

James Weldon Johnson The Negroes Poet Laureate

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His National Negro Anthem, composed for a local Sunday occasion in Jacksonville, Florida, before he had come to metropolitan notice and national attention, reveals the true inwardness of his soul. It is pitched in the militant key but in plaintive and wailing tone as of a race which would sue rather than fight for its rights. The music is fitted to the words by his collaborator J. Kosamond Johnson, his brother by temperament and genius as well as blood. The fame of the Johnson brothers, James Weldon, and J. Rosamond, will go down bracketed in history; and although James Weldon is exhibited as the frontispiece, yet their fame can no more be sullied than that of Gilbert and Sullivan.

James Weldon Johnson was by nature a recluse and never deigned to "mix with crowds and keep his virtue."

He was accepted into service as field secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Although he served in this capacity with intelligence, courage, tact, and resourcefulness, yet one was constantly impressed with the thought that he was impressed into a field of service for which he was not fitted by nature or inclination. Militancy and agitation engaged the energies of his head rather than of his heart. Unlike DuBois (of the earlier days) and Walter White, he never gave himself full abandon and self detachment to the struggle for the political and civil rights of his race. Indeed the years which he devoted to the leadership of this militant organization were but an interlude, and one might say a strange interlude between the earlier and later stages of his career. We first discover him as a partner of Cole and Johnson author of "Rag Music" then in vogue typified by "Under the Bamboo Tree." In the declining years of his leisure, we find him a dignified professor of Creative Literature in two American Universities one black and one white. Thus both ends of his career contrast with the middle.

James Weldon Johnson made a brief incursion into the field of politics. He first belonged to the New York "Literary Fellows," the metropolitan center—art of the

Boston cabal of college scions who were oath-bound to offset the industrial propaganda of Booker T. Washington. William Monroe Trotter, George Forbes and William H. Lewis, were the leaders of this cabal. By shrewd political finesse the wizard of Tuskegee sought to wean Johnson and Lewis from their hostile alignment by offering them the allurements of office. Johnson was appointed to an important post in the Consular Service; he accepted the assignment and served efficiently until replaced by a democratic administration. He then entered the service of the NAACP, which was anti-Washington in origin, spirit and objective. However, under the guiding hand of Joel E. Spingarn, this militant originator did not dramatize its hostility to the great industrial leader by violent controversy and vocal antagonism. It must be said for James Weldon Johnson that he was never Mr. Washington's bitter or violent opponent. There was no bitterness in his nature. It is this which made him so readily acceptable to the white race.

James Weldon Johnson was not a poet per se or par excellence like Paul Lawrence Dunbar. He might fairly be called a literary dilettante scribbling prose or verse as the mood or the occasion required. He wrote coon songs, for minstrel shows, librettos for light opera, the Negro National Anthem or God's Trombones, as the spirit moved him or opportunity presented itself. His Ex-Colored Man, was not his own auto-biography but that of Douglas Wetmore, his companion, who played the double racial role both simultaneously and at different times. God's Trombones, usually regarded as his masterpiece, was but a translation in literary form of the picturization of the Hebrew Scripture, an art which he learned from his father who was a typical Baptist of the older Evangelical type. His poetic genius reaches its highest peak in "The White Witch Rides Tonight," in which he admonishes Harlemites of the danger pit of their besetting sin.

James Weldon Johnson's reputation as a poet and a literary man is secure in the keeping of the white race, for he uttered nothing as offensive to their racial sensibility. He was the Negroes' ambassador of letters to the white race—honored and admired.

NEWBERRY NEWS

Calvary Presbyterian Church
Rev. A. H. Reasoner, Pastor
Supt. S. W. Allen and his assistant Prof. C. W. Jones are always on time at the opening of Sunday school. Even though it is hot and a good number of teachers are away attending summer schools, the good work goes successfully on. Sunday school opens every Sunday at 10 o'clock.

After his usual service for the little people, Rev. Reasoner came before his congregation with this text: "Fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life," whereunto thou are also called, and hast professed a good profession, before many witnesses." The theme was, "The Fight of Faith," Sunday having been communion Sunday, the subject was dealt with accordingly.

At 4:30 for the afternoon, an interdenominational meeting was held having as its guest speaker, Prof. Alfred T. Butler.

Mr. Elliott Rutherford, the efficient custodian at the People's hospital died at his home Thursday morning. Funeral services were held at Bethlehem Baptist church with his pastor, Rev. E. E. Gauden officiating. He was buried in Werts cemetery Sunday afternoon. His wife, who had been visiting with her daughter, Miss Edna in New York City, were both here at his passing.

Mr. Henry Montgomery is well on the road to recovery now. He was seen out last week visiting some of his friends and looking over his garden plots.

Miss Carrie Mae Wilson left the city Tuesday for Washington.

Mrs. Carrie Mae Floyd who is attending summer school at Bettis Academy visited the city over the week-end. Her sister in law Mrs. Lucius Floyd accompanied her back.

Rev. Samuel E. Martin of Columbia spent the 4th of July in the city.

Mrs. Lula Pratt has been quite ill, but at this writing she is improving.

Mrs. Jefferson, the wife of Rev. J. R. Jefferson who has been visiting relatives and friends in Savannah, Ga, has returned home.

GEORGETOWN NEWS

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Bethel A. M. E. Church
Rev. W. B. L. Clarke, Pastor
Last Sunday, July 3rd was a big day at Bethel. Quite a number of faces were seen at church Sunday whose physical condition kept them away for months some years. But it was made possible for them to be present through a special committee appointed on transportation, who consist of the following: Messrs D. H. Drayton, Dr. W. S. Thompson, B. H. James, L. A. Dunmore and William Washington. The day services began with prayer meeting 5 o'clock in the morning; Sunday school, 9:30 to 10:30; prayer meeting 10:30 to 11:30. This led into the regular mid day worship when the pastor delivered a soul's reviving sermon. Text selected from Numbers 24:17 I shall see him but not now. We acknowledge the presence of the following visitors: Mrs. Gladys Teale of Bethesda Baptist church, city; Mrs. Helen Clinton, Charleston; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. London, Mr. and Mrs. James Mitchell, Mr. Joe Clinton and Mrs. S. S. Campbell, all of Jacksonville Fla. The latter was guest of Rev. and Mrs. Clark for a week.

At 3:00 p.m. the prayer bands of the city were out in large numbers and a glorious time was had. At this time the Rev. J. H. Bryant, pastor of Dickerson A. M. E. church with a number of his members as promised and the Rev. Bryant preached a great sermon beautifully outlined and ably delivered. He selected his text the 133rd Psalms 1-2 verses. Theme Living Together a Necessity.

The evening hour of worship the pastor preached and used as a text To him that overcometh. Music was furnished by a combined choir Senior and Junior. Thus ended a glorious day in the service of the Lord.

Chester, S. C.—Brooklyn A. M. E. Zion church has taken on new life for the year 1938. We have reclaimed our places in the progressive movement with the leading churches of today. All our activities are at work with their various meetings. Our Sunday services are arranged in order with the Sunday school, which is at ten o'clock a.m. Preaching at eleven o'clock and the V. C. E. society at 7:00 p.m.

FEDERATION NOTES

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Two or three persons were asked to accompany the girls to the camp in Columbia. The ladies were further urged to come to the Harvest Festival. Mrs. Annie D. Staggs made a motion that a copy of these minutes be given each club in Greenville. Motion was received and adopted. Mrs. Ophelia W. Smith was appointed to speak to the Summer School group now attending at Engle Sterling High in behalf of the Wilkinson Home. This she stated would be done sometime during the next two weeks. Mrs. Lida Williams would represent the clubs at the interracial meeting to be held in Columbia this month. This get together meeting was a very profitable one, first because of the fact that we had the beloved "Mother Wilkinson" with us. Second because of the great interest the Piedmont district women have in the Wilkinson Home, third, because a meeting of this kind keeps the club members close in heart and spirit toward the object of their untiring work. Mrs. Wilkinson expressed her delight in being able to be with the women in Greenville once again, and leaving with them words of encouragement. She is always at home when she visits us, and the members are reluctant in bidding her adieu. During the social hour, following the business part of the meeting, delicious old fashioned pound cake and ice cream were served. We were pleased to have Mrs. Wilkinson's daughter, Mrs. Sheffield with us at this meeting also, as she always had just and mirth to any group.

FRIENDSHIP BAPT. CHURCH

Rev. F. M. Young, Pastor
Sunday was one more of those days that was enjoyed at our church. The Sunday school under the care of Supt. J. B. Barnett is still moving forward. He has a staff of teachers that means very much to any Supt. and S. school. Our pastor, with his natural gift as a leader has had much training in Sunday school work. So it is nothing for us but to move forward. After Sunday school and a brief devotional service, the pastor came forward with a message that was enjoyed by all. Theme: "A Personal Decision."

3:30 Rev. A. C. Jones of Second Nazareth Baptist church who was programmed to serve, did not, because of a funeral in which many of his members were involved. Many members of the pastor, from Mill Creek and Bethlehem, Childs were present with many of our members and friends of the city. The pastor preached a sermon that made the hearers feel that the prison that will stay out of service, out of church and the like because of a bad spirit is very, very small. Theme: The Unhappy Brother. He made us see the older brother as a small man. The writer would that others could have heard the message.

Sunday night, Rev. S. Jackson with his officers from Mt. Pilgrim Baptist church Edgewood came and gave us a very good message.

Miss E. Louise Ryal, who was in the city for a brief visit with her mother, Mrs. F. M. Young, relatives and friends, returned last Wednesday to New York City. She worshipped with us the 4th Sunday night.

Come to Friendship, the home of the young people.

BROOKLYN A.M.E.Z. CHURCH

Rev. A. C. Wade, Pastor
By (Mrs.) Ada Whitlock

Biographical Data Concerning The Life of Louis Armstrong, America's Foremost Apostle of Swing Music; Super Jazz Dazzler

Amid the bursting of fire crackers and gay fan-fare of a July 4th Celebration in 1900, Sir Stock arrived at the humble home of Willie and Mary Ann Armstrong located in a tenement section of New Orleans, La., delivered an 8 pound baby boy whom the Armstrongs christened Louis.

Willie and Mary Ann held no high station in life, but they made themselves content with a small income and he surroundings of a clean, modestly furnished home. Little did they realize that their offspring was to become one of the most talked of musical personalities in the world. Events between 1905 and New Year's Day of 1913 are best told in Louis Armstrong's Autobiography "Swing That Music" (Longman Green and Company—New York City) published in November of 1935. It is the true story of a mother trying to keep her son in school, of gamely fighting against unfavorable environments for her two children, a death-defying struggle for existence. Mary Ann was a good and fine woman.

Jazz And Louis Got Born Together

(Excerpt from Chapter 1 of "Swing That Music")
"When I fired off my daddy's old '38" it made the other kid's little six-shooter sound pretty sick. It bagged out above the scattering of the firecrackers and the hot jazz music coming from the honky tonks down the street. It made a whole gang of sound, for sure. It was New Year's Eve of 1913 and New Orleans was high, celebrating the way it always did—with bang and big time.

Meny-makers were going along the street and when that old cannon let loose in my hand, and sang out so loud, they stopped short and looked back. There was one pretty big party of them. They stood still a minute, then they all burst out laughing. They laughed a lot and then they called, "Happy New Year," and went on. I must have looked funny to them; a little kid with such a big gun in my hand, standing there scared half to death at all the noise I'd made.

But the really funny part of it was something very different. It was the way it all turned out, because that shot, I do believe started my career. It changed my life and brought me my big chance. In the twenty and more years that have passed since, I guess I have played almost all over the world. I played before the Prince of Wales, the new King Edward, and his brother, the Duke of York, and the Crown Princess of Italy and for many other famous people, and I have swung my band in Paris and Copenhagen and Brussels and Geneva and Vienna and New York and Chicago and Hollywood and many other places. But whenever I have had a few minutes to myself out of all this running around so I could stop stock-still and ask myself, "Louis, how come this to happen to you?" I have always thought back to that one New Year's Eve before the big war, and of what followed. For I was sent to jail."

So they sent Louis to the Waif's Home for Boys in New Orleans for shooting of his father's old '38 and it was there that the world's greatest virtuoso of the trumpet began his career. It was there that the character was molded of the greatest Jazz Dazzler that the world has ever known. It was there that the little playmates—the little black urchins snatched from the dirty streets of New Orleans—nicknamed Louis "Satchelmouth," because of his big mouth—"Satchelmouth" Armstrong. And these years, only now it has been modernized and boiled down to "Satchmo."

Mr. Peter Davis, one of the keepers (all of the keepers were colored men) and also instructor of music at the Waif's Home took an interest in "Satchmo". First, he later he taught him to play the cornet preparatory to placement in the Boys' Band.

Armstrong was a good student, especially he learned fast. He began to develop the deep chest and strong lips which nabbed him years later to flow the most high C's any trumpet player—living or dead—in the history of music. His record established years ago is 280 consecutive high C's.

Louis became such a good boy at the Waif's Home for Boys that Mr. Peter Davis helped him all the more and, in 1915, after one year and seven months in the institution, the young black boy who was destined to become the world's greatest trumpet player—"Satchmo" Armstrong—faced the world and began his career.

Louis recalls the days from 1910 to 1922 during the prominence of "The Old Dixieland Jazz Band" which had been formed by Dominick James (Nick) LaRocca. Others in the band were Larry Shields, clarinet; Eddie Edwards, trombone; Regas, piano and Starbar, drums.

Note: Some of the records made by the Dixieland Jazz Band which carried the new jazz music all over the world were: "Tiger Rag," "Lazy River," "Clarinet armalade," "Sensation," "Livery Stable Blues" and "Toddlin' Blues". They became famous the world over and had much to do with the recognition of jazz music in Europe.

Nancy Hunt Rose From School Glee Club To Broadway

As 73,000 people have traveled from all parts of New York City to see the WPA Federal Theatre Project's "Haiti," and not one has yet accused the Negro Theatre of supplying less than a thrilling evening in the theatre, it is difficult to name any one feature of the Du Bois play responsible for its great success. However, the work of the choir, which interprets the native Haitian chants with such fidelity, contributes enormously to the appeal of "Haiti," and in this group no single member has done better work than Nancy Hunt.

The story of Nancy Hunt's first big break in show business can safely be put down to extreme good fortune. ers is the story of how a young Negro girl attending George Washington High School in New York got a chance to sing on the school's glee club and soon afterwards won a scholarship from the Damrosch School of Music and Art in New York.

Nancy was born in Brooklyn, N. Y.

Stars in "Haiti"



NANCY HUNT

Member of the Choir in the WPA Federal Theatre's "Haiti," owes much of her success to a scholarship she received while a school-girl. "Haiti" will climax its sensational Harlem run by opening at Daly's Theatre, off Broadway, on July 11 Same cast. Same prices.

On January 8, 1915, elen and Dudley Hunt, her parents, wanted her to be a nurse or a doctor, but instead, the talented Nancy ran the gamut of the entire theatrical sphere, winding up as dancer, actress and singer.

After graduating from a Brooklyn public school, Nancy attended St. Mary's Boarding School in Germantown, Pa. Leaving that school she matriculated at George Washington High School, where she won the scholarship that is directly responsible for her being in the theatrical profession.

After finishing her course at the Damrosch School, Nancy pursued with fierce energy her chosen career in the theatre. W. C. Handy gave her an opportunity, when he made her a member of his famous choir. Her contralto singing with this group was so excellent that Donald Heywood gave her a job the next season in his own choir. The Heywood choir was part of the Negro play, "Old Man Satan," which enjoyed great success on Broadway a few seasons back.

Still forging ahead, the ambitious Nancy, by this time thoroughly experienced, shattered the belief that Negroes cannot become firmly entrenched in the theatrical profession.

During the war in Ethiopia a film depicting scenes in the war-torn country was shown at the Harlem Opera House, in conjunction with an African dance group which interpreted primitive African dancing, and was admitted to the group as a full-fledged African dancer.

Nancy tells of a very interesting experience while appearing as an African dancer at the Harlem Opera House. "Along with other members of the African group, I had strict orders from the management not to utter a single word of English while appearing as an African. For days and days, Momo-du Johnson, African chieftain and organizer of the group, schooled me in a kind of African jargon. "I was doing very nicely as an African, until one day a friend recognized me and came backstage I had just finished my act, and was on my way to my dressing room, when I heard some one calling, 'Hey Nancy!' Forgetting for the moment that I was supposed to be an African, I answered back 'Hello there Sue!' to the astonishment of stagehands and other members of the cast who were not supposed to be Africans. "After the engramment at the Harlem Opera House the entire group was taken over by the Federal Theatre Project and became known as the Bassa Moona Co.

"Bassa Moona" ran successfully at the Lafayette Theatre and later on Broadway. Since coming to the Negro Theatre, Miss Hunt has appeared in "Walk Together Chillun," "Conjure Man Dies," "Macbeth," "Turpentine," "Sweet Land," "The Case of Philip Lawrence," "Horse Play," the O'Neill one-act plays and the current "Haiti," now in its fifteenth week at the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem.

TABERNACLE BAPT CHURCH

Rev. Wm. Watson, Pastor
Greenville.—Sunday school at the usual hour. Opened and conducted by Supt. R. Bradley. Very large attendance. Several new teachers have been added to the staff—Mrs. Rosa Lee Stewart, and Mrs. Christena Moore.

At 11:30 the pastor, Rev. Watson preached a great sermon; after which communion was served. Baptizing at 4:30. BYPU at 5:00.

At 7:30 Rev. W. R. Martin preached a wonderful sermon. Several visitors were present during the day. We were more than glad to see Mrs. Annie M. Huff Radliff back home, with her mother and three children, looking the picture of health.

The funeral services of Deacon R. S. Gamples were held Friday. Deacon Chapman was in the service Sunday after being "sick two weeks."

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