributor 2. genuine folk songs 4 Am.
Meisters f. & tosplauded 4 an audience 7 fair songs.

NYT, Feb 17, 27 21:4
Song N° Spills
F. W. & T.G. pianist b-broadsee, T.G. tenor, April at Cavern last eve
of a program of N° Spills such as they had given in small halls in
of other cities. They were enthusiastically greeted, the performance again giving
2. old slave songs a devotional character. F-music's actual origin is the
as even a popularity symph "ahmen" to Rosamond Johnson's deep emotional
rejoinders, as he sings & played enacts 2. T.G.'s hit 6 of his popular
melodies.
- Concert was 4. benefit f. NY & Brooklyn Urban League. Branch 1
WVWBNY, and was an ex. of me org's 24th 2 pac real pubs
spend a "gospel 1 internal goal cme," as told up plaatm he
spoke of Lloyd Garrison, Texas f. lead.
NYT, Jan 23, 1923
Five Concerts of No Spills
J. R. T. & T. gave a program of no spills last eve. at 6th Ave.
seats of concerts by well-men artists at Hotel Babylon. As an
introduction to the evening, Anna Bellen, org., played "Dame Negre" by
Cyril Scott. Vocal duets comprised many original airs by J. Mattin
and, at the piano joining the refrain until his urge became evident.
2 other adaptations at Barbara's "Sum Day I'm Born Home" by
H. T. Barlow's "Scandalize My Name."
NY Times, March 1, 1926, 16:1

Eric Negro Spirituals

J. Rosamond Johnson & Taylor F. gave a program of negro spirituals & secular songs at Tin Hall yesterday. They have been splendidly done, with beautiful melody & emotional feeling that rivals the art of singing par excellence.

Messrs. J & T both voices in perfect form, they sing & pray with a fervor & conviction, no one, no 2 voices more beautiful. It is 2 voices in 1, the laughter & preacher at the same time.

"I want G's Help in 2 Be Mine" recorded its 1st pub. performance.

NYT, Apr 17, 1926, 14:2

Concert Aid of School

Am's singing of those native folk-songs won as negro "spills" was added to a benefit at Tin Hall last night. Concert completed a fund of $10,000, with $2,000 had been promised by B. N. Duke, 11. women.

Manassas and S. Paul Robinson, negro actor & singer, who is his opening spot. Lawrence Brown had 2 & 3 standing room, as usual up to date.

J. T. & T. who also interpolated 3 of the 1st hearty group, finished every song of the varied songs of negro spirituals such as "I can't help singing 6-NY on the river," 15 times this season. The music, singing & real sympathy, was applauded by a thrilled social box.
FAMOUS COWBOY SONGS
As Sung Over Radio, on Old Mission Laboratory Programs, Los Angeles Stations.

Twenty-One Years

Go beg the Governor
On your sweet soul,
If you cannot get a pardon
Try to get a parole.

I've counted the footsteps,
I've counted the stars,
I've counted a million
Of these prison bars.

I've counted on you, Babe,
To get me a break,
I guess you forgot, Babe,
I'm here for your sake.

You know who is guilty
You know it too well
But I'd rot in this jail house
Before I would tell.

Oh, come, you young fellows
With hearts brave and true
Don't believe any woman,
You're beat if you do.

Don't trust in a woman
No matter what kind
For twenty-one years, boys,
Is a mighty long time.

Riding Old Paint and Leading Old Bald

I'm getting mighty tired of a cowboy's life,
Going to settle down and get me a wife,
Way out west where the sun shines every day;
I'll get me a herd and run me a brand,
Riding Old Paint, and leading old Bald.

Chorus
Riding old Paint, and leading old Bald,
I'm going to quit work this coming fall,
Going to quit work, collect my roll,
Going in the hills, and look for gold;
Going to get married, I swear I will,
Riding old Paint, and leading old Bald.

There's a pretty little girl that I've got in mind,
The golden nuggets I'm sure to find,
Happiness is bound to come our way;
We'll settle down in a hut for two,
Out in the hills where the skies are blue,
Riding old Paint, and leading old Bald.

Every night when my work is through,
We'll go strolling, just we two,
Way out west where the sun is sinking low;
I'll play her a tune on my old guitar,
Every night beneath the stars,
Riding old Paint, and leading old Bald.

(Chorus)

Being a vegetable herb compound, O-M Tablets are not habit forming no matter how long they are used.

SYMPTOMS ARE OFTEN MISLEADING. A trial of the tablets is the best proof of what they will do for you. Just follow directions.

These songs supplied with 10c week's trial of O-M Tablets by Old Mission Laboratories of Pasadena, Calif.

HERE'S SOMETHING WORTH WHILE
Send your name and address with 15 3c stamps (45c) to the Union Stationery and Printing Company, 44 East Union Street, Pasadena, and they will send you Fifty Beautiful Calling Cards, with your name, or any name you specify. These cards sell regularly for $1.00. Orders shipped same day they are received, and all shipping charges are prepaid. This also makes an ideal present for one you wish to remember.
That Big Rock Candy Mountain

On a summer day in the month of May,
A burly bum came hiking,
Down a shady lane through the sugar cane,
He was looking for his liking,
As he roamed along he sang a song
Of the land of milk and honey,
Where a bum can stay for many a day
And he won't need any money.

CHORUS
Oh, the buzzin' of the bees,
In the cigarette trees,
Near the soda water fountain;
At the lemonade springs,
Where the blue bird sings,
In that Big Rock Candy Mountain.

On a run came a farmer and his son
To the hay fields they were bounding
Said the bum to the son, "Why don't you come,
To that Big Rock Candy Mountain?"
So the very next day, they hiked away,
The mile posts they kept counting,
But they never arrived at the lemonade tide,
In that Big Rock Candy Mountain.

There's a lake of gin, we can both jump in,
And the handouts grow in bunches,
In the new mown hay, we can sleep all day,
And the bars all have free lunches;
Where the mail train stops, and there isn't no cops,
And the folks are tender hearted,
Where you never change your socks, and you never throw rocks,
And your hair is never parted.

Jack rolled his eyes up to the skies,
And said to the bum named Sandy,
"I'm weary, I'm starved, I want a steak to carve,
Where is that gol-darn candy?
I'll hike no more, for my feet are sore,
I'll never reach that fountain,
I want a homeguard, with a union card,
In that Big Rock Candy Mountain.

She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain

She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes,
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes,
She'll be comin' round the mountain,
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes.
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes,
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes,
She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes.
Oh, we'll all go to meet her when she comes,
Oh, we'll all go to meet her when she comes,
We will kill the old red rooster,
We will kill the old red rooster,
And we'll all have chicken and dumpling's when she comes.

Hand Me Down My Walking Cane

Hand me down my walking cane,
Hand me down my walking cane,
Oh, hand me down my walking cane,
I'm a-goin' to leave on that midnight train,
'Cause all of my sins are taken away.

Hand me down my bottle of corn,
Hand me down my bottle of corn,
Oh, hand me down my bottle of corn,
I'm a-goin' to get drunk, as sure as you're born,
'Cause all of my sins are taken away.

Oh, I got drunk and I got in jail,
I got drunk and I got in jail,
Oh, I got drunk and I got in jail,
And I had no wife to go my bail,
And all of my sins are taken away.

Beans was tough and the meat was fat,
Beans was tough and the meat was fat,
Oh, beans was tough and the meat was fat
And oh, my Lord, I couldn't eat that,
So all of my sins are taken away.

If I had listened to what mamma said,
If I had listened to what mamma said,
Oh, if I had listened to what mamma said,
I'd 'ave been sleeping on a feather bed,
'Cause all of my sins are taken away.

Come on mamma and a-go my bail,
Come on mamma and a-go my bail,
Oh, come on mamma and go my bail,
And get me out of this buggy jail,
'Cause all of my sins are taken away.

Give me back my bootleg gin,
Give me back my bootleg gin,
I'm goin' to forget where I have been,
'Cause all of my sins are taken away.

Golden Slippers

Oh, my golden slippers am a-laid away,
Kase I don't spect to wear 'em till my weddin' day,
I want a homeguard, with a union card,
In that Big Rock Candy Mountain.

CHORUS
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Golden slippers I se gwine to wear,
Bekase dey look so neat.
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Golden slippers I se gwine to wear,
To walk the golden street.

And my long white robe dat I bought last June,
I'm a gwine to get changed kase it fits too soon.
Oh, my banjo hangs on de wall.
And the very next day, they hiked away,
The mile posts they kept counting,
But they never arrived at the lemonade tide,
In that Big Rock Candy Mountain.

She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain

She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes,
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes,
She'll be comin' round the mountain,
She'll be comin' round the mountain when she comes.
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes,
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes,
She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses when she comes.
Oh, we'll all go to meet her when she comes,
Oh, we'll all go to meet her when she comes,
We will kill the old rooster,
We will kill the old rooster,
And we'll all have chicken an' dumpling's when she comes.

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Bekase dey look so neat.
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Oh, dem golden slippers;
Golden slippers I se gwine to wear,
To walk the golden street.

And my long white robe dat I bought last June,
I'm a gwine to get changed kase it fits too soon.
Oh, my banjo hangs on de wall.
Kase it ain't been tuned since way last fall,
But de darkies all say, we will hab a good time,
When we ride up in de chariot in de morn.
NYT coded 071 NY
T Gordon checked, Jan 26 - 1966
1950-
1940 - Marcus Gordon, recital; Po'J, Mon 16, x1f: 6:3; recital, Mon 16, 9:2
1941 - "" "" N2, 14; 8:2; "" N3, 10:7
Jan-Mar, 1927 (p.311): joint recital - JR Johnson, F 17, 21:4
Jan-Mar, 1926 (p.259): prog 7 Nc spiritus, Mon 1, 16:1

Hallitures (1930-35 checked, 2)
1951 - Nat Mental Health Inst study under Dr. J.W. Eaton find few ill
among Huts Ap 16, 27:8 (p.677 Index)
1954 - W Kaempfert - Dr. Eaton & Mayer rec study; find unusual fertility;
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Prodigy and Prejudice

Philippa Schuyler's talent was supposed to destroy racial barriers. Instead, those barriers helped destroy her.

COMPOSITION IN BLACK AND WHITE

The Life of Philippa Schuyler.
By Kathryn Talalay.

By Phyllis Rose

A thrilled, heartbreaking book restores to attention Philippa Schuyler, child prodigy of the 1930's, pianist, composer, Harlem's Mozart, "the Shirley Temple of American Negroes." Her father was George Schuyler, a well-known black journalist. Her mother was Josephine Cogdell Schuyler, the white daughter of a Texas rancher. Insisting that her daughter was the normal product of "hybrid vigor" and good nutrition, Jody Schuyler dedicated her to the cause of integration: Philippa's brilliance would break down racial barriers in America. Instead, as Kathryn Talalay tells this important story, racial barriers and a manipulative, demanding mother broke Philippa.

Based on fascinating family papers in New York's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, "Composition in Black and White: The Life of Philippa Schuyler" begins by plunging us into a 1930's world of race enthusiasm. "Nor­ deed to Harlem for the night life and white girls date black men to rattle their families and prove to themselves they have interesting lives. Josephine Cogdell arrived in New York in 1927, wanting to write. She had contributed pieces to The Messenger, a left-wing black publication whose editor was George Schuyler. They met and were immediately attracted to each other.

A fanatic diarist, Jody even described their first kiss, revealing (or boasting) that she found George's lips "softer and more sensuous than white lips." Her primitivist ideas - the flip side of racism - glorified everything African and white salvation in miscegenation. She encouraged herself to marry Schuyler with the thought that "the white race... is spiritually depleted and America must mate with the Negro to save herself."

People like Jody Schuyler, literalist ideologues who live out their ideas, make for great reading but may not make great moms. From the beginning, Philippa was under tremendous pres­sure to prove the Schuyler prodigy marriage. She could read and write at two, started learning piano, and barely a year later she was playing Mozart in public. She started composing before she was 5.

Phyllis Rose teaches fiction writing at Wesleyan University. She is the author of "Jazz Cleopatra: Josephine Baker in Her Time" and the editor of "The Norton Book of Women's Lives."

For "the education of America," Jody entered her daughter in every possible musical competition. She was the stage mother from hell, blending a frustrated artist's ambition with an activist's sense of righteousness. She followed the child­rearing advice of the behaviorist John Broadus Watson, a predecessor of B. F. Skinner, who didn't believe in coddling or even cuddling children or in letting them, as John Dewey advised, grow from within. A food faddist, she fed Philippa only raw foods: cooking destroyed vitamins. Even steaks and liver were eaten uncooked in the Schuylers' home.

From the age of 8, Philippa concert­ized constantly, a darling of both the black and the white press, a role model that she found George's lips "softer and more sensuous than white lips." Her primitivist ideas - the flip side of racism - glorified everything African and white salvation in miscegenation. She encouraged herself to marry Schuyler with the thought that "the white race... is spiritually depleted and America must mate with the Negro to save herself."

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Piano Men

A history of the Steinway family and the product it made and sold for a century and a half.

STEINWAY & SONS


By Eva Hoffman

To the countless aficionados who have relished its sublime action and its rich, round tone, a Steinway piano may be a thing of beauty and a joy forever. But an expensive instrument is an object existing at an intersection of culture and commerce, and to those who produce it, it means mostly business. In "Steinway & Sons," Richard K. Lieberman brings a revealing, if not always uplifting, perspective to the story by looking at the company that for a century and a half made, marketed and sold Steinways.

Actually, this is the second history of the Steinway to appear this year. An earlier one, "The Steinway Saga," by D. W. Fostle, drew heavily on Steinway family archives. Mr. Lieberman's book, based largely on company archives, is not an investigative report but an informative and tutorial chronicle, perhaps too conscientiously concerned with promotion techniques and sales and profit figures through the ages. But a history of the Steinway is also, implicitly, a history of the pianistic tradition; and while concentrating on his specific brief, Mr. Lieberman also gives us an often fascinating overview of a musical epoch that may, regrettably, be coming to an end.

Mr. Lieberman — a historian and the director of LaGuardia Community College's LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, which house the Steinway collection of documents — approaches his subject largely through profiles of the men who ran Steinway & Sons in successive generations, in a system of inheritance that passed the leadership from father to nephew, as often as to the son. The family saga begins with Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg, a cabinet and instrument maker who in 1833 started a modest piano manufacturing concern in the small German town of Seesen. In 1850, facing one another, faced grand piano makers as Henry Steinway Jr., who in the 1850's perfected the technique of overstringing, which gave the piano a larger, warmer tone.

But aside from the high level of their skills, the Steinways were also canny about injecting into their instruments the impalpable extra ingredient of cultural cachet. The latter part of the 19th century was the era of superstar performers, and the Steinways capitalized on this to good effect by sponsoring the more famous among them in return for endorsements. Mr. Lieberman tells wonderful anecdotes of herculean performances — like Anton Rubinstein's 1878 New York debut, during which he was kept playing till 4 o'clock in the morning by the wildly excited audience. In 1881, Ignace Paderewski, the musical idol of his day (and for a while the President of Poland), played six different concertos in his first week in New York, and the next year he gave 107 concerts in 117 days, much of the time playing in agony from an injured finger. He and other musicians, like Josef Hofmann, Rachmaninoff, Horowitz and Arthur Rubinstein, were kept loyal to Steinway in part by fees and careful coddling.

On the strength of such events and associations, the very name Steinway gradually became a byword for pianistic grandeur, as well as for bourgeois ambition and cultivation. Although the company's fortunes went through various ups and downs, Steinway & Sons mostly prospered and expanded, opening branches in Germany and England and shipping pianos to households across America and Europe. The Steinways themselves became a major cultural force in New York, opening the elegant Steinway Hall in 1866 and supporting musical causes and institutions. For a while they were also a major economic force in Queens, where they built factories and private mansions, established rail links to Manhattan and opened the immensely lucrative North Beach Amusement Park (on the site of today's LaGuardia Airport).

Steinway & Sons initially transferred its operations to Queens to escape what one member of the family called the "anarchists and socialists" causing violent labor unrest in volatile Manhattan; perhaps their most inventive piece of business strategy was the creation of "a company village," in which they rented houses to their employees, supplementing that of the public services and provided English and German lessons to the workers' children.

But the Steinways' paternalism wasn't always so benevolent. Within their own enclave, they never allowed women near the seat of power; within their factories, they kept strikers out and wages low. The chairmen in successive generations ranged from sensitive souls, who cracked from the pressures of their job, to ruthless businessmen and corporate thinkers. Mr. Lieberman's tale is surprisingly full of fraternal dissension, sexual scandal, dubious tactics and cutthroat competitiveness. In the early days, the company's management repeatedly bribed jurors at international exhibits and struck deals; thus an almost Steinway victories over such pianos as Chickering and Weber. During World War II, the Hamburg branch of Steinway & Sons supplied the Nazi regime without a murmur.

But finally, whatever their temperamentally managerial style, none of the Steinway leaders were immune to the effects of larger social and economic trends. In recent years the piano has come to occupy a less central place in our musical imaginations. The capricious element of charisma has moved to the side, and the record player, fewer people have felt the need to make music in their homes themselves.

At the same time, with the rise of unions and increasing labor costs, the production of handmade instruments became less financially tenable. The Steinways were never good at shifting to less prestigious, or less expensive, models. In the 1930's, they lost the market for space-efficient uprights to brands like Baldwin and Kimball. But perhaps the real coup de grace came from Yamaha, which, once its offer to represent Steinway in Japan was refused in the 50's, started competing in America with cheaper mass-produced pianos. The rest, for Steinway, is sad history. In 1973, Steinway & Sons was sold to CBS, and since then the company has changed hands twice more; the pianos are still produced in Queens and Hamburg, but by more mechanized methods.

To some cognoscenti, the new-issue Steinways lack the clarity and warmth of the old versions. But perhaps such subtleties become harder to discern amid the noise of new technologies. Steinway may have gained its pre-eminence by being the best, as well as by excellence; but it was one of the best vehicles for the kind of pianism that depends on fine tonal nuances, and on bravura sound. The concept of a "piano, instrument of the immortals," as one advertising slogan called it, undoubtedly marks the waning of a living musical environment in which such things could be heard, and in which they mattered.

Eva Hoffman, the author of "Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language," is an amateur musician.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW
"All Dressed Up But No Place to Go."
The Black Writer and His Audience During the Harlem Renaissance.
—Chas S.Scruggs
Ann Lit're
Jan '77
(Shoreline)
THE HIDDEN SOURCES OF NEGRO HISTORY

By C. VANN WOODWARD

Of the current need for Negro history—the writing, the teaching, and the learning of it—there can be no reasonable doubt. The old history, what there was of it, and whether it was written by whites or blacks, needs revising in the light of new knowledge. There is reasonable excuse for the lack of African history, so much of which is buried in the preliterate tribal past. But large numbers of people of African blood now live in the New World with an experience developed in the full light of modern history. The denial of their rightful place in American history and the neglect and distortion of their own history are largely due to their former slave status and to the fact that the "Negro history" that white men read was written by other whites.

The demand for Negro history is therefore legitimate. But the fulfillment of the need will not be instant, the learning of the history painless, or the content of it exclusively or predominantly glorious. The meaning of such history—its "lessons"—will not always be clear. Its pages are likely to be tortured with ambiguities and doubts and enigmas as ironic and inglorious as the Poor Peoples Crusade of 1968, and there will be chapters crowded with charlatans, knaves, and rakehells. The Father Divines and Daddy Graces will outnumber the Martin Luther Kings. Even the most glorious heroes—a Nat Turner, perhaps—may turn out to have moments of hesitation and dubious encounters that the more pious biographer would prefer to skip. Which is only to say that it will be human history.

The most important response so far to the demand for Negro history is the forty-four-volume series entitled, "The American Negro: His History and Literature" published by the Arno Press and The New York Times. The character of the books chosen and the prices charged for them, if nothing else, put this particular enterprise beyond suspicion of vulgar commercialism. It is a serious effort to meet a legitimate need. It is not popular history. It belongs in the scholar's library rather than the organizer's pad.

It is not easy to characterize a series that includes so many varieties and categories of literature. Given the prevalence of autobiography and reminiscence, the historian would classify the series broadly under "source materials," but that would not take care of several works of scholarship, journalism, and polemics that are included. In spite of the promise implied by the subtitle "History and Literature," only one volume, The New Negro, edited by Alain Locke in 1925, includes any poetry, fiction, or drama. (We are assured that the second series has a more literary emphasis.) All the volumes are reprints, apparently done by a photo-offset process that reproduces illustrations fairly well.

The problem is that reprinting a book, especially one long-forgotten, inevitably implies a sort of endorsement. Without scholarly guidance, the uninformed reader is likely to be unintentionally misled. Too many volumes in this series run that risk. In all but five volumes, the only contribution made by the editors is a brief one-to-two-page introduction to each volume that can do little more than identify the author. Roughly three-quarters of the books reprinted deal with slavery and its aftermath, which means they are concerned with the middle third of the nineteenth century. Given the importance of the period and the subject, this is a natural emphasis. The selection of books, however, and the period of their origin reflect some of the present-day motivation and interest in Negro history. Much of it is history with a purpose—polemical, philopietistic, and uncritical. It is valuable to the historian, but often misleading as history.

Unfortunately, there are no slave reminiscences that go back to Africa, such as those recently reprinted by the Wisconsin University Press. The only
African experience is found in *Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Slave* (1854). The Captain’s memoirs illustrate the intractability of historical documents, for he was as genial and impenitent a pirate as ever sailed the Spanish Main, blithely persuaded that he was doing the Africans a jolly good turn with a free ride to the New World.

One large and important category of Negro writings, the fugitive slave narrative, is represented by nine autobiographical works. Five of the shorter ones, including some of the better accounts, such as those of Lunsford Lane and William W. Brown, are bound in one volume. The classic of the genre and one of the classics of American autobiography is Frederick Douglass’s *My Bondage and My Freedom*. Some scholars prefer the first and smallest of his three autobiographies, but I think this, his second, published in 1855, is the wiser choice. If I were forced to recommend one volume above all others in the series, *My Bondage* would be the choice. It contains more insights into the nature of slavery and slave society than any other book I know of that is written from the slave’s point of view. Douglass does not stop at recording his sufferings and his protest, as most of the slave authors do. He analyzes perceptively what slavery did to children, mothers, and fathers of slave families, and what it did to drivers, overseers, masters, and their families. Along with the work of his white Southern contemporary George Fitzhugh (not represented here, of course), Douglass’s book marks the beginnings of a sociology of slave society.

The only class of literature in which white authors in any number are represented in the series is the one dealing with the anti-slavery movement. Garrison’s *Thoughts on African Colonization* (1832) marks the break of young radicals from the conservative colonization movement. Lydia Maria Child in *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (1836) makes a comparative study of slavery to indict her country and explores anthropology to defend black Americans from racial bigots. One of the most striking defenses of the enslaved race made during the slavery period was *The Condition… of the Colored People* (1852) written by Martin R. Delany, “this most extraordinary and intelligent black man,” as Lincoln described him. It was an excellent idea to revive his book. From the white side and the inside of the abolitionist movement, Samuel J. May’s *Recollections* (1869) provides an informal history of the crusade against slavery.

In addition to anti-slavery polemics, ideology, and history, there is a great mass of anti-slavery propaganda. It could not be better represented than by the most famous and influential example, *American Slavery As It Is* (1839), the work of two South Carolina aristocrats, the Grimke sisters, and Angelina Grimke’s husband, Theodore Dwight Weld. They faithfully followed the advice of a friend who urged that atrocities “which are merely horrid must give place to those which are absolutely diabolical.” The book was intended to make people fighting mad about the horrors of slavery. It did. It still can. It was superb propaganda, and no historian can ignore it. But there is a difference nonetheless between history and propaganda.

No aspect of the anti-slavery crusade has stirred the American imagination more deeply than the romantic and fabled Underground Railroad. That story is the subject of three massive volumes of this series. Two of them are written by participants and may be considered “documentary.” William Still, son of ex-slave parents, kept full records of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee
for helping fugitive slaves in the 1850s and published them in his 800-page book, *The Underground Railroad* (1872). The stories he preserved of hundreds of fugitives are personal, detailed, and circumstantial, and with due allowance for the human proclivity for making a good story better, they can be read with profit. Almost as bulky are the *Reminiscences* (1876) of Levi Coffin, a North Carolina Quaker who moved to Illinois, and, according to the subtitle of his book, became "The Reputed President of the Underground Railroad." His stories are fascinating, and considering the memory handicaps of their eighty-seven-year-old author, they are also worthwhile reading.

The third contribution on this subject is by a professor of history with all the claims to authority his profession lends, Professor Wilbur H. Siebert, who published his *Underground Railroad* in 1898, formulated the remarkable theory that age improves rather than impairs a man's memory. He interviewed hundreds of aging abolitionists in the 1890s and made their reminiscences the subject of his book, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1892), Martin R. Delany, 214 pp., $15.00. *The Underground Railroad* from Slavery to Freedom (1898), Wilbur H. Siebert, 478 pp., $14.50.

**Neglect** of the important part played by black Americans in the Civil War has been partly remedied by modern historians. They owe much to the work of early Negro writers whose books are known only to a few specialists. An impressive example is *The Black Phalanx* (1898) by Joseph T. Wilson, a veteran of the Union Army who writes of the

*The American Negro: His History and Literature.*


**American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses** (1839), Theodore D. Weld, 224 pp., $7.

**The Underground Railroad** (1872), William Still, 780 pp., $25.


**The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom** (1898), Wilbur H. Siebert, 478 pp., $14.50.

**John Brown and His Men** (1894), Richard J. Hinton, 752 pp., $25.

**The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin** (1853), Harriet Beecher Stowe, 508 pp., $15.50.

**Reminiscences of My Life in Camp** (1902), Suzie King Taylor, 82 pp., $4.

**Behind the Scenes** (1868), Elizabeth H. Keckley, 371 pp., $9.

**The Black Phalanx** (1885), Joseph T. Wilson, 528 pp., $15.50.

**First Days Among the Contrabands** (1893), Elizabeth Hyde Botume, 286 pp., $10.50.

**The Freedmen's Book** (1865), Lydia Maria Child, 277 pp., $8.50.

**Cheerful Yesterdays** (1899), Thomas W. Higginson, 374 pp., $11.50.


**Black and White: Land, Labor and Politics in the South** (1884), T. Thomas Fortune, 310 pp., $9.

**Race Adjustment** (1908) and *The Everlasting Stain* (1924), Kelly Miller, two volumes in one, 692 pp., $20.50.


**Black Manhattan** (1930), James Weldon Johnson, 284 pp., $13.

**The New Negro: An Interpretation** (1925), edited by Alain Locke, 446 pp., $9.

**New World A-Coming** (1943), Roi Ottley, 364 pp., $11.50.

**The Atlanta University Publications,** edited by W. E. B. Du Bois, approximately 1,000 pp., $30.

**The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot** (1922), 672 pp., $15.


**The Free Negro Family** (1932), E. Franklin Frazier, 90 pp., $2.50.

**The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861** (1919), Carter G. Woodson, 454 pp., $14.00.

**The Negro at Work in New York City** (1912), George Edmund Haynes, 75 pp., $4.50.

**Negro Population, 1790-1915** (1918), 844 pp., $23.50.

**Men of Mark** (1887), William J. Simmons, 1,141 pp., $39.50.

**Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina** (1868), 930 pp., $28.

**The History of the Negro Race in America** (1883), George W. Williams, 1,136 pp., $34.50.
Defeated melancholy memoirs encountered so far ing and shooting situations. As an antiis count he and T. Washington and W. Wentworth Higginson has left his ac­ tale teller, Nat Love, self-styled marksman and consorted with the mur­ bite the dust as much as any white crusader, with a larger ego, Thomas Wentworth Higginson has left his ac­ toms by Negro women enrich the story. A rather welcome contrast to the mel­­ is The Life and Adventures of Nat Love (1907). An unabashed rogue and tall­­ tale teller, Nat Love, self-styled “Dead­­ wood Dick,” was the black cowboy who integrated the Wild West in the 1870s and 1880s. A dead shot—by his own ac­ count he “never missed anything” and “defeated all comers in riding, roping, and shooting”—he enjoyed watching “painted savages” and “dirty Mexicans” bite the dust as much as any white marksman and consorted with the mur­ derous Billy the Kid in integrated drink­ ing and shooting situations. As an anti­­ climax to his Wild West career, he set­ tled down as a prosperous Pullman porter. Missing from this library of Negro au­ thors are any books of the two most notable figures of the black elite, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois, both of whom were prolific writers. Both are readily available in existing editions, which accounts for their absence here. On the other hand, their followers and­­­ opponents are well represented. Booker Washington wrote an introduction to­­­ the autobiography of Mifflin Wister Gibbs, Shadow and Light (1902), Gibbs operated on many fronts: in the Far West as a businessman, in Arkansas as a judge and politician, in the Orient as a U.S. consul. His motto was: “Labor to make yourself as indispensable as possible in all your relations with the dominant race,” but he did speak out against injustice and discrimination. Born in slavery, T. Thomas Fortune became a peppy and extraordinarily adaptable journalist intellectual. As editor of the leading Negro paper of the 1880s and 1890s, he shifted from Du­­­ Bois radicalism—anticipated in his Black and White (1884)—to Washingtonian conservatism after 1895, and wound up as editor of Marcus Garvey’s black na­­­­ tionalist Negro World. Garvey’s black separatism, the doctrine that inspired by far the greatest upheaval of black nationalism in our history, is embodied in the Jamaican’s Philosophy and Opinions (1923), edited by his second wife. In this strange book Garvey acknowledged his affinity with Booker Washington as well as his differences. DuBois, of course, rejected Garveyism.

Washington enjoyed the support of a brilliant defender, Kelly Miller, who was the author of two volumes bound as one in this series, Race Adjustment (1908) and The Everlasting Stain (1924). It is incredible that he could have written so eloquently on lynching and still have declared in 1908: “We are in the midst of an era of good feeling.” Kelly considered the Negro “a great storehouse of conservatism,” but admitted in the 1920s that had Washington lived, “he would not be able to hold the Negro to his avowed doctrine of prudential silence on the issue of manhood rights.”

The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s is treated by three able Negro writers. James Weldon Johnson, with a distin­­­­ guished writing career already behind him, began his Black Manhattan (1930) with a running history of Negroes in New York City, beginning in 1826, when the black population numbered eleven. He is concerned throughout this informative volume with the Negro in the arts, especially the theater, and more than half the book is devoted to the 1920s. Back in the days when Harlem was an enthusiasm instead of a fighting word, Johnson reminds us that for Negroes it had “better, cleaner, more modern, more airy, more sunny houses than they had ever lived in before.” In its heyday, Har­­­­ lem was “known in Europe and the Ori­­­­­ ent, . . . talked about by natives in the interior of Africa,” and celebrated as “exotic, colorful, and sensuous; a place of laughing, singing and dancing.
a place where life wakes up at night.” He knew the seamier side, but the side he exhibits with love and warmth is not that of Malcolm X. “Gaity is characteristic of Harlem,” he wrote.

One is grateful for the samplings of poetry, fiction, drama, music, painting, design, and criticism that Alain Locke rounded up in The New Negro: An Interpretation (1925) as the fruit of Harlem at its peak. Time has been kinder to the poetry than to the fiction and drama, but it all breathes the excitement of the moment. “Cultural adolescence and the approach to maturity,” Locke called it. The mood was naive and nostalgic. It was still a time when James Weldon Johnson could apostrophize: “O Southland, dear Southland,” and Locke could boast that “a leaven of humor, sentiment, imagination and tropic nonchalance” contributed to the South was the gift of the Negro. Cynicism and hate were kept at bay, he thought, by “a truly characteristic gentleness of spirit.” It all seems long ago.

Roy Ottley’s book, New World A-Coming (1943), brings us closer to the dreadful present, but stops short of it in spirit. Ottley’s Harlem, pictured in a jaunty but not imperceptive journalism, was that of the Depression, the abode of Father Divine and Daddy Grace, of Madame C. J. Walker, the hair-straightening millionaire, of Joe Louis and Langston Hughes. But Adam Clayton Powell was already on the scene, and the riot of 1935 had already taken place. No later period is covered by books of this series. Again, the reason is to be found in their general availability.

Negro scholarship in history and sociology is represented by several volumes. The weightiest by far, and in many ways the most impressive, is really twelve monographs bound together. These studies of the Negro’s social problems, published between 1896 and 1914, were done at Atlanta University by students and staff of W. E. B. DuBois. All but two were edited by him. Covering such subjects as urban life, church, family, crime, and morals, they avoided politics, civil rights, and sexual race relations as “too controversial.” Crude by modern standards, they were probably unsurpassed in their own period, for they were pioneering new ground and setting the pace for a new field of study. This was a “first” for Negro scholarship that deserves acknowledgement. A more advanced piece of work was The Negro in Chicago (1922), done by a commission nearly half of whom were Negroes. A forerunner of the recent Kerner Report, it was a comprehensive study of the anti-Negro riot of 1919 and its background.

Three important and expensive volumes of this library are entirely for the scholar—for reference and research rather than for reading. Indispensable for any historian, is the huge Negro Population, 1790-1915, originally published by the Bureau of the Census in 1918. Since 90 per cent or more of the Negroes lived in the South during most of this period, the volume is concerned mainly with this area. Its statistical essays, tables, and maps are the starting point for Negro history. Until more competent dictionaries of Negro biography replace it, William J. Simmons’s 1,100-page Men of Mark (1887) remains, for all its shortcomings, a standard reference. Of more limited interest but more permanent significance is the Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention of South Carolina (1868). With its Negro majority, the Reconstruction convention wrote the first democratic constitution of the state, a constitution unchanged until 1895, and then only to deny its benefits to a majority of the state’s citizens, the blacks.

One of the most admirable decisions the editors made was to reprint George W. Williams’s huge two-volume History of the Negro Race in America, Williams was the father of Negro history and his book, published in 1883, is a monument in American historiography. The rhetoric will sometimes jar modern readers, for he has leaders “consumed with the sacred fires of patriotism,” and God giving “all the races of mankind civilization to start with.” But those are the shortcomings of the times rather than the man. George Bancroft could write such things in the same period.

What is impressive about Williams is his sense of the high seriousness of his calling. “Not as the blind panegyrist of my race,” he wrote, “nor as the partisan apologist, but from a love for the truth of history, I have striven to record the truth. . . .” The true correction of bias and prejudice and distortion in Negro history is not eulogy and apology and panegyrics, but rather the spirit that informed the work of George Williams. 

A reading from Uncle Tom’s Cabin at the home of the Duchess of Sutherland, in London, 1856—“The old history . . . whether it was written by whites or blacks needs revising in the light of new knowledge.”
Huntington Library tour, March '97:

Sue Hodson, Am. Lit curator, said they have Flash, a 1920's Afro-American literary journal; it occurs to me that it might have lingo useful toward Monty character in Fireflies.
Chinua Achebe
Views of Home From Afar

The volume of three essays from Oxford University Press seems so simple: 105 pages, not much. But mention Achebe's name outside those days when writers write long and editors don't have time to edit them down. Home and Exile by Chinua Achebe. So deceptive, like the clarity of light on this brilliant May morning that ca­joles you into thinking reality is right before your eyes. Achebe's text makes you blink and look again.

Manhattan disappears as the train follows the Hudson upriver. The world of purple hills and green pastures is speckled with small towns in need of jobs and a lick of paint, dotted, too, with leafy weekend houses for well-off urban refugees. The taxi drivers, idling at the Rhinecliff station, squabble over who shall have the fare. The winner drives the final 15 minutes to the house tucked up a path beyond Bard College's main entrance. Achebe, in his 70th year, has come to know as much about home and exile as any man can, much more than he would have wished. How far the pukka yet remarkably warm English he's speaking is far from his mother tongue.

In 1958, Achebe opened outsiders' startled eyes to the Africa of Africans in Things Fall Apart (Heinemann; Anchor edition in U.S.), the first modern novel written by an African in English to enjoy large-scale success. More than eight million copies have been sold worldwide. A dozen works followed: fiction, short stories, essays, children's books. But mention Achebe's name outside college classrooms and for many it rings only a faint bell. Home and Exile (Oxford; Forecasts, May 8) is the first solo work to come from the father of modern African literature since Anthills of the Savannah was nominated for the Booker Prize 13 years ago.

A niece, over from Nigeria, opens the door. (Achebe's own children are scattered: one defending a doctorate in history at Cambridge, another doing the same in California; a third completing a medical residency in Texas; a fourth in graduate school at Columbia.) The sun-filled room is in many ways quite ordinary. Yes, there are several African sculptures, carvings with beads, the latest plaques from one of many universities wanting to honor a great man. But also a china closet stuffed with dolls and nondescript knickknacks, a fax machine, a photo of a beautiful daughter in a white wedding gown.

A quarter of an hour elapses before Achebe rolls in, in his chair. More than a decade ago, he was traveling to Lagos airport on route to a semester at Stanford. The car never made it. After the accident, he was flown to a London hospital and, despite months in rehabilitation, he was left paralyzed from the waist down. Then the invitation came from Bard. A place was created for him, a refuge from the chaos unleashed in his homeland and within his own life.

Speaking about his new life, he says, "The day is shorter by the time I go through my routine. I don't lament the fact of fewer hours. If you want to accomplish certain things, you have to give them more time." Later, he adds, "I'm a novelist and there is always a novel hovering. This is like clearing the table for it. I've started in the way I do."

Achebe has not written overtly about his own life until now. Home and Exile began with three lectures he gave at Harvard in December 1998. The first essay, "My Home Under Imperial Fire," recalls the African stories of his childhood, looks back on his school and university days, and provides quietly devastating examples of everyday European cultural imperialism and African cultural dispossession.

The second essay, "The Empire Fights Back," tells how Africa's story came to be reclaimed by Africans. The final essay, "The Balance of Stories," delves further into notions of dispossession and reclamation, home and exile, through memories as well as razor-sharp critiques of other writers.

Achebe agrees when it's suggested that the essays convey a fundamental message to any writer: know yourself; be yourself; explore your own stories; share them with the world and we'll all learn something. Does that mean that someone who is white cannot or should not tell the story of someone who is black? "No, not at all," Achebe replies. "What it means is to ask anybody who's dealing with someone else's story to walk softly, as Yeats said, because you walk on my dreams. People dream their world into being. If you're a visitor, remember that, and you can write as strong a story as anybody else."

Later, he tells a story about his friend the South African Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer. Some years earlier, she had been invited to participate in a conference of African writers that Achebe was also asked to attend. Shortly before the conference, Gordimer phoned him, extremely upset, having been "disinvited," no doubt because of the color of her skin. Achebe shakes his head. "She's more than paid her dues as an African writer. I agree with Ben-Gurion: whoever wants to be a Jew is a Jew as long as you pay your dues."

"We should set our," he announces in the pukka yet remarkably warm English that characterizes his generation of intellectuals schooled under British imperial rule. It's hard to remember the language he's speaking is far from his mother tongue.

He sits upright in the motorized chair, jauntily sporting a navy blue beret. While
however, has more than one million stock options.

Internet Dollars
The biggest pay day of the executives tracked by PW was for Amazon.com’s new president and chief operating officer, Joe Galli. Although Galli received only a $102,266 salary last year, he also took home a $2.9-million signing bonus as part of a total signing bonus of $7.9 million, payable over three years. Other new hires in the year received similar deals. Warren Jenson, senior v-p and chief financial officer, is entitled to a signing bonus of $7.5 million payable over five years, while Jeff Wilke, v-p and general manager of operations, was given a signing bonus of $2 million payable over four years. Amazon chairman Jeff Bezos’s salary remained at $81,840, but the e-retailer founder owns more than 117 million Amazon shares.

The big winner at Barnesandnoble.com was former CEO Jonathan Bulkeley, who received $10.9 million in exchange for his stock options (News, April 17). Among those still working at b&n.com, v-p for merchandising Brenda Marsh received a 77% salary hike, to $250,000, while senior v-p Carl Rosendorf earned a salary of $300,000 and a $100,000 bonus. Rosendorf also has more than 431,000 stock options, and Marsh has 86,250. Len Riggio controls more than seven million shares of b&n.com stock.

Fatbrain.com president Dennis Capovilla and executive v-p for product development Kim Orumchian both received raises last year, and their new employment contracts call for Capovilla’s base salary to rise to $225,000 this year and Orumchian’s salary to go to $185,000. The more interesting twist is that Fatbrain has loaned Capovilla $300,000 and Orumchian $150,000 and granted them the right to acquire up to 1% each of MightyWords, following the close of that subsidiary’s first round of financing.

[Editor’s Note: Results from the survey are based on responses from 673 PW subscribers. Due to the fact that the numbers for some positions are based on small sizes, readers are advised to use the data diagnostically rather than conclusively.]

For more information or to order the full report for $25, call 212-463-6820.]

### INTERNET COMPANIES

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Dermody Properties Welcomes
Publishers Group West
Baker & Taylor
Anderson Merchandisers

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we make our deliberate progress, following the path to the college building where he'll conduct his undergraduate seminar, he talks about the five weeks he spent in Nigeria in 1999, his first trip home in so many years. "It was a tremendous experience," he says carefully. "The time I return to live depends entirely on how quickly things return to some kind of normal. I'm talking about safety in the sense of dealing with armed robbers, yes, but also in the sense of having a hospital that works.

"This doesn't mean I'm thinking of 20 years from now. If sufficient movement towards normalization were to occur... I'm under great pressure from within to go." As he trundles along the wooded path, notions of what too early a return might cost a man in need of a hospital that works — and what every day of not returning costs a 70-year-old whose inspiration has always been his home — play silent counterpoint to the birdsong of the hot spring day.

The text Achebe pores over with his students, Distant View of a Minaret, is a story collection by the Egyptian writer Alifa Rifaat. He weighs his words as he says, "Each little story looks little to begin with until you really reflect. Her stories seem to take contradictory positions, so at the end of the day you can't say this world is just this or that. It's this as well as that."

The words could equally well describe Things Fall Apart. Contradiction indeed that the tragic story of an Igbo village leader whose world is undone by the coming of the missionaries should have been written by the son of an Anglican minister who, as an orphan boy, was taken in by the church.

Later, back at his home after the seminar, over some very proper tea and biscuits served by his psychologist wife, Christie Chinwe Achebe, the writer admits, "I am fascinated by ambivalence. I don't expect ever to understand what reality is. I expect to nibble at its edges for the rest of my time, and I think that's where we're supposed to be. We learn all the time but sometimes we unlearn. Christianity has a certain truth which persuaded my parents to go over. The society in which they lived was in disarray."

For Achebe — who started university thinking he would become a doctor — it is literature that provides the healing his parents sought in a foreign religion. "Healing, yes, this is why art was made. The need people have for that healing causes them to make rituals and celebrations. It's not for me to say how it does it, but it does. There are things I knew without actually experiencing them, but experiencing them is that much stronger. Some of the people who came to see me in hospital would say, 'Why would this happen to you?' I'd always known there was no answer to that question, only now I knew it even better."

Rifaat's book is one of some three or four hundred in the African Writers Series published by Heinemann London, of which Things Fall Apart was the very first title. Its profits paid for the publication of many of the others, and Achebe functioned as the series' editorial adviser for its first 10 years and first 100 titles. In Home and Exile, the writer alludes to the birth of this semi­nal project and to Alan Hill, the Heinemann director who made it happen. After university Achebe worked as a broadcaster in Nigeria. He journeyed to London in 1957 to attend the BBC staff school, carrying with him the manuscript of what would eventually become his first two novels. One of the BBC instructors, Gilbert Phelps, a Heinemann author, provided an introduction to his publisher.

"Alan Hill took a chance — he was that kind of man, a really great publisher," Achebe recalls. "He loved books and had the energy to get things done. Can you imagine, he'd meet authors himself at Heathrow at 6 a.m.!?"

Hill's grandfather had gone to Cameroon really great publisher," Achebe recalls. "He loved books and had the energy to get things done. Can you imagine, he'd meet authors himself at Heathrow at 6 a.m.!?"

Hill's grandfather had gone to Cameroon as a missionary and "he had that kind of interest in Africa."

The people who succeeded Hill have "not been the same kind of enthusiasm," Achebe says simply. "He told me when he was leaving the company that publishing had been taken over by accountants. There are some new people who are anxious to go out beyond the known names. The problem is, they're looking for writers who have the same concerns as themselves. I don't think they even know how to reach out for the really unknown. To know where the game will be in five or 10 years requires attention and freedom from preconceived notions, and that is very, very, difficult."

Why, after this decade in America, has Achebe not written about the place? "The story of America is so huge it's frightening — you need to have the temerity to deal with it. I wanted to find out how black Americans are doing with their own story, because that is a story that pertains to me, a story we lost completely in Africa... We allowed the memory almost to fade."

"That's a big problem we have to address in Africa, and we have the task to link up the two stories. What someone like Toni Morrison is doing to recover that story is of vital importance to me. It's almost like the Africans sold their own brothers. We have to find out how much is our responsibility and deal with it; what is somebody else's responsibility is entirely up to them to deal with."

On the subject of America in general, Achebe says, "The time is coming when what the rest of the world thinks of America will be of considerable import to the happiness and security even of Americans... I wish America would look at itself more critically than she is apt to do. I have a feeling, for instance, that anyone who is going to say something useful about human rights must begin by recognizing that human rights are violated all over the world, and begin by looking domestically at a place where numbers of children survive below the poverty line in the midst of such abundance."

But the conversation cannot help turning to the screaming headlines and mutilated images of Africa that fill newspapers and screens so often these days. Achebe is quiet for a moment. "Africa now... Yes, there's disappointment, pain, sorrow. But I say to myself, when was it in the last 500 years that Africa has not been in great pain and sorrow and disappointment? The answer is, very rarely.

"There's an Igbo proverb that says of a particular kind of rodent we have — the grass cutter, which when chewing through the grass makes a lot of noise — even if there's only one of them left, you'll hear this sound. It's a rather grim kind of hope, but the alternative is to give up and kill yourself. I don't like that option."

"You celebrate whatever achievement you can. Somebody asked me recently how I could talk about African literature as a celebration in view of Africa's problems. I said that I'm simply basing my attitude on something very old in my culture. We had celebrations where there were carvings of the white district officer, of the earth goddess, of the gods of thunder and of smallpox. If you don't bring terrifying characters into your celebration, they'll be out there plotting something else. You bring them in and keep an eye on them."
Conservation District and Rotary to observe Soil Stewardship Week

The third annual Meagher County Conservation District and Rotary Club Soil Stewardship Dinner will be held Wednesday, May 19 at 7:00 p.m. in the Golden Fleece. The cost is $2.00 per plate with everyone invited who is interested. Featured speaker for the evening will be Charles Bordsen who has traveled extensively and worked in Thailand. He will present a series of slides and talk on the “Conservation and Social and Economics of Thailand.” A business meeting to follow will see an election of supervisors for the district.

Historical Association accepts old Presbyterian Church building

The oldest building in continuous use in Montana has now been officially accepted and deeded to the Meagher County Historical Association. The only restriction in the deed is that if the Historical Association should decide to sell the building within the next 20 years that 50 per cent of the money after expenses should be paid to the church.

With the acquisition of this old historic building, the Historical Association will have more display area for items it now possesses. At present a drive is on to raise money to help in the preservation effort by the Association and interested persons may send contributions to the cause in care of Mike Baechler, Box 339, White Sulphur Springs.

Taylor Gordon, noted singer, author, laid to rest at Mayn Cemetery

On Tuesday, May 11, funeral services were held for Emmanuel Taylor Gordon in the Twichel Chapel. The Rev. James Anderson of the Grace Episcopal Church officiated with Mrs. Sue Musgrove offering a message in song. Mrs. Musgrove sang “Lead Kindly Light” and “Sweet Chariot.” Pallbearers were Jack Mathis, Keith Peterson, Marshall Hanson, Grant Schmid, Bob Bailey and Marvin Corkill. Burial was in the family plot of the Mayn Cemetery.

Mr. Gordon was born in White Sulphur Springs on August 29, 1893 to John and Mary Gordon. His mother had been a slave and yet he went on to become famous as an outstanding tenor and the author of the book “Born to Be,” which is now highly sought after as a rare edition. His father came to this area by steamboat and worked here as a chef and baker. He had come to this country from Scotland with a family named Gordon and had adopted that name. Mrs. Gordon was a slave in Kentucky before she met and married Taylor’s father. They came to this area while the town was a thriving cowtown.

John Ringling, of circus fame, often visited his ranch here and young “Manny” as he was then called, learned to ride and repair cars from the Ringling chauffeur. He later became a chauffeur for an official of the Minneapolis Opera Co. and his musical career was launched. He held many jobs, however, before he settled permanently on music, with Ringling helping him on several occasions. He appeared in many musicals on the East Coast, including one with Fred Astaire and made many tours of the nation and Europe. He retired in 1960, returning here to live with a sister Rose, who died in 1968. His last concert was in Great Falls in 1961.

He was preceeded in death by his sister Rose, and three brothers, Robert, George and Francis. There are no survivors.

Funeral services held Monday afternoon for Jeanne Mae Petterson

Jeanne Mae Petterson was born October 19, 1905 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Benjamin and Mary McMullen Fogelson.

She married the Rev. Loren Petterson and they made their home here and in California. She was known to have a beautiful singing voice and added her talent to many public gatherings.

GRIMES
for
BETTER NEW A
DON JI
Your Representative
G.M.C. Trucks,
Verle's View...

The community is saddened by the death of Rose Gordon, a friend to all. And, as a friend to all, her community wishes to express its sentiments to her. We think that possibly, this is the best way...

In this paper, Rose Gordon wrote many tributes about people of her community when they passed on. Now, who is to remember Rose? In our hearts, we all remember Rose. Her helping hands that eased an aching body, her understanding words that comforted an aching heart, her gentle spirit that soothed a troubled soul, her humor and laugh and soft voice—oh, we all remember Rose—

OUR ROSE IN MEMORY

Dress all crisp and white as snow
Soothing voice so soft and low;
Gentle hands, to ease all pain
Gentle heart, to calm all strain —

Our Rose.

Aroma of chicken and trimmings sans measure
Wood-burning warmth and cozy pleasure;
Familiar hum of melodious tune
A superb meal—but ended too soon —

Our Rose.

Summer nights and weather fair
Or blizzard and cold beyond compare,
Come theater night she lived the plot
In agony or ecstasy—we've not forgot —

Our Rose.

A year long gone—a concert of Songs
This above all in our memory belongs:
When the worldly gave way to ethereal tone
"Swing Low Sweet Chariot" comes to "Carry Her Home."

Our Rose.

Friends.

May God bless the soul of a true Christian lady.
Dear Ken

Many thanks for the copies of Taylor Gordon's wills. Rather unusual, aren't they? John Coleman wrote me a few days ago and told me the State Historical Society seems to have matters in hand. Which is good, because it would be a shame if Taylor's things weren't preserved.

I've just been revising an article I wrote about Taylor, and which should appear in the Montana Magazine of Western History later this year or early next. And someday, I guess I would like to look at whatever papers he left and see if anything more could be written. I think it would depend on how well the period from about 1936-1959 (he came back to WSS for good in 1959, as far as I can tell) is covered; that was a tough time for him, which he wouldn't talk about when I was tape recording him.

All is well here. Carol and I head off on a backpacking trip this weekend, out to the ocean beach. Then about three more weeks of work for both of us, and a ten-day vacation -- before more writing for me and more teaching for her. Should be a good summer, though; we don't extend ourselves much in nice weather.

Take care

Ivan Doig
Concern! This is my
Temporary will.

Giving to my sister's children, children, and their ancestors and relations I wish to leave my belongings, as I am the

last of John Francisco Maya. John's
children, I wish to have these words
writting if something should happen
tome, "By this hand give my beloved friend
I will settle my estate." This true
and valid will, made on the 3rd day of June, 1971, at the

signatures of John Francisco Maya and

Heston Stoudt, witnesses.

The United States government, State of Montana, and
Meagher County, to establish a museum, or

memorial for Emmanuel Taylor Stoudt,

who was the first man to develop

a "Human Radio," and used it oftenly

in New York, to Montana during the years

of 1946 to 1957. — [Signature]

[1]
All the cooking jars and green books of John and Mary Gordon to
the Meagher County Historical Society. These cooking utensils are made of red 'Dom-Tyson',
which I am sure most, I try to get the rest of.

All the Gordon pictures to the
Historic Society at the
Montana Branch of
Meagher County. They can be placed in a
book (includ. the painting of the conductor
by Robert Chambers, 1928) 3x4 inches.

My Copyright to "Born to Be" to
the Montana and associated group of Colorado people

Copyright of the Manuscript to the
Meagher County Historical Society.

The Manuscript "Refused" to the
United States Treasury Department.

The Safe Document to the Bank of New York City.

124 West 125th
New York, N.Y. 10027
ALL OF REV. B. Gordon, including all
her movables of her life, together with
the Meaford County, Holmesville, Ohio,
also to collect these things, as much of her
affairs as could be kept in tact, common
practiced by the States, USA and Meaford.

The Willman Building and 5th Avenue,
Sold to pay my funeral expenses, and
at least $2,000 to the City of Meaford
Maintain the building of the Gordon grain
store on the year $600 to the Dean Especial Bank.
Now to the Mountain View Methodist
sum total to Mrs. Oris L. Chandler,
and $1,000 to Miss Katie E. Kenball, 
Miss E. Coode and Concord.

Hampshire 03301.
I have a few outstanding bills next
more than $600 on each ship.
I owe the First National Bank $1,000.

I appoint Mrs. Robert Johnson and Mr. Donald
F. Nowell and the First National Bank as, Administrators
on instant orders to handle my estate.

Sincerely, Emanuel Taylor
Gordon.
Dear Ivan,

I'm enclosing a copy of Taylor Gordon's Will or rather Wills. I think the only one which counts is the holographic one. The typed one is easier to follow though.

I talked with Don Powell yesterday, and he said he was going to have the State Historical Society come over and inventory everything & take it all to Helena for safe-keeping. I didn't know they could do that, but there is a lot I don't know....

I think Taylor had an exaggerated idea of the worth of his real property. However I'm sure his papers are a real treasure.

Don Powell, as you will read in the Will, is named as his Executor. However he says he may turn it over to the Public Administrator. I wish you could someday go through Taylors papers with the object of writing his Biography. The entire town, needless to say, is saddened by his death.

Will keep you informed of any major developments.

Best Regards,

Kenneth Twichel
To whom it may concern:

Owing to my Sister's sudden death, and I have no other relations to leave my property, I'd like to make this "temporary will "

The (copyright of Born To Be) to the Montana National Association of Colored People. The Manuscript of "Daonda," which is in the Chemical Bank Safe-deposit Box (To the Library of Congress) and the papers with it, so that they may study them to try and amend the laws so that no other person will have to be denied the protection of the LAW.

I owe an old bill of $1,000.00 (One thousand dollars) to Mrs. Doris (Harold) Kimball of "5 Cambridge Ave., New Hampshire. 03301

My Painting of the //me by Robert Chandler, 1928, 3x4, to the Meagher county Historical Society.

I owe few outstanding bills... The Wellman building should be sold to pay funeral expenses and bills.

I'd like the Gordon Residence to be made into a "Museum" and employ at least ONE COLORED PERSON for the City of White Sulphur Springs, and Meagher county... As I am the first man to produce a, "Human Radio..." And the memory of my Father and Mother with the rest of the family. I hope to live long enough to establish a (foundation) with my writings... In the event I don't; I'd like Mr. Donald R. Powell of the First National Bank, WSB Montana, to be the administrator; without bonds.

Thank you very much.

My signature and fingerprints. Gordon

Emmanuel Taylor Gordon
WHERE ARE MONTANA’S RECORDS?

In January, the Archives began to inventory and assess Montana’s historical records. The purpose of the project is to locate records of historical significance and to record their quality and condition. The project aims to determine the needs of Montana’s record keepers (improved storage conditions and preservation, for example) and, by doing so, ultimately make the historical records throughout the state more accessible to researchers.

The work is funded by a $24,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Montana is one of 38 states to receive such an award.

The grant, coordinated by State Archivist Brian Cockhill, is to focus on the records held by local historical societies, museums, and libraries. In addition, representative county and municipal repositories will be surveyed. Archivist Bill Summers will be responsible for most of the field work with Cockhill conducting the evaluation of state government records.

The inquiry began with a questionnaire mailed to all local historical societies, museums, and libraries; to the commissioners and clerks and recorders of all 56 counties; and to officials of all 126 incorporated municipalities. The survey asks about the sorts of records held (diaries, manuscripts, official documents, etc.) and the problems encountered with the management of historical papers. A good response to the questions will familiarize the project staff with the more common problems in local collections, and alert them to records of potential significance previously unknown to researchers.

Field archivist Bill Summers’ on-site inventory has him traveling throughout Montana from early February through most of the year. He will be visiting as many of the non-government repositories as possible. He hopes to discover letters and diaries that chronicle political activities at the local, state, and national levels—both by individuals and groups. Minutes of organizations, and school records that register names of teachers as well as pupils and their families are other items of potential use to researchers.

Business records reflecting the homestead boom and bust, especially in eastern Montana,
are also of special interest. Summers cites, as another example, research resources on the travel courts that sprang up in the 1920s and 1930s, preceding the motel when Americans began touring by car. It is one of many types of business information present and future historians may seek.

A cross-section of representative government repositories—housing records of cities, counties, and school districts—will be chosen on both geographical and population bases. Their holdings to be inventoried include records that are not of purely administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes.

A report will result from this lengthy survey. It will describe the status of Montana’s historical records, any solutions or remedies that may be sought for problems that are encountered during the project, and may include recommendations for statutes which might assist Montana’s records keepers in protecting the state’s written heritage.

At right, field archivist Bill Summers with a frontier business ledger from our own research collections.

MHS Press plans are announced

With the publication of F. Jay Haynes, Photographer in October 1981, the Montana Historical Society revived one of its traditional functions that began more than a century ago—publishing quality books on the history of the state and region. The Montana Historical Society Press is alive and it is the Society’s hope that one or more volumes per year may be published under the Press imprint.

Funded with the proceeds of its own book sales, the Press will publish manuscripts from all historical disciplines that relate to the history of Montana or our geographical region. Potential books include scholarly monographs, biographies, memoirs, photo books, guides and reference works, and more.

“This is an effort,” Society Director Robert Archibald remarked, “that fulfills one of our most important missions — to provide educational materials for the use and enjoyment of Montana’s citizens. Not in Precious Metals Alone, an excellent and successful book published by the press in 1976, and F. Jay Haynes, Photographer demonstrate that the society press can produce quality volumes on a pay-as-you-go basis.”

Gordon papers received

With the recent settlement of the Emmanuel Taylor Gordon Estate, the Society Archives is now able to begin processing of the collection of materials donated to us by the terms of Mr. Gordon’s will.

Gordon, a noted singer and author during the 1920s, grew up in White Sulphur Springs as a member of the town’s only black family. As a young man, he had traveled with the Ringling family and their circus, as a porter, before going to New York to pursue his musical career. His autobiographical story, Born To Be, was published in 1929 and reprinted in 1975. Gordon returned to White Sulphur Springs in the 1950s and lived there until his death in 1971.

The Gordon Collection contains correspondence, music, clippings, photographs and manuscripts written by Taylor Gordon. There are also materials of other members of the Gordon family including his sister, Rose, a physical therapist and small-business woman in White Sulphur Springs.

An additional donation relating to the Gordon Collection has been made by Gertrude McStravick of White Sulphur Springs. Miss McStravick, a friend of the Gordons, has presented to the Society Library her copy of Circus Kings, the story of the Ringling family.

A Press Advisory Committee, composed of Society staff members, will aid the Press in selecting manuscripts. The Committee includes Gordon Brown, archivist; Marcella Sherfy, state historic preservation historian; Rick Newby, archival technician; Robert M. Clark, librarian; and Sue Jackson, archivist. Authors who wish to send manuscripts to the Press should first send letters of inquiry, describing their work. “Some materials,” Press editor Bill Lang commented, “will be inappropriate for us to publish, but I am certain that there are many solid manuscripts that we will want to look at very seriously.”

There are several Society publishing projects that might be undertaken by the Press, if funds become available. One item, a comprehensive index for Montana the Magazine of Western History, has been a hope of the publications and library departments for years. But there are other possibilities, including publication of bibliographies, guides to collections and other reference works.

The twenty-five-year-old Taylor Gordon in New York, July 1918.

The Montana Post

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Feb 6, '26 - laid at top J. Rockles
May 13, '26 - "clean funeral" & then
Sun. May, spring & fall '27: "10 Lords"
Collin wrote 4-16-28
4-18-28 - belon.$
June 50, '29 - fuses gets glorifyg

George Bagat, auo ca.

RT Digest

RT cirrus

TV - Nigh Hem 813 V 371 m

W Johnson

Spiritus

Divine

Married Draper title?

Jame?  

quote 0. 20s?

W titles: Excavations
Porties
Spiritus Berry

Divine - Nation, 151-3
1867, '35

Forum, 0, '34, 217

Carl VV: 1.20s 813 V 372 L M

Lueders

Johnson - N° poetry 811.08

Trombones 811 J 6332 G

128.9 N 3 J 67 19308
137 - Claude McKay, *Harlem Shadows*:

"Oh, heart of me, weary, weary feet
In Harlem wandering now at 2 a.m."


"I got a mother in heaven,
I got a mother in heaven,
I got a mother in heaven,
Lord, I can't stan' still."

100 - Deep River

"Oh, chillun', oh, don't u want 2 go, 2 me gospel train,
That promised land, that land, wiz el a peace."

126 - *Get on Board, Little Chiller*

"De gospel train acomin',
I hear it jist at hand,
I hear de car wheel movin',
An' rumblin' thro de lan'.
Get on board, little chiller."
Nation, Feb. 6, '35


Quote: "Peace! Good health, good appetite, prosperity & a heart full of merriment. I give me al the thr.

"I am here & I am the & I am every. I am like radio wave. Dial in & u shall always find me."
least two other desirable qualities which were lacking in my father: tact and discretion.”

With reviews and prefaces behind him, Carl Van Vechten contributed a number of his own articles to periodicals. Theatre Magazine published his “All God’s Chillun Got Songs,” a paper about Paul Robeson and Lawrence Brown, for whose debuts he had been responsible. Vanity Fair ran half a dozen of his pieces. The first, “The Folksongs of the American Negro,” declared that these were “the most important contribution America has yet made to the literature of music. . . . They contain, indeed, every element of modern jazz, save the instrumentation.”

In “The Black Blues,” he pleaded, again in terms of hyperbolic propaganda, for wider recognition, predicting that the blues would “enjoy a similar resurrection which will make them as respectable, at least in the artistic sense, as the religious songs.”

Carl’s “Prescription for the Nigger Theatre” in 1925 bemoaned the absence of so much Negro material on Broadway because of the constant repetition of what had preceded. Shuffle Along, and its formula-following imitations Runnin’ Wild, Dixie to Broadway, The Chocolate Dandies, held to a single doctrine, “which varies so little that only once in five years or so after the customers have forgotten the last one is it possible to awaken interest in a new example.” Blacking up the comedians and whitening up the chorus girls did not help. Carl Van Vechten’s own suggestions for improvement were several: advertise for a Negro chorus and forget about autonomy in color; forget the false make-up, the mammie songs, and the ghost-in-the-graveyard skits; insert some spirituals; do a Harlem cabaret sequence; do a Striver’s Row sequence; and hire Bessie Smith for a number. He could have suggested, with equal facility, Taylor Gordon or Nora Holt, two disparate singers in whose careers Carl had become passionately involved.

11 July, 1925, p. 52.
12 August, 1925, p. 92.
13 October, 1925, p. 92.
14 P. v.
15 Ibid., pp. 185–86.
GORDON, J. and GORDON, C. J.—Continued

"...It is familiar with the European vagabonding of the Gordons will hasten to share these. And if they fear the impressions gathered cannot be as "romantic" as those of Fraa completely, Simplon, and Albania and Spain, because 'America is no longer romantic,' the Gordons reassure them." F. B.

+ Boston Transcript p8 D 22 '28 700w

"Their book is full of shrewd sense, and of unfailing humour; and the authors' sketches—there is unhappily only one illustration in colour this time—add greatly to its charm." + New Statesman 32:767 Mr 2 '29 200w

"In essence their book is a deftly mannered sketch of American folk life, not written, as so many visitor's diaries, either in malice or charity, but rather in a spirit of friendly inquiry, with a quotient of dry humor and accurate observation that stamps the volume as a self-revealing and entertaining contribution to our library of books about ourselves." + Halsey Raines

+ N Y Times p11 Jl 6 '29 1450w

"These two English artists are keen observers of the American scene and they have done some clever character studies of typical American types." G: Joel

+ N Y World p1m F 10 '29 50w

"Shrewd, sensible, slyly humorous, cheerfully tolerant, they see and report on everything from artists' colonies to cotton fields, and discover much that is still picturesque in the American rural scene. The illustrations, in black and white and color, are charming." + Outlook 150:1373 D 19 '29 120w

"We are indeed deeply grateful for the picture of that other America, which to the Englishman is as a closed book, and we 'guess' no one could interpret it with greater insight and understanding. The drawings are as good as ever." + Spec 142:29 Ja 19 '29 580w

"The American scene was one the authors were peculiarly well-equipped to observe, and the result is a book which is not only highly entertaining but valuable." + Times [London] Lit Sup p42 Ja 17 '29 760w

Wis Lib Bul 25:101 Mr '29

GORDON, TAYLOR. Born to be; with an intro. by Muriel Draper, a foreword by Carl Van Vechten. 236p $4 Covic

B or 92

"Taylor Gordon, black boy and singer of spirituals, makes his debut into the world of letters with his hand tucked gratefully into Carl Van Vechten's, that beneficent godfather, as he turned to all of sophisticated black Harlem. Muriel Draper's justifiably ecstatic editor, and Covarrubias supplies decor.... In the course of this autobiography] a colored boy who begins his career as a diminutive uniformed page in White Sulphur Springs discovers himself, at thirty-six, sought-after entertainer and guest at parties where 'royalty' attends."—Books (N Y Herald Tribune)


- -

"Certainly this confiding autobiography is unique and attractive both in manner and material.... Only an unconstructed and choleric Southerner is likely to take offense at this Taylor's ingratiatingly childlike and most legitimate delight in his good luck." D: C. Tilden

Books (N Y Herald Tribune) p5 O 13 '29 900w

+ Boston Transcript p4 D 14 '29 420w

"Taylor Gordon—unless, of course, I am mistaken—has set himself to discover just what the world expects a Negro artist to be and to show with all the good humor in the world, has been it: simple, lusty, amoral, nomadic, sexually superior, sporty and laughter-loving. In this manner, he has succeeded in making a good, no-quarters of his book amusing and even exciting, if not important." + M. P. Levy

+ — New Repub 61:175 Ja 1 '30 380w

+ Boston Transcript p8 D 22 '28 700w

"The biggest thing in Taylor Gordon's book is just the story of his own gay, irresponsible, happy-go-lucky, sensual, sinful, lyrical life. I don't think I ever read a book written by a Negro as well or as pleasantly as this one. Taylor Gordon's amusing, excitingly into words. He never could master grammar, but he calls us his 'editors,' and his spelling is his own; but he has style in that highest degree which consists in using the exactly right words to say with the utmost precision exactly what he wishes to say," Shearns O'Sheele

+ N Y World p1m N 24 '29 380w

"It isn't often that one finds an autobiography written with the unaffected simplicity and childhood frankness found in Taylor Gordon's 'Born To Be.' Seemingly aware of the fact that every experience has its place in the varied scheme of character building, he sees no reason for withholding any incident of his extraordinary life, however sordid or sensual it might appear. After having read the unique account and reflected on its merits as an important contribution to literature, one finds oneself asking if the patronizing foreword by Carl Van Vechten and the introduction by Muriel Draper are not unduly ecstatic. As for Covarrubias's illustrations, they reflect so strongly the elements of travesty and burlesque that they are wholly out of keeping with a story that is presented in all seriousness," R. B. Kennedy

+ — Sat R of Lit 6:814 D 7 '29 570w

Theatre Arts Mo 14:99 Ja. '30 100w

GORDON-BARRETT, RICHARD. Regis. Travelling in Italy. 228p $2.50 McBride [74 ed Methuen]

914.5 Italy—Description and travel 28-29288

"For motorists visiting Italy Mr. Gordon-Barrett's book will prove an exceedingly useful compendium of information. The larger portion of it consists of a description of roads in the form of a diary of tours made by the author. Here a good deal of space might have been saved and used for more practical purposes by omitting many details of no general interest." + Times [London] Lit Sup p394 O 11 '28 580w

GORRE, CHARLES. Christ and society. (Halsey Stewart lectures, 1927) 218p $3 Scribner [46 ed Allen & U.]

261 Sociology, Christian. Jesus Christ 28-21925

"In these lectures Bishop Gore goes through the history of Christian association, dwelling with affection and honour on the Christianity of the apostolic and early patriarchal ages. It is Bishop Gore's aim to show that it is only by the attitude of the early Church—the life-association of good-will—the potentiality of Christendom can be realised. In the last chapter he lays down practical measures to be applied to our circumstances demand."—Spec

+ Christian Century 46:17 Ja 3 '29 860w

Pratt p9 summer '29

"Altogether these lectures are extremely well worth reading as an illustration of a better application of the principles of Jesus to the (notably English) social order." Shailer Mathews

Pratt p9 summer '29
This Young Spade

BORN TO BE.

Reviewed by DAVID C. TILDEN

TAYLOR GORDON, black boy and singer of spirituals, makes his debut into the world of letters with his hand tucked gratefully into Carl Van Vechten's that benificent godfather of all of sophisticated black Harlem. Muriel Draper is his justifiably ecstatic editor, and Covarrubias supplies decor that are, for the most part, broodingly naive and beautiful. And the publishers, heartened perhaps by all this passionate patronage, hail "Born To Be" as one of the "smartest" books of the season, which is as may be.

Certainly this confiding autobiography is unique and attractive both in manner and material. In the course of it a colored boy who began his career as a diminutive uniformed page to the girls at B. Maud's and other houses "on the End" in White Sulphur Springs discovers himself, at thirty-six, sought-after entertainer and guest at parties where "celebrity" attends. He has been everywhere, this young "snowball" from Montana, and seen everything. He has chanced with Lady Oxford's "an equal" and she has asked him if he had a good "black bottom"; he has been seen in the King's Road in London, he has investigated the mysterious plumbing devices of Paris, and has been to parties at Heywood's. What more can he hope for from life? He'd be glad to retire now and unembarrassed enjoyment of wine, women and song in Harlem if only he had a wife to run off, of an evening, as a wonder and proof of his triumphs. Wanting that, he must go on to all the miles and honey he can get. "Ho! Ho!" says he, in the last line of his book, "I wonder what I was born to be?"

Only an unreconstructed and choleric Southerner is likely to take offense at Taylor's infuriatingly childlike and most legitimate delight in his good luck. Naturally this young "spade" (as he always calls himself) rolls the white of his wondering eyes when he considers what doors have been opened for him by a luscious singing voice, a winsome personality and the happy coincidence of a vogue. Born "Mannie" Taylor, one of the two or three pickaninnies in the only Negro family in his town, he found his color no handicap at all. Not until he went to St. Paul as a chauffer, at the age of seventeen or so, did he discover that black money wouldn't buy a plate at a restaurant reserved for whites. And by the time he made that potentially tragic discovery his happy-go-lucky self-confidence was so firmly established that he suffered no grave distress—merely a wondering readjustment, in terms of the limitations that racial prejudice imposed on his vague, youthful dreams of being, one day, a man of wealth and power. It was only when he went South as steward on John Ringling's private car, a drowsy, arrogant young buck with an appraising eye for a white girl, that he learned what the color line sometimes means.

A simple, confident youngster, with a talent for putting the carefree joie de vivre of his race into words, Taylor's story of his days in White Sulphur Springs—in and out of the six "good" saloons there, crooked pin boy at the local bowling alley, water-boy and runner of errands—of his life in St. Paul and Chicago, of his merry evenings with the "part-time gals," and his meagre course in "the art of love" in New Orleans, is full of frank circumstances and anecdote, and a mischievous delight in the way of the world as he finds it. It is when he "arrives" as a singer and socially acceptable man-about-town in New York, London and Paris that he develops into a veritable Daisy Ashford among the intelligentsia. Under the influence of his new friends he gets very highbaitin' indeed, and the vernacular that served him so well as a Pullman porter with the traveling blues gives way to astonishing literary elegance. And he has opinions to air. . . .

His debt to Mrs. Draper—and it is one which you as a potential reader of "Born to Be" must share—he pays off in elegant style:

For instance, Muriel Draper. What a great place this world would be if every one was free of their inhibitions like Princess Muriel Draper is. Having the greatest wisdom of any and being a marvelous writer is not enough for her. She knows how to drape her shapely figure in all materials—win-

dow curtains, silk bedspreads, satins, Spanish shawls—so that, no matter where or how big the party may be, people always ask, who is that woman?

Which is all the evidence you need that Mrs. Draper is an impartial editor and "Born to Be" is a delectable book.

A Shabby World

KEPT WOMAN.

Reviewed by VIRGILIA PETERSON ROSS

I every day you stop for a cup of coffee in a lunch room, sit down at a cramped, stained table, listen to your neighbors' audible gossips, imbibe a dark, tasteless fluid and then go up town in the subway, you will probably come to feel that the world is flat, stale and unprofitable. Much the same effect proposition, lives on he has sold his high time to.

Two or three reduced chi around Lillie the paying him. He is proud of.

The week driving to shopping, q by-and-by marriage or friend tells be happy broods over is no same happy. An tag for he that, her n 'wife' sound pured with what they glad to be.

But $15.
Born To Be

Born To Be, by Taylor Gordon. With an Introduction by Muriel Draper, a Foreword by Carl Van Vechten and Illustrations by Covarrubias. New York: Covici-Friede. 233 pages. $4.

Born To Be," the autobiography of a Negro spiritual singer, has been characterized by its publishers and some of its sponsors and critics as an adventure in charming naivete. And so, indeed, it is; but not in the precise sense indicated. Taylor Gordon—unless, of course, I am mistaken—has set himself to discover just what the world expects a Negro artist to be and then, with all the good humor in the world, has been it: simple, lusty, amoral, nomadic, sexually superior, sporty and laughter-loving. In this manner, he has succeeded in making a good three-quarters of his book amusing and even exciting, if not important. It holds too closely to the pattern for the lives of colored men set by the Van Vechten school to be very deeply revealing.

It is not to be doubted, of course, that the narrative is true: that young Gordon, born in a Montana mining camp actually did spend his childhood in communion with the town's bawds and saloonkeepers—such things as these were common to all boys, white or black, in that environment. It is not at all incredible that he captured the fancy and friendship of the great John Ringling, nor that, while acting as porter on a Pullman car, he was able to achieve sexual intimacy with an attractive woman never seen before or since, nor that, having begun life in poverty, he was at last able to sing before royalty and Carl Van Vechten, "the Abraham Lincoln of Negro art": all these things might naturally occur in the course of an existence. It is not easy to believe, however, that this man could have gone through these adventures—or any others—and remain so abnormally untouched and without suffering; nor that all of the bawds, chauffeurs, bootleggers and laborers he has ever met could have been such thorough playboys as he describes, neither needing, nor accidentally coming by, families and permanent responsibilities.

Only in the single chapter "My People" does "Born To Be" reveal more than the pleasant convention of the romantic underworld. Here Taylor Gordon reveals himself.

Robert Herrick.
THEATRE ARTS BOOKSHELF

which appeared serially in THEATRE ARTS for April and May, readers will recall as a careful study of their closet dramas, Bothwell, Queen Mary and The Sentimentalists. He speaks more in sorrow than in anger that these three poets, all potential dramatists, especially Meredith, should have ignored or scorned to equip themselves with the technique of the theatre, and by so doing, should neither have profited the theatre nor been profited by it.

If these friendly researches into a vanishing decade fail to uncover any rich ore, they nevertheless result in a book that is rich in observation, analysis and, at times, humor. Walter de la Mare’s paper, in particular, is brilliantly written. And Granville-Barker’s graceful introduction concludes with the pertinent suggestion that “by a wider view than we can take from the top of the pile . . . of imaginative and unimaginative literature, the Englands of the 1870’s and 1920’s may have more in common than the change in the noise of their life lets us suppose” and that our own, to us active, decade scanned at some future date may, as Mr. de la Mare puts it, “be packed up in an old satchel.”

VERA KELSEY

OTHER NEW BOOKS

Cyrano, by Cameron Rogers. Double-day, Doran: N. Y.

Irma Duncan’s Russian Days, by Irma Duncan and Allan Ross Macdougall. Born to Be, by Taylor Gordon. Covici-Friede: N. Y.


JUST around the corner from the shelves of books on the theatre are lengthening rows of volumes which, if not definitely related to the stage, have every right to be recognized as in-laws. Of these, Cyrano, a lusty tale of a lusty 17th century swordsman, Libertin, and man of letters is welcome both for itself and because it tells the tale of that great romantic whom Rostand has perpetuated in Cyrano de Bergerac. Although strangely enough, the real Cyrano was cold to love, it was the sensitiveness engendered by his prominent nose that held him back from success in his three chosen fields even as it barred him from the lady of his heart in the play. And by virtue of Mr. Rogers’ skill in the telling, the flesh and blood Cyrano is almost as moving a tragi-comic figure as Rostand presented him on the stage.

Irma Duncan and Allan Macdougall have been less successful in portraying Isadora Duncan during her last shadowed years in Russia, America, and France. For those who are not satisfied to know Isadora, the artist, through her own words in The Art of the Dance, and who wish to penetrate beyond the final pages of the dancer’s turbulent, stirring My Life to the experiences she herself had planned to tell of her Russian experiment, Isadora Duncan’s Russian Days will, of course, furnish a record of dates and places and events. But it reveals nothing further of the personality that was Isadora, nor, fortunately, can it take anything away.

Anticipating any attempt at biography, Taylor Gordon autobiographs himself in Born to Be. The book is a frank, straightforward account of his life from his urchin days in Montana when as a boy among boys he never realized his skin was brown to his present position as one of America’s foremost Negro spiritual singers. As he tells almost nothing of his musical experience, the book is of interest chiefly as a revelation of his reactions and attitude on discovering himself a Negro in a white man’s world.

Except for a few descriptive paragraphs of plays and players in Washington during post-Civil War days, The Tragic Era has little legitimate claim to a place on or near a theatre book shelf. Yet as a recreation of the twelve tragic years following the assassination of Lincoln, it is so vividly theatrical both in theme and treatment that it may well be considered as it stands a great American drama or as the potential material from which the long expected “great American drama” may come.


THIS is an entertaining little autobiography, ambling and inconsequent, full of revealing anecdotes about other interesting people besides the author and his immediate associates. One of the most valuable chapters tells of the early association of Martin Shaw and Gordon Craig,
Books of Special Interest

The Last Stuart


Endowed by Bartlet Bremer he decides whether it was an advantage or a disadvantage to have the subject for fictionalization.

The poor, stupid woman was quite a person before she became it is difficult to dredge up different past much that is significant, although not so difficult as some of this book would have believed. Yet the consequence is that she with temerity and the encouragement offered by our present appetite for historical portraits, can present a picture of Anne before 1688 that is often. Of course the aim will be to imagine portrait not too unlike the one who worried William and Mary highly in their place. The fact however that even after Anne was into public ken by her mere blood of inheritance, she proved to be so and chicken-headed a nonentity even since she has been disdained as an incalculable living organism continued breath alone stood between dead nation and the distress that breeds.

going chosen so difficult, or so easy, a Miss Brown has done a good piece of work. She manages to sustain interest in the life and career of her subject, remarkably. In fact she almost succeeds in concealing the horrid truth that Anne was "a person of no importance" except in terms of the drama of lives. She was the bridge, or perhaps the temporal stop-gap, between the ecclesiastical and imperial England that only of the Stuart would-be despots under, and the even more commercial and imperial England that finally imported alien from Hanover as mere constitutionalannexes. Anne was thus queen at a time when all her Stuart instincts craved for glory to revive the divine hereditary of kings, but when those instincts had died and exile to feed on. Miss Brown makes this personal tragedy her theme, but fails to bring its deep causes up into appropriate relief.

The book, then, is a quietly consistent and convincing revelation of a perpetually befuddled and thwarted woman, who happened to be a queen. The tragedy of her life was completed by the fact that she could bear children, but children who could not live. In this account of her life there are a few slight historical errors, such as a too-early introduction of the theories of the exiled Locke, but in general the imaginary history, the "decorated," and the documented, do not seriously offend. One question remains. Why, after all, should we give our time and attention to ghost-like and imaginary wraths on the surface of the mirror of history when the active underlying forces are brought to life for us and the whole deep perspective of the times receives such effective treatment as it does in the brilliant and dramatic "England under the Stuarts" of G. M. Trevelyan? That living historian recreates Anne's life-time more fully and satisfyingly than Miss Brown and he does so with no less interest or literary charm. There are some expert historians who can write as well as interpret. Why should we not rediscover them before we offer too hearty encouragement to mere novelties? Then we might give such books as Miss Brown's the place they deserve, in this case tribute to a well-written personal history of a nonentity.

A Negro Musician

BORN TO BE. By TAYLOR GORDON. New York: Covici-Friede, 1929. $4.

Reviewed by R. EMMER KENNEDY

IT isn't often that one finds an autobiography written with unaffected simplicity and childlike frankness found in Taylor Gordon's "Born To Be." Seemingly aware of the fact that every experience has its place in the varied scheme of character building, he sees no reason for withholding any incident of his "extraordinary life, however sordid or sensual it might appear.

Throughout the ever-changing narrative the surprised reader cannot help being impressed by the spontaneity and honesty of a mind endeavoring to reveal its homely story precisely as it came about. Unlike many artists who have climbed to success and have made a conspicuous place for themselves in the world of music and letters, Taylor Gordon speaks of his lowly beginning and early struggles with admirable candor and unassuming. He is conscious of his deep feeling of pride in his humble origin and African heritage when he speaks of his Zulu father, and tells of his mother who was born a slave on a Kentucky plantation, and of her brave efforts to support her children after her husband's death.

It was Taylor Gordon's unique good fortune to be a member of the only colored family living in the little Monton town where he was born. His school days, passed with white companions, were untroubled and happy, and his mind remaining free from all feeling of race-consciousness enabled him in after years to approach his own people and study their characteristics in a manner far different than if he had always lived among them in close intimacy.

Starting to work at an early age, he tells of his experiences as a page in the questionable house presided over by Big Maude, a blonde-haired daughter of joy who claimed relations to English nobility. Growing tired of the humble opportunities, he tried his luck as a chauffeur in St. Paul, then as a cook on the private car of the Ringling Brothers circus, next as a Pullman porter, then at various other things, until he finally arrived in New York City and began to consider music as his real calling. Keen observation and a humorous outlook add much to the telling of the unusual episodes.

A regrettable feature of this entertaining book is that so large a portion is devoted to amorous escapades and dalliances with the "lustful heathen maid" and so little attention is given to Taylor's musical beginnings and early interest in song. Coveting of a race naturally endowed with melodic sense and vocal equipment, it is surprising that his interest in the art of song was not wholly awakened until he was twenty-two years old, if one is to rely on his own statement. He speaks with admiration of his mother's voice and the memories he retains of her. Were these the same moving, melancholy spirituals which he is conceded to interpret with such depth of feeling and understanding?—melodies that never had to be learned but were a part of his being from earliest childhood?

After having read the unique account and reflected on its merits as an important contribution to literature, one finds oneself asking if the patronizing foreword by Carl Van Vechten and the introduction by Muriel Draper are not unduly ecstatic. As for Covarrubias' illustrations, they reflect so strongly the elements of travesty and burlesque that they are wholly out of keeping with a story that is presented in all seriousness.

Greek Poets

HELENISTIC POETRY. By ALFRED KÖRTE. Translated by JACOB HAMMER and MOSES HADAS. Columbia University Press, 1929. $4.

The "Hellenistische Dichtung" appeared in 1925. In the preface he says:

This little book is intended not for scholars, but for the wider circle of readers who can appreciate poetry even when it is presented in a foreign language.
GOODLOE, MRS. DOROTHY OLIVE—Teacher.

While a student at Princess Anne, she won a number of prizes and later received a four year scholarship to Morgan College and the Hargis Gold Medal for the best English Oration.

In the Junior year at Morgan College she was elected Undergraduate Representative of the Y. W. C. A. and was sent to the Conference at Talladega College, Ala., and there was elected a member of the National council and was sent to the conference in Eagles Mere, Penn., where the colleges from six states were represented.

GORDON, EUGENE—Newspaper Man.

GORDON, TAYLOR—Concert Singer.
b. Apr. 29, 1893, White Sulphur Springs, Montana; z. John F. and Anna (Goodlow) Gordon; educ. Public Sch., White Sulphur Springs; Montana; Auto Mechanics, 1900-1911; Silk Designer, 1918-19; Chef, 1914-15; Deportation Attendant, 1915-16; B. F. Keith (Vaudeville), 1919-22; Concert Singer, 1924-present; Residence, 110 W. 106th St., New York, N. Y.

GOVAN, CHARLES—Heating Engineer.
* educ. Pub. and High Sch., Georgetown, S. A.; Ecol6 Technique, Montreal, Canada; M.E., 1917; associated with Black Star Line as Marine Engineer; 1919-20; Organized Black Star Line Works, 1920-22; Employed as Foreman, Lehigh Valley R.R. Co. at Coxton, Pa., 1922-23; Prop. Lehigh Heating Co., heating engineers and contractors, 1924-present; mem. Phi Beta Sigma; Masons; Relig. Protestant; Business Address, 220 Second Ave, New York, N. Y.; Residence, 813 St. Nicholas Ave, New York, N. Y.

GRAHAM, ARCHIE ALLEN—Clergyman.

Rev. A. A. Graham was the Moderator of the Norfolk Union Baptist Association for fourteen years and Secretary of the Baptist General Association of Virginia for fifteen years.

The Lott-Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Inc., U. S. A., of which Dr. Graham has been corresponding Secretary for seven years, is devoted exclusively to Foreign Mission Work. It has workers in Africa, Haiti, Russia and India. Has established the only industrial plant in Liberia, except the Firestone interests.

GRAHAM, JESSE M. H.—Clerk, Civil Service Dept.
b. Feb. 8, 1869, Clarksville, Tennessee; s. James Monroe and Mahala (Mahan) Graham; educ. Fisk Univ.; Clerk, Federal Civil Service; Editor and Publisher, Clarksville Enterprise, 1895-98; Taught school in Kentucky and Tennessee; First and only colored man elected to Legislature, from Montgomery Co., Tenn., 1896-97; mem. Masons; K. of P.; Odd Fellows; Elks; United Spanish War Veterans; American Legion; Army and Navy Union; Pol. Independent; Relig. Christian Scientist; Residence, 1257 Q St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

He enlisted in the regular army for service in the Spanish-American War and served in the Philippine Islands. Later he became a clerk in the Insular Bureau of Audits of the Philippine Islands, serving from 1902-1917.

attended the Officers' Training Camp at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, was commissioned Second
Denny, May 18, 1918; Lawyer, 1912-present; Pres., Citizens Trust Co.; Vice-Chairman, Committee of Management, Butler St. Y.M.C.A.; Pres., Atlanta N.A.A.C.P.; Pres., Atlanta Urban League; Pres., Atlanta Univ. Alumni Assn.; Chairman, Republican Executive Committee, 5th Congressional Dist. of Georgia; Grand Atty., K. of P. of Georgia; Grand Atty., Yorkrite Masons of Georgia and also National Body of same; K. of P.; Yorkrite Masons; Elks; Alpha Phi Alpha (Boulé); Chairman, Trustee Bd., Wheat St. Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.; Pol. Republican; Relig. Baptist; Office, 205-7 Hopkins Bldg.; Residence, 524 Larkin St., S.W., Atlanta, Ga.

WALDEN, H.—Instructor.

WALKER, ABRAHAM McCARTNEY—Educator.

WALKER, MME. A'LELIA—Corporation President.
b. June 6, 1885, Delta, La.; d. Moses and Sarah (Breedlove) McWilliams; educ. Knoxville College, Knoxville, Tenn.; m. James Arthur Kennedy, M.D., May 1, 1926; one adopted child, Mae Walker Jackson; President, The Mme. C. J. Walker Mfg. Co., May, 1919-present; mem. Kappa Alpha Psi, Sorority; Women's Auxiliary, N.A.A.C.P.; ex-member of Utah Club, Women's Auxiliary Urban League and Board of Directors of the Nat. Urban League; was Vice-Pres., Harlem Child's Welfare League; was a member of Music School Settlement; Relig. Presbyterian; Business Address, c/o Mme. C. J. Walker Beauty Shops, 110 W. 136th St., New York, N. Y. or (Headquarters) 640 N. West St., Indianapolis, Ind.; Home Address, Villa Lewaro, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York.

Mme. A'Leila Walker is the daughter of the late Madam C. J. Walker, the founder of the Mme. C. J. Walker Mfg. Co., manufacturers, located in Pittsburgh since 1908 and Indianapolis since 1910. The factory and sales office in Pittsburgh was left in care of Mme. A'Leila Walker at the time of its organization. On the death of Madam C. J. Walker, May 25, 1919, the daughter took charge of the entire business, in Indianapolis and other cities, as well as the Eastern branch located at 110 West 136th Street, New York, N. Y.

Two-thirds of the net proceeds of the business established by Madam C. J. Walker is donated to worthy Race charities, such as Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Orphan’s Homes, Old Folks Homes, Missionary Societies and Scholarships.

WALKER, MRS. HATTIE BROWN—Librarian.
b. Philadelphia, Penn.; d. Robert and Anna Brown; educ. Pub. and High Sch., Phila., Penn.; Temple Univ.; studied at Univ. of Cincinnati; m. (Rev.) J. Franklin Walker; two children, Helen; Brent; Organized Inter-Denominational Ministers’ Wives Assn.; Chairman of Education, Religious Committee, Y.W.C.A. (Cincinnati, Ohio); Librarian, Stowe Branch, Cincinnati Public Library, 1920-present; Pol. Independent; Relig. Baptist; Address, 3240 Beresford Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio.

She has the distinction of being the only colored person appointed Librarian at main library in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio.

WALKER, MRS. MAGGIE LENA—Bank President-Editor.

Mrs. Maggie L. Walker is the founder and President of St. Luke Bank and Trust Co. which has on its books more than 6,000 depositors and resources of over a half million dollars.

The order of St. Luke’s, of which she is Executive Secretary, has a membership of over 100,000, a building in Richmond, Va., valued at over $100,000, and an emergency fund in excess of $150,000. It is a fraternal organization with branches in large cities of the United States. Over 20,000 children are enrolled in thrift clubs, part of the plan of the Order. It employs 145 field workers and there are 55 clerks in the home office.
3 -- more than 5,000 Negro cowboys after Civil War

5 -- Clark's slave, York. Negro named Jacob Dodson with Fremont on 1843 expedition, another named Saunders Jackson with F's 4th expedition in 1848.

9 -- "During the Civil War, 178,975 Negro soldiers wore the blue uniforms of the Union Armies, and Negroes took part in 449 engagements. More than 38,000 were listed as killed, wounded or missing in action." Two infantry and two cavalry regiments served in the West after War.

10 -- Indians called them "Buffalo Soldiers"

152 -- Negro cowboys at XIT

140 -- "There were probably fewer Negro cowboys in Idaho and Montana than in any other part of the cattleman's West. One reason was race hatred and bitterness: early steamboat traffic up the Missouri had resulted in the immigration into Montana of many "unreconstructed" Southerners and the simultaneous arrival of a number of transient Negro steamboat crewmen and river front roustabouts. . . .

142 -- "Montana had no monopoly of cheerful killers, but it seems clear that its citizens, school boards and legislatures did little to make the territory or state particularly attractive to Negroes. The late opening of its eastern ranges also acted to reduce the number of Texas trail crews entering (p. 143) the territory. Consequently few Texas Negro cowboys entered or remained in Montana. Negro cowboys drove longhorn cattle, which were no longer in great demand. . . .

So the census figures, though never very accurate indicators of the drifting cowboy population, show comparatively few Negroes. The census counted 183 Negroes in the Montana Territory in 1870, and 346 in 1880."

144 -- "Most of the few Negro cowboys who worked in the territory seem to have come from Texas, delivered their herds and ridden back down the trail. They came to Montana, but they were never a part of it."

Epilogue mentions Wister and Zane Grey.

Negro cowboys: Bill Pickett, "Deadwood Dick" Nat Love. Mountain man Jim Beckworth

229 -- "Americans have lost something valuable if they forget that Wild Bill Hickok and George Washington Carver grew up on the Western plains at the same time."
grasp glittering opportunity. Because he was also the most ruthless and egotistical of the brothers, he forced them to go along with him. And because he was the most farsighted, with the possible exception of Otto, his gambles paid golden dividends for many years, until in the days of depression, when opportunity shriveled and all bets were off, he came close to lonely ruin.

Nor were John Ringling’s ventures confined to circus business. As he traveled around the country on the circus train, his eyes were always searching for opportunity. He loved money more than anything except pictures, and he never missed a chance of making some. He might see a theater in some small city that was doing badly and could be turned into a profitable movie house; or a streetcar line that needed a little capital; or even a steam laundry whose owner wanted to retire. It did not matter to Uncle John what the line was as long as there was money in it. As a result, he owned businesses all over the United States.

Another of John Ringling’s extracurricular activities was building short-line railroads. Since he routed the circus, he was as familiar with rail systems of the United States as a spider with its web. Although the great railroad-building days were over and the transportation system almost complete, Uncle John occasionally would discover a missing link that might be forged with profit. One such line, built about 1911, was the fifty-five-mile connection between Mark Twain’s home town, Hannibal, Missouri, and Bowling Green, which Uncle John proudly named the St. Louis and Hannibal, though it went nowhere near the Missouri metropolis. It operated profitably until the 1930s, when it was scrapped.

Another short line was in Montana. Before starting this railroad, Uncle John took the precaution of buying about 70,000 acres of adjoining real estate. He then built a twenty-mile line from White Sulphur Springs, Montana, to Broken Jaw, whose grateful inhabitants rechristened their town Ringling—a great loss of picturesque nomenclature, but very gratifying to Uncle John. With his usual recklessness of geographical exactitude he called it the White Sulphur Springs and Yellowstone Park. It is still running, with my brother John as president, while my cousin Paul Ringling ranches the remaining 20,000 acres of the original landholding.

My uncle’s fondness for calling his railroads by high-sounding names was probably a reflection of circus-style exaggeration. One of his most grandiose gestures in this direction was the twenty-mile railroad he built between Eastland and Breakwater, Texas, which he called the Eastland, Wichita Falls and Gulf. The family were teasing him about this pretentious title when Uncle Charlie came to his rescue by saying, “It may be only twenty miles long, but it’s just as wide as anybody’s railroad.”

The most profitable of all John Ringling’s gambles in railroading was not due to his acumen, but to pure happenstance. Perhaps this is not quite correct, for Uncle John always put himself in the path of Opportunity and that capricious dame did not even have to knock once; she had but to droop her left eyelid.

In 1913 one of her favorite haunts was still the old Waldorf bar. At five o’clock every weekday afternoon tycoons and tycoonlets gathered under the potted palms in its somber magnificence to discuss past triumphs and future amalgamations; and to refresh themselves with old bourbon or those newfangled martinis. There might sit Otto Kahn, Frank Vanderlip of the National City Bank, and George F. Baker of the First National, a trio of Morgan partners, a couple of Vanderbilts, Charles M. Schwab, Payne Whitney, Cornelius Kelley of Anaconda, and, with ears quivering and his mind working like a still uninvented electronic computer, that brilliant young opportunist, Bernard M. Baruch.
Another of Uncle John's techniques was to go to the great auctions at Christie's in London accompanied by Newton or some other expert. He knew that the other dealers would try to bid him up, so he would have Newton bid on the pictures he really wanted, while he ostentatiously bid for pictures he did not particularly like.

Now, I do not want to imply that my uncle never got stuck, for he assuredly did. Some of the pictures he thought great bargains had been impugned by the experts, though Uncle John never believed these gentlemen if he did not choose to. But the fact remains that his do-it-yourself art education enabled him to amass a collection of old masters—he never bought modern pictures—which at the time of his death was appraised at close to $15,000,000, about five times what he paid for it. His collection put the John and Mable Ringling Museum in the first rank among the galleries of the world.

While John Ringling was cultivating artistic discrimination, he also acquired a good deal of social polish. Though he had no affectations, except his occasional affectation of vulgarity, he was far too sensitive not to perceive the merits of good usage. One of the first things to go was that barber-shop mustache. His store-bought clothes were replaced by the products of Saville Row or equally well-cut and even more expensive garments by Mr. Bell of New York. Good horses were an inherited love of all the Ringlings. After all, such products of the harness maker's craft as "a gold- and rubber-mounted double harness" needed a blooded animal to show it off properly. As the age of the automobile came in, impatient Uncle John transferred his affection to them, though Uncle Al did not. However, Uncle John was equally fastidious about internal-combustion locomotion; he never owned anything but Rolls-Royces and Pierce-Arrows.

The one vulgar taste he kept was food. Though he could enjoy a European dinner with vintage wines, what he liked best was Old Curio scotch and hash—any kind of hash. He could put away tremendous quantities of hash. I remember an occasion when a Chinese valet who had left Uncle John's employ came to his Venetian palace in Sarasota to see him and ask for his old job back.

"But I have a good man now, Willy," Uncle John said. "I don't need a valet, I need a cook."

"I can cook, Mr. Lingling," said Willy, who had the oriental block against the letter r.

"You kept your secret well," Uncle John observed. "Can you make good hash?"

Willy beamed. "Mr. Lingling," he said, "I can make eighteen kinds of hash."

He got the job.

So far I have discussed the frivolous side of John Ringling's emerging character. But anyone who supposed that this was his measure—and some did—was apt, in the words of the old song, to find "his head tucked underneath his arm."

During the time of Ringling Brothers' great expansion he gradually assumed the leadership of the partnership. Though in theory each partner remained equal with an equal voice, in practice Uncle John played the dominant role. There were several reasons why he was able to do this. For one thing, the others were immersed in the technical problems of their respective departments of the circus, while John, freewheeling between Europe and America, did not get bogged down in details. Coming back from his trips with a fresh point of view, he was able to see what military men call the big picture. And his imagination showed him the way to profit by it.

While his brothers were generally content to progress slowly, John's tremendous drive and soaring ambition made him impatient with conservative policies. His was an all-or-nothing spirit, ready to go out on a long financial limb to
Black Man Singing

Taylor Gordon: Honoring Harlem

Faithmar

Can't realize mo like 2 b black
not so uncompleted as others think
hand work = bum singer

N° 6 - NY
246 - Negriati
Nun-ahemed man
252 - Divine
251 - Mady Walker
219 - Walker & VB
217 - "Juwan

New World
174 - T & M
171 - Walker shrinking

Bluba Od
242 - my self inside & hair

Put in excellent situation

Be the two of wood in terrible

understand

intakeed

Pole Poles

this come another staff

 saúdeed with hand and sample

---

FAH:

Evil to convert bad

Obees Ode to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all to escape all
tries - Consumer Reports
lube
apartment
UW
write, Mont.

Xerox, Doran, Mont rewrite
Eve, Herald
TE piece
Vernon & Dickrey
921 455 546

Sinclair L - spirit? Village apt.

Kensington book - Circus Knigs
920.073
R474.00

X Johnson 920.97 W626
author New Eng Conservatory Music

J Johnson - Book 7 am No Spirits
Westminster Gazette, July 16, 27

Gray Dunce - March 6, '33
OK, NYT

920.01
1936
WRITER'S DIGEST 029.605 WD (M)
EVA HERALD
DICKERS-ADAMS-NEMEROV
TYPEWRITER RUBBER
NEW REPUBLIC RUBBER
NR Ma 3, '26 70 J. ROBESON
" As 1, '30 345 J. ROBESON
\n\nS. SERGEANT

p. 43: "Take a song of strong
arranged pair, like Witness. M. T. G.,
Robeson's latest rival & solo led 7
individual performances, who is accompanied by
M. ROSSANOCL Johnson, sings it as a
member of congregation; it as a
preacher."

checked NR make, 1926-30
A Negro with the single name of York was a member of the historic Lewis and Clark expedition which was the first to explore the wilderness all the way to the Pacific Northwest. York was the “black servant” of Capt. William Clark and he was a “remarkable, stout, strong Negro,” according to journals describing the voyage. Though a servant, York performed the same labors and suffered the same hardships as other members of the party. The wilderness had little respect for a man’s rank or race. York took his turn at provisioning the expedition, hunting buffalo, bear, deer and other game. He also served as guide and scout, and as boatman on the journey up the Missouri River. It was a rigorous life.

The winter of 1804 saw a number of the men afflicted with frostbite—one of them was York. “My servant’s feet also frosted,” Clark wrote in his journal. Clark and Capt. Meriwether Lewis headed the expedition which had been ordered by President Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson was curious about the Indians, the flora and fauna and the course of the mighty rivers of the interior. Jefferson also expected the expedition to open up the interior to a lucrative fur trade and to establish America’s claim to the territory. The expedition moved up the Missouri in 1804 in three boats. The party consisted of nine Kentuckians, 14 soldier-volunteers, two French boatmen, an interpreter and York. A corporal, six soldiers and nine watermen accompanied the expedition on the first leg of its journey and then returned. The color of York’s skin was a great advantage to the expedition. The Indians along the route had never seen a Negro. They were so curious they forgot to be hostile. One tribe gave York the name of “Great Medicine.” The Nez Perce called him “Tse-mook-Tsoo-loos,” or “black white man.” In North Dakota, an Indian chief was skeptical about York and agreed that his skin was truly black only after spitting on his finger and attempting to rub off the “paint.” Everywhere, however, the Indians were eager to see York and astonished once they did. York played his role to full advantage.

By GEORGE REASONS AND SAM PATRICK

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NEXT: Catherine Ferguson, who loved little children.

(Copyright, 1969, Los Angeles Times.)
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Seattle Fayette
Galston

Vanity Fair
Jul, '25
Aug, '25
Nov, '25
Feb, '26

Miguel Covarrubias
Primo J. Wales

Gordon, RGPL 1920a:

"Blk Who's Wha"... 325.26 f 6362 m
Along this Way 921 16333 j 0 m

James W. Johnson - Black Manhattan E 138.9 N5 J67

Esther Murphy
Covarrubias Sat 7 Jan 18, '47, 8 p
Am exhibit 6a, 48 21-4
Our Bio

Negro Cowboys
Scholar: Lewis 921 1588 m

Draper - Music at Midnight 921 D924 m
only covers to 1914. No pic then

Advocate / Together

1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Bruce Kellner - Carl Van Vechten & Unrequited
Decades
U of Okla Press, Norman, 1968

3-VV b. Cedar Rapids, La., 1880

195 - quote in Time, 1925: "Sullen-mouthed, 
sullen-faced Author Van Vechten has been 
playing a Negroes lately, writing prefaces to the 
poetry, have them read - have, going to Harlem."

197 - No author Walter White & VV became friends; 
White intro'd VV and J. James Weldon Johnson, 
Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen

198 - Andy Razaf's song, GoHarlem, had line: "Go inspector like Van Vechten!"

VV helped careers of Hughes, etc.

219 - writer of '25-6, VV later admitted, he was 
wholly or partly drunk around clock.

311 - d. Dec. '64

Advocate/Together

1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Draper, Dr E PL
Harper 339-49 Aug '28
" 562-9 Apr '28
n 195-202 Ja '31

Advocate / Together

1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Art and Library
Arts and Art
ML 3556 P 38 CMY

nothing o Gordon
Sum o Johnson

Advocate / Together

1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

John Ringling
Am. Men 5, '19 56-8
Lit.Dig 05, '29 36-40
Nw.i. 085, '33 17
Obit Nw.i. D12, '36 48
Times D14, '36 73

Advocate/Together
1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
Memorandum

from CAROL M. DOIG

Miguel Covarrubias - Cur Bldg 1946
b. 1902, Mexico
caricaturist & Vanity Fair
1927 book: Negro Drawings
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Checked: C. G. Golden
Colored Who's Who
Until Under to Pack, 1924-7, 1928-31
R. T. L., 1925-'32
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

My tapes

Left WDS in 1910
Apr 6 St Paul 1911-12½

CN & St J Salt Lake
remains Ttle witing
1914- hired back by Ringing as chief o priv. car & handyman
quit 1915

Rig & back, stayed til '17
worked on base & Camp Upton
drafted 6 Nov '17

NYC RR -
drafted, went to DIP 6-7 days 14'end 1 was

If Marcus had folled my advice
Memorandum

from
CAROL M. DOIG

Van V
196 - interest b / V artists
197 - J. Irwin Johnson: US consul
200 - woman & loaded gun
201 - porter anecdote
202 - U.V & D. Draper
202 - Madam Walker
204-5 - Gordon
209 - Nigh Hearn
204 - W's "Porties"
Aug. 29, rehearsals for Born to Be?
-- Negro Cowboys - screen's now - or strikers? -
Muriel Draper (son Paul)
Hut - J. Vandbild b Seattle
BF Keith Vandvild unit
Edna Thomas & Emm Pictures: Alelia Walker's
- daughter;
Taylor opened - Gay Divorcee & Astaire & Boston, 1'329
Paderewski Hall - Well & Loneliness
- Cottn Club - Duke Ellington
- Sinclair Lewis & spirituals.
- "I spoke same wit Em intro'd
Born to Be at BK Club
Esther Murphy (700) went to China
1st Mrs John Stackey
2nd " Mrs. Arthur's son

Advocate / Together

Smith Eli - jelly / lead
For Dear Life

1661 N. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY, PARK RIDGE, ILL. 60068
NEW YORK IN THE TWENTIES

BY SIR OSBERT SITWELL

Sir Osbert Sitwell's five volumes of reminiscences, which were published in this country under the Atlantic-Little, Brown imprint, stand as a unique monument to Victorian and Edwardian England. Recently he has been at work on a new book, about his father, Tales My Father Taught Me. In the following essay he gives us a glimpse of what New York was like in the late twenties, before the Depression cast its shadow.

It was in November, 1926, that I set off to discover America for myself — though, in fact, in the end I only explored New York. My visit coincided not only with the full tide of Prohibition but with the full height of the great Wall Street Beano. Never had so many rich people been crowded together in so minute a space, for the island of Manhattan is small and has therefore been obliged to develop vertically rather than horizontally. What follows in this essay relates to New York before the Slump, when, as one looks back upon it, the city was as innocent as Adam and Eve before the Fall. Sophistication showed already in individuals but not in whole sections of the people, as it does today. America had not yet grown used to her position as a great power.

To give an example of life in New York at that time, let me here record that in the Ambassador Hotel, where I was staying, lived a friend of mine, a professional photographer, but, by the standards of the time, not a rich man. Except for getting up in the late afternoon to take a single photograph for an immense fee, he stayed in bed all day, telephoning to Wall Street to buy shares on margin, and invariably got up in the evening in time for dinner — at which he always ate oyster-crabs Newburg, a specialty of New York — a much richer man on paper than when he had gone to bed the night before. Alas, this state of affairs was drawing to a close, but nobody knew it. People then presumed that it would last forever.

When we arrived in New York, we found a day of extreme brilliance. It would be impossible ever to forget the first sight of the groups of slender towers that form the skyline of New York City, chanting hosannas to an autumn sky. English people who have not been there always presume that New York has a very dry climate, but, to the contrary, it must be one of the most humid cities in the world, though also that with the most changeable climate. In the two or three months I stayed there, I grew to know all the varieties of weather possible, except extreme heat, because every day I would go for a long walk, whatever the weather, stepping out fast beneath the clifflike buildings. I used, for example, to walk from my hotel to Wall Street, or to the Battery. I would make my way through the Italian and Chinese enclaves and examine them at my leisure. Whenever I saw a bookshop I stopped and entered it and looked round, and I visited many picture galleries and museums. Thus I saw New York when it
pointing out to them the particular beauties and subtleties of color and detail. So well had he known them, so much had he loved them while he still retained his sight that he never made a mistake; in this manner he kept alive and constantly renewed his memories.

I went home from my voyage of discovery by the southern route, from New York to Naples, sailing on a great Italian liner, its interior designed and heavily furnished in the dark late-Renaissance style prevalent in the most expensive Italian hotels. You entered Italy the moment you set foot on board. The Italian voice, so beautifully modulated and so beautifully produced by the Italian people — though often strident and shrill, equally among the rich and the members of the old ruling class — formed an animated background. The ship was celebrated for its parties, and I recall that one lady from Boston had brought with her a gray silk dress that had belonged to her grandmother, which she was determined to wear when she presented the prizes at a Fancy Dress Ball. An instance of such an unsophisticated enthusiasm for fun of a modest kind would not be easy to find today; but it must be admitted that in this costume she looked very well, after the manner, no doubt, of the simple-souled Quaker lady for whom it had been made.

We sailed through the Azores, with its mists and under them, its hills covered with hydrangeas, and stopped for a day and a night at Funchal, the capital of Madeira, that lovely island, a single mountaintop rising from a great depth in the middle of the Atlantic; an island full of fine nineteenth-century villas with their entrancing gardens of semitropical Regency and early-Victorian style, gardens in which orchids flourish as easily as Dorothy Perkins grows in England, and solandra with their white buds so huge, several times the size of the flowers of a magnolia grandiflora, that if you pop them, as you might a fuchsia bud, they make a sound like an old-fashioned motor horn, and large paulownia and jacaranda trees that can only blossom with profusion in such a climate. All this floral exuberance rises on the foundation of the fortunes made from the wine that bears the name of the island.

Perpetual early summer seems to reign here. We left the island and sailed through estival seas, sportive with dolphin and porpoise nosing and jumping out of the Atlantic rollers, and with flying fish sequining the green-blue lanes between them. We disembarked at Naples, and a few days later, I met in the street a very shrewd American lawyer to whom I had talked on the boat. It was his first visit to Europe, and he observed to me: “One thing I notice particularly; the people you pass in the streets here have a different expression in their eyes from what they have at home.”

What did he see in those magic mirrors, affording clues to the past and the future, I wonder: in the past, the European triumphs of every sort, but specially in the arts, for century after century; the age-old dusty poverty, aggravated by war, of Naples, the last great classical city surviving to our own day; or in the future, hints of the Civil War in Spain, that short rehearsal for the wicked war which was waiting for us round the corner, or the revival of the torture chambers and the introduction of gas ovens in Germany? And what did he see in the eyes of his own countrymen when he returned to New York? What I saw in the eyes of a generation ago was infinite kindness and credulity, and the boundless confidence which enabled a great people to grasp the leadership of the civilized world, and then not know what to do with it.

CONTINGENCIES

BY LYNNE LAWNER

Windows spangled with sun
And all the air a great, unfolding rose:
Tracery of trees on stone,
Debris on water.

Lost in deceptive spaces of contingencies
My hair turns chestnut,
Burns,
Smoking in the early evening of your eyes.
raised so hard that the water splashed back from the pavement. I saw it under snow, when, until the dust from buildings that were being destroyed took possession of it — and in New York gigantic edifices are always being destroyed and re-created — it was as white and clean as the North Pole. I have seen it when the wind whistles knife-like round street corners, and I have heard the horn-mouthed thunder redoubled by stone and cement drawn the hootings of the great liners, but I have never known a day more beautiful than this, first one, dry and crackling, and it enabled me to make a discovery of which no one had spoken beforehand: that in New York you receive a harmless electric shock when you ring the elevator bell. But if I asked for an explanation, there would always be the same murmurs about “static electricity.”

The first night I spent in New York I was taken to an immense dinner party given by a great picture collector and his charming and discerning wife. They were very kind to me, and after dinner my hostess led me up to a chair, a cross between a campstool and a shooting stick, but made of wood, and said: “This is our Dante Chair.”

“You mean Dante sat in it?” I inquired.

“No, he was asked to, but refused,” she replied, “and that is why we call it our Dante Chair. I want you to sit in it on this, the night of your arrival in New York.”

Accordingly, I sat in it, and, as I did so, it crumbled into dust — albeit “crumbled” is not the word to describe this process, since it carries no sense of immediacy, while this disintegration was instantaneous. When I had recovered from the shock — and I may say that my hostess was extremely kind about the incident, though I could not expect her to enjoy it — I found myself entangled in conversation with a fanciful lady of massive frame, elaborately upholstered in green and yellow brocade.

“Let’s talk about you,” she was saying, “You Englishmen all wear armor.”

To which I countered: “No. Let us keep it to yourself.”

She replied: “I’m just a wild Irish thing, just a ‘Dejah Thoris.’”

My first novel, Before the Bombardment, was about to be published in America, and George Doran, the publisher, gave a dinner in my honor for some twenty persons. Even at so comparatively small a party the American passion for oratory made after-dinner speeches compulsory. Among those present whom I recall were William Rose Benét, Frank Swinnerton, F. P. Adams, and the biographer of George Washington, W. E. Woodward, a banker turned debunking but genial author. In the middle of dinner he hissed into my ear: “I have read your book, and I know you won’t be taken in by this Dollar Business.” I reassured him. In addition, I received a warning from a friend who was present at it that I should leave the party punctually at twelve, since the first alcoholic rows were likely to break out at that hour.

Liquor under Prohibition had become a national obsession. Love of liberty made it almost a duty to drink more than was wise. In this respect, intellectuals vied with socialites. At the end of a ball it was not an uncommon spectacle to see smart young men who had, in the phrase of the time, “passed out” stacked in the hall ready for delivery at home by taxicab. At any literary gathering there would be almost equally relaxed behavior, because most festivities depended on supplies of synthetic gin and whiskey, and the strength of them was formidable.

To show the ingenuity of purveyors: I remember Dick Wyndham ordered some champagne for a party he was giving — he had taken a studio at the Berkeley — and the next morning, while he was still in bed, the door was unlocked and a French couple entered with their luggage. There seemed a great deal of it. Dick kept explaining to them that this was his room and that he was in bed in it. They appeared to be deal and paid no attention until all the luggage had been collected. They then bolted the door, threw open their trunks, produced the champagne, received their money, and left.

Prohibition had some other curious, opposite consequences. For example, at the Ambassador Hotel, which had large and magnificent public rooms, it was impossible in any of them, except the dining room, to obtain a glass of water, since no beverage of any sort was allowed to be served.

Another result of the current boom was a new development in the domestic bird world. Rich old ladies bequeathed large legacies to their parrots, but so many of the human heirs were reluctant to take on the job of looking after these spoiled birds that a Parrots’ Home, it was said, had been founded for accommodating only privileged, moneyed parrots, cockatoos, and macaws, who were lodged and fed according to social position and income. Accent and way of talking were taken into account. The parrots who had inherited $10,000 a year and cultivated a Fifth Avenue voice would be given a better perch than the $3000-a-year birds and would be entitled to more and less-mildewed grapes. What happened to these birds when the Great Slump came I never heard.

What I did discover was the existence of a completely unknown set of alternative literary figures, writers whose names were familiar to everyone in
literary circles in America but of whom nobody had ever heard in England, and vice versa. Until I arrived in New York, I did not know the names of Heywood Broun, then at the height of his fame as a critic, of his wife Ruth Hale, of F. P. A., and of many others. What seemed more extraordinary still was that English novels — *romans à clef* — were in the United States fitted out with an entirely different and local personnel. If, for example, Desmond MacCarthy had been said to figure in an English book, in America this same character would be attributed to Heywood Broun, and that of a woman writer, say Rose Macaulay, to Ruth Hale, and similarly on through the whole volume. In short, there were two sets of figures, but if you explained that one of them was not an American but an Englishman, your statement would be received with incredulity.

One of my most pleasant memories of that time was my first meeting with Marianne Moore, to whom I took a letter of introduction from my friend Mrs. Bryher. Marianne Moore was then living with her mother in a trim red-brick house in a trim street in or near the Village. When I arrived punctually at four — and punctuality with me always means at least ten minutes beforehand (I have wasted as much time by this fault as another man loses by being late) — Miss Moore had not yet returned from the office of the *Dial*, and I was received by her mother. Mrs. Moore, like myself, greatly admired Dickens, and she talked to me of his tour in the States and told me of the towns where he had delivered his readings. After a little time Miss Moore arrived, a charming and very unpretentious young woman with the same quiet elegance and the same strong but merciful personality that have so finely developed throughout her life. In spite of her apparent simplicity, it was easy to discern a very definite, delicate, and poetical nature. Though shy, she was able to take refuge behind an appealing and almost apologetic smile, but she was as full of character, both individual and national, as a swarm is full of bees.

Among the friends who gave parties for me when I arrived in New York, one of the first was Muriel Draper. I remember with what amusement she told me, apropos of this party, that when she had sent a card with "To Meet Captain Osbert Sitwell" on it to Ford Madox Ford, he had replied: "You can't ask Colonel Ford to meet Captain Sitwell." (I had invented for him the name of Freud Madox Fraud.) The party took place during her Gurdjieff period before she became a Communist, when she was still an interior decorator. There was much talk in her studio of furniture made of metal and glass, but this occurred before the nightmare became true and culminated in the metal and chromium-plated tubes and uncured leather seats slung on three rods of steel that were to be the fashion. When I had been introduced to her in England some years before we had immediately become friends. Much of her character is still visible in her book *Music at Midnight*, and thus can be recaptured, but her amazing gift of life and her entirely individual appearance are more difficult to record. I had first seen her remarkable head in the stalls of Covent Garden before the war. She seemed a realization of the American spirit and might well have been the figurehead of a new race. To talk to her was enchanting, for she combined frankness with the most extraordinary powers of minute observation. Everybody who knew her either loved or hated her. There was no middle way.

I also attended a party given by George Moore, the genial American financier who had previously shared a large house in London with Lord French of Ypres and who loved to provide amusement for his friends. He was now entertaining equally lavishly in New York. This was a noisy evening, with Cossacks giving toasts and singing and jumping over their swords. It was impossible to hear a single word your neighbor said, so, as I wanted to talk with Muriel Draper, who was sitting next to me, I proposed we should slip under the large supper table and in that refuge finish our conversation, an idea which we put into practice. It seemed very quiet.

One of the people I liked most in the New York of that time was Alexander Woollcott, who was friendly and witty. The most valuable personal quality with which nature had endowed him was his obvious love of life, and he showed no sign of the insolence with which his personality has been invested. I first met Woollcott, who was not then as famous as he became later, at Miss Elizabeth Marbury's; I have heard him be so funny in conversation that the taxi driver who was taking us to a theater had to pull up at the side of the road because he was laughing so helplessly. Miss Marbury was, mentally and physically, one of the remarkable figures of the time in New York. To write that she was large is an understatement. She was of such enormous size that it was always difficult for her to get in or out of an automobile, but this disability in no way discouraged her from going about and usually caused her to laugh uproariously. Everywhere she went people were delighted to see her. Somerset Maugham had kindly given me a letter of introduction to her, and I met her frequently just after I arrived in New York. On each occasion she watched and listened to me carefully, with a frightening look of acumen.
After this had happened four or five times and she had summed me up in her mind, she said to me: "I should like to act as agent for you" — an honor which I fully appreciated.

I used to visit the château on Fifth Avenue of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, whom I had often met before in England. Indeed, on one occasion, at Polesden Lacey, I had said to her: "What a lovely color your dress is, Mrs. Vanderbilt," to which she had replied in her happy innocence: "Yes, I love blue; that is why in New York I am known as the Kingfisher."

Her house was the social center of New York. It was not lovely but what was called, in advertisements of houses to be let or sold, "well-appointed," large and luxurious, full of Louis Quinze furniture and of footmen, already a rarity in New York. When the time came for me to say good-bye before leaving for England, I asked if I could do anything for her when I reached London. She replied: "Only to give my love to the dear boys."

I knew immediately whom she meant: His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, and Their Royal Highnesses, the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and Kent.

At this time, one would have said, certainly, that Mrs. Vanderbilt was one of the most conventional people alive. Even her clothes, her invariable bandeau, and her gray hair were a cliché, but as she grew older her conventionality faded, as I was to find out many years later when I sat next to her at luncheon in the house of a friend in New York. She suddenly said to me, pointing to a variable description. "That man is too noisy. I shall yell, loud and fierce enough to have done credit to a white master of the colored revels. I remember the day when I had been the victim of an inverted snobbishness that was causing me to stay up longer than I wished because my classes ought not to mingle."

There was then no talk of integration. Downstairs, one of the nieces, who was very sure of herself, was saying to Dick Wyndham: "Excuse my asking, but are you high-class?"

He did not know what to reply. If he said no, he might be asked to leave; if yes, he would probably be stamped by conceit, but in the end he judged it better to say yes, to which his dancing partner replied: "I am so glad, because I have no color prejudice, but I do think the classes ought not to mingled."

The tornado of prosperity swept on. Colored people offered hospitality as much as white, and one of the most memorable parties I attended was a ball given by Madam Walker, the heiress of Anti-kink, for two young nieces who were on this occasion to make their first appearance in Black Society. Madam Walker, who must have been a very rich woman, lived in one house and reserved another for party giving. The room where she received us was a tent room, carried out in the Parisian style of the Second Empire. She stood attended by a niece on each side and by Dr. X, who was known as the Negro Lenin, but I did not have time to find out whether this was a correct description. One curious feature was that on arriving no one would shake hands until he or she knew exactly where you had come from, and when my name was called out, they gave me a searching glance until I added, "from England." Then they shook hands warmly.

Our hostess, a very large woman, was wearing an elephant-gray tight Greek ball dress, and braiding her hair was a Greek fillet in gold. When the time came for the dance to begin, Madam Walker asked me to go upstairs with her and talk. Downstairs we could hear the band start to play. Alleged Scotch whiskey was the drink supplied below, but upstairs Madam Walker produced two bottles of champagne, which she opened, and then proceeded to reveal to me her trouble: "Twenty years ago," she announced, "my feet spoiled my honeymoon — and tonight they're hurting me again, something crool."

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The New York theater was in a state of great activity and vigor compared with its London equivalent. For example, the play Broadway was there to compete with the suburban comedies then to be seen in London. It was easy to decide which was the more interesting. I found much pleasure and made many friends in the theatrical world.

Clare Eames wrote to me a fan letter about Before the Bombardment and asked me to have supper with her and her husband, the playwright Sidney Howard. We became great friends. They lived in a small house — even then a rare possession — and I often went there after the theater and ate chicken fried by an excellent colored cook at two o’clock in the morning. They wore rather loose, shaggy clothes and wore his tie inside a ring. Muriel Draper had said to me: “When you see Taylor Gordon, ask him about his meeting with John Webster.”

A few days later I saw him and accordingly said: “I hear you met Mr. Webster. How did you get on with him?” to which he replied: “Mr. Sitwell, when I think that that man comes from the capital of the world’s tailoring!”

...
When Ed Brown finally left Abbeville, Georgia, in 1962, he and his wife worked as domestics for Jane Maguire's family, first in Atlanta and then for thirteen years in New York City. During those years Ms. Maguire became fascinated by Ed's sharp memories of what life was like for a black farmhand in Georgia, and she persuaded him—he is illiterate—to let her help tell his story. She interviewed him, taking careful notes over a period of about four years, and assembled the interviews into a consecutive reminiscence entitled simply Ed. His direct, unself-pitying, and often heartbreaking story will be published by W. W. Norton later this month, and we are pleased to publish the following excerpt from this unusual memoir.

Mr. Brown is now retired and lives in Brooklyn, New York, where his two daughters by a second marriage are in high school.

ON SHARES

In 1929 Mr. Addison bought a tractor. He was the first man I ever knowed to have one. Right away he cut the fifteen men on his place down to four hands. It would be a favor to him, he say, if I could get myself another job. That was the turrible year I worked on shares for Mr. Leslie Prince.

To buy food and to take care of the smokin and chewin me and my wife wanted to do while we was makin the crop, Mr. Prince said he'd loan me ten dollars a month. He would put it out, he say, but not all in cash. January through June, with interest at 15 per cent. He was aimin to make me take all the meat and syrup he could from his smokehouse.

Then, on shares, the boss furnish you with the land, mule, seeds, tools, and one half of the fertilizer. I was to put out the other half of the fertilizer and all the labor.

Things went all right for a while. I was the best cotton picker there. Whenever Mr. Prince hire anyone to pick by the hundredweight, he said, "I want you to beat Ed pickin."

The most I ever picked in an hour was a hundred and thirty-five pounds.

But hard work didn't get me nowhere. Mr. Prince wouldn't show me the papers the gin and the warehouse give him, so I didn't know what the crop had brung and what my share should be. He took his share and all of mine and claim I owe him twenty-four dollars in addition.

In panic times ten dollars would buy a horse wagon full of groceries. You could buy ten pounds of sugar for fifty cents, fifteen pounds of bacon for ten or fifteen cents a pound. A gallon of syrup would cost fifty cents, and so would a peck sack of flour.

And usually I had a garden, either for myself or on halves with the boss, such as potatoes, squashes, onions, turnips, collards, cabbage, snap beans, butter beans, peas, Irish potatoes, tomatoes, and okra. Come summer my wife would put up seventy-five or eighty jars of blackberries, plums, watermelon rinds, apple preserves, and jelly. She raised chickens, and I would have a sweet-potato patch.

Robert Gwathmey, a white Southerner by birth, is a painter who has always felt particular empathy toward black subjects. His simple and evocative serigraph, "Share Croppers," was made in 1939.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

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Down Home on the Range

Ron Welburn

THE ADVENTURES OF THE NEGRO COWBOYS
by Philip Durham and Everett L. Jones. Illustrated with photographs; Bantam Pathfinder Books, 120 pp., $7.75

This is a paperback edition of Durham and Jones’ book first published in 1966 by Dodd, Mead. It fits comfortably into the hip pocket or modern holster. The story of the black cowboys is yet another chapter in the “rediscovery” of the Afro-American and his neglected accomplishments en route from slavery to freedom. The first cowboys and horsebreakers in southern Texas were black slaves, and one freedman owned a large ranch with 2,500 cattle and several white-tutored slaves of his own.

Black cowboys, conspicuously absent from movies and television until the latest deluge, numbered close to 12,000 after the Civil War. They served in many capacities, as wranglers, ropers, cattle drivers, and cooks, some leading their own outfits. The black chuckwagon cook who has appeared in Westerns has been the only remnant of the Afro’s role in the cowboy tradition, and as everyone knows, the cook’s role helped perpetuate a stereotype while the white cowpunchers got all the glory, let alone the appearance of the black cook playing a Sleep ‘n’ Eat role dressed in chaps and an apron. But the real experiences of the black cowboys was not unlike their white counterparts. Cattle and buffalo stampedes, cattle thieves and Indians, weather and desert marches subjected all cowboys to the same perils, and the men helped each other regardless of identity, situation, or for that matter skulduggery. Blacks helped blaze the Chisholm, the Western, and the Goodnight-Loving Trails from the Texas plains north through New Mexico and Kansas to Montana and the Dakotas. Accounts left by many cowboys praised the blacks for their courage, determination, and reliability.

Blacks were with Billy the Kid in Kansas. In the 1870’s, Dan Diamond terrorized Denver, where a small number of blacks worked in the stockyards and in the mines. Two cowhands worked for Texas John Slaughter (one even made Walt Disney’s TV version). But the most famous black cowboy was Nat Love. Portrayed in the romantic glitter of dime novels, Nat was born in slavery in Tennessee in 1855. He left home in 1870, attaching himself to a Texas cattle outfit and eventually turning up in Deadwood, South Dakota, where he won a roping contest, thus becoming the hero of the town, and earning the name Deadwood Dick. In his book, The Life and Adventures of Nat Love: Better Known in the Cattle Country as “Deadwood Dick” — By Himself (1907), he commented on the experiences he shared with other cowboys: “In the midst of life we were in death, but above all showed the universal manhood” (Nat was an avid reader and probably read Ambrose Bierce’s collection of stories titled In the Midst of Life.).

This is a vividly written handbook on America’s ignored builders of the old frontier. The black cowboys have a chance now to be sympathetically revived for film audiences, if film directors and producers will be concerned with portraying them as they really were.
Jan. 9, '81

Dear Ken--

When all else fails, turn to Ken Twichel, I always say. Or at least I say it now and again.

Here's the situation. Wanting to know the inclusive years of Rose Gordon's life for something I'm writing, I sent off to the Montana Dept. of Health for her death certificate. Back came a letter saying they charge $5 (used to be $3) and $10 an hour to search the files. I can't remember when Rose died. So, do you have that date in your files—and the year she was born, as well? I'll somehow reward you for this, but likely not at $10 an hour.

How are things? How come you weren't at the antique car race at Lake Sutherlin on the 4th of July? Carol and I were. But that's all the WSS visiting we managed, a quick hop over from Helena that afternoon. Maybe more leisure, this fall. Hope you're all well, and surviving this winter.

all the best

[Signature]