

# The Voice

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**EDITORIALS**

The views expressed in these columns are those of the writer and not necessarily a reflection of the policy of The Voice.—Pub.

## YOUR MOST HUMBLE SERVANT

By Shirley Graham, Reviewed by Etta Vee Barnes for ANP.

"He was born a free man in a country where freedom was a thing for which men died." Thus Shirley Graham introduces her reader to Benjamin Banneker "forgotten hero of America's early years."

Banneker is best remembered by some as the man who helped survey and plan the capital of the United States. By others, he is remembered for having constructed one of the first clocks to be made in this country. Still others may have heard that this scientist was the calculator of a series of almanacs issued during the years 1792-1802.

"YOUR MOST HUMBLE SERVANT" is fascinating reading. It is beautifully and sympathetically written. Miss Graham evidently did extensive research in preparing for the work. The reader is shown many facets of life during the paradoxical time of Benjamin Banneker.

This educated, genteel, Negro man was the cause of much perplexity during his time. He was thought a slave (tho' a well

dressed one) until he spoke, then his education and freedom were often resented by some whites. A similar attitude is noticed more than a hundred years later when Negroes don't live "up" to the stereotypes maintained by some groups.

Banneker was free, but he was not accepted by the revolutionists to help them fight for freedom from Britain. He was free, but he couldn't marry the woman he loved, for her owner would not sell her to him.

Here is fascinating reading, vivid writing. The action takes place more than a hundred years ago, but its appeal is as current as this morning's paper.

Shirley Graham's fame is spreading as biographer of distinguished Negroes. Her biography of Frederick Douglass, "There Was Once a Slave" won for her a Guggenheim fellowship and the Julian Messner award for the best book combating intolerance in America. Others who are among the great whose lives she has portrayed in her writing are George Washington Carver, Paul Robeson and Phillis Wheatley.

## MGM to Pair La Vaughan, Eckstine in Special Disc Releases; to Invade Long Playing Field Also

NEW YORK. (ANP). Leave it to Leo, the magnificent G-rowling M-ascot, to pull a double-barreled coup on the platter front.

Last week, the MGM playboy announced what amounts to being one of the biggest and best treats of 1950—the teaming of the Great Mr. B. and La Vaughan (with the magic voice) in a series of special releases. At the same time, MGM General Manager Frank B. Walker said the firm would begin the release of 33 1/2 long-playing microgroove records on March 1.

Sarah, who recently came into the MGM fold, has come a long way from being a church choir singer in Newark, N. J. Just a few short years ago, she embarked upon her career as a popular singer by winning an amateur contest. Now hailed as one of the truly great song stylists, she has taken every major popu-

larity poll as America's No. 1 girl singer during the past two years. Her latest for MGM are two re-issued spirituals THE LORD'S PRAYER and SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A MOTHERLESS CHILD.

The other half of the duet is the man voted "outstanding male vocalist of 1949—Billy Eckstine. Need more be said—except perhaps that the Eckstine voice may be heard six times in a special album recently released. Tunes in this set are "Someone To Watch Over Me," "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," "My Old Flame," "I Don't Want to Cry Any More," "You Go To My Head," and "Over the Rainbow."

About the LP, first releases in this field will be four of MGM's most popular albums formerly released on standard 78 rpm shellac and Metrolite platters.



by JAMES C. OLSON, Superintendent STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When winter locked the Missouri river in ice, the pioneers of territorial Nebraska lost their most important outlet to the world—the steamboat. Yet the same ice which closed off this means of transportation opened up another, for only when the Big Muddy was frozen solid did Nebraska territory have a bridge to Iowa.

The pioneers made good use of this natural bridge, and at times a steady stream of wagons would be seen making their way between Iowa and Nebraska. The ice bridge assumed particular importance after the Chicago and North Western Railway was completed to Council Bluffs in 1867.

And before the Union Pacific bridge was completed in 1873, the railroad at times ran trains over a bridge built on ice. The Union Pacific Museum in Omaha has a photo of such a bridge in use.

Naturally, the condition of the ice was an important item of local news and the early territorial newspapers frequently mentioned it.

The Brownville Advertiser of December 30, 1858, took note of the river as follows: "The weather, for ten days past, has been exceedingly mild. On southern exposures the frost is entirely out of the ground. The ice in the river is yet stationer; there has been no venturing over it, however, for two days past, during which time we have been without any eastern mails—in fact, without any from any direction."

Two weeks later, the situation had further deteriorated, and on January 13, 1859, the Advertiser reported: "One of Hoadley Muir's lumber teams, in crossing the river on Tuesday, broke through the ice: one of the oxen was drowned before it could be gotten out. Last evening a team belonging to Mr. Dunder, broke through the ice a short distance above this city. One horse was rescued; the other, together with the wagon was lost. The Missouri bridge is rather dangerous just now. Be careful."

Other years, though, were colder. On December 15, 1864, the Advertiser announced: "The river at this place is spanned by a firm and substantial bridge of ice, over which heavily loaded wagons are constantly crossing."

Again, on January 19, 1865, the Nebraska City News informed its readers: "The river presents a lively appearance at present. The continual crossing and recrossing of teams, the working of the ice men, and the sport of skating with the boys, gives the 'Old Muddy' a very animated appearance. The bridge is safe and solid and promises to last for some time to come. Wood can now be bought at reasonable figures."

## Sports Questions and Answers

By Al Moses

NEW YORK. (ANP). Readers bear with us, for it is question and answer time again:

Dear Al Moses:

I say that it was in San Francisco where Stanley Ketchel made his great stand against heavyweight champion Jack Johnson. Would the year be 1908? Didn't Ketchel stay ten rounds?—Virgil Hayes, NYC.

(A) The affair was in Colma, Calif., in October, 1909. Ketchel was kayoed (for 15 minutes) by 210-pound Johnson in the 12th round after the clashing white fighter, who scaled 40 pounds less, dropped "Lil Artha" for a nine count in this round, which was the final one.

(Q) In his first two seasons in the majors how many stolen bases were credited to Brooklyn's Jackie Robinson?—L. H., Troy, N. Y.

(A) 51 bases.

(Q) Was Roy Campanella a great athlete before joining up with Negro leagues? Has he children?—Clement Whittaker, Barrow, Fla.

(A) The bullet-pegging Brooklyn backstop was a four-letter athlete while attending Simon Gratz high school in Philadelphia. The Campanellas have four kiddies, namely, two boys, David and Roy, Jr., and two girls Beverly and Joy.

(Q) See where good-looking Johnny Bratton suffered a fracture of his broken jaw by Beau Jack in the Ike Williams fight which you predicted would result disastrously for deaf mute Hairston's conqueror. Do you think Bratton should continue boxing Alvin?—Tony Sills, Baltimore, Md.

(A) No.

(Q) What did you think of the guest who threw a right-handed punch at Branch Rickey, Dodgers prexy, after Rickey's Hotel Astor speech on the FEPC? What Negro sports figures were in attendance?—Eugene Hampton, NYC.

(A) The unidentified assailant was entirely wrong as I saw it. Ray Robinson, Jackie Robinson, and a number of colored writers attended the dinner most of whom considered Rickey's "tolerance plea" eloquent and most timely. However, you can't please all the people all the time you know, Gene.

(Q) Do you think any Negro kegler can bowl well enough to keep Our World magazine from losing \$1,000 should champion Johnny Small, ABC king, accept the challenge Al?—Leroy Stokes, New Haven, Conn.

(A) Only the three screened by Major Robinson, Our World sports researcher, have a chance. They are Jack Marshall, Bill

Rhodman and William Hampton, all from Chicago.

(Q) How does this Riley, whom Willie Pep all but murdered recently, compare with Sandy Saddler, ex-champion. Why don't they meet?—G. H. L., Detroit, Mich.

(A) Because Saddler's manager, Charlie Johnson, was stupid enough not to protect his fighter in writing as is the legal way. Saddler would kayo Riley just as easily. He is Pep's only real threat.

(Q) George Rhoden, West Indian middle distancer, and Herbert McKenley, also a Britisher, seem to have recaptured the form that made them unbeatable. Who is the better of the two?

(A) Rhoden seems to be better than McKenley (this indoor season) over the 600.

Considering McKenley's time (77:7) for winning the 500 at the K. of C. games Saturday night two weeks ago at Brooklyn's 160th Regiment armory, McKenley would win at 300, 400 meters—440 and 500 yards.

(Q) What was the name of the team (Catholic college) that first elevated a Negro basketball player to its roster, and have there been any more additions to that said school on the sports front?—Pat McQueen, 8th Ave. Butchers Assn, Harlem, N. Y. C.

(A) Levi Bough, a real great player first joined St. Francis college's basketball squad in '49. This year the Brooklyn Terriers, as St. Francis college is known to sportsmen, boasts another Negro potential star (freshman squad) in Vern Stokes, ex-Commerce high school courteer of outstanding ability in PSAL circles.

(Q) How many CIAA basketball championships has my friend John McLendon, North Carolina State's peerless basketball coach won during the ten years he has been there?—F. D. C., East Orange, N. J.

(A) 202 victories in 252 starting games. Born in Kansas, "John B." developed squads that dominated the CIAA in 1941-43-44-46-47-49. State's teams were in the second slot under his guidance in 1940-42-45.

(Q) Would Jack Blackburn have whipped Ray Robinson at the time Blackburn was licking god 175 and 2-- pounders?—Guy Wood, New Dorp, Staten Is.

(A) I have no way of knowing but I should think he could have, for Jack Blackburn was as formidable a boxer as he was a trainer. At the latter job he was plenty good.

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