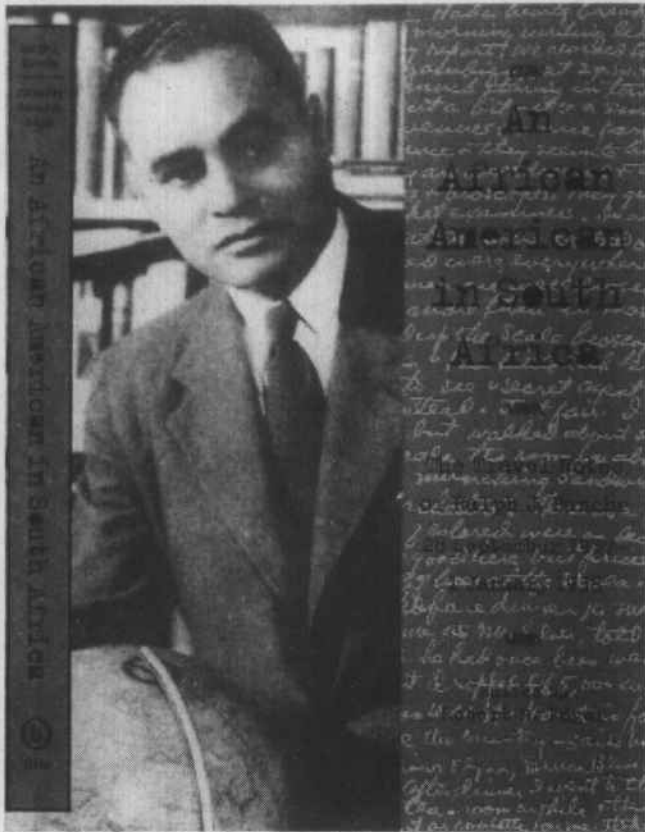


'An African American in South Africa'

New book features Ralph Bunche's travel notes



SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

ATHENS, Ohio – For three months in 1937, American political scientist Ralph Bunche (who was to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950)

traveled in South Africa. As an African American, Bunche experienced an ambiguous status, with whites treating him as African and Africans thinking he was a European and mistrusting him. Often he passed for white.

The Howard University professor was a pioneering student of Africa, earning his Ph.D. at Harvard on research in West Africa and later conducting fieldwork in South Africa and East Africa. Bunche never wrote a book about his 1937 trip, but his copious notes are the basis of "An African American in South Africa: The Travel Notes of Ralph J. Bunche, 28 September 1937 - 1 January 1938," edited by Robert Edgar, which Ohio University Press is issuing in paperback on Feb. 28, 2001.

Bunche toured cities, gold mines, tribal reserves, schools and missions. He met prominent people in the colored, Indian and African communities. He found the political system in shambles.

As for the race situation, he noted, "They all here employ that same cliché about how 'happy' the natives are. They don't look so 'happy' to me."

Bunche attended the silver anniversary of the African National Congress, and he criticized the ANC for not helping make Africans aware of their potential political power. However, because of his precarious status as a visiting black in South Africa – viewed as a possible subversive by the government – Bunche reserved most of his opinions for his journal.

As an educated man, a student of colonialism and as an American of color, Bunche's perceptions were rich and multi-layered. He was struck by the similar separation of races in South Africa, which was somewhat paradoxically a "tremendous racial melting pot." Colored people he met were struck, in turn, by his self-description as "Negro," because in their world that word referred only to Africans. The objective for many of the colored elite was to pass for white, and Bunche was distressed by the lack of solidarity among the various classes based on shade of skin color.

Overall, he considered Africans on reserves better off socially and even economically than the colored who were allowed to live and work in cities.

"An African American in South Africa" provides unique insights into a segregated society and its psychology for general readers, students and scholars.



Eleanor Roosevelt and Bunche

United Nations Photo

N.C. Blacks

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of the crew's most famous rescues was in 1896 when the captain of the E.S. Newman sounded an SOS

off Hatteras Island's treacherous shores, an area also known as The Graveyard of the Atlantic.

Today, the remains of the station still stand at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge head-

quarters. You can learn more about these brave men at the N.C. Aquarium at Roanoke Island or by attending the Family Day at the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort on Saturday, Feb. 24.

This year's Family Day, titled "Hurricanes and Heroes," will focus on weather and other hazards encountered by seafarers and on the heroes of the surf and sea.

Activities will begin at 11 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. At 2 p.m. author and special guest, Carole Boston Weatherford, will combine story and song to commemorate the Pea Island lifesavers. The program is free and open to the public. For additional information, contact the N.C. Maritime Museum at 252-728-7317.

This is just a sampling of North Carolina's black history. For more statewide information, go to www.visitnc.com or call 1-800-VISIT-NC to order "The Rich Heritage of African Americans in North Carolina," a travel publication that includes a statewide sampling of historical and cultural sites and events.

Scouting

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service. He worked at No. 8.)

Murray Jr., who was born in 1941, became a Cub Scout in 1952 at Mount Zion Baptist Church – years after his father was a Scout leader there.

"I made Eagle in 1957," he said. E.W. Reid was the scoutmaster then.

In addition to being a Cub Scout and a Boy Scout, Murray Jr. was an Explorer.

Because of scouting, and his love of the outdoors and plant life, Murray Jr. decided to major in horticulture at N.C. A&T. He graduated in 1964. (He currently has a construction and horticultural consultant business, Murray's Builders and

Horticulture Consultants. He was in the Naval Seabees. "I served eight years' active duty and was in the Naval Reserves 23 years." He retired in 1985 from the Naval Reserves as chief warrant officer 4.)

Murray Jr. has served as a Scout leader from 1957 through the present. He has been a Scout leader in Norfolk, Va., Richmond, Va., Milledgeville, Ga., Augusta, Ga., Erie, Pa., and here in Winston-Salem. He has held positions including scoutmaster, unit commissioner, cubmaster and institutional representative.

He returned to Winston-Salem six years ago "to take care of Dad. He was very, very ill. He died three years ago. After the dust settled, I returned to scout-

ing at my church."

He is currently cubmaster of Pack 869 at Mount Zion Baptist Church and his wife, Barbara L. Murray, is den mother.

Since he has been cubmaster the pack's membership has increased from zero to 22 today, he said.

Murray Jr. said his father, who was never a Boy Scout himself, "was 100 percent for scouting – girl scouting and boy scouting."

"He believed in building character in young people. He spent his life doing that."

And Murray Jr. has carried on that tradition.

Murray Sr. would take pride in the fact that his great-grandson, Shawn L. Reynolds, is currently a member of Pack 869 at Mount Zion Baptist Church.

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