

THE TRIBUNAL AID

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**A VIABLE, VALID REQUIREMENT
RESPONDING TO
BLACK NORTH CAROLINA**

The 1976 Editions of THE TRIBUNAL AID will be dedicated to America's bicentennial Celebration, with emphasis on contributions our Race has made in the making of America, from birth to the present.

In 1976 there should not be a need to lift these contributions from isolated sources. Our past

should be interwoven into the fabric of our civilization, because we are, except for the Indian, America's oldest ethnic minority.

We have helped make America what it was, and what it is, since the founding of Virginia. We have been a factor in many major issues in our history. There have been many misdeeds

against us, yet we have been able to live through them and fight back. This is living proof of our history.

Our role in the making of America is neither well known or correctly known. Many positive contributions have escaped historians and have not found their way into the pages of many history books.

Faye Ashe, Black History Editor

We will strive to give readers, Black and white, many little-known facts about our past and it is hoped that a proper perspective of our history will be of value to persons who may believe that as Black people we have an unworthy past; and hence, no strong claims to all rights of other Americans.

THE BLACK CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN LETTERS

ART IN ITS BROAD SENSE IS THE EXPRESSION OF BEAUTY IN FORM, COLOR, SOUND, SPEECH, AND MOVEMENT. ART EMBRACES NOT ONLY DRAWING, PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE, BUT POETRY, MUSIC, DANCING AND DRAMA—TICS. OUR CULTURE IS RICH IN ALL OF THESE ARTS FORMS, WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME EXAMPLES OF THIS PARTICULAR ART FORM.

A contemporary of Horton's in Philadelphia was FRANCES ELLEN (WATKINS) HARPER, whose POEMS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS had been published in



Philadelphia in 1854. She was popular as an "elocutionist", and read her poems which helped the sale of her book. The book sold ten thousand copies in the first five years, and it was reprinted three times before her second work, MOSES, A STORY OF THE NILE, appeared in 1869. She was devoted to the cause of freedom, as a Black poet was inclined to be in the middle of the nineteenth century, as a Black poet was practically obliged to be, she promptly came to grips with this theme, as shown in this poem:

*I ask no monument, proud and high,
To arrest the gaze of the passer-by,
All that my yearning spirit craves
Is bury me not in a land of slaves.*

Seven years after the publication of her first little volume, the war of liberation having begun and Mrs. Harper having established herself very favorably in the public eye as a Black poet and a shining example (along with FREDERICK DOUGLASS and other personalities) of what a Negro might become in freedom. She began to contemplate on provocative subjects. When Frances Harper was no writing about the specific problems that confronted her people, she wrote on themes of the evil of strong drink and childhood, its innocence and blessedness. In her poem; "THE DOUBLE STANDARD" she treats still another.

*Crime has no sex and yet today
I wear the Brand of shame,
Whilst He amid the Gay and Proud
Still wears an Honest Name.*

*Yes Blame me for my downward course,
But Oh! Remember well,
Within your homes you press the hand
That led me down to hell.*

*No golden weights can turn the scale
Of justice in his sight,
And what is wrong in woman's life
In man's cannot be right.*

SKETCHES OF SOUTHERN LIFE, Mrs. Harper's third book, was published in 1873 and is notable for lang-

uage it put into the mouths of Negro characters. While avoiding dialect, as it later was to be used and popularized by PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR she nevertheless sought to suggest the flavor of Negro speech through characteristic patterns, phrases and nuances, techniques not unrelated to those used in the twentieth century by such writers as JAMES WELDON JOHNSON AND Langston Hughes. There were more than thirty volumes of poetry by Black Americans published between Phillis Wheatley's Collection and Dunbar's first.

Routine, format, and substance of the minstrel show originated with Negro slaves in the United States around 1820. Dunbar's lyrics came at the high tide of minstrel popularity. A son of former slaves, Dunbar greeted the twentieth century with LYRICS OF LOWLY LIFE (1896), a book which won for him a national reputation and enabled him to pursue a literary career for the rest of his life. Helped by the minstrel tradition his popularity was at first based mainly on poems written in the broad dialect of plantation folk. In another sense his writing is in the tradition of Robert Burns, a poet mentioned by literate Blacks, who had themselves come out of plantation slavery. Other volumes of Dunbar's works include: OAK AND IVY, LYRICS OF SUNSHINE AND SHADOW, LYRICS OF LOVE



AND I, FIGHTER, and COMPLETE POEMS. The latter has never been out of print, and it is found to contain, along with dialect poems that made him famous, many poems in Standard English, some of which provide the lyrics for songs which remain well known. EXAMPLE:

*DAWN
An angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping night.
Night woke to blush: the sprite was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it dawn.*

One of Dunbar's poems in dialect which most of us are familiar with is: *Little Brown Baby*

*Little Brown Baby wif' spa 'klin' eyes,
Come to yo' puppy an' set on his knee.
What you been doin', suh-makin' san' pies?
Look at dat bib-you's ez du 'ty ez me.
Look at dat mouf-dat's merlasses, I bet.
Come hyeah, Maria, an' wipe off his han's.
Be s' gwine to ketch you an' eat you up yit.
Bein' so sticky an' sweet-goodness lan's.*

JAMES WELDON JOHNSON was a contemporary of Dunbar, but his first collection of poems was not published until eleven years after Dunbar



death. Johnson was known mainly at that time by popular song lyrics, including, LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING, which since its composition in 1900 has become the Negro National Anthem. His FIFTY YEARS AND OTHER POEMS, (1917) ended what had begun to seem like silence by Black poets in the wake of Dunbar's death. The publications of James Weldon Johnson were numerous and varied. Among his more important works were: fifty years and other poems, the book of American Negro poetry (1922) GOD'S TROMBONES, SEVEN NEGRO SERMONS IN VERSE (1927) in which he endeavored to catch something in rhythm and imagery of the older Black Preachers, BLACK MANHATTAN (1930), which was mainly concerned with giving a record of Black progress on the New York stage; and along with this was (1933), an autobiography. From God's Trombones—THE CREATION begins:

*And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said,
I'm lonely—
I'll make me a world.*

Set to music by Louis Gruenberg, "THE CREATION" was produced by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

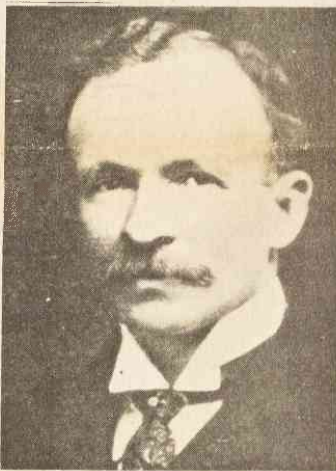
*Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.*

*Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song
Full of the faith that the dark past has
Sing a song
Full of the hope that the present has
brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day
begin
Let us march on till victory is won.*

CHARLES W. CHESTNUT won a place in literature not previously attained by any man identified with Black people. Chestnut taught in the

public schools of Charlotte and Fayetteville, North Carolina. At the age of twenty-four he became principal of the State Normal School in Fayetteville, North Carolina. In 1887, he began in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY a series of stories based on the superstitions of Black living near the Coast in North Carolina. These stories were later brought together in a volume entitled THE CURJURE WOMAN 1899. Followed by THE WIFE OF HIS YOUTH, AND OTHER STORIES OF THE COLOR LINE (1899). The first novel, THE HOUSE BEHIND THE CEDARS, (1900) treats in the story of the heroine, Rena Walden, some of the most searching questions raised by the color line. THE MARROW TRADITION (1901), based on the Wilmington riots of 1898, touches upon practically every phase of the race problem. THE COLONEL'S DREAM (1905), gives the experience of one who was originally from the South and who had achieved success in New York. Chestnut also wrote a compact life of Frederick Douglass in the series of BEACON BIOGRAPHIES OF EMINENT AMERICANS.



CLAUDE MCKAY, who came to the United States from Jamaica, was the most vigorous of the new group of poets. A militant Sonnet "IF WE



MUST DIE", was much quoted in the months immediately after the war, and this author's best verse was brought together in HARLEM SHADOWS (1922). There have since appeared three novels HOME OF HARLEM (1928) BANJO (1929) and BABA A BOTTOM (1933); also GINGERTOWN, a collection of stories.

IF WE MUST DIE

*If we must die—let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die—Oh, let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
Oh, kinsmen! We must meet the common foe,
Though far outnumbered, let us show us brave
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!*

WE HAVE JUST TOUCHED THE SURFACE OF BLACK WRITERS. WE WILL AT A LATER DATE RETURN WITH MORE BLACK WRITERS AND EXAMPLES OF THEIR WORK.

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BICENTENNIAL BLACK HISTORY "Lost-Strayed-Or Stolen" by Fay Ashe

Black history in the Western Hemisphere most probably begins with the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Blacks are known to have participated meaningfully in a number of later explorations made by Europeans in various parts of the United States and Spanish America. Facts such as these at once fashion a new dimension for Black history within the mainstream of American history. Inasmuch as one of the primary purposes of this feature is to record some historical achievements of the Black, it becomes most important to offer the reader chronological accounts through which he can conveniently familiarize himself with the broad sweep of American Black history. The years covered here are 1492-1954.

1844 CALIFORNIA for his freedom in the Circuit Court of St. Louis

1847 ROCHESTER, NY Jim Beckworth discovered a pass through the Sierra Nevadas to California and the Pacific Ocean.

1845 Worcester Mass. Frederic Douglass publishes the first issue of his abolitionist newspaper, "The North Star."

1848 BUFFALO The convention of the Free Soil Party is attended by a number of Negro abolitionists.

1846 NEW YORK Abolitionist Gerritt Smith plan to parcel up

thousand of acres of his land in New York fails to attract prospective Negro farmers. Lack of capital among Negroes and the infertility of the land itself combine to doom the project.

1847 ST. LOUIS, MISS. Dred Scott first files suit

1849 MARYLAND Harriet Tubman, soon to be a conductor on the "Underground Railroad" escapes from slavery in Maryland. Miss Tubman later returns to the South no less than 19 times, and helps transport more than 300 slaves to freedom.

1776 Honoring America's Bicentennial 1976