

FOLKWAYS FH 5523

THE NEGRO WOMAN

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JEAN M. BRANNON / READ BY DOROTHY WASHINGTON / FOLKWAYS RECORDS FH5523

- Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784)
- Sojourner Truth (1797-1883)
- Harriet Tubman (1820-1913)
- Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)
- Ida B. Wells Barnett (1862-1931)
- Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954)
- Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955)



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

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INTRODUCTION

(Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve)
 PHILLIS WHEATLEY (1753-1784)
 SOJOURNER TRUTH (1797-1883)
 SOJOURNER TRUTH cont.
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 MARY CHURCH TERRELL (1863-1954)
 MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE (1874-1955)
 Last Will and Testament

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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THE NEGRO WOMAN

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THE NEGRO WOMAN

Text and Introduction by Jean Marilyn Brannon

Side 1 - Band 1

(These words expressed the philosophy Mary McLeod Bethune believed in and lived.)

"Enter to Learn, depart to Serve"

"Be a Daniel. Take the vow of courage. Be militant. But let the weapons of determination be coupled with the armor of justice and forgiveness."

"I rejoice now, as I look back down my 75 years that I have been able to share in our American life. I rejoice that I have been able to help in the movement for the extension of brotherhood through greater interracial understanding. I rejoice that in my own way I have been able to demonstrate that there is a place in God's sun for the youth "farthest down" who has the vision, the determination, and the courage to reach it."

"If we have the courage and tenacity of our borebears who stood firmly like a rock against the lashings of slavery and the disruptions of Reconstruction, we shall find a way to do for our day what they did for theirs."

"The links are being forged. Someday we will be one people - Americans."

Side 1 - Band 2

Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784)

"TO THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH"

Written by Miss Wheatley after the Earl's appointment as secretary of the North American colonies.

Hail, happy day, when smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New England to adorn!

Should you, my lord, while you persue my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,

Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,

I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatched from Afric's fancied happy seat!

What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labor in my parents' breast!

Steeled was that soul and by no misery moved
That from a father seized his babe beloved,

Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?

Side 1 - Band 3

Sojourner Truth (1797-1883)

The rebirth of Sojourner Truth - Isabella Baumfree became Sojourner Truth!

"Why do I remain here, tied down, a slave to work, accomplishing nothing, moving from one worry to another, getting nowhere? What has been holding me to this one spot, praying and preaching, working and slaving, and making no headway? I am meant to do greater things than these I am doing. I feels it in me. ... Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? My spirit calls me to go out ... to travel ... I hears a voice telling me to travel east ... to talk ... to tell them about the Lord Jesus ... to help the world find itself ... There must-be persons out there who will hear me ... persons who will love me and care for me ... I am not afraid ... I must go ... I shall go ... I shall go."

"... My name was Isabella; but when I left the house of bondage, I left everything behind. I wa'n't goin to keep nothin' of Egypt on me, and so I went to the Lord and asked him to give me a new name. And the Lord give me Sojourner because I was to travel up an' down the land showin' the people their sins an' the Lord give me "Truth," because I was to declare the truth to the people..."

Speeches made before various Women's Rights conventions and meetings.

(Women's Rights Convention - 1853)

"Is it not good for me to come and draw forth a spirit to see what kind of spirit people are of? I sees that some of you have got the spirit of a goose, and some have got the spirit of a serpent ... I've been lookin' 'round and watchin' things, and I knows a little mite 'bout woman's rights too. I come forth to speak 'bout woman's rights and to throw in my little might, to keep the scales a-movin'. I knows that it feels a kind of hiss'n' and ticklin' to see a colored woman get up again; but we have been long enough trodden down now; we will come up again, ... I am sittin' among you to watch, and every once and a while I will come out and tell you what time of night it is."

"Well, children, whar there's so much racket there must be something out o' kilter. I think that twixt de Negro's of the Souf and the women of the Norf all a talkin' bout rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talkin' 'bout? Dat man ober there say that women needs to be helped into

carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place every whar. Nobody ever help me into carriages or over mud puddles, or give me any best place and ar'n't 'I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me - and ar'n't 'I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much (when I could get it) as man, bear de lash as well - and ar'n't I a woman? I have borne many children and seen'm most' all sold off into slavery, and when I cried with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard - and ar'n't I a woman?

Then they talks 'bout this thing in the head - what this they calls it? That's it, honey - intellect - now, what's that got to do with women's right or Negro's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?

Den that little man in black thar, he say women can't have as much rights as a man, cause Christ wont a woman. Whar did your Christ come from? Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do with him!

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all alone - these together ought to be able to turn it back and get it rightside up again: and they is askin' to do it, the men better let 'em."

Side 1 - Band 4

A reference has been made to the Constitution and the United States government during a religious meeting.

Sojourner's reply referred to the fact that thousands of acres of wheat had recently been destroyed by a weevil.

"You read books! I talks to God! Children, I talks to God and God talks to me. I goes out and talks to God in the fields and the woods. This morning ... I saw the wheat a holding up its head, looking very big. I goes up and takes holt of it. You believes it, there was no wheat there? I says, God, what is the matter wid this wheat? And he says to me 'Sojourner, there is a little weasel in it.' Now I hears talkin' about de Constitution and the rights of man. I comes up and I takes hold of this Constitution. It looks mighty big, and I feels for MY rights, but there aint any there. Then I says, 'God, what ails this Constitution?' He says to me, 'Sojourner, there is a little weasel* in it."

*Much wheat had been destroyed during this time by weevil.

On precautions of the Union homeguard to protect Sojourner from anti-abolitionist.

"The abolition ladies thought I should be dressed in uniform as the captain of the home guard, whose prisoner I was and who was to go with me to the meeting. So they put upon me a red, white, and blue shawl, a sash and apron to match, a cap on my head with a star in front, and a star on each shoulder ... I looks in the glass and was fairly frightened. It seems I am going to battle. I carries no weapon; the Lord will reserve (preserve) me without weapons. I feels safe even in the

midst of my enemies, for the truth is powerful and will prevail.

When we were ready to go, they puts me into a large beautiful carriage with the captain and other gentlemen, all of them was armed. The soldiers walks by our side ... I see the buildings surrounded by a crowd. I feels as I was goin' against the Philistines and prayed to the Lord to deliver me ..."

Side 1 - Band 5

Harriet Tubman (1820-1913)

The desire for freedom-
The first moments of freedom!

"I grew up like a neglected weed - ignorant of liberty, having no experience of it. I was not happy or contented; every time I seen a white man I was afraid of being carried away ... I think slavery is the next thing to hell. If a person would send another into bondage he would, it appears to me, be bad enough to send him to hell if he could.

"I had reasoned this out in my min', ... there was one of two things I had a right to, liberty or death. If I could not have one, I would have the other, for no man should take me alive. I would fight for my liberty as long as my strength lasted, and when the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me."

(up on reaching freedom of the North-)

"When I found I had crossed that 'line', "... I look at my hands to see if I was the same person. There was such a glory over every thing; the sun came like gold through the trees, and over the fields, and I feels like I was in Heaven."

"So it was with me. I had crossed the line. I was free."

"Oh, how I prayed then, "I says to the Lord, 'I'm goin' to hole steady on to you, and I know you'll see me through."

(Conductor of the Underground Railroad)

"I couldn't trust Uncle Sam with my people no longer. They're not safe no more till they're under the paw of the British lion."

The British paw referred to the use of Canada as a place of refuge.

"Mah people mus' go free."

"Mah people are goin t' be free."

"What's up there? Who's holding up this line? ... No you don't! Hasn't you any backbone? You enlisted with us didn't you? Then march on, or you die! ... A dead man tell no tales."

"Keep on, brothah, or die."

"They might catch me, ... but not alive."

Harriet Tubman often used song as a timetable for the arrivals and departures of her Underground Railroad.

"Of all the whole creation in East or in the West, The glorious Yankee nation is the greatest and the best. Come along! Come along! don't be alarmed, Uncle Sam is rich enough to give you all a farm. "

Assorted views and opinions of the nation and its affairs.

"They may say, 'Peace, Peace!' as much as they like; I knows there's going to be war!"

"Never wound a snake but kill it. God is ahead of Mr. Lincoln. God won't let Mr. Lincoln beat the South until he do the right thing. Mister Lincoln, he is a great man, and I'm a poor Negro; but this Negro can tells Mr. Lincoln how to save money and the young mens. He can do it by setting the Negroes free. Suppose there was an awful big snake down there on the floor. He bites you, You sends for the doctor to cut the bite; but the snake, he rolls up there, and while the doctor is doin it, he bites you again. The doctor cuts down that bite, but while he's doing it the snake springs up and bites you again, and so he keeps doing till you kills him. Never wound a snake but kill it. That's what Mr. Lincoln ought to know. . . "

Side 2 - Band 1

"They may send the flower of their young mens down south, to die of the fever in the summer and the ague in the winter . . . All of no use. God is ahead of Mister Lincoln. God won't let Mr. Lincoln beat the South until he does the right thing . . . He can do it by setting the Negroes free . . . "

"All we knew was that the first colored troops sent South from Massachusetts only received \$7. 00 a month, while the whites got \$15. 00. We didn't like that . . . "

A letter dictated by Harriet Tubman after her participation in the Combahee (Kum be) raid when almost 800 slaves were freed.

"Last fall, when the peoples became very much alarmed for fear of an invasion from the rebels, all my clothes were packed and sent with the others to Hilton Head, and lost; and I never been able to get any trace of them since. I was sick at the time and couldn't look after them myself. I wants among the rest, a bloomer dress, made of some coarse, strong material to wear on expeditions. In our late expedition up the Combahee River, in coming on board the boat, I was carrying two pigs for a poor sick woman, who had a child to carry, and in order to run, stepped on my dress, it being rather long, and fell and tore it almost off, so that when I got on board the boat, there was hardly anything left of it but shreds. Made up my mind then I would never wear a long dress on another expedition of this kind, but would have a bloomer as soon as I could get it. So please make this wish known to the ladies, if you will for I expects to have use for it very soon, probably before they can get it to me.

You have no doubt, seen a full account of the expedition I refer to. Don't you think we colored peoples are entitled to some credit for that exploit, under the lead of brave Colonel Montgomery? We weakened the rebels somewhat on the Combahee River, by taking and bringing away seven hundred and fifty-six head of their most

valuable live stock, known up your region as 'contrabands,' and this, too, without the loss of a single life on our part, though we had good reason to believe that a number of rebels bit the dust. Of those seven hundred and fifty-six contrabands, nearly or quite all the able-bodied men have joined the colored regiments here.

I have now been absent two years almost, and have just got letters from my friends in Auburn, urging me to come home. My father and mother are old and in feeble health, and need my care and attention. I hopes the good people there will not allow them to suffer. But I do not see how I am to leave at present the important work to be done here. "

(A description of the Assault on Ft. Wagner - outside of Charleston, South Carolina - hundreds of Negro soldiers fought and lost their lives in this battle.)

"And then we saw the lightning, and that was the guns, and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling and that was the drops of blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men we reaped. "

(Looking back over her life and her devotion to the nation.)

"You wouldn't think that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to wants in its folds. "

(While picking apples as a young slave, she had been denied the right to eat them.)

"... I liked apples when I was young and I said to myself some day I'll plant apples myself, for other young folks to eat, and I guess I did. "

Side 2 - Band 2

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911)

(A letter written to a friend.)

"I saw a passenger per the Underground Rail Road yesterday; did arrive safely? Notwithstanding that abomination of the nineteenth century - the Fugitive Slave Law - men are still determined to be free. Notwithstanding all the darkness in which they keep the slaves, it seems that somehow light is dawning upon their minds. . . . These poor fugitives are a property that can walk. Just to think that from the rainbow crowned Niagara to the swollen waters of the Mexican Gulf, from the restless murmur of the Atlantic to the ceaseless roar of the Pacific, the poor, half-starved, flying fugitive has no resting-place for the sole of his foot!" . . .

"What would you do if you were in my place? Would you give up and go back and work at your trade? There are no people that need all the benefits resulting from a well-directed education more than we do. The condition of our people, the wants of our children, and the welfare of our race demand the aid of every helping hand, the God-speed of every Christian heart. It is a work of time, a labor of patience, to become an effective school teacher, and it should be a work of love in which they who engage should not abate heart or hope until it is done. "

(Letter written to John Brown's widow:)

"My Dear Madam: In an hour like this the common words of sympathy may seem like idle words, and yet I want to say something to you, the noble wife of the hero of the nineteenth century. Belonging to the race your dear husband reached forth his hand to assist, I need not tell you that my sympathies are with you. I thank you for the brave words you have spoken. . . . Our heart may grow more hopeful for humanity when it sees the sublime sacrifice, it is about to receive from his hands. Not in vain has your dear husband periled all, if the martyrdom of one hero is worth more than the life of a million cowards."

Side 2 - Band 3

Ida B. Wells Barnett (1862-1931)

An article appearing in a 1900 copy of The Independent an abolitionist publication.

The Independent publishes an earnest appeal to Negro editors, preachers and teachers to 'tell their people to defend the laws and their own rights even to blood, but never, never to take guilty participation in lynching white man or black.'

Theoretically the advice is all right, but viewed in the light of circumstances and conditions it seems like giving a stone when we ask for bread.

For twenty years past the Negro has done nothing else but defend the law and appeal to public sentiment for defense by law. He has seen hundreds of men of his race murdered in cold blood by connivance of officers of the law, from the government of the States down to the sheriffs of counties. . . .

All this and more the Negro has seen and suffered without taking the law into his hands, for, lo, these many years. There have been no Nat Turner insurrections and San Domingan horrors in relation for all the wrongs he has suffered.

Part of an article from a 1910 edition of the Original Rights Magazine.

With no sacredness of the ballot there can be no sacredness of human life itself. For if the strong can take the weak man's ballot, when it suits his purpose to do so, he will take his life also. Having successfully swept aside the constitutional safeguards to the ballot it is the smallest of small matters for the South to sweep aside its own safeguards to human life. Thus 'trial by jury' for the black man in that section of the country has become a mockery, a plaything of the ruling classes and rabble alike. The mob says: 'This people has no vote with which to punish us or the consenting officers of the law, therefore we indulge our brutal instincts, give free rein to race prejudice and lynch, hang, burn them when we please.' Therefore, the more complete the disfranchisement, the more frequent and horrible has been the hangings, shootings and burnings.

Side 2 - Band 4

Mary Church Terrell (1863-1954)

From her autobiography

In the public schools of Yellow Springs, I learned a fact that I had never known before. While we were reciting our history lesson one day, it suddenly occurred to me that I, myself, was descended from the very slaves whom the Emancipation Proclamation set free. I was stunned. I felt humiliated and disgraced. . . . This was a rude and terrible shock. . . . When I grew older, however, the stigma of being descended from slaves had lost its power to sting. . . . with a single solitary exception. . . . no race has lived upon the earth which has not at some time in its history been subject of a stronger. If history teaches one lesson more than another, it is that races wax and wane. . . . but he is himself conquered in the end. Holding human beings in slavery seems to have been part of the divine plan to bring out the best there is in them. . . . This fact, not only comforted and consoled me, but it greatly increased my self-respect.

An excerpt of a talk before 400 Normal College students in Milwaukee.

You may have an insuperable aversion to people whose skins are dark. If that is true, . . . I do not blame you at all. I pity you. It is your misfortune, not your fault, to dislike human beings whom our Creator has made, simply because their complexions are darker than yours. But even though you may dislike to be near a swarthy individual, you can be just to him and treat him like a human being and give him a chance.

(closing memories)

In writing the story of my life I might have related many more incidents that I have, showing my discouragement and despair at the obstacles interposed and the limitations placed upon me because I am a colored woman. Several times I have been desperate and wondered which way I should turn. . . . Some people will feel perhaps, that I have revelled too much in the fact that I have been able to accomplish as much as I have in spite of the prejudice encountered because of both my race and my sex. Colored women are the only group in this country who have two heavy handicaps to overcome, that of race as well as that of sex. Colored men have only one handicap to hurdle - that of race.

So far as possible, I have tried to forget the limitations imposed upon me on account of my race and have gone ahead striving to accomplish what I wanted to do. . . .

Side 2 - Band 5

Mary McLeod Bethune (1874-1955)

(Her last Will and Testament)

Sometimes as I sit communing in my study I feel that death is not far off. I am aware that it will overtake me. . . . I face that reality without tears or regrets. I am resigned to death as all humans must be at the

proper time. . . . The knowledge that my work has been helpful to many fills me with joy and great satisfaction. . . . as my life draws to a close . . . Here then, is my legacy.

I leave you hope.

The Negro's growth will be great in the years to come. Yesterday, our ancestors endured the degradation of slavery, yet they retained their dignity. Today, we direct our economic and political strength toward winning a more abundant and secure life. Tomorrow, a new Negro, unhindered by race taboos and shackles, will benefit from more than 330 years of ceaseless striving and struggle. Theirs will be a better world. This I believe with all my heart.

I leave you racial dignity.

I want Negroes to maintain their human dignity at all costs. We, as Negroes, must recognize that we are the custodians as well as the heirs of a great civilization. We have given something to the world as a race

and for this we are proud and fully conscious of our place in the total picture of man's development. We must learn also to share and mix with all men. We must make an effort to be less race conscious and more conscious of individual and human values. I have never been sensitive about my complexion. My color has never destroyed my self respect nor has it ever caused me to conduct myself in such a manner as to merit the disrespect of any person. I have not let my color handicap me. Despite many burdens and handicaps, I have risen from the cotton fields of South Carolina to found a college, administer it during its years of growth, become a public servant in the government of our country and a leader of women. I would not exchange my color for all the wealth in the world, for had I been born white I might not have been able to do all that I have done or yet hope to do.

If I have a legacy to leave my people, it is my philosophy of living and serving. As I face tomorrow, I am content, for I think I have spent my life well. I pray now that my philosophy may be helpful to those who share my vision of a world of Peace, Progress, Brotherhood and Love.

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEGRO WOMAN

"Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve." This motto was the guiding philosophy of Mary McLeod Bethune. The words were inscribed on one of the Bethune-Cookman College buildings as a daily reminder to those who entered.

"Be a David. Take the vow of courage," but let the weapons of determination be coupled with the armor of justice and forgiveness," advised Mary Bethune to her students.

These quotations introduce the recordings, The Negro Woman, because each of the women contained therein was a David. Each woman, in her own particular mode of expression, served. Courage, determination, tolerance, and love were common qualities each one possessed. Each woman contributed to and served her race, her country, and all mankind.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY (1753-1784) Biographical Sketch

Phillis Wheatley, the amazing Negro poetess of colonial Boston, was an exponent of the neo-classicism school of poetry. Her poems were sophisticated, impersonal, and highly elaborate. Though raised a slave, her works were little influenced by her position of servitude. Her poetry contained the popular clichés of the period. Allusions to pagan gods and biblical heroes combined with typical New England Puritanical attitudes were dominant in her writings. Critics have marveled at and sought explanations as to how a slave child could be so imitative of classical standards.

A letter written by her owner, John Wheatley, to her London publisher provides insight into her early aptitude and genius.



Phillis Wheatley

Phillis was brought from Africa to America in the Year of 1761, between Seven and Eight Years of Age. Without any Assistance from School Education, and by only what she was taught in the Family, she in sixteen Months Time from her Arrival, attained the English Language, to which she was an utter Stranger before, to such a Degree, as to read any, the most difficult parts of the Sacred Writings, to the great **ASTONISHMENT OF ALL WHO HEARD HER.**

As to her Writing, her own Curiosity led her to it; and this she learnt in so short a Time, that in Year 1755, she wrote a letter to Rev. Mr. Occum, the Indian Minister, while in England.

She has a great Inclination to learn the Latin Tongue, and has made some progress in it. This Relation is given by her Master who bought her and with whom she now lives. 1

1 - Vernon Loggins, The Negro Author. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 17.

The budding potential of Phillis Wheatley flowered under the constant encouragement of the Wheatley family. She wrote her first poem, "To the University of Cambridge, in New England," at the age of thirteen. The young Miss Wheatley became popular in Boston literary circles. She visited London and the Countess of Huntingdon to whom she had dedicated one of her earlier poems. The publication of her volume, Poems of Various Subjects, Religious and Moral, took place after her European visit. Her collected works attracted favorable attention in the United States and abroad. One of her popular poems was written for General George Washington during the siege of Boston. She received a reply and an invitation to visit Washington at his headquarters.

The poem, "To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Secretary of State for North America" was written after the Earl's appointment by George III. This poem contains her strongest references to the wrongs of the Negro in America. "Imagination" is considered her best work by critics today. "Liberty and Peace" is one of Miss Wheatley's most strongly written poems.

Phillis Wheatley died at the age of thirty-one. She died, possibly, before she was able to create her ultimate expressions. All of her works reflected courage, strength of character, and love for the American nation and her fellowman.

M. A. Majors, Noted Negro Women. Pages 19-20.
Letter from George Washington.

Cambridge, Feb. 2, 1776

Miss Phillis:

Your favour of the 26th of October did not reach my hands till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetical talents; in honour of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the poem, had I not been apprehensive that, while I only meant to give the world the new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favoured by the muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great respect, your obedient humble servant.

George Washington

Hughes and Bontemps, The Poetry of the Negro. Double-day, 1949, page 6.

"His Excellency General Washington"

Celestial choir! enthroned in realms of light,

Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of Heaven's revolving light
Involved in sorrows and the veil of night!

The goodness comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel binds her golden hair;
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.
Muse! how propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrap'd in tempest and night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;
Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.
In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.
Shall I go to Washington their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.
Thee, first in peace and honours, -- we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.
Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian and implore!

One century scarce perform'd its destined round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven defended race!
Fir'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.

Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, Washington! be thine.



Sojourner Truth

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SOJOURNER TRUTH (1797-1883)

Once when Sojourner Truth heard a reference made to Horace Greeley, she replied to the speaker, "You call him a self-made man, I am a self-made woman."¹

She was, indeed, a self-made woman. She had been born a slave, Isabella Baumfree, in Maryland. She grew into womanhood, escaped slavery, and experienced a "rebirth" as Sojourner Truth. As Sojourner Truth, she traveled through the northern states preaching and orating the glories and the loving wisdom of God. She preached against the evils of slavery and the denial of women's suffrage rights. As the self-made Sojourner Truth, she wandered constantly and restlessly over the countryside. She moved and influenced many when she spoke before camp meetings, revivals, women suffrage committees, and abolitionist groups. She exhibited a dramatic and hypnotic effect upon audiences. Sojourner Truth, a tall Lincolnesque figure, spoke in thunderous, vigorous, and emotional tones. Her biting wit, her penetrating insights, and her candid, earthy simplicity combined in enabling her to express her beliefs in concise and memorable phrases. Never silenced or discouraged by physical threats or surly insults, she agitated constantly for justice.

She died in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1885. Once after hearing the completion of a stirring but gloomy oration by Frederick Douglass, Sojourner boomed from the back of the assemblage, "Frederick, is God dead?"²

These words, "Is God dead?", are inscribed on her headstone; a fitting memorial to a woman who had faith in God and justice.

1. Olive Gilbert, Narrative of Sojourner Truth. (Battle Creek: Review and Herald Office, 1884), p. v.
2. Sylvia Dannett. Profiles of Negro Womanhood. (Yonkers: Educational Heritage, 1964), p. 97.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF HARRIET TUBMAN (1820-1913)

The poem "Harriet Tubman", written by Negro poetess, Margaret Walker, chronicles the events of the dynamic life of the bold and brave patriot. Harriet Tubman, the slave, the liberator, the rebel, the abolitionist, the spy, the soldier, the nurse, was a most remarkable American. She was known by various names during her life: Araminta Ross, a Maryland slave girl of a family of eleven children; Harriet Tubman, the muscular and sturdy wife of ex-slave John Tubman; "Moses", the daring and skillful conductor of the Eastern Seaboard Route of the Underground Railroad; and "General" Tubman, the brilliant strategist and leader of the successful Combahee River Raid and the Fort Wagner Assault. Each name gives valuable insight into the amazing personage that was Harriet Tubman.

As a conductor of the Underground Railroad, she led nineteen excursions from Maryland into Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Canada. Because of her excursions, thousands of other slaves were stimulated to escape on their own. As a conductor, she was never captured,

wounded nor did she ever lose a passenger. Always armed with a pistol, she spirited through hazardous territory and situations with such ease that she became a living legend among the fugitive slaves. She often used song as a signal to slaves as to her whereabouts, activities and intentions. (See songs to be inserted)



Harriet Tubman when nearly 100 years old

The following article appeared in July 10, 1863 edition of a Boston newspaper Commonwealth describing her participation in actual combat during the Civil War.

Colonel Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, under the guidance of a black woman, dashed into the enemy's country, struck a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars worth of commissary stores, cotton, and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebellion, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars worth of property, without losing a man or receiving a scratch. It was a glorious consummation.

After they were all fairly well disposed of in the Beaufort charge, they were addressed in strains of thrilling eloquence by their gallant deliverer, to which they responded in a song, "There is a white robe for thee," a song so appropriate and so heartfelt and so cordial as to bring unbidden tears.

The colonel was followed by a speech from the black woman, who led the raid and under whose inspiration it was originated and conducted. For sound sense and real native eloquence, her address would do honor to any man, and it created a great sensation. ...

Since the rebellion she has devoted herself to her great work of delivering the bondsman, with energy and sagacity that cannot be exceeded. Many and many times she has penetrated the enemy's lines and discovered their situation and condition, and escaped without injury, but not without extreme hazard.

(Conrad - Harriet Tubman, Page 169)

Harriet Tubman missed participation in John Brown's Ferry Harper only because of illness. Harriet once said of John Brown, "We Negroes in the South never call him John Brown, we call him our Saviour. He died for us." (Conrad - Harriet Tubman, p. 178)

Harriet Tubman also served as a nurse for the 54 Massachusetts Volunteers' all Negro regiment.

After the war, she returned to Auburn, New York, remarried, and established a home for the elderly poor and incapacitated. She died on March 10, 1913. Again the words sung by her during her Underground Railroad activities were appropriate again.

I'm sorry friens to leabe you;
Farewell. Oh, farewell!
But I'll meet you in de morning;
Farewell. Oh, Farewell!

Wilbur H. Siebert. The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom. Macmillan, 1899.

Page 185 - Quote of Gov. Wm. H. Seward of New York
"I have known Harriet long, and a nobler, higher spirit or a truer, seldom dwells in human form."

"I am convinced that she is not only truthful, but that she has a rare discernment, and a deep and sublime philanthropy."

Page 185 - John Brown

"I bring you one of the best and bravest persons on this continent, General Tubman we call her."

Page 185-186-188 - Assorted quotes.

"Excepting John Brown, of sacred memory, I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you"

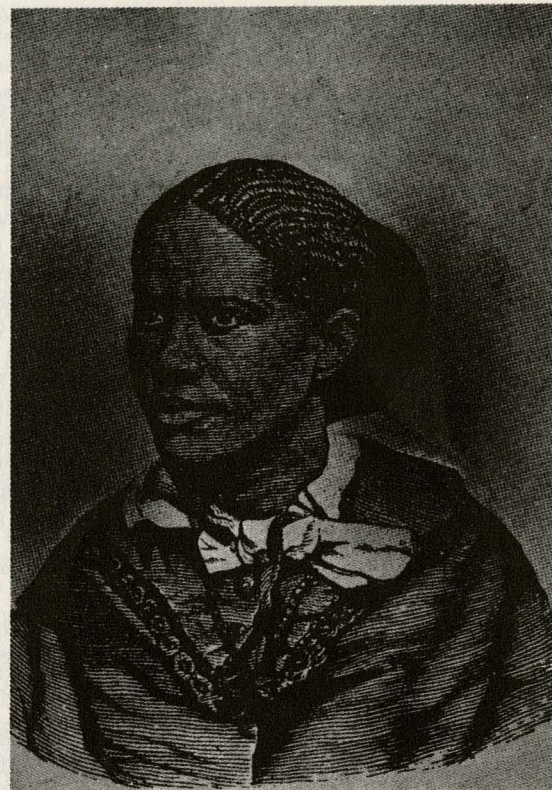
"She seemed to know no fear and scarcely ever fatigue. They called her Moses."

Quaker - Thomas Garrett

"... I never met with any person, of any color, who had more confidence in the voice of God, as spoken to her soul. She has frequently told me she talked with God, and he talked with her, every day of her life, and she has declared to me that she felt no more fear of being arrested by her former master, or any other person, when in his immediate neighborhood, than she did in the state of New York, or Canada, for she ventured only where God sent her."

General Rufus Saxton

"I can bear witness to the value of her services in South Carolina and Florida. She was employed in the hospitals and as a spy. She made many a raid inside the enemies' lines, displaying remarkable courage, zeal, and courage."



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER (1825-1911)

God bless our native land,
Land of the newly free,
Oh may she ever stand
For truth and liberty.

God bless our native land,
Her homes and children bless,
Oh may she ever stand
For truth and righteousness. 1

"Sketches of Southern Life"

Dannett - Profiles of Negro Womanhood, Page 108.

Love for America, love for her race, love for her fellow man seemed to be the motivating forces in the life of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. The dedicated Negro abolitionists and lecturer was also a minor poet and the first published Negro woman novelist.

She was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1825 of free parents. Orphaned at the age of three, she was raised by an aunt. Mrs. Watkins in her later writings expressed regret at the loss of a real mother.

Have I yearned for a mother's love? The grave was my robber. Before three years had scattered their blight around my path, death had won my mother from me. Would the strong arm of a brother have been welcome? I was my mother's only child. 2

(Still - The Underground Railroad, p. 775)

She taught at Union Seminary in Columbia, Ohio and in Pennsylvania. She became active in the Underground Railroad while in Pennsylvania. She became a permanent lecturer with the Anti-Slavery Society of Maine. She traveled through the South and North on lecture tours, and gained the reputation as an outstanding abolitionist lecturer. An article in *The Independent* described the abolitionist:

She has a noble head, this bronze muse; a strong face, with shadowed glow upon it indicative of thought and a nature most femininely sensitive, but not in the least morbid. She stands quietly beside her desk and speaks without notes, with gestures few and fitting. Her manner is marked by dignity and composure. She is never assuming, never theatrical. 3

3. Brawley - Early Negro Writers - p. 291.

She was a spokesman for the Women's Christian Temperance Union after the Civil War.

Mrs. Watkins was a prolific writer concerned with the problems of Negroes and Americans.

I hold that between white people and the colored there is a community of interests, and the sooner they find it out the better it will be for both parties; but the community of interests does not consist in increasing the privileges of one class and curtailing the rights of the other, but in getting every citizen interested in the welfare progress and durability of the State. . . . yet I know that the colored man needs to know the value of a home-life; to know how to be incited to leave behind him the old shards and shells of slavery and to rise in the scale of character, wealth and influence 4

(Scruggs - Women of Distinction, page 10.)

Her poetry and prose were influenced by Whittier and Longfellow. Her writings dealt with religion, abolitionist, anti-slavery, social reform, and traditional love themes.

If our talents are to be recognized, we must write less of issues that are particular and more of feelings that are general. We are blessed with hearts and brains that compass more than ourselves in our present plight. We must look to the future which, God willing, will be better than the present or the past and delve into the heart of the world. 6

(Redding - To Make a Poet Black, p. 39)

She published three volumes of poetry, two novels, and a selection of short stories and articles.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF IDA B. WELLS BARNETT (1862-1931)

A determined powerful personality, a brilliant mind, a forceful and forthright writing style combined in Ida B. Wells Barnett to create one of the most militant Negro spokesmen of her time.



Ida B. Wells

The eldest in a family of six children, she raised her orphaned brothers and sisters in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Mrs. Barnett attended Rust College in Holly Springs, and Fisk University in Nashville. She taught school during the first years after college. She entered the journalism field to be able to inform the nation of existing racial inequalities. She urged Negroes to migrate North in order to seek better living conditions. She exposed the horrors of lynching as they were practiced in the South and some parts of the North. She compiled and published the first statistical pamphlet on lynching, *The Red Record*. She became the owner of *The Memphis Free Speech*; an organ so vocal, so outspoken that its offices were demolished and the young editor forced to flee to the North herself.

She moved to Rochester, New York and wrote for *The New York Age*. Throughout her life she contributed to *The Memphis Living Way*, *Gate City Press* in Kansas, *The Detroit Paindealer*, *The American Baptist*, and *The Christian Index*. Often her editorials, letters, and articles appeared under the pen name of Iola.

She was among the petitioners to President McKinley in 1898 for legislation against mob violence. She helped lay the groundwork for the organization which grew into the National Urban League. She was part of the Niagara Movement in 1909 which grew into the nucleus of the present NAACP.

Anti-lynching literature was her foremost concern. Her fiery and articulate writings were commended by Frederick Douglass. The titles of some of her publications indicate the strength of her expressions against the existing lynching practices: *Southern Horrors*, *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, and "Lynching, the Excuse For It."

Frederick Douglass wrote the following letter to Miss Wells:

Dear Miss Wells:

Let me give you thanks for your faithful paper on the lynch adomination now generally practiced against colored people in the South. There has been no equal to it in convincing power. I have spoken, but my word is feeble in comparison. You give us what you know and testify from actual knowledge. You have dealt with the facts with cool, painstaking fidelity and left those naked and uncontradictory facts to speak for themselves.

Brave woman! You have done your people and mine a service which can neither be weighed nor measured. . . .

Very truly and gratefully yours,
Frederick Douglass

(Preface of A Red Record written by Ida B. Wells)

After her marriage, Mrs. Barnett moved to Chicago. Her political and civic activities in Chicago led to the naming of a low income housing development in her honor.



Mary Church Terrell

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF MARY CHURCH TERRELL
(1863-1954)**

Mary Church Terrell walked with the lowly and the exalted, the illiterate and high trained, and all admired her and held her in high esteem. ¹

The preceding was a typical reaction to Mary Church Terrell, teacher, lecturer, civic leader, world diplomat, and writer. The daughter of ex-slaves, she was born at the end of the Civil War in Memphis, Tennessee. She was raised in gracious and wealthy surroundings by intelligent and independent parents.

She attended elementary schools in Yellow Springs, Ohio and Oberlin, Ohio. She was one of the first of her sex and her race to attend Oberlin University. After her graduation from Oberlin, she taught, traveled abroad, and then married Robert H. Terrell. Her husband was to become the first Negro to be appointed to a Judgeship in the Municipal Court of Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Terrell fought for the equal rights for universal women. She assisted in the organization of the National Association of Colored Women and became one of its first National Presidents. She was one of the first female and Negro members of the District of Columbia School Board. Her scholarly logic, her dignity, her personal charm, her vivacious wit, and forceful persuasion made her a very popular lecturer. Some highlights of her speaking career were appear-

ances before the Annual Convention of the National Women's Suffrage Association and in 1904 when the International Council of Women met in Berlin. Members of the latter assemblage heard her speech delivered in English, German and French. (Include excerpts of speeches - see p. 160-162 of auto and p. 216 of Brawley)

She was a member of the NAACP when it was nationally and initially organized in 1909. In 1920, she became Director of Work among Colored Women, Eastern District for the Republican National Committee. She was a delegate to the International Peace Congress in Zurich. (See p. 331-333 of auto)

She was one of the citizens of Washington who was instrumental in bringing about the 1953 United States Supreme Court Decision that rendered racial discrimination illegal in District of Columbia public restaurants, theaters, movie theaters and other public places of amusement in the nation's capital.

The following appeared in the Washington Evening Star after her death:

Dr. Mary Church Terrell, who died last Saturday at the age of 90, was a gracious lady and a staunch fighter for human freedom. Her most noteworthy service was her constant, patient and dignified effort to advance the cause of Negro equality; but her interests were broader than those of a single race. She fought discrimination and bigotry wherever she found it, but always with understanding rather than hatred. She had become a real civic institution in Washington, and the esteem and affection in which she was held was attested by the hundreds of persons from all walks of life who turned out last October to pay honor to her birthday. . . . recently she was principal in the Thompson Restaurant Case that brought enforcement of the anti-discrimination laws. It must have been a source of great satisfaction to her in the last year of a life that began the year of the Emancipation Proclamation to see the Supreme Court dispose of the largest barrier to equality in the schools. Washington is richer because Mary Church Terrell lived here, and her death is a real loss to the Nation's Capital.

1. Sylvia Dannett, Profiles of Negro Womanhood. (Yonkers, Educational Heritage Pub., 1964), p. 211.

**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF
MARY McLEOD BETHUNE (1875-1955)**

There grew many varieties of roses, red, yellow, pink, and even black. Each rose was sending its own tap root into the earth and drawing from it. Each rose got what it as an individual could get from the earth.

The red rose did not desire to be the white rose, nor the black the pink one. Yet each had equal opportunity to grow as an individual and be itself.

I don't want to be a white or a black woman. I just want to be me. That is all I ask. ¹

Mary Jane McLeod Bethune, the server, the doer, the mighty and the wise, spoke these words after visiting a scientific rose garden in Switzerland. "I just want to be me," she said.

When the midwife who assisted in the birth of the fifteenth Bethune offspring saw Mary Jane for the first time, she said, "She's different. She'll see things before they happen."²

Mary Bethune was different. From her first years on the Bethune farm she showed signs of being unusually alert, imaginative, and verbally fluent. At nine years old she was endowed with the stamina and energy to enable her to pick 250 pounds of cotton during one day.



Mary McLeod Bethune

She quickly learned to read and count, and assisted her father with his business transactions.

She attended Scotia Seminary in North Carolina and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. African missionary work had been her first choice of vocation. When denied a missionary opening, she channeled her disappointment into zeal for teaching underprivileged Negro children. She taught at Haines Institute under the direction of Lucy Croft Laney, one of the pioneer Negro women teachers.

Mrs. Bethune moved to Florida after her marriage and the birth of a son. She endeavored to open a school in Florida. She endured many hardships and discouragements until her modest Daytona Industrial School for Girls grew into Bethune-Cookman College. Her modest beginnings developed into a coeducational institution which was to graduate thousands of students.

Mrs. Bethune was appointed director to the Office of Minority Affairs of the National Youth Administration under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She became closely associated with both President Roosevelt and his wife.

"Mrs. Bethune is a great woman. I believe in her because she has her feet on the ground - not only on the ground but in deep plowed soil," Roosevelt once said of Mrs. Bethune.³



When receiving the appointment as director of Office of Minority Affairs, Mary Bethune said, "Here I am, alone with only God and the President of the United States of America, to commune together on solutions which may prove beneficial to all mankind."⁴

She founded the National Council of Negro Women. The honor and awards she received were innumerable. She was the recipient of nine honorary degrees. She was appointed consultant for the Charter for Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations.

Mrs. Bethune's courage, faith, and tenacity has served to better the position of the Negro youth, the Negro woman and the American citizen.

When W. E. D. DuBois visited Cookman College he said, "... the institution has been built and planned by the indomitable energy of one black woman and her enthusiastic spirit inspires and makes it live."⁵

This same indomitable energy and enthusiastic spirit has enabled the memory of Mary McLeod Bethune to live on, remembered along with other famous and dedicated contributors to American history.

1. The Chicago Defender, 5-28 -55, p. 1.
2. Rackham Holt, M. M. B. (Garden City, Doubleday, 1964), p. 1.
3. Ibid, p. 198.
4. Page 198 of Holt
5. Daniel - Women Builders, p. 79.

DOROTHY FRANKLIN WASHINGTON

Dorothy Franklin Washington, the actress who portrays the seven historical women on the recording, showed dramatic promise at an early age. Her parents, Ila and William Franklin, were quick to note and wise enough to develop her flair for mimicry, her lively sense of humor, her sensitive nature, and her talent for self-expression. She was enrolled in speech and drama classes while a youngster in her native city of Chicago, Illinois.

A love of the theatre and show business developed because of her natural talent, and because of the exposure resulting from her father's professional career as a musician and operatic baritone. His appearances with various opera productions, with a nationally known singing group the Southernaires, and as co-star with Katherine Dunham in Carib Song were definite stimuli for young Dorothy.

She attended the Chicago Conservatory of Music and Drama, appeared in a Civic Opera production of Aida, gave dramatic readings on the campuses of the universities of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. She appeared in the Little Theatre Group productions while attending Herzl Junior College in Chicago. She has acted with amateur production groups in New York City.

Mrs. Washington is now a Harlem housewife, married to Robert L. Washington, and the mother of three active youngsters. Her love of the theatre continues to express itself through her work with amateur dramatic church groups. She maintains an avid interest in current dramatic presentations, performances, performers, and related literature.

JEAN MARILYN BRANNON

Jean Marilyn Brannon, born in Chicago, Illinois, was exposed to the history of the American Negro while attending elementary and secondary schools on the South Side of Chicago. An early appreciation and awareness of the history of her race were developed by her family and teachers. Growing up in a community which housed one of the most complete Negro library collections, named for one of Chicago's pioneer Negro physicians, George Cleveland Hall; and attending a high school named for one of Chicago's first permanent settlers, a Negro, Jean Baptise Pointe Du Sable; she became increasingly aware of the historical accomplishments and contributions of the American Negro. The research assignment for The Negro Woman enabled her to delve more deeply into an area in which she had always been vitally interested.

Miss Brannon attended Wilson Junior College, Chicago Teachers College, and The University of Chicago. She was an elementary classroom teacher for a number of years. She is now a free-lance writer in New York City.

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