THE GLORY OF NEGRO HISTORY

FOLKWAYS FC 7752

WRITTEN AND NARRATED BY LANGSTON HUGHES

WITH THE ACTUAL VOICES OFRALPH BUNCHE AND MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE RECORDED ESPECIALLY FOR THIS RECORD

FEMALE VOICES: HILDA HAYNES MALE VOICES: CLAYTON CORBIN

SINGERS: LEON BIBB, CLARK MORGAN, HILDA HAYNES AND THE GEORGE MCCLAIN CHORALE
THE GLORY OF NEGRO HISTORY

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Part I - THE STRUGGLE

It is glorious — this history of ours! It is a great story — that of the Negro in America! It begins way before America was America, or the U. S. A. the U. S. A. It covers a wide span, our story. Let me tell it to you:

BOOM OF SEA WAVES (1)
WHISTLE OF WIND (2)

Hear the wind in the sails of the ships of Columbus? They say one of his pilots, Pedro Alonso Niño, was a Negro. That was in 1492. Certainly by the early 1500's, black explorers were coming to the New World. One of them was Estavan — or Estavanico, his nickname — which means in Spanish "Kid Steve."

"Tierra! Ah, esta tierra!" From the deck of a Spanish galleon he cried, "Land! There is Land!" when he first sighted the coast of what is now Florida. On that coast his ship was wrecked and Estavan, with four Spaniards, were the only men left alive. Perhaps because he was colored, Estavan got along well with the Indians. He learned their various languages, and soon became a famous guide and translator for other explorers who could not communicate with the Indians. All the way across the southern part of what is now the United States, and as far as Mexico City, for eight years Estavan wandered. From Mexico in 1539 he set out with Friar Marcos de Niza on an expedition toward the North to find the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola, which were said to be built of gold. Estavan was the only Negro in the group. The Spaniards held out until they got as far as what is now Texas. Then the heat and the dust overcame them. They asked Estavan if he would go ahead with the Indian guides and send word back to them as to what he found.

Estavan did not find the Cities of Gold, but he did find rich Indian pueblos with houses of sunbaked brick, whose doorways were decorated with turquoise. And he discovered the rich and beautiful country of gold, copper, cotton, and flowers that is now Arizona. So you see, the first Negroes did not come to America as slaves. They came as explorers. History says that.

When Balboa discovered the Pacific, thirty colored men were in his party.

1619 was the year when the roots of slavery began in Virginia. Then ships filled with captured black men and women began to sail across the Western Ocean to our shores. In chains, crowded in the dark holes of the slave ships, they sang their mournful songs:

AFRICAN CHANT (3)

-Music of the World's Peoples, side 2, band 6, FE 4504

Sometimes whole groups of Africans, taken on deck at night for air, would leap into the sea — committing mass suicide rather than go into slavery. As soon as they were landed and sold, some would run away into the forest and join the Indians. No man wanted to be a slave. But thousands of Africans were brought by force to America to plant cotton, rice, corn, and wheat, to build the roads and clear the forests, to do almost all the hard work that went into the early building of America.

Most slave masters were heartless and cruel, but there were some who were kind. Such a master was the tailor, John Wheatley. One day he went down to the dockside in Boston to buy, from a newly arrived slave ship, a little servant girl for his wife. The child he bought was from Senegal, maybe seven or eight years old, very dark and cute and shy — and frightened, too, for she could not understand people when they asked her what
her name was. So her master and mistress called her Phillis. Later, she took their last name, Wheatley. Before she was twenty, that name, Phillis Wheatley, began to be famous all over the New England colonies — for she became a poet. General George Washington wrote Phillis a letter commending her talent. Because of her genius, Phillis was given her freedom. But, in a land of slavery, when Phillis Wheatley wrote one of her famous poems about the freedom of the American colonies after the Revolutionary War, she must have been looking forward to the future freedom of her own people, too. This is a part of her poem, "Liberty and Peace, 1784":

Lo freedom comes! The prescient muse foretold
All eyes the accomplished prophecy behold;
Her port described, "She moves
Divinely fair,
Olive and laurel bind her golden hair." ...
To every realm shall peace her charms display,
And heavenly freedom spread her golden ray.

The first man to fall for American freedom was a Negro, Crispus Attucks. When a group of Bostonians, who did not like being ruled by the King, protested, and the Red Coats fired, Crispus Attucks was shot dead. Today in Boston Common there is a monument to Crispus Attucks, the Negro who died for American freedom.

"OH, FREEDOM" (4)

-Leon Bibb

In 1783, America became a free nation — the U. S. A. That is, all were free except the Negro, still a slave. But not willing — no man likes to be a slave. In 1800, a young Negro, Gabriel, organized a revolt in Virginia that involved thousands of black men and women. But on the day when the uprising was to have started, a great storm and a flood wrecked their plans. The leaders were discovered, and Gabriel and some thirty-five others were put to death by the slave owners. They died silently.

"OH, FREEDOM"

In 1831 another great slave rebellion broke out in Virginia, led by Nat Turner. In this one some sixty slave owners were killed. More than a hundred Negroes lost their lives before this uprising was suppressed. Seventeen slaves were put to trial and hanged. But Nat Turner had no regrets. Just before he was led to the scaffold to die, he said, "I was intended for some great purpose." In his mind, that purpose was freedom. More and more restless did those in bondage become, more and more did they revolt. In increasing numbers, too, they were escaping to the North.

One who had been a slave, but went away to freedom, was a woman named Isabella. In New York City she had a vision, so she changed her name to Sojourner Truth, and she began to make speeches all over the North against slavery:

"Now about my name, the Lord gave me Sojourner, because I was to travel up and down the land showin' the people their sins and bein' a sign unto them. Afterwards I told the Lord I wanted another name, 'cause everybody else had two names. And the Lord gave me Truth, because I was to declare the truth to the people. I've had five children, and I've seen 'em most all sold off into slavery. Where they be, I don't know — and my children don't know where I be. But I look at the stars, and they look at the stars, and somehow I feels better. Now I walks the world lookin' for truth. I think of the great things of God, not the little things. It's a sojourner lookin' for truth!"

Truth to her was freedom — not just for herself, but for all. That's what it meant to Harriet Tubman, too, in the dark, in the deep woods, singing:

"STEAL AWAY" (5)

-Hilda Haynes

But that "steal away" did not mean, as the slave masters thought, stealing away to Jesus. Harriet Tubman used that song as a great secret call — to steal away to freedom, to steal away through the swamp, and follow the North Star to freedom! After she had made her own escape alone from a Maryland plantation, Harriet Tubman went back into slave territory many times to rescue relatives and friends, and guide them to the North:

"Home! Home is where freedom is!
Home ain't nowhere, children, but where freedom is. The house can be ever so nice with a soft bed, and fine food, and fire in the fireplace — but it ain't home, if it ain't where freedom is. Houseboy! I hear you cryin' in the Big House where you eat the Missus' cake. Huh! Freedom ain't there! Coachman! I hear you cryin' on the carriage seat where you drive them fine bays. Freedom ain't there! Rosie, I hear you cryin' as the master slips a coin in your hand when the mistress ain't lookin' — because you're pretty. Money ain't freedom! I live where the fire is out, where the bed is hard, and the bread is scarce, and maybe you work, and maybe you eat — and maybe you don't — the North."
But freedom is there! Do you want to go? I know you do --- freedom is where I'm gonna! Go with me --- through swamp, through fire, past pitter-rolllers with their bloodhounds and dogs, past danger, past even death. Freedom is there! Come with me!"

"SWING LOW, SWEET CHARITY" (6)

---Hilda Haynes

Do you think she was singing about the chariot of death? Not Harriet Tubman! Called at one time the most dangerous woman in America, with a price of $40,000 on her head, put up by the slave owners for her capture, going back and forth in the South to rescue slaves, a great conductor of the Underground Railroad to freedom, a nurse for the Union soldiers in the Civil War, a spy for the Union Armies, Harriet Tubman was singing about the chariot of freedom. But not all slaves had a Harriet Tubman to help them escape from slavery. Thousands ran away alone. This is a song about a slave named Riley who escaped "like a turkey through the corn," and about a bloodhound named Rattler who could not pick up his scent:

"OL' RILEY" (7)

---Huddie Ledbetter Memorial, Volume 2, side 2, band 4, PA 2014

No use calling Rattler, master. Old Riley's gone, long gone, North! What was slavery like --- that men rebelled against it, women risked their lives to escape, that upset the whole South, and eventually brought war to the nation?

"Once when I was trying to clean the house like Old Miss tell me, I finds a biscuit. It's so hungry I eat it, 'cause we never see such a thing as a biscuit. We just have corn bread and syrup, but when I eat that biscuit and she comes in and say, "Where is that biscuit?" I say, "Miss, I eat it 'cause I's so hungry." Then she grab that broom and start to beating me over the head with it and calling me low-down, and I guess I just clean lost my head, 'cause I knowed better than to fight her, if I knowed anything at all, but I started to fight her, and the driver, he comes in and he grab me and starts beating me with that cat-o' nine-tails, and he beats me till I fall to the floor nearly dead. He cut my back all to pieces."

"When a slave died, they bury him duh same day. They'd cart 'em down to duh graveyard on duh place and didn't even bury them deep 'nough so dat duh buzzards wouldn't come circling 'round lookin' for dere bodies. In them days they wasn't no time for mournin'."

"My papa was strong. He never had a licking in his life. But one day the master says, "Si, you got to have a whoppin," and my papa says, "I never had a whoppin' and you can't whop me." And the master says, "But I can kill you," and he shot my papa down. My mama took him in the cabin, and put him on a pallet --- and he died."

Frederick Douglass, in his autobiography, describes a beating which a Maryland slave-breaker gave him when he was a boy, in order to tame him for his master, who wanted his spirit broken:

"He rushel at me, tore off the few clothes I had on and proceeded to wear out on my back the heavy goads he had cut from a gum tree. Under his blows my blood flowed freely. Wails were left on my back as long as my little finger. During the first six months I was there I was whipped, either with sticks, or cow-skins, every week."

So no wonder Frederick Douglass said to himself:

"I'll run away. I have only one life to lose. It cannot be, I shall live and die a slave."

"OH FREEDOM"

Douglass was twenty-one when he ran away. He got a job in New England, began to make anti-slavery speeches, and eventually became one of the Great American abolitionists, founding a paper called "The North Star," writing and speaking for freedom. Strong societies of white abolitionists, including people of every faith, grew up in the Northern cities. Many escaped slaves worked with the white abolitionists. Some limited their activities to speaking and writing and fund raising in the North, while others, like Harriet Tubman, risked their lives to go into the South to help slaves escape.

"GO DOWN MOSES" (8)

---Clark Morgan

And there came a kind of Moses intending to lead the slaves to freedom. His name was John Brown, old and tall, white, with a flowing white beard, a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other. John Brown believed that God had called him to help free the Negro people. In a speech on the Fourth of July, 1852, Frederick Douglass said:

"It is not light that is needful, but fire. It is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake."

John Brown brought the thunder and the earthquake. A group of white men and Negroes together, 23 in number, one October night in 1859, marched on the government arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, intending to seize the arms and give them to the slaves. Some were killed and the rest were taken prisoners.
John Brown's uprising was a failure in so far as freeing the slaves then went. But it shook the empire of slavery to its foundations. It startled the world. It aroused the conscience of the nation. It gave courage to the bondmen and struck terror into their masters. John Brown was hanged. But it was only a matter of time before the whole of the Union Armies began to march for freedom. John Brown died on the scaffold, but his soul went marching on in song and story:

"JOHN BROWN'S BODY" (9)

-Hermes Nye, Ballads of the Civil War, side 1, band 4, PH 5004

Thousands believed that Brown was right and slavery was wrong, that Frederick Douglass was right and slavery wrong, Harriet Tubman was right to steal slaves away from their masters--and the masters were wrong. Then Abraham Lincoln became president, Julia Ward Howe wrote a song, and armies of men began to march for freedom:

BUGLE CALL (10)

Frederick Douglass called for Negro volunteers in aid of Lincoln:

"Go! Go quickly— and help fill up the first colored regiment from the North. Remember Denmark Vesey of Charleston; remember Nat Turner; remember John Brown."

Frederick Douglass sent his own two sons to war against the slave masters. Harriet Tubman became a nurse in the Union Armies, and later a spy behind the rebel lines. Colonel Robert Gould Shaw led the Negro troops at the assault of Fort Wagner. And the cannon boomed:

CANNON (11)

But when the camps were quiet in the lull between battles, through the darkness of night:

"BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC" (12)

-Hermes Nye, Ballads of the Civil War, side 1, band 4, PH 5004

And the Negro slave cabins, sometimes even before freedom came, the song came:

"BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC" (13)

-Sonny Terry

And in the ranks of the Union Armies, from tents pitched on a ridge in the starlit night:

"BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC" (14)

-Brownie Mc高峰期

And then, after many men had died on the battlefields, the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, put his name to a paper that said:

"On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free..."

"BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC"

Part II - THE GLORY

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn, with ever-returning spring.
Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you bring
Lilacs blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,
And thought of him I love.
O powerful western fallen star!
0 shades of night! 0 moody, tearful night!
0 great star disappear'd.....

So wrote Walt Whitman on the death of Abraham Lincoln, killed in Washington, a martyr to our freedom.

The Civil War was over, Lincoln was dead, Emancipation had begun, and the period historians call the Reconstruction. For a little while freedom was wonderful. There were Negro Representatives from the South in Congress. Negroes held city and state offices. Then the reaction set in. The vote was taken away from the freedmen in many states. The Ku Klux Klan began to ride. Jim Crow cars made their appearance on the railroads. Negro churches and schools were burned. White teachers were driven away from the South. Freed with nothing, the former slaves were poor and often hungry. The night was dark. But hope was there, and ambition, and the desire for learning, even though the road was hard:

"TROUBLE IN MIND" (15)

-Bertha Chippie Hill, Jazz, Volume 4, "Jazz Singers", side 2, band 5, FJ 2804

The blues! But the sun is going to shine in my back door someday..... Shortly before the Civil War began a boy was born in slavery. He stood with bare feet before the Big House to hear the Emancipation Proclamation read, and he saw the tears run down his mother's face at the
news of freedom. Then, still a child, he went to work in the salt pits of West Virginia. He wanted to learn to read and write. So did his mother. But there was no teacher for Negroes anywhere around, all by themselves, they poured over an old blue-backs speller at night by the firelight. Finally the colored people of the town raised enough money to send away and get themselves a teacher. Then the boy went to school, working in the early mornings before school in the salt mines, and again after school until dark came. On his first day in class, the teacher asked all the children their names — and each child but him had two names. He was ashamed to have only one name, Booker. So when his turn came, out of the clear blue sky, he added Washington — "Booker Washington," he said. Later he added his initials, T, — he gave himself a full name: Booker T. Washington.

When he was about fifteen Booker walked almost all the way to Hampton on the coast to study, arriving there with no money. But the kind white teachers accepted him, and he became their most famous student. After graduation, he himself founded a school, Tuskegee. And he became one of the great American Negroes, an educator and a diplomat — a kind of link between the freedmen and the powers that be — a counselor to Presidents, and the "official" leader of his race. At the Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta in 1895, addressing the largest crowd to whom a Negro had ever spoken in the United States, he made a famous speech that went in part like this:

"One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success...... Once a ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water! We die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water! Send us water!" ran up the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heading the injunction, cast down his bucket and it came up full of fresh sparkling water from the Amazon River.

To those of my race who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. No race can prosper till it learns there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem...... To those of the white race, I would repeat what I say to my own race, 'Cast down your bucket where you are.' Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity you have tested. Cast down your bucket among these people who have tilled your fields, cleared your forests, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth. Cast down your bucket among my people, help and encourage them to the education of head, hand, and heart. There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. This will bring to our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth."

Tuskegee became a model industrial school. Educators came from all over the world to study its methods of teaching people how to "let down their buckets" where they are, getting the most out of the soil and surroundings they live in. To Tuskegee Booker T. Washington brought a young agricultural chemist, George Washington Carver, who was to become just as famous as the founder of the school. Carver developed hundreds of new products from the peanut, the sweet potato, and the soil of Alabama itself — from paints to cooking oils, plastics to rubber compounds, peanut butter to linoleum. His discoveries enriched the whole South, indeed the whole world, not just the Negro people.

While Washington and Carver were working at Tuskegee, other Negroes all over the country were doing important things, too. Great Negro newspapers were being founded, colored insurance companies were coming into being, books were being written, and among other things, Jazz was on its way to being born:

"DALLAS RAG" (16)
-Dallas String Band, Jazz
Volume 1, "The South",
side 2, band 6, PJ 2801

Meanwhile in Dayton, Ohio, a colored elevator boy was writing poetry. His father and mother had been slaves. And it was young Paul Laurence Dunbar, as a child in school, who helped his mother learn to read and write. Dunbar grew up to publish many books, to lecture in England and to write Broadway shows. One of Dunbar's poems, famous at the turn of the century, is about a father coming home from a long day's work, playfully picking up his baby son, and saying:

"LITTLE BROWN BABY" (17)
-Paul Laurence Dunbar

Down in New Orleans a little brown boy in the band at the Walf's Home began to play on a battered old cornet the music that he had always heard. This lad played so beautifully that the people stopped on the streets to stand at the curb whenever his band passed. Later this boy from New Orleans became one of the great kings of jazz — Louis Armstrong:

"I'M NOT ROUGH" (18)
-Louis Armstrong, Jazz Volume 2,
"The Blues", side 2, band 6, PJ 2802
That's Louis! And he's playing a blues — the blues that were to have such a great influence on American music. In 1914, W. C. Handy wrote "The St. Louis Blues," now sung around the world. And in 1924 George Gershwin first performed his "Rhapsody in Blue" that has become an American classic. Its themes are derived from the Negro blues.

The blues are sad songs, but with an undercurrent of hope and determination in them. Thus it was with Negro life for a long time, with pools of prejudice and segregation at the doors, but with hope and determination always there. In 1905 a group of courageous colored men met at Niagara Falls to initiate a movement to do something about the many problems which colored people — and democracy — faced. Out of their conference eventually grew the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — the N.A.A.C.P., began to try to bring into being full democracy for all of the people in our land.

In 1925, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, to whom this recording is dedicated, established the Association for the Study of Negro History and Culture. Later he founded Negro History Week. This Association soon began to publish "The Journal of Negro History" and the "Negro History Bulletin," also Dr. Woodson's book, "The Negro in Our History." They brought out many valuable records of our past and present.

Following the First World War there were 70 lynchings within a year. In 1919, there were 25 bloody race riots in the United States. In some towns returning Negro soldiers were beaten and forced to discard their uniforms. Houses burned Negro homes. Segregation grew. In the violent Chicago race riot, millions of dollars' worth of property was destroyed and many people killed. Then it was that the poet, Claude McKay, wrote his famous sonnet:

"If We Must Die" (19)

Claude McKay

But for civilized men, violence should be no solution for their problems, so the N.A.A.C.P. kept working for equal enforcement of the laws of our Constitution, particularly for the colored citizen who did not have legal equality or full protection by the police. But little by little, we have seen these objectives come more and more into being in recent years, largely through the affirmation of the Supreme Court's upholding the great provisions of our Constitution. In those states where Negro tax money was spent for beautiful state universities to which Negroes could not go, the lawyers for the N.A.A.C.P. convinced the Supreme Court that this should not be, and the Court declared it wrong. Again, through the N.A.A.C.P., restrictive covenants denying colored people the right to buy homes anywhere were broken down. Segregation in interstate travel has been declared against the national interest. And, most recently, the right of all children to a full and equal education without discrimination has been upheld. The Urban League has had great effect in opening up Negro workers employment in plants and factories, and offices, and shops where formerly no colored people worked. The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, under the guidance for many years of Mary McLeod Bethune, has been a force for good in race relations, too. During the Second World War, Mrs. Bethune became an advisor to the President, and an internationally known speaker for the rights of all peoples.

Meanwhile, books by Negro writers began to be published in increasing numbers, and to be translated abroad. Our music, from jazz to the symphonies of William Grant Still, has been heard around the world. And Joe Louis became the heavyweight champion of the world. Jackie Robinson became a member of the Dodgers, and our music is still traveling. Here is Ella Fitzgerald:

"Organ Grinder's Swing" (20)

Ella Fitzgerald, Jazz Volume IV, "Jazz Singers," side 1, band 3, F32604.

In the United Nations, the highest ranking American official on the permanent staff is Dr. Ralph Bunche, a Negro, second only to the Secretary-General. Born in Detroit, educated in California and at Harvard University, Ralph Bunche is an expert on the affairs of minority groups and smaller nations. He was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950. Looking at the years ahead of us, Dr. Bunche says:

"A Humble Faith in the Kind of World We Are Longing for and Will Be Achieved. It Is the Kind of World the United Nations is Working Incidentally to Bring About. A World at Peace; A World in Which People Practice Tolerance and Live Together in Peace with One Another as Good Neighbors; A World in Which There Is Full Respect for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms for All Without Distinction as to Race, Sex, Language, or Religion; A World in Which All Men Shall Walk Together as Equals and with Dignity."

Ralph Bunche is speaking for all mankind. But, in speaking for mankind, he is speaking for the Negro in America, too. We have wanted those very things since the beginnings of our history in the United States. Our efforts to achieve them — and our very great achievements — will continue the story of — indeed the glory of — Negro history in America. All the way from the Negro pilot who was with Columbus to Ralph Bunche at the United Nations — from Esteban and the explorers with Salina to Henson who went to the North Pole with Perry — from the colonial poet, Phillis Wheatley to Margaret Walker and dozens of other excellent colored writers — from Crispus Attucks, the first man to fall for American independence to Dolley Miller, a hero of World War II, from the anonymous Negro singers on the slave ships to Marian Anderson, from the players of African drums to Duke Ellington and the hundreds of famous masters of music today — from Harriet Tubman to Mary McLeod Bethune — who speaks to us now in her own voice:

"Battle Hymn of the Republic" (23)

George McClellan Choral

The End.

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The End.