

Fences by August Wilson

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Actors Packet compiled by Jacqueline Lawler of [JLaw Presents](#)

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Playwright Profile

August Wilson, Theater's Poet of Black America, Is Dead at 60

CHARLES ISHERWOOD OCT. 3, 2005 – The New York Times

August Wilson, who chronicled the African-American experience in the 20th century in a series of plays that will stand as a landmark in the history of black culture, of American literature and of Broadway theater, died yesterday at a hospital in Seattle. He was 60 and lived in Seattle.

The cause was liver cancer, said his assistant, Dena Levitin. Mr. Wilson's cancer was diagnosed in the summer, and his illness was made public last month.



"Radio Golf," the last of the 10 plays that constitute Mr. Wilson's majestic theatrical cycle, opened at the Yale Repertory Theater last spring and has subsequently been produced in Los Angeles. It was the concluding chapter in a spellbinding story that began more than two decades ago, when Mr. Wilson's play "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" had its debut at the same theater, in 1984, and announced the arrival of a major talent, fully matured.

Reviewing the play's Broadway premiere for The New York Times, Frank Rich wrote that in "Ma Rainey," Mr. Wilson "sends the entire history of black America crashing down upon our heads."

"This play is a searing inside account of what white racism does to its victims," Mr. Rich continued, "and it floats on the same authentic artistry as the blues music it celebrates."

In the years since "Ma Rainey" appeared, Mr. Wilson collected innumerable accolades for his work, including seven New York Drama Critics' Circle awards, a Tony Award, for 1987's "Fences," and two Pulitzer Prizes, for "Fences" and "The Piano Lesson," from 1990.

"He was a giant figure in American theater," the playwright Tony Kushner said yesterday. "Heroic is not a word one uses often without embarrassment to describe a writer or playwright, but the diligence and ferocity of effort behind the creation of his body of work is really an epic story."

"The playwright's voice in American culture is perceived as having been usurped by television and film, but he reasserted the power of drama to describe large social forces, to explore the meaning of an entire people's experience in American history. For all the magic in his plays, he was writing in the grand tradition of Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller, the politically engaged, direct, social realist drama. He was reclaiming ground for the theater that most people thought had been abandoned."

To honor his achievements, Broadway's Virginia Theater is to be renamed the August Wilson Theater. The new marquee is to be unveiled Oct. 17.

With the exceptions of "Radio Golf" and "Jitney," a play first produced in St. Paul in 1981 and reworked and presented Off Broadway in 2000, all of the plays in the cycle were ultimately seen on Broadway, the sometimes treacherous but all-important commercial marketplace for American theater. Although some were not financial successes there, "Fences," which starred James Earl Jones, set a record for a nonmusical Broadway production when it grossed \$11 million in a single year, and ran for 525 performances. Together, Mr. Wilson's plays logged nearly 1,800 performances on Broadway in a little more than two decades, and they have been seen in more than 2,000 separate productions, amateur and professional.

Each of the plays in the cycle was set in a different decade of the 20th century, and all but "Ma Rainey" took place in the impoverished but vibrant African-American Hill District of Pittsburgh, where Mr. Wilson was born. In 1978, before he had become a successful writer, Mr. Wilson moved to St. Paul, and in 1994 he settled in Seattle, where he died. But his spiritual home remained the rough streets of the Hill District, where as a young man he sat in thrall to the voices of African-American working men and women. Years later, he would discern in their stories, their jokes and their squabbles the raw material for an art that would celebrate the sustaining richness of the black American experience, bruising as it often was.

In his work, Mr. Wilson depicted the struggles of black Americans with uncommon lyrical richness, theatrical density and emotional heft, in plays that gave vivid voices to people on the frayed margins of life: cabdrivers and maids, garbage men and side men and petty criminals. In bringing to the popular American stage the gritty specifics of the lives of his poor, troubled, plagued and sometimes powerfully embittered black characters, Mr. Wilson also described universal truths about the struggle for dignity, love, security and happiness in the face of often overwhelming obstacles.

In dialogue that married the complexity of jazz to the emotional power of the blues, he also argued eloquently for the importance of black Americans' honoring the pain and passion in their history, not burying it to smooth the road to assimilation. For Mr. Wilson, it was imperative for black Americans to draw upon the moral and spiritual nobility of their ancestors' struggles to inspire their own ongoing fight against the legacies of white racism.

In an article about his cycle for *The Times* in 2000, Mr. Wilson wrote, "I wanted to place this culture onstage in all its richness and fullness and to demonstrate its ability to sustain us in all areas of human life and endeavor and through profound moments of our history in which the larger society has thought less of us than we have thought of ourselves."

Mr. Wilson did not establish the chronological framework of his cycle until after the work had begun, and he skipped around in time. Although "Radio Golf," the last play to be written, was set in the 1990's, "Gem of the Ocean," which immediately preceded it in production (it came to Broadway in the fall of 2004), was set in the first decade of the 20th century.

His first success, "Ma Rainey," which took place in a Chicago recording studio in 1927, depicted the turbulent relationship between a rich but angry blues singer and a brilliant trumpet player who also wants to succeed in the white-dominated world of commercial music. From there Mr. Wilson turned to the 1950's, with "Fences," his most popular play, about a garbage man and former baseball player in the Negro leagues who clashes with his son over the boy's intention to pursue a career in sports. His next play, "Joe Turner's Come and Gone," considered by many to

be the finest of his works, was a quasi-mystical drama set in a boardinghouse in 1911. It told of a man newly freed from illegal servitude searching to find the woman who abandoned him.

The other plays in Mr. Wilson's theatrical opus are "The Piano Lesson," set in 1936, in which a brother and sister argue over the fate of the piano that symbolizes the family's anguished past history; "Two Trains Running," concerning an ex-con re-ordering his life in 1969; "Seven Guitars," about a blues musician on the brink of a career breakthrough in 1948; "Jitney," a collage of the everyday doings at a gypsy cab company in 1977; and "King Hedley II," in which another troubled ex-con searches for redemption as the Hill District crumbles under the onslaught of Reaganomics in 1985.

As the cycle developed, Mr. Wilson knit the plays together through overlapping themes and characters. Many of the primary conflicts concern the dueling prerogatives of characters poised between the traumatizing past and the uncertain future. The central character in "Radio Golf" is the grandson of a character in "Gem of the Ocean." The guiding spirit of the cycle came to be Aunt Esther, a woman said to have lived for more than three centuries, who was referred to in several plays and who appeared at last in "Gem." She embodied the continuity of spiritual and moral values that Mr. Wilson felt was crucial to the black experience, uniting the descendants of slaves to their African ancestors.

A Fruitful Partnership

Mr. Wilson's career was closely linked with that of Lloyd Richards, who became the first black director to work on Broadway when he staged the first play written by a black woman to be produced on Broadway, Lorraine Hansberry's "Raisin in the Sun," in 1959. Ms. Hansberry's warmhearted but clear-eyed play about the struggles of a black family to move up the economic ladder in Chicago shares with Mr. Wilson's work a focus on the daily lives of black Americans, relegating the oppressions of white culture to the background.

Mr. Richards, the dean of the Yale School of Drama and the artistic director of Yale Repertory Theater from 1979 to 1991, was also the head of the Eugene O'Neill Playwrights Conference in Connecticut when Mr. Wilson submitted "Ma Rainey" to the program. ("Jitney," begun in 1979, had been submitted and rejected twice.) When it was accepted, Mr. Richards helped refine the work of the then-unknown writer and first produced and directed it at Yale Rep, where its success instantly established Mr. Wilson as an American playwright of singular talent, perhaps the greatest American stage poet since Tennessee Williams.

Mr. Richards would help shape and direct the next five plays in Mr. Wilson's cycle, ending with "Seven Guitars," which arrived on Broadway in 1996. Each play was refined through a series of productions at Yale and other regional theaters before moving to New York. (Most grew significantly shorter along the way: Mr. Wilson's work was most often criticized for excessive length and sometimes belaboring its ideas. In a celebratory review Mr. Rich wrote when "Joe Turner" opened on Broadway, he nevertheless noted, "As usual with Mr. Wilson, the play overstates its thematic exposition in an overlong first act.")

This formula replicated in a noncommercial arena the tryout circuit that had once been commonplace for plays aiming for Broadway, a method of development that ran aground as the costs of theater skyrocketed. The process, which also involved Mr. Wilson's longtime producer, Benjamin Mordecai, the managing director of Yale Rep during much of Mr. Richards's tenure,

was important in defining a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship between the country's not-for-profit regional theaters and its Broadway-centered commercial establishment. (Mr. Mordecai, who was involved with all of Mr. Wilson's plays in one capacity or another, died earlier this year.) More significantly, the collaboration between Mr. Richards and Mr. Wilson was the most artistically fruitful in American theatrical history since Elia Kazan's association with Arthur Miller and Williams.

An Atypical Education

Mr. Wilson was born Frederick August Kittel on April 27, 1945, in Pittsburgh. He was named for his father, a white German immigrant who worked as a baker, drank too much and had a fiery temperament his son would inherit. He was mostly an absence in Mr. Wilson's childhood, and it was his African-American mother, Daisy Wilson, who instilled in her six children a strong sense of pride and a limited tolerance for injustice. (She once turned down a washing machine she had won in a contest when the company sponsoring the event tried to fob off a secondhand item on her.) Mr. Wilson legally adopted her last name when he set out to become a writer.

Eventually Mrs. Wilson divorced Mr. Wilson's father and remarried, and the family moved to a largely white suburb. As the only black student in his class at a Roman Catholic high school, Mr. Wilson gained an awareness of the grinding ugliness of racism that would inform his work. "There was a note on my desk every single day," he told *The New Yorker* in 2001. "It said, 'Go home, nigger.'" Mr. Wilson attended two more schools but gave up on formal education when a teacher accused him of plagiarizing a paper on Napoleon. At 15, he chose to continue - but essentially to begin - his education on his own, spending his days at the local library absorbing books by the dozen.

Mr. Wilson acquired an equally valuable education outside the library walls, hanging out and listening to the Hill District denizens pass the time on stoops, in coffee shops and at Pat's Place, a local cigar store. Eventually the voices he absorbed while hanging loose with retirees and sharpies in his 20's would re-emerge in his plays, sometimes with little artistic tampering.

Mr. Wilson acquired his first typewriter with \$20 he had earned writing a term paper for one of his sisters at college. But he preferred to write in public places like bars and restaurants and had a particular affinity for composing on cocktail napkins. Only when he settled into his career as a playwright did he become comfortable writing at home, in longhand on yellow notepads.

By the time he was 20, Mr. Wilson had decided he was a poet. He submitted poems to Harper's and other magazines while supporting himself with odd jobs, and began dressing in a style that raised eyebrows among his peers. While most of the young men of the time were dressing down, Mr. Wilson was always meticulously turned out in jackets, ties and white shirts selected from thrift shops. Later he would be known for his trademark porter's cap.

Inspired by the Black Power movement then gaining momentum, Mr. Wilson and a group of fellow poets founded a theater workshop and an art gallery, and in 1968 Mr. Wilson and his friend Rob Penny founded the Black Horizons on the Hill Theater. Mr. Wilson was the director and sometimes an actor, too, although he had no experience, and learned about directing by checking a how-to manual out of the library. The company was without a performance space and staged shows in the auditoriums of local elementary schools. Tickets were sold, for 50 cents a pop, by chatting up people on the streets right before a performance.

But Mr. Wilson's aspirations as an author were still being channeled into poetry; after an abortive effort to write a play for his theater, he set aside playwriting for almost a decade. He came home to drama almost by happenstance. Mr. Wilson moved to St. Paul in 1978 and started working at the Science Museum of Minnesota. His task: adapting Native American folk tales into children's plays.

Homesick for the Hill District and growing more comfortable with the playwriting process, he started channeling the Hill voices haunting his memories as a way of keeping the connection alive. "Jitney," begun in 1979, was the result. It was produced in Pittsburgh in 1982, the same year that "Ma Rainey" was accepted at the O'Neill Center. (Mr. Wilson's first professional production was of a prior play adapted from a series of his poems, "Black Bart and the Sacred Hills," staged by St. Paul's Penumbra Theater.)

In a 1999 interview in *The Paris Review*, Mr. Wilson cited his major influences as being the "four B's": the blues was the "primary" influence, followed by Jorge Luis Borges, the playwright Amiri Baraka and the painter Romare Bearden. He analyzed the elements each contributed to his art: "From Borges, those wonderful gaucho stories from which I learned that you can be specific as to a time and place and culture and still have the work resonate with the universal themes of love, honor, duty, betrayal, etc. From Amiri Baraka, I learned that all art is political, although I don't write political plays. From Romare Bearden I learned that the fullness and richness of everyday life can be rendered without compromise or sentimentality." He added two more B's, both African-American writers, to the list: the playwright Ed Bullins and James Baldwin.

Although his plays achieved their success in the white-dominated theater world, Mr. Wilson remained devoted to the alternative culture of black Americans and mourned its gradual decline as the black middle class grew and adopted the values of its white counterpart. He once lamented that at convocation ceremonies at black universities, the music would be Bach, not gospel.

When a Hollywood studio optioned "Fences," Mr. Wilson caused a ruckus by insisting on a black director. In a 1990 article published in *Spin* magazine and later excerpted in *The Times*, he said, "I am not carrying a banner for black directors. I think they should carry their own. I am not trying to get work for black directors. I am trying to get the film of my play made in the best possible way. I declined a white director not on the basis of race but on the basis of culture. White directors are not qualified for the job. The job requires someone who shares the specifics of the culture of black Americans." (The film was not made.)

He was a firm believer in the importance of maintaining a robust black theater movement, a viewpoint that also inspired a public controversy when Mr. Wilson clashed with the prominent theater critic and arts administrator Robert Brustein in a series of exchanges in the pages of *American Theater* magazine and *The New Republic*, and later in a formal debate between the two staged at Manhattan's Town Hall in 1997, moderated by Anna Deavere Smith.

The contretemps began when Mr. Wilson delivered a keynote address to a national theater conference in which he lamented that among the more than 60 members of the League of Regional Theaters, only one was dedicated to the work of African-Americans. He also denounced as absurd the idea of colorblind casting, asserting that an all-black "Death of a Salesman" was irrelevant because the play was "conceived for white actors as an investigation of the specifics of

white culture." Mr. Brustein referred to Mr. Wilson's call for an independent black theater movement as "self-segregation."

At the sold-out debate at Town Hall the friendly antagonists essentially restated their positions publicly. "Never is it suggested that playwrights like David Mamet or Terrence McNally are limiting themselves to whiteness," Mr. Wilson said. "The idea that we are trying to escape from the ghetto of black culture is insulting."

A Legacy of Stars

Mr. Wilson was dedicated to writing for the theater, and resisted many offers from Hollywood. (His only concession: adapting "The Piano Lesson" for television.) He didn't even see any movies for a stretch of 10 years.

But the list of well-known television and film actors who first came to prominence in one of Mr. Wilson's plays is lengthy. Charles S. Dutton scored his first success as the trumpeter Levee in the original production of "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," a role he reprised nearly 20 years later when the play was revived on Broadway in 2003, with Whoopi Goldberg in the title role. S. Epatha Merkerson, now known as Lt. Anita Van Buren on "Law & Order," appeared opposite Mr. Dutton in "The Piano Lesson" on Broadway.

Other notable actors who appeared in one or more of Mr. Wilson's plays include Angela Bassett, Roscoe Lee Browne, Phylicia Rashad, Courtney B. Vance, Laurence Fishburne, Lisa Gay Hamilton, Keith David, Viola Davis, Delroy Lindo, Ruben Santiago-Hudson, Leslie Uggams and Brian Stokes Mitchell.

Mr. Wilson's first two marriages, to Brenda Burton and Judy Oliver, ended in divorce. He is survived by his wife, Constanza Romero, a Colombian-born costume designer he met when she worked on "The Piano Lesson"; and two daughters, Sakina Ansari (from his first marriage) and Azula Carmen Wilson (from his third). He is also survived by his siblings Freda Ellis, Linda Jean Kittel, Richard Kittel, Donna Conley and Edwin Kittel.

Mr. Wilson did not write plays with specific political agendas, but he did believe art could subtly effect social change. And while his essential aim was to evoke and ennoble the collective African-American experience, he also believed his work could help rewrite some of those rules.

"I think my plays offer (white Americans) a different way to look at black Americans," he told *The Paris Review*. "For instance, in 'Fences' they see a garbageman, a person they don't really look at, although they see a garbageman every day. By looking at Troy's life, white people find out that the content of this black garbageman's life is affected by the same things - love, honor, beauty, betrayal, duty. Recognizing that these things are as much part of his life as theirs can affect how they think about and deal with black people in their lives."

In describing his own work, Mr. Wilson could be analytical or offhand. A soft-spoken man whose affability masked a sometimes short temper, he was a connoisseur of the art of storytelling offstage and on. Here's the story behind all his characters' stories, in his own words: "I once wrote a short story called 'The Best Blues Singer in the World' and it went like this: 'The streets that Balboa walked were his own private ocean, and Balboa was drowning.' End of story. That

says it all. Nothing else to say. I've been rewriting that same story over and over again. All my plays are rewriting that same story. I'm not sure what it means, other than life is hard."

The Blues

August Wilson is often said to write with a musicality to his language that mimics The Blues. [PBS](#) Describes the Blues:

"On a lonely night in 1903, [W.C. Handy](#), the African American leader of a dance orchestra, got stuck waiting for a train in the hamlet of Tutwiler, Mississippi. With hours to kill and nowhere else to go, Handy fell asleep on a hard wooden bench at the empty depot. When he awoke, a ragged black man was sitting next to him, singing about "goin' where the Southern cross the Dog" and sliding a knife against the strings of a guitar. The musician repeated the line three times and answered with his instrument.

Intrigued, Handy asked what the line meant. It turned out that the tracks of the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad, which locals called the Yellow Dog, crossed the tracks of the Southern Railroad in the town of Moorehead, where the musician was headed, and he'd put it into a song.

It was, Handy later said, "the weirdest music I had ever heard."

That strange music was the blues, although few people knew it by that name. At the turn of the century, the blues was still slowly emerging from Texas, Louisiana, the Piedmont region, and the Mississippi Delta; its roots were in various forms of African American slave songs such as field hollers, work songs, spirituals, and country string ballads. Rural music that captured the suffering, anguish-and hopes-of 300 years of slavery and tenant farming, the blues was typically played by roaming solo musicians on acoustic guitar, piano, or harmonica at weekend parties, picnics, and juke joints. Their audience was primarily made up of agricultural laborers, who danced to the propulsive rhythms, moans, and slide guitar.

In 1912, Handy helped raise the public profile of the blues when he became one of the first people to transcribe and publish sheet music for a blues song—"Memphis Blues." Eight years later, listeners snapped up more than a million copies of "Crazy Blues" by [Mamie Smith](#), the first black female to record a blues vocal. This unexpected success alerted record labels to the potential profit of "race records," and singers such as [Ma Rainey](#) and [Bessie Smith](#) began to introduce the blues to an even wider audience through their recordings.

As the African American community that created the blues began moving away from the South to escape its hardscrabble existence and Jim Crow laws, blues music evolved to reflect new circumstances. After thousands of African American farm workers migrated north to cities like Chicago and Detroit during both World Wars, many began to view traditional blues as an unwanted reminder of their humble days toiling in the fields; they wanted to hear music that reflected their new urban surroundings. In response, transplanted blues artists such as Muddy Waters, who had lived and worked on a Mississippi plantation before riding the rails to Chicago in 1943, swapped acoustic guitars for electric ones and filled out their sound with drums,

harmonica, and standup bass. This gave rise to an electrified blues sound with a stirring beat that drove people onto the dance floor and pointed the way to rhythm and blues and rock and roll.

In the 1940s and early 1950s, the electrified blues reached its zenith on the radio, but began to falter as listeners turned to the fresh sounds of rock and roll and soul. In the early 1960s, however, as bands like [The Rolling Stones](#) began to perform covers of [Muddy Waters](#) and [Howlin' Wolf](#), aspiring white blues musicians in the United Kingdom helped resuscitate the genre. In the process, they created gritty rock and roll that openly displayed its blues influences and promoted the work of their idols, who soon toured England to wide acclaim. Although happy to be in demand as performers again, many veteran blues musicians were bitterly disappointed by seeing musicians such as Led Zeppelin get rich by copying the sound of African American blues artists, many of whom were struggling to survive.

Today, 100 years after WC Handy first heard it, the blues no longer commands the attention it once did; to many young listeners, traditional blues—if not contemporary blues—may sound as strange as it did to Handy. But if they listen closely, they'll discover a rich, powerful history of people who helped build America and created one of the most influential genres of popular music.”

These links will also lead you to a comprehensive documentary of Blues music. I would recommend taking a listen, as they can give you an idea of the look and feel of the start of the Blues, and how they may have influenced Troy. [Part One](#), [Part Two](#).

Baseball and the Negro League

African-Americans began to play baseball in the late 1800s on military teams, college teams, and company teams. They eventually found their way to professional teams with white players. Moses Fleetwood Walker and Bud Fowler were among the first to participate. However, racism and “Jim Crow” laws would force them from these teams by 1900. Thus, black players formed their own units, “barnstorming” around the country to play anyone who would challenge them.

In 1920, an organized league structure was formed under the guidance of Andrew “Rube” Foster—a former player, manager, and owner for the Chicago American Giants. In a meeting held at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Mo., Foster and a few other Midwestern team owners joined to form the Negro National League. Soon, rival leagues formed in Eastern and Southern states, bringing the thrills and innovative play of black baseball to major urban centers and rural country sides in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. The Leagues maintained a high level of professional skill and became centerpieces for economic development in many black communities.

In 1945, Major League Baseball’s Brooklyn Dodgers recruited Jackie Robinson from the Kansas City Monarchs. Robinson now becomes the first African-American in the modern era to play on a Major League roster.

While this historic event was a key moment in baseball and civil rights history, it prompted the decline of the Negro Leagues. The best black players were now recruited for the Major Leagues, and black fans followed.

The last Negro Leagues teams folded in the early 1960s, but their legacy lives on through the surviving players and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum.

More information on the Negro Leagues can be [found here](#).

Historical Context

Fences takes place during two specific years: 1957 and 1965. A lot changes in American history during those two times. The rest of the Actor's Packet will address some specific information, but here is an overview:

1957:

Cost of Living

Average Cost of new house \$12,220.00

Average Monthly Rent \$90.00

Average Yearly Wages \$4,550.00

Cost of a gallon of Gas 24 cents

Bacon per pound 60 cents

Eggs per dozen 28 cents

Hi Fi Portable Record Player \$79.95

Children's Shoes \$5.95

1957 saw the continued growth of bigger taller tail fins on new cars and more lights, bigger with more powerful engines and an average car sold for \$2,749. The Soviet Union launched the first space satellite Sputnik 1. Movies included "Twelve Angry Men" and "The Bridge Over the River Kwai", and TV showed "Perry Mason" and "Maverick" for the first time. The music continued to be Rock and Roll with artists like "Little Richard". The popular toys were Slinkys and Hula Hoops. The continued growth of the use of credit was shown by the fact that 2/3 of all new cars were bought on credit. Some of the areas that would cause problems later were starting to show South Vietnam is attacked by Viet Cong Guerrillas and Troops are sent to Arkansas to enforce anti segregation laws

World --- Asian Flu Pandemic

Asian Flu pandemic claims over 150,000 lives world wide

More Information and Timeline For The Asian Flu Pandemic

1. Caused by mutation in wild ducks combining with a pre-existing human strain of Flu
2. 1956 Spring Avian influenza Pandemic originates in China Category 2 (0.1% to 0.5% population affected)
- 3a. 1957 The Final Death toll in the US thought to be close to 70,000

3b. World wide the death toll thought to be in excess of 1 million

Webmasters Note, You will often hear Flu Epidemics / Pandemics described with the name of a species of animal for example Bird or Avian, Swine, etc. The reason these type of influenza (Flu) are so dangerous is because when a particular strain for example H5N1 of influenza virus adapts to effect both humans and birds the human body has not previously been exposed and does not possess the antibodies required to fight the particular strain of influenza. In the case of Avian Flu additional complications are caused because of the world wide migration of birds which causes the spread of the strain quickly around the world.

Russia --- First artificial satellite Sputnik 1

USSR launches Sputnik 1 on inaugurating the **Space Age and the Space Race**

More Information and Timeline For The Beginning Of The Space Race

- 1944 September 8th Germany begins using the V2 Guided missile rocket technology against Britain
- 1957 August 21st The USSR Launches the first Intercontinental ballistic missile
- October 4th The USSR launches the First artificial satellite Sputnik
- November 3rd The USSR launches the Second artificial satellite Sputnik 2 carrying the First animal in space (a dog named Laika)
- 1958 January 31st The United States Launches the First US satellite Explorer 1
- Over the next few years the USSR and The United States continued to advance the technology, but the crowning glory of this period of history has to be the successful landing of a man on the moon by the United States on July 20th 1969 when Neil Alden Armstrong becomes the first person to set foot on the Moon.

Sputnik 1 is often quoted as the beginning of the Space Race, but in all truthfulness the Space Race began in Germany in World War II, and following the defeat of Germany, American, Soviet and British governments all gained access to the V-2's technical designs and the German scientists responsible for creating the Guided missile rocket technology (Used in World War II, V-1 flying bomb nicknamed the Doodlebug and the V-2 rocket which was a single stage ballistic missile used against Great Britain) The technology provided the beginnings of mans quest for space exploration.

United States Little Rock Nine

The National Guard on the order of Governor Orval Faubus is used to prevent nine African American students from entering Central High School in Little Rock on September 4th and shortly after Federal troops charge defiant protesters with fixed bayonets to ensure nine African American Students can attend Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas.

More Information and Timeline for the Little Rock Nine.

- During September of 1957 nine African-American students enrolled at Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas, a formerly all-white school, in what was one of the most important moments during the early Civil Rights Movement.

- Known as the "Little Rock Nine," Carlotta Walls, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Gloria Ray, Minnijean Brown, Terrence Roberts, Melba Patillo, Thelma Mothers, and Jefferson Thomas were encouraged by the Arkansas NAACP to be the first determined students to integrate the school.
- The nine students attempted to enter the school on the first day of classes on September 4th but were blocked by the National Guard as ordered by the Governor, Orval Faubus.
- Later in the month, the National Guard was removed and the nine students attempted to enter the school again while escorted by police and were successful in entering the building. However, violence broke out within the crowd of protesters upon their entrance and the students were told to leave as the school administrators were worried for their safety. 5. Two days later President Eisenhower ordered federal troops to escort the students and they were able to complete their first full day of school on September 25th.
- Of the nine, eight students successfully completed their first year of school at the newly desegregated Little Rock Central High School. They faced harassment and attacks throughout the year. Minnijean Brown had been expelled during the year after she had retaliated against an attack by white students.
- Ernest Green became the first black student to graduate from Little Rock Central High School in May of 1958.
- After the school year had ended the Governor of Arkansas ordered Little Rock high schools to be closed as the state grappled with the issue of integration. The schools remained closed until August of 1959.

Civil rights Act of 1957 – First Civil Rights legislation since Reconstruction (post Civil War). The new act established the first Civil Rights section of the Justice Department and empowered federal prosecutors to work against interference with the right to vote, and to investigate discrimination.

Race Relations in the Age of Communism

Prologue: Selected Articles

Winter 1999, Vol. 31, No. 4

Race Relations in the United States and American Cultural and Informational Programs in Ghana, 1957-1966

By Kenneth W. Heger



At the stroke of midnight, March 6, 1957, Kwame Nkrumah proclaims Ghana's independence. (NARA, 306-RNT-57-18116)

On March 6, 1957, American relations with Africa entered a new era when Ghana, the former British colony of Gold Coast, gained its independence. Ghana's independence heralded the dawn of a new political world, and over the next two years, nations sprang up across the continent. The significance of these events was not lost on American foreign policy makers. To show the importance the United States placed on its relations with the new country, the Eisenhower administration chose Vice President Richard Nixon to lead the American delegation to Ghana's independence celebrations. In August 1959 the U.S. Department of State signaled the growing significance of Africa when it elevated the Office of African Affairs to the rank of a bureau. To further build ties with Africa, President John Kennedy appointed diplomats with the rank of ambassador to each newly independent state early in his administration.¹

During these years, the United States was not the only nation interested in Africa. The Soviet Union, and later the People's Republic of China, also sought influence there and the continent soon became another cold war battleground in the propaganda warfare between the East and the West.² Both communist nations readily used virtually any weapon at their disposal to discredit the United States and quickly seized upon the position of black Americans as a major tool to weaken American influence on the continent.

Communist propaganda forced American policy makers to take swift and decisive actions to deal with foreign perceptions of race relations in the United States before those perceptions could adversely affect American relations with the new nations of Africa. The story of how the United States dealt with this issue in Ghana serves as an excellent example of the cultural and informational programs the United States developed to counteract communist activities on the continent and to maintain good relations with African nations.

The U.S. government was well aware that foreign perceptions of race relations in the United States had the potential to become a major diplomatic problem. In October 1957, after civil rights issues reached a boiling point in the desegregation of the high school in Little Rock, Arkansas, the United States Information Agency (USIA) conducted a survey to determine how race relations affected America's image abroad. What the agency found was disturbing. Universally, foreigners had a negative view of the treatment of blacks in the United States, an opinion that held sway even in nations as friendly to the United States as Norway, West Germany, and the United Kingdom.³ A survey taken later the same year was even more worrisome. The poll-takers discovered that the incidents in Little Rock were not themselves the cause of this negative opinion. Although the study's authors felt that Little Rock may have hardened some opinions about the poor state of race relations in the United States, they interpreted the studies to indicate that those negative views had already been in place before the events in Arkansas.⁴ Other USIA studies conducted in the wake of racial incidents in Mississippi and Alabama confirmed these findings.⁵

Because the communist press readily used these events as a means of attacking the United States, it was partially responsible for these negative views. Communist periodicals pointed to race-based incidents in the United States as proof that American democracy was false and that the American people possessed a racist mentality. Moreover, Soviet and Chinese propagandists did not need to rely solely on communist editorials. In what must have been particularly embarrassing to American diplomats, communist news services made ample use of pictures, cartoons, and editorial comment from American papers to support their assertions about the sad state of black Americans.⁶

Vitriolic attacks by the communist press notwithstanding, the situation was not entirely bleak. Although the USIA studies made it clear that world opinion universally held a negative view of American race relations, the USIA discovered that this view did not automatically translate into hostility toward the United States. In fact, people throughout the world believed that the American federal government was doing a good job of combating racism and discrimination in the United States and felt that federal civil rights programs would eventually improve conditions for black Americans. Even respondents who held harsh views of the state of race relations in the United States usually had a high overall opinion of the United States and its foreign policy.⁷ A 1962 USIA research report described this situation neatly when it characterized racism in the United States as "the chief blemish on the image of the American people abroad."⁸

Even though USIA findings indicated that race relations in the United States did not at the present pose a major problem for the nation overseas, American foreign policy makers were determined to face the issue head-on to ensure that it did not become an impediment to American diplomacy and to soften the impact of communist propaganda. As a result, it became an integral part of American cultural foreign policy to combat negative views of American race relations abroad, and as early as 1961 the USIA took concrete, formal steps to address the issue. In July of that year the USIA released Special Report 41, "IRI Background Facts: The Negro American." The report's introduction made it clear that the USIA realized that racial prejudice and discrimination in the United States had a profound effect on America's image abroad, a fact that complicated American relations with the new nations of Africa and Asia. Although American embassies and consulates had access to books and other publications pertaining to the status of black Americans, the USIA felt there was a pressing need for American personnel overseas to have information at their fingertips to be able to answer questions that the literate elite in other nations might have. It is important to note that Special Report 41 was not an attempt to

discount claims of racism in the United States. American informational personnel freely admitted that segregation, inequality, and race-based violence existed. In Special Report 41, the USIA attempted to provide information stressing positive events in the history of African Americans since the Civil War. By focusing on the achievements black Americans had made in the areas of education, politics, and economics, the USIA hoped to illustrate that, although things might be bad for black Americans at the moment, conditions had been improving slowly for some time and were continuing to improve. Special Report 41 became the first in a series of reports that treated many of these topics in a more detailed fashion.⁹

While ready access to facts and figures concerning progress made by black Americans was important, it alone could not provide the support American personnel needed to combat the effects of racism on foreign perceptions of the United States. Throughout the late 1950s and the 1960s, American information officers overseas came to rely on more visual techniques to wage this battle, techniques that could reach a much wider audience than special reports. Ultimately, USIA developed a strategy that incorporated exhibits, as well as lectures and performances by visiting African Americans.

As the first sub-Saharan colony to gain independence, Ghana offered the United States the earliest opportunity to develop such informational programs. From the outset, however, the Department of State and the USIA faced numerous obstacles. The first came in the person of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's leader from independence until the Ghanaian military overthrew him in a 1966 coup. Initially, relations between the United States and Ghana were warm. Nkrumah admired President Kennedy's aggressive civil rights campaign as well as the President's Africa policy. Increasingly, however, Nkrumah began to espouse a brand of "African socialism" that caused a gulf to open between the two states. In August 1963 the Ghanaian government placed limitations on foreign cultural and informational activities in Ghana. It restricted the sale of foreign books, limited the ability of foreign-run libraries to loan books, and banned diplomatic missions from establishing cultural centers in the country. Since the United States insisted that USIA activities and the USIA library were integral parts of the American embassy, those facilities were able to continue operation, but not without constant criticism from some elements in the Ghanaian government and press.¹⁰



Vice President and Mrs. Nixon, pictured here with Ghana's finance minister, K. A. Gbedeman, led the U.S. delegation at the Ghana independence celebrations in 1957. (NARA, 306-RNT-12-16)

After Kennedy's assassination, the situation deteriorated still further. Despite Lyndon Johnson's firm stand on improving civil rights in the United States, Nkrumah felt that the new President's position on Africa was not as friendly as Kennedy's. Difficulties between the two nations developed rapidly. On February 4, 1964, propaganda vans from Nkrumah's Convention People's Party toured the streets of Accra, the capital city, calling on Ghanaians to march on the American embassy to protest what it called American rumor-mongering and attacks on the government. Later that day, the party organized a protest rally in front of the embassy. At the same time, the Ghanaian government expelled four American professors from their posts at the University of Ghana on the grounds that the academics were indulging in subversive activities. Nkrumah refused to see the American ambassador about the demonstration or the expulsions.¹¹

Radical elements among the Ghanaian press formed the other major hurdle. Throughout the Nkrumah years, it was common for Ghana's press to contain anti-American editorials often focusing on racism in the United States and accusing American foreign policy of being neocolonialistic, a state of affairs that existed even during the relatively congenial Kennedy years. In 1958 several papers ran articles on the Jimmy Wilson case in Alabama.¹² The *Ghana Evening News* used almost a full page to reprint an article from London's *Sunday Observer* entitled "Death for 14 Shilling Theft." In 1962 the *Ashanti Pioneer* asserted that racial incidents in Mississippi, especially those concerning desegregation of the university, proved a daily disgrace to the United States and to all of humanity. In fall 1964, editorials in the official *Ghanaian Times* often alluded to rampant racism and fascism in the United States and characterized the presidential election as the "race for the leadership of white America." Early the next year, press criticism increased. The *Ghanaian Times* ran editorials accusing the United States of immorality and claimed that as American industry continued to automate, black Americans would be thrown out of work. That paper and the *Ghana Evening News* pointed to racial violence and the assassination of Malcolm X as proof that the position of African Americans was intolerable. These attacks were often so shrill that they drove American diplomats in the country to lodge formal protests with the government.¹³

None of this induced American policy makers to give up on Ghana. On the contrary, it prodded them to examine the views of the Ghanaian populace to determine the mood in the country at large. They found that, despite the growing gulf between the two governments and attacks by the official press, the Ghanaian population was by no means anti-American. For example, the Ghanaian response to the 1962 USIA filmstrip *Toward Equal Opportunity* was encouraging. USIA personnel observed that Ghanaians who viewed the filmstrip looked favorably upon the progress that black Americans seemed to be making. Furthermore, a 1963 USIA study of African students in the United States found Ghanaian students to be moderately to favorably inclined toward the United States. The same study also determined that although approximately 80 percent of the African students in American had a poor picture of the position of blacks in the United States, 70 percent of them thought the picture was improving. These findings led American policy makers in Ghana to conclude that a small circle within the government and the press viewed the United States with suspicion, if not hostility, but that the general population did not share that opinion. USIA personnel believed that a campaign designed to inform Ghanaian students, teachers, civil servants, and businessmen about the progress that African Americans had made and were making in the United States could improve the image of the United States in Ghana and defuse the attacks by the radical press.¹⁴ The result was the development of a program of exhibits, films, radio broadcasts, and support for visiting African Americans designed to illustrate the positive aspects of the life of black Americans.

Perhaps the easiest means of reaching Ghanaians was through the use of exhibits. The USIA library in Accra had eight large windows perfectly designed for such purposes. As early as 1957, USIA staff used photographs supplied from Washington to produce a picture exhibit entitled "Africans in the United States" and displayed it in this window space. The staff expanded upon the exhibit by displaying additional photographs on this subject inside the library.¹⁵

By cultivating good relationships with local Ghanaian merchants and community leaders, USIA personnel were able to place exhibits in other locations, thereby increasing Ghanaian exposure to them. For example, the 1961 exhibit "Progress of the Negro in America" was on display at the UTC, one of Accra's largest department stores. The 1963 exhibit "President Kennedy Calls for Equal Rights for U.S. Negro Citizens" could be seen in the central libraries of Accra and Kumasi; the municipal libraries of Sekondi, Cape Coast, Koforidua, Ito, and Tamle; the YMCA center in Accra; the Boy Scout and Girl Scout centers in Accra; as well as the USIA library.¹⁶

The exhibits proved to be a useful tool in conveying the USIA's message, and local American officials estimated that thousands of Ghanaians viewed them. Exhibits concerning the life and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King were particularly popular. 1962's "The New American Negro" received approximately four thousand visits. The following year, two more exhibits relating to King, "Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace Prize" and "Man of the Year: M.L. King," each received about three thousand visits. Exhibits focusing on other topics were also successful. USIA reports indicate that in 1962 and 1963 approximately five thousand people visited the *Ebony*-magazine-sponsored "100th Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation." During 1963 and 1964 approximately 9,500 Ghanaians visited "The Negro Moves Ahead," and in 1963 approximately 3,500 people visited a special exhibit on USIA Director Carl Rowan entitled "Carl T. Rowan's Portrait."¹⁷

More significantly, the exhibits frequently prompted Ghanaians to learn more about African Americans. When a popular exhibit was on display, the USIA library often reported increased readership, with special interest in the works of African American authors such as James Baldwin. In addition, people came into the library to ask questions and to request copies of the

photographs on display. These activities indicate that the exhibits had the additional effect of creating an interest in the USIA's message beyond a brief examination of the exhibits.18

At the same time, USIA personnel in Ghana developed other programs to supplement the exhibits. They obtained motion pictures such as *The Rafer Johnson Story* and *The Lady from Tridelfia*, a film about Marian Anderson's recent Asian tour, to show to general Ghanaian audiences, as well as films and filmstrips about American life targeting secondary school students. Motion pictures often produced positive results. American personnel were especially pleased with the Ghanaian reaction to *The Lady from Tridelfia* and wrote to Washington that audiences throughout the country were enthralled by the film and hailed Anderson as a role model.19

Embassy staff and USIA personnel presented lectures on American life and the American civil rights movement at the USIA library in Accra as well as on the campuses of secondary schools and teacher training colleges. They made tapes of speeches and commentary by black Americans available to Radio Ghana, including Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech and an interview with Sidney Poitier about his Academy Award. They also developed music programs to increase interest in the United States. In May 1958 the USIA library in Accra played recordings of classical music and Negro spirituals and presented a program about the life and music of the late W. C. Handy to the headmaster, music teacher, and twenty-five students from Accra's Ebenezer Secondary School. In December 1964 the USIA resumed its production of American jazz programs for Radio Ghana with the preparation of a series of fifty half-hour shows entitled "The Sound of Jazz."20

Exhibits, films, and music were not the only weapons in America's arsenal. Perhaps the most remarkable way that the USIA and embassy staff tried to paint a positive picture of the life of black Americans was to enlist the services of African Americans traveling through Ghana. From the nation's independence and extending throughout the 1960s, American officials in Ghana welcomed dozens of African Americans to the country. These visitors included Lester Granger, executive director of the National Urban League, and Dr. Benjamin Mays, president of Morehouse College, both of whom received warm welcomes from the local population. USIA personnel in Ghana were impressed by the positive impact that visits of African Americans had on the Ghanaian population and made great efforts to attract prominent black Americans to the country. Several of these visits warrant special attention.21

1965

Yearly Inflation Rate **USA** 1.59%

Yearly Inflation Rate **UK** 5.0%

Year End Close Dow Jones Industrial Average 969

Average Cost of new house \$13,600.00

Average Income per year \$6,450.00

Gas per Gallon 31 cents

Average Cost of a new car \$2,650.00

Loaf of bread 21 cents

Average Rent per month \$118,00

1965 the war in Vietnam continues to worsen as whatever the Americans do including major bombing of North Vietnam they continue to lose more men , at the same time the Anti-War movement grows and on November 13th 35,000 march on Washington as a protest against the war. There is also civil unrest with rioting, looting and arson in Los Angeles. This was also the first year mandated health warnings appeared on cigarette packets and smoking became a no no. The latest craze in kids toys was the Super Ball and The Skate Board. Fashions also changed as women's skirts got shorter men's hair grew longer as the The miniskirt makes its appearance. The word Hypertext is created to describe linking in early computer systems and computer networking. The St Louis Arch is completed and The Beatles release 4 new albums including "Help".

Watts Riots

Watts Riots, sometimes called the Watts Rebellion, took place in a neighborhood outside of Los Angeles. An African American motorist was arrested on suspicion of drunk driving. A minor roadside argument broke out, which escalated into a fight. The community outrage to the police brutality soon spread, and riots ensued. It would be the city's worst riot until the 1992 Rodney King riots.

More Information and Timeline For 1965 Race Riots in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, California

- August 11th 7.00 PM California highway patrolman, Lee Minikus, arrests Marquette Frye after Frye failed his sobriety tests.
- August 11th 7.00 PM to 7.23 PM Crowd of a few hundred gathered around the scene
- August 11th 7.00 PM to 7.23 PM Additional Police are bought in for crowd control
- August 11th 7.23 PM Patrolman, Lee Minikus arrests three Frye family members Marquette, his brother Ronald, and their mother
- August 11th 7:40 PM Police leave the scene with those they have arrested leaving behind an angered, tense crowd
- August 11th 8.00 PM to Midnight angry mob goes on rampage including stoning cars and threatened police in the area.
- August 12th Black leaders including preachers, teachers, and businessmen try to restore order in the community
- August 13th Rioting continues with an increase of looting and arson with 100 fire brigades trying to put out fires started by rioters
- August 13th 14,000 national guardsmen are called in and join the police trying to maintain order on the streets
- August 14th Lieutenant Governor Anderson appeared on television announcing the curfew which made it a crime for any unauthorized persons to be on the streets in the curfew area after 8:00 p.m
- August 15th riots and vandalism end
- August 17th Governor Brown lifts the curfew
- *The riots ended with 34 dead and 1,032 reported injuries, including 90 Los Angeles police officers, 136 firemen, 10 national guardsmen, 23 persons from other governmental agencies, and 773 civilians. More than 600 buildings were damaged by burning and looting and another 200 buildings were destroyed,*

The United States enters the Vietnam War

Between the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and the U.S. presidential election in November 1964, the situation in Vietnam had changed for the worse. Beginning in September, the Khanh government was succeeded by a bewildering array of cliques and coalitions, some of which stayed in power less than a month. In the countryside even the best ARVN units seemed incapable of defeating the main forces of the Viet Cong. The communists were now deliberately targeting U.S. military personnel and bases, beginning with a mortar attack on the U.S. air base at [Bien Hoa](#) near Saigon in November.

Many of Johnson's advisers now began to argue for some sort of retaliation against the North. Air attacks against North Vietnam, they argued, would boost the morale of the shaky South Vietnamese and reassure them of continuing American commitment. They would also make Hanoi "pay a price" for its war against Saigon, and they might actually reduce the ability of the North to supply men and matériel for the military effort in the South. Except for Undersecretary of State [George Ball](#), all the president's civilian aides and principal military advisers believed in the efficacy of a bombing campaign; they differed only as to how it should be conducted. The military favoured a short and sharp campaign intended to cripple the North's war-making capabilities. On the other hand, National Security Adviser [McGeorge Bundy](#) and Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton argued for a series of graduated air attacks that would become progressively more damaging until the North Vietnamese decided that the cost of waging war in the South was too high. Within the administration, both Ball and Vice President [Hubert H. Humphrey](#) warned the president that a major bombing campaign would likely lead only to further American commitment and political problems at home. But Johnson was more concerned with the immediate need to take action in order to halt the slide in Saigon. In mid-February, without public announcement, the United States began a campaign of sustained air strikes against the North that were code-named [Rolling Thunder](#).



By the summer of 1964, the successes of the Viet Cong on the battlefield led the U.S. government to the bombing campaign followed the graduated path outlined by Bundy but was steadily expanded to include more targets and more frequent attacks. It was closely directed from the White House in order to avoid provoking the Chinese or Soviets through such actions as attacking ports where Soviet ships might be docked or hitting targets near the Chinese border. Yet it was soon apparent



that the bombing would have little direct impact on the struggle in South Vietnam, where the communists appeared to be gaining ground inexorably. By mid-March Westmoreland and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were advising the [White House](#) that the United States would have to commit its own troops for combat if it wished to forestall a communist victory. Unhappy memories of the [Korean](#)

[War](#), where U.S. troops had been bogged down in costly indecisive fighting for three years, had made Johnson and his predecessors reluctant to send soldiers to fight in Asia, but the choice now confronting the president appeared to be between committing troops or enduring outright defeat.

In March 1965 U.S. Marines landed at Da Nang, South Vietnam, and regular troops of the North



By June 1965 Westmoreland was predicting the likely collapse of the South Vietnamese army, and he recommended the rapid dispatch of U.S. troops to undertake offensive missions against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese anywhere in South Vietnam. Secretary of Defense [Robert S. McNamara](#), on a mission to Vietnam in early July, confirmed the need for additional forces. In late July Johnson took the final steps that would commit the United States to full-scale war in Vietnam: he authorized the dispatch of 100,000 troops immediately and an additional 100,000 in 1966. The president publicly announced his decisions at a news conference at the end of July. There was no declaration of war—not even an address to Congress—and no attempt to put the country on a war footing economically. The [National Guard](#) and military reserves were not called to active service, even though such a measure had long been part of the military’s mobilization plans.



Although Johnson and his advisers had painstakingly examined the question of committing military forces to Vietnam—how many should be sent and when—they had given little thought to the question of what the troops might do once they arrived. In contrast to the tightly controlled air war in the North, conduct of the ground war in the South was largely left to the leadership of General Westmoreland. Westmoreland commanded all U.S. operations in the South, but he was reluctant to press for a unified U.S. and South Vietnamese command despite the questionable capabilities of many South Vietnamese generals. Instead, the two allies depended on “coordination” and a continuation of the existing advisory relationship, with every South Vietnamese army unit larger than a company having its complement of U.S. advisers. At the top of the [hierarchy](#), Westmoreland himself served as senior adviser to the chief of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff, Gen. Cao Van Vien. The chronic political instability in Saigon seemed finally to have abated with the installation in February 1965 of a government headed by the army general [Nguyen Van Thieu](#) as head of state and air force general [Nguyen Cao Ky](#) as prime minister. This arrangement, backed by most of the top military commanders, lasted until 1968, when Ky was eased out of power, leaving Thieu in sole control.



Whatever the status of the South Vietnamese forces, they were clearly relegated to a secondary role as U.S. troops and equipment poured into the country. To support these forces, the Americans constructed an enormous logistical infrastructure that included four new jet-capable air bases with 10,000-foot (3,000-metre) runways, six new deepwater ports, 75 tactical air bases, 26 hospitals, and more than 10,000,000 square feet (900,000 square metres) of warehousing. By the fall of 1965, U.S. Marines and soldiers had clashed with NVA and VC main-force troops in bloody battles on Cape Ba Lang An (also called the Batangan Peninsula), southeast of Da Nang, and in the Ia Drang valley in the central highlands. The U.S. forces employed their full panoply of firepower, including air strikes, artillery, armed helicopters, and



even B-52 bombers, to inflict enormous losses on the enemy. Yet the communists believed they had more than held their own in these battles, and they were encouraged by the fact that they could easily reoccupy any areas they might have lost once the Americans pulled out.

Westmoreland's basic assumption was that U.S. forces, with their enormous and superior firepower, could best be employed in fighting the enemy's strongest units in the jungles and mountains, away from heavily populated areas. Behind this "shield" provided by the Americans, the South Vietnamese army and security forces could take on local Viet Cong elements and proceed with the job of reasserting government control in the countryside. Meanwhile, the regular forces of the Viet Cong and the NVA would continue to suffer enormous casualties at the hands of massive U.S. firepower. Eventually, went the argument, the communists would reach the point where they would no longer be able to replace their losses on the battlefield. Having been ground down on the battlefield, they would presumably agree to a favourable peace settlement.

That point seemed very distant to most Americans as the war continued into 1966 and 1967. Washington declared that the war was being won, but American casualties continued to mount, and much of what the public could see of the war on television appeared confusing if not futile. Because Westmoreland's strategy was based on attrition, one of the ways to measure progress was to track the number of enemy killed. The resultant "body count," which was supposed to be carried out by troops during or immediately after combat, soon became notorious for inaccuracy and for the tendency of U.S. commanders to exaggerate the figures. *A Program for the Pacification and Long-Term Development of Vietnam* (PROVN), a study commissioned by U.S. Army Chief of Staff Harold K. Johnson and published in 1966, raised serious questions about Westmoreland's approach. It proposed that U.S. efforts should be concentrated on providing security and stability for the rural population in South Vietnam and suggested that attrition would not work as an effective counterinsurgency strategy. At the time of its publication, PROVN was largely dismissed by military commanders, and the continued emphasis on overwhelming firepower and "search-and-destroy" missions amounted to an almost wholesale rejection of its recommendations.



In the provinces just north and east of Saigon, some large-scale operations such as [Cedar Falls](#) and [Junction City](#), involving up to a thousand U.S. troops supported by hundreds of sorties by helicopters and fighter-bombers, were mounted to destroy communist base areas and supplies. Though yielding large quantities of captured weapons and supplies, they were ultimately indecisive, because the U.S. forces would invariably withdraw when they had completed their sweeps and in due course the Viet Cong and NVA would return. In order to deny the NVA and Viet Cong the use of dense forest to conceal their movements and to hide their supply lines and bases, the U.S. Air Force sprayed millions of gallons of a [herbicide](#) called [Agent Orange](#) along the Vietnamese border with [Laos](#) and [Cambodia](#), in areas northwest of Saigon, and along major waterways. Agent Orange was effective in killing vegetation—but only at the price of causing considerable ecological damage to Vietnam and of exposing thousands of people to potentially [toxic chemicals](#) that would later cause serious and sometimes fatal health problems.



Along the DMZ separating North and South Vietnam, the Americans established a string of fortified bases extending from just north of Quang Tri on the [South China Sea](#) westward to the Laotian border. These bases were part of a system that also included electronic warning devices, minefields, and infrared detectors designed to check infiltration or outright invasion from the North. The North Vietnamese, pleased to find that the strong-point obstacle system was within range of their artillery, carried out periodic attacks by fire and ground forces against U.S. outposts at Con Thien, Gio Linh, Camp Carroll, and Khe Sanh. These larger engagements attracted most of the public's attention, but they were not in fact typical of the war in South Vietnam. Most "battles" of the war were sharp, very brief engagements between units of fewer than 200 men. Many of these lasted only a few hours, often only a few minutes, but nevertheless could result in heavy casualties. Overall, communist casualties far outnumbered U.S. casualties, but the North Vietnamese never came close to depleting their manpower. In any case, the communists could, when necessary, ease the

pressure on themselves by withdrawing their forces to sanctuaries in nearby Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. Hanoi, not Washington, largely controlled the tempo of the ground war.

Like the ground war in the South, the air campaign against the North continued to grow in scope and destructiveness but remained indecisive. By the end of 1966, the United States had dropped more bombs on North Vietnam than it had dropped on Japan during [World War II](#) and more than it had dropped during the entire [Korean War](#). Yet the bombing seemed to have little impact on the communists' ability to carry on the war. North Vietnam was primarily an agricultural country with few industries to destroy. Many of the necessities of Hanoi's war effort came directly from China and the Soviet Union, which competed with each other to demonstrate support for Ho Chi Minh's "heroic" war against U.S. [imperialism](#). The Soviets provided an estimated 1.8 billion rubles in military and economic aid and sent 3,000 military advisers and technicians along with sophisticated weapons to the North. China spent an estimated two billion dollars in assisting Hanoi; at the height of its effort, it had more than 300,000 engineering, medical, and anti-aircraft artillery troops in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Even when bombing knocked out more than 80 percent of the North's petroleum-storage facilities during the summer of 1966, the CIA reported no discernible shortages of petroleum or disruption of transportation. While the air raids continued, North Vietnam progressively strengthened its air defenses with the help of the latest radars, anti-aircraft guns, missiles, and modern jet fighters supplied by the Soviets and Chinese. By the end of 1966 the United States had already lost almost 500 aircraft and hundreds of air crewmen killed or held as prisoners of war.



Script Encyclopedia

Page 7:

Garbage collectors, 1957



Lunch buckets, 1957



Page 8:

Nigger – A derogatory term used to describe black people

A brief history of the word Nigger can be found [here](#).

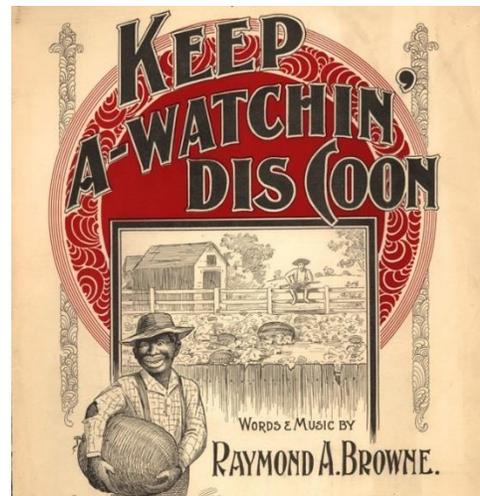
Watermelon – A fascinating article in about the racist implications of the Watermelon and how they came to be:

[How Watermelons Became a Racist Trope](#)

Before its subversion in the Jim Crow era, the fruit symbolized black self-sufficiency.

WILLIAM BLACK DEC 8, 2014

It seems as if every few weeks there's another watermelon controversy. The *Boston Herald* got in trouble for publishing a [cartoon](#) of the White House fence-jumper, having made his way into Obama's bathroom, recommending watermelon-flavored toothpaste to the president. A high-school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, was briefly [fired](#) for a bizarre post-game celebration ritual in which his team smashed a watermelon while making ape-like noises. While hosting the National Book Awards,



author Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) [joked](#) about how his friend Jacqueline Woodson, who had won the young people's literature award for her memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, was allergic to watermelon. And most recently, activists protesting the killing of Michael Brown were greeted with [an ugly display](#) while marching through Rosebud, Missouri, on their way from Ferguson to Jefferson City: malt liquor, fried chicken, a Confederate flag, and, of course, a watermelon.

While mainstream-media figures deride these instances of racism, or at least racial insensitivity, another conversation takes place on Twitter feeds and comment boards: What, many ask, does a watermelon have to do with race? What's so offensive about liking watermelon? Don't white people like watermelon too? Since these conversations tend to focus on the individual intent of the cartoonist, coach, or emcee, it's all too easy to exculpate them from blame, since the racial meaning of the watermelon is so ambiguous.

Free black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons, and in doing so made the fruit a symbol of their freedom.

But the stereotype that African Americans are excessively fond of watermelon emerged for a specific historical reason and served a specific political purpose. The trope came into full force when slaves won their emancipation during the Civil War. Free black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons, and in doing so made the fruit a symbol of their freedom. Southern whites, threatened by blacks' newfound freedom, responded by making the fruit a symbol of black people's perceived uncleanness, laziness, childishness, and unwanted public presence. This racist trope then exploded in American popular culture, becoming so pervasive that its historical origin became obscure. Few Americans in 1900 would've guessed the stereotype was less than half a century old.

Not that the raw material for the racist watermelon trope didn't exist before emancipation. In the early modern European imagination, the typical watermelon-eater was an Italian or Arab peasant. The watermelon, [noted](#) a British officer stationed in Egypt in 1801, was "a poor Arab's feast," a meager substitute for a proper meal. In the port city of Rosetta he [saw](#) the locals eating watermelons "ravenously ... as if afraid the passer-by was going to snatch them away," and watermelon rinds [littered](#) the streets. There, the fruit symbolized many of the same qualities as it would in post-emancipation America: uncleanness, because eating watermelon is so messy. Laziness, because growing watermelons is so easy, and it's hard to eat watermelon and keep working—it's a fruit you have to sit down and eat. Childishness, because watermelons are sweet, colorful, and devoid of much nutritional value. And unwanted public presence, because it's hard to eat a watermelon by yourself. These tropes made their way to America, but the watermelon did not yet have a racial meaning. Americans were just as likely to associate the watermelon with white Kentucky hillbillies or New Hampshire yokels as with black South Carolina slaves.

Soon after winning their emancipation, many African Americans sold watermelons in order to make a living outside the plantation system. (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

This may be surprising given how prominent watermelons were in enslaved African Americans' lives. Slave owners often let their slaves grow and sell their own watermelons, or even let them take a day off during the summer to eat the first watermelon harvest. The slave [Israel Campbell](#) would slip a watermelon into the bottom of his cotton basket when he fell short of his daily quota, and then retrieve the melon at the end of the day and eat it. Campbell taught the trick to another slave who

was often whipped for not reaching his quota, and soon the trick was widespread. When the year's cotton fell a few bales short of what the master had figured, it simply remained "a mystery."

But Southern whites saw their slaves' enjoyment of watermelon as a sign of their own supposed benevolence. Slaves were usually careful to enjoy watermelon according to the code of behavior established by whites. When an Alabama overseer cut open watermelons for the slaves under his watch, he expected the children to run to get their slice. One boy, Henry Barnes, refused to run, and once he did get his piece he would run off to the slave quarters to eat out of the white people's sight. His mother would then whip him, he remembered, "fo' being so stubborn." The whites wanted Barnes to play the part of the watermelon-craving, juice-dribbling pickaninny. His refusal undermined the tenuous relationship between master and slave.

Emancipation, of course, destroyed that relationship. Black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons during slavery, but now when they did so it was a threat to the racial order. To whites, it seemed now as if blacks were flaunting their newfound freedom, living off their own land, selling watermelons in the market, and — worst of all — enjoying watermelon together in the public square. One white family in Houston was devastated when their nanny Clara left their household shortly after her emancipation in 1865. Henry Evans, a young white boy to whom Clara had likely been a second mother, cried for days after she left. But when he bumped into her on the street one day, he rejected her attempt to make peace. When Clara offered him some watermelon, Henry [told her](#) that "he would not eat what free negroes ate."

Newspapers amplified this association between the watermelon and the free black person. In 1869, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* published perhaps the first caricature of blacks reveling in watermelon. The adjoining article explained, "The Southern negro in no particular more palpably exhibits his epicurean tastes than in his excessive fondness for watermelons. The juvenile freedman is especially intense in his partiality for that refreshing fruit."

Two years later, a Georgia newspaper reported that a black man had been arrested for poisoning a watermelon with the intent of killing a neighbor. The story was headlined "Negro Kuklux" and equated black-on-black violence with the Ku Klux Klan, asking facetiously whether the Radical Republican congressional subcommittee investigating the Klan would investigate this freedman's actions. The article began with a scornful depiction of the man on his way to the courthouse: "On Sabbath afternoon we encountered a strapping 15th Amendment bearing an enormous watermelon in his arms *en route* for the Court-house." It was as if the freedman's worst crime was not attempted murder but walking around in public with that ridiculous fruit.

The primary message of the watermelon stereotype was that black people were not ready for freedom. During the 1880 election season, Democrats [accused](#) the South Carolina state legislature, which had been majority-black during Reconstruction, of having wasted taxpayers' money on watermelons for their own refreshment; this fiction even found its way into history textbooks. D. W. Griffith's white-supremacist epic film *The Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915, included a [watermelon feast](#) in its depiction of emancipation, as corrupt northern whites encouraged the former slaves to stop working and enjoy some watermelon instead. In these racist fictions, blacks were no more deserving of freedom than were children.

As mass-produced pianos and sheet music became popular in the late nineteenth century, so did “coon songs,” popular tunes that mocked African Americans for their lazy, shiftless, childish ways. (Courtesy Brown University Library)

By the early twentieth century, the watermelon stereotype was everywhere—potholders, paperweights, sheet music, salt-and-pepper shakers. A popular postcard portrayed an elderly black man carrying a watermelon in each arm only to happen upon a stray chicken. The man laments, “Dis am de wust perdickermunt ob mah life.” As a black man, the postcard implied, he had few responsibilities and little interest in anything beyond his own stomach. Edwin S. Porter, famous for directing *The Great Train Robbery* in 1903, co-directed [The Watermelon Patch](#) two years later, which featured “darkies” sneaking into a watermelon patch, men dressed as skeletons chasing away the watermelon thieves (à la the Ku Klux Klan, who dressed as ghosts to frighten blacks), a watermelon-eating contest, and a band of white vigilantes ultimately smoking the watermelon thieves out of a cabin. The long history of white violence to maintain the racial order was played for laughs.

It may seem silly to attribute so much meaning to a fruit. And the truth is that there is nothing inherently racist about watermelons. But cultural symbols have the power to shape how we see our world and the people in it, such as when police officer Darren Wilson saw Michael Brown as a superhuman “demon.” These symbols have roots in real historical struggles—specifically, in the case of the watermelon, white people’s fear of the emancipated black body. Whites used the stereotype to denigrate black people—to take something they were using to further their own freedom, and make it an object of ridicule. It ultimately does not matter if someone means to offend when they tap into the racist watermelon stereotype, because the stereotype has a life of its own.

Union – An organized association of workers formed to protect and further their own rights and interests

Commissioner – A representative of the supreme authority in the area

9

Colored - The Oxford English Dictionary describes the term colored as “usually offensive – colored was adopted in the US by emancipated slaves as a term of racial pride after the end of the American Civil War. It was replaced in the 1960s by the word “black”, and later by “African American”. The word is retained by the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). For the time the Fences was written, Colored would have been the politically correct term. For what it’s worth, the phrase “people of color” is making a comeback. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz describes the metamorphoses of the phrase “people of color” like this:

"People of color explicitly suggests a social relationship among racial and ethnic minority groups. ... [It is] is a term most often used outside of traditional academic circles, often infused by activist frameworks, but it is slowly replacing terms such as racial and ethnic minorities. ... In the United States in particular, there is a trajectory to the term — from more derogatory terms such as negroes, to colored, to people of color. ... People of color is, however it is viewed, a political

term, but it is also a term that allows for a more complex set of identity for the individual — a relational one that is in constant flux.”

A full article about the evolution of the term colored can be found [here](#).

10

Tallahassee –the capitol of the state of Florida

11

Mississippi River – One of the world’s major river systems. The second longest river in North America, flowing over 2000 miles. It runs from northern Minnesota down to the Gulf of Mexico.



Goodyears – A brand of tires

Pig feet – As it sounds. A dish of southern Soul Food. There are many different preparations – here’s one example on YouTube by a man named [“PhillyboyJay”](#)

12

Collard greens – A dish of southern Soul Food.



Hitch up my pony, saddle up my mare ... there’s a woman out there for me somewhere – A line from the song “Pony Blues” [by Alvin Youngblood Hart](#) –

Banty rooster



The back door – Clandestine; underhanded. Of or related to being unfaithful (your lover comes in through the back door)

13

I thought only white folks had inside toilets and things – Indoor plumbing didn't make it to rural America until the 1930s. In 2014, the [Washington Post reported](#) that 1.6 million Americans didn't have indoor plumbing. According to that article, in 1950 25% of US households did not have a flushing toilet

A&P – A grocery store. John Updike gave the store some symbolic significance when he wrote a short story called A&P. It's about a teenager named Sammy who abandons his post at the grocery store to defend three beautiful girls who enter the store wearing their bathing suits. When the store manager tells them their attire is inappropriate, Sammy resigns on the spot in an act of solidarity with the girls. The store manager makes a point of saying that the act would disappoint his parents, but he quits anyway – only to discover that his heroic act goes unnoticed by the girls. It's very much a white coming-of-age/nihilistic story, but could serve as an interesting (less meaningful) foil to Cory's situation at the A&P. [Full text](#) – or at least a bootleg copy – of the story can be found at the link.

You shop where you want to. I'll do my shopping where the people been good to me. – The idea of “buying black” has its roots in the activism of Booker T Washington back in the Civil Rights era. It is an effort to support and to build wealth within the black community. Since the recent slue of black murders by the police, the Black Lives Matter movement has recently brought back the movement (#BuyBlack, #BankBlack). A 2016 NPR article about the difficulties of the Buy Black movement can be [found here](#).

14

College football rules black people 1957 – Segregation (of schools and elsewhere) was made legal in 1896 by the iconic Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court Case. The verdict was overruled in 1954, and the United States world toward de-segregation. Over the course of Cory's life, it is reasonable to assume that he may have attended a black, and then a desegregated school by the time the action of the play occurs.

In college football, in 1957 there was a black college football national championship among “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” (HBCU). During the age of segregation, they did not have many opportunities to play against white schools. However, the first game between an HBCU and a predominately white school came in 1948. As Troy mentions, desegregation in sports was already beginning, notably with his one-sided nemesis, Jackie Robinson. After 1948, HBCUs began slowly but surely to gravitate toward the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, and the integration has improved as time has gone on. However, declaring an HBCU Champion has remained a popular tradition.

Babe Ruth – arguably one of the most famous baseball players of all time, George Herman “Babe” Ruth played baseball in the early 20th century, and was sold to the New York Yankees in 1919. Besides his impressive stats, he’s infamous for being traded from the Red Sox to the Yankees, which led “The Curse of the Bambino”. The Red Sox wouldn’t win another World Series Championship for 84 years. Babe Ruth made a name for himself as a New York Yankee. The 1923 Yankee Stadium (now the old stadium) was dubbed “The House that Ruth Built”.



Josh Gibson – A contemporary of Babe Ruth who died in 1947. He was an American Negro league baseball catcher and probably one of the best power hitters and catchers in the history of any baseball league – including the then-segregated Major League Baseball. In 1972 he became the second Negro League player to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. He was known to many as the “black Babe Ruth” – and in fact, fans who saw both of them play often called Ruth “the white Josh Gibson”.



That was before the war. Times have changed a lot since then – Refers to World War II. Though the United States was firmly segregated at the time that war broke out, African Americans fought in the US Military in segregated troupes. The National World War II Museum titles [a publication on African](#) Americans “Fighting for a Double Victory” referencing the “Double V” campaign – international victory against the Nazis, and domestic victory as equal to their white counterparts. Though their roles were initially primarily service duties (supply, maintenance, transportation) their efforts were vital to the war effort. By the end of the war, troop loss forced the military to place African American troops into positions such as infantryman, pilots, tankers, medics, etc. Shamefully, African Americans stationed in the South often could not enter restaurants where German prisoners were being served a meal. On D-Day, the First Army on Omaha and Utah beaches included about 1,700 African American Troops.

Stephen Ambrose points out America’s great shame, “The world’s greatest democracy fought the world’s greatest racist with a segregated army.” Post WWII, the military worked toward integration, and indeed Cory would enter an integrated military.

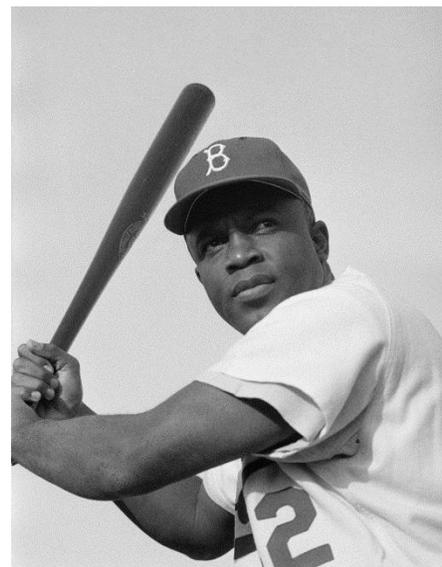
[Henry Louis Gates, Jr writes about the black experience during WWII.](#)

15

Selkirk – the right fielder for the New York Yankees after Babe Ruth.

Batting .269 – Troy batting .432 – Batting percentages that dictate how well a baseball player performs at the plate. A .300 batting average is generally considered to be good, and means that a player gets on base 3 out of every 10 times he's up to bat. A .432 batting average is very good.

Jackie Robinson – Jackie Robinson was born in Georgia in 1919 to a family of sharecroppers. His single mother raised five children, and theirs was the only black household on their block. He excelled in sports early in life, and was the first athlete to win varsity letters in four sports at UCLA: baseball, basketball, football, and track. In 1941, he was named to the All-American football team, but was forced to leave college due to financial difficulties and enlisted in the US Army. After two years in the army, he progressed to second lieutenant, but was court martialled when he objected to incidents of racial discrimination. Ultimately he left the army with an honorable discharge.



In 1945, Robinson played one season in the Negro Baseball League, and in 1947 the president of the Brooklyn Dodgers approached him about joining the team. The Major Leagues had not had an African American player since 1889, when the league was segregated. He became Rookie of the Year with 12 home runs, a league-leading 29 steals, and a .297 average. In 1949 he was the National League MVP. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. Learn more at JackieRobinson.com.

Fastball on the outside corner – A baseball pitch that brushes the edge of the strike zone [away from the batter](#).

16

450 feet worth of lying! – Most baseball fields have a range from home plate to the fence (the length it takes to hit a home run) anywhere from 300-420 feet.

The middle of July 1941 – It is not a WWII reference as the US didn't enter the war until December 1941 (when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor). Troy had pneumonia that summer.

17

The Bible say be ever vigilant: 1 Peter 5:8: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. [Read all of Peter Chapter 5 here](#).

Pneumonia – A lung inflammation caused by bacterial or viral infection in which the air sacs fill with pus and may become solid. A serious disease that claims lives even today.

Sickle – a tool used for harvesting



18

Goatee – A man's facial hair style



Sport coat – A style of jacket



19

Blackjack – A gambling card game also known as 21.

21

At the Judgment – a commonly held Christian belief that all will be called upon for a final “judgment” by Christ, who will return at an unknown date.

Matthew 25:31-46 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Final Judgment

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the

nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?'³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,^[a] you did it to me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

22

Passavant – a hospital in Pittsburgh.

25

Jesus be a fence all around me every day – A spiritual. [A 1964 recording](#) by the Meditation Singers.

That 651 hit yesterday – Lottery numbers

26

Negroes – Referring to black people.

Negro (The Word) A History

Negro means "black" in both Spanish and Portuguese languages, being derived from the Latin word *niger* of the same meaning. The term "negro", literally the Spanish and Portuguese to refer to Black Africans and people with that heritage used "black." From the 18th century to the mid-20th century, "negro" (later capitalized) was considered the correct and proper term for African Americans. It fell out of favor by the 1970s in the United States.

In current English language usage, "Negro" generally is considered acceptable in a historical context or in the name of older organizations, as in the United Negro College Fund, and is used more commonly by those born before the post World War II baby boom. Lyndon B. Johnson was the last American president to publicly refer to the African American population as Negroes (to which, for much of his life, he gave the Texas pronunciation *nigras*, widely considered an insult by African Americans). Before he left office, he had begun to employ the word blacks, too. 19th and 20th century anthropologists used the related word (Negroid) to refer to a race of people from Africa. This ended in the mid-to-late 20th century. The word has had a similar history in languages such as Italian. Currently in Italy, using the term "negro" to refer to a black person would be considered a racist insult, suggestive of fascist opinions. Yet, in Portuguese, the socially accepted term nowadays is "negro" (literally, "black"), while "preto" (meaning, in this context, "black-skinned") usually is seen as a possible insult because of societal color bias. But, today some Portuguese people and Portuguese speaking Africans prefer the term preto in opposition of branco (white), than negro (that also can mean "dirty"). In French, *nègre* was the word generally used in the 19th century and earlier times to describe Black persons of African origin. It now has heavy colonial undertones, and the word *noir* (literally, "black") is always used instead, except occasionally when specifically discussing slavery or colonialism, or when *nègre* is used as slang for ghostwriter.

In Argentina and Cuba, negro (*negra* for females) is a word commonly usually used to refer to friends or people in general, and does not have a racist connotation. For example, one may say to a friend, "Oye, negro. Como estás? Literally, that translates as, "Hey, black man, how are you doing?" Here, "negro" is used in its diminutive form "negrito", as a term of endearment meaning "pal", or "buddy" or "friend." "Negrito" has come to be used to refer to a person of any ethnicity or color, and also can have a sentimental or romantic connotation similar to "sweetheart," or "dear" in English. (In the Philippines, Negrito was used for a local dark-skinned short people, living in the Negros islands among other places) In other Spanish-speaking South American countries, the word negro can also be employed in a roughly equivalent form, though it is not usually considered to be as widespread as in Argentina or Cuba (except perhaps in a limited regional and/or social context). In Cuba, *moreno* is used for a Black person. In other parts of the Spanish-speaking world, *moreno* means just "tanned" or brunette.

In the Post-Soviet states the word *negr* (derived from negro) commonly refers to somebody with the African ethnic roots. Because the majority of the population has seen such people only on television or in films, the word *negr* does not have any negative aftertaste. The direct translation of "black" (*chjornyj*) refers nowadays to people from the southern regions of the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia etc.) and is considered a racist insult. The word *cvetnoj* ("coloured") is also socially unacceptable in most layers of society. Controversy around the word "Negro" has spread to many languages, to a greater or lesser extent, because many have come to perceive the usage of any word similar to "Negro"

with respect to black people in any language as a possible form of insult. Internationally, there is no definite consensus.

While some argue that prevailing attitudes in the United States of America (and elsewhere) should not always be taken into account when deciding what words people should use in other languages, others try to avoid using "Negro" or its variants, as they have come to consider that it could be possibly offensive. Implementing this decision is not always easy, because in some languages the word for "black" is not considered to be a better alternative at all (in Russian *chorny* is a name for minorities like Chechens, in Estonian *must* also means "dirty", etc.) Other options are "dark skinned" or "African".

However, many languages presently do not have any widely accepted alternatives for an alternative to "Negro" that is more neutral or positive in its associations. Some Spanish-speaking people have adopted the term "negrito" or even "azulito" (the diminutive of "azul", the color blue) instead of "negro" to avoid the insulting connotation of the word in English, especially around English-speaking people who do not know Spanish. A specifically female form of the word — *negress* — was sometimes used; but, like another gender-specific word "Jewess", it has all but completely fallen from use. Both are considered racist and sexist.

As with other racial, ethnic, and sexual words that are seen as pejoratives, some individuals have tried "reclaiming" the word. An example of this is artist Kara Walker. In the US, some African Americans may use the term playfully among themselves (as in "You can't please Negroes"), especially throughout the American South and other areas with a higher percentage of African Americans. Such usage is similar to that of the word *nigga*, although it is generally not considered profanity, and is less offensive.

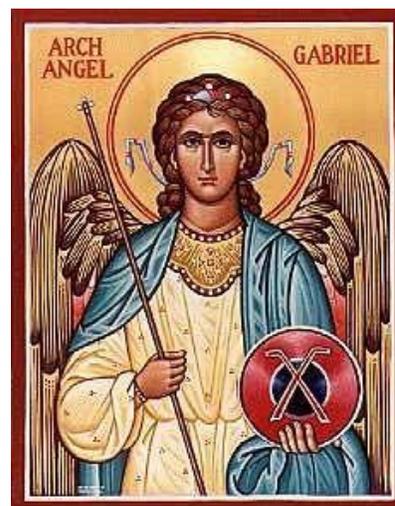
27

Believes he is the Archangel, Gabriel: An angel who serves as a messenger to God. He is one of three archangels and is mentioned in both the Old and New Testament:

First, Gabriel appears to the prophet Daniel to explain his visions (Daniel in the Lion's Den). In this story, Gabriel is described as "one who looked like man." He speaks to Daniel while he is sleeping. After his visit, Daniel becomes tired and sick for days. Gabriel continues to visit Daniel and provides him with more insight and understanding.

In the New Testament, Gabriel is described as "an angel of the Lord". He first appears to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, telling him: "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and they wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth." (Luke 1:13)

Finally, after Elisabeth conceives and is six months pregnant, Gabriel appears again to Nazareth to visit the virgin married to a man named Joseph and tells her of the virgin birth of Jesus. The Book of Luke describes him as saying, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee:



blessed art though among women... Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name, Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the hosue of Jacob for ever; and his kingdom there shall be no end.” Luke 1-33.

After the Annunciation of Mary, Gabriel is not spoken of again.

Gabriel is often depicted as clothed in blue or white, and is seen carrying a lilly, a trumpet, a shining lantern, a branch from Paradise, a scroll or a scepter. He is occassioanlly cited as the one who blows God’s trumpet to indicate the Lord’s return to Earth. The earliest known identification of Gabriel as the trumpet holder comes in 1455 represented in Byzantine art.

Patron saint of messengers, telecommunication workers, and postal workers.

28

Yes ma’am, I got plums – this does not appear to be a real song, but one that Gabriel makes up himself.

St Peter – considered the first Pope. Peter had humble beginnings and became one of Jesus’ 12 Apostles. In Matthew 16: 17-18, Jesus ordains Peter, saying, “Simon, son of Jonah, you are a blessed man! Because it was no human agency that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it.”

There are many stories that occur between Peter and Jesus that can be found [here](#).

30

Aunt Jemimah – The pancake brand. The original Aunt Jemima was a woman named Nancy Green who became the advertising world’s first living trademark. The inventers of the self-rising pancake flour used in Aunt Jemima’s pancakes were looking for an image for their product when they saw a vaudeville show with a tune called “Aunt Jemima” sung by a blackface performer. This is where the brand gets its name. Nancy Green was a former slave, and an excellent storyteller and spokeswoman. She was 56 years old when she became “Aunt Jemima”, and kept the job until a car crash killed her in 1923. An article about how deeply engrained race-related tropes have become in the United States can be found [here](#).

Hellhounds – A supernatural beast in folklore thought to reside in hell.



Better get ready for the judgment – A folk song thought to originally be sung by Rev. Sister Mary Nelson. A rendition can be found [here](#).

31

Japs – Short for “Japanese”. Was used fairly colloquially for many years, but took on a racial significance during and after WWII. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, the United States imprisoned American citizens of Japanese descent and Japanese immigrants in internment camps. The shortened “Japs” quickly became a derogatory term.

34

TV – in 1957, a TV looked something like this:



World Series – The US baseball championship seven-game series.

Two hundred dollars – In 1957, the average monthly rent was about \$90. It's reasonable to assume that \$200 was about two months rent, maybe even a little more. Not a small amount of money.

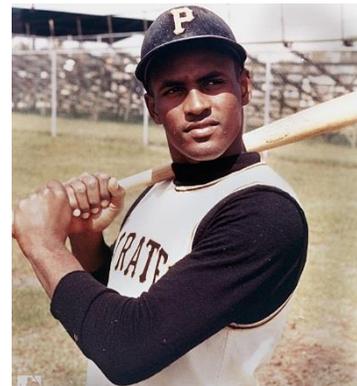
35

Bankbook – a small booklet used to record bank transactions on a deposit account before computers.

The Pirates – The Pittsburgh Pirates, a baseball team.

36

Puerto Rican Boy Clemente – Roberto Clemente, a Puerto Rican professional baseball player and a right fielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame in 1973, one year after his death, and was the first Latin American and Caribbean player to be inducted.

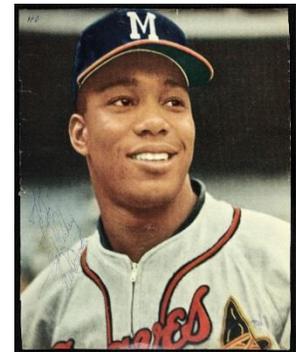


The Braves – Now the Atlanta Braves – Georgia baseball team. One of the first major league professional teams to make their home in the deep south. Originally, the team was called the “Boston Red Stockings” back in 1871. By 1912, the franchise had become known as the Boston Braves. As they began to lose fans to the Boston Red Sox, they moved to Milwaukee and became the Milwaukee Braves. At the time that Fences is set, they still would have been the Milwaukee Braves. They moved to Atlanta in 1966.

Hank Aaron – A retired Major League Baseball player who played for the Milwaukee/Atlanta Braves (1954-1976). He hit 24 or more home runs every year from 1955-1973. He appeared briefly in the Negro American League and in minor league baseball before starting his career in the majors. He played late in Negro league history: he was the last Negro league baseball player to end up on a major league roster.



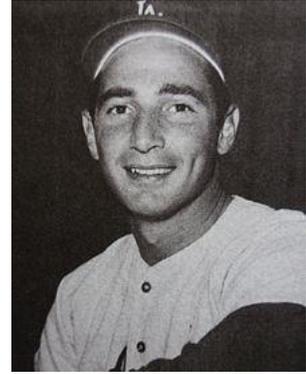
Wes Covington – A left fielder who played for the Milwaukee Braves from 1956-1966.



Satchel Paige – Leroy Robert “Satchel” Paige was an American Negro league baseball and Major League Baseball pitcher who became a legend in his own time as maybe the best pitcher in baseball history. At age 42, he was the oldest major league rookie when he played for the Cleveland Indians. He played with the St. Louis Browns until the age of 47.



Sandy Koufax – a former Major League Baseball left-handed pitcher for the Brooklyn/LA Dodgers. At age 36 he became the youngest player ever elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame

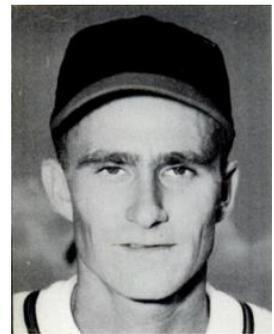


37

Warren Spahn – a Major League left-handed pitcher who played for the Boston/Milwaukee Braves until 1965 when he left for the San Francisco Giants. He won 363 games, more than any other left-handed pitcher in history. He was a “thinking man’s” pitcher, who liked to outwit the batters. He is credited with having said, “Hitting is timing. Pitching is upsetting timing.”



Lew Burdette – A Major League Baseball right-handed pitcher who played primarily for the Boston/Milwaukee Braves.



42

Spikes—slang for cleats: the shoes have spikes to help athletes maintain tread on grass or dirt.

**44**

Old Blue – an old blues song, [sung here](#) by Jim Jackson

45

Courier – An African American newspaper published in Pittsburgh from 1907 until 1966. It was once the country’s most widely circulated black newspaper with a national circulation of almost 200,000. More information on The Courier can be found [here](#).

47

Battle of Armageddon – According to the Book of Revelations, Armageddon is the prophesied location of a gathering of armies for a battle during the end of times. The word is translated to Greek from Hebrew to mean “a mountain or range of hills”.

51

Troy’s Coming of Age story may be a good moment to take a snapshot of the role of African American Fathers today. I cannot find too much research on the role of African American Fathers from the 50s and prior, but we can assume a legacy based on persistent societal oppression. [Here’s where we are today](#).

52

We talking about 1918 – An example of a car in 1918:



53

African American men in prison:

I would recommend to everyone to eventually read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*, which presents a comprehensive history of the incarceration of black men in the United States. Until then, here is a snapshot of where we are today from the NAACP:

[CRIMINAL JUSTICE FACT SHEET](#)

Incarceration Trends in America

- From 1980 to 2008, the number of people incarcerated in America quadrupled—from roughly 500,000 to 2.3 million people
- Today, the US is 5% of the World population and has 25% of world prisoners.
- Combining the number of people in prison and jail with those under parole or probation supervision, 1 in every 31 adults, or 3.2 percent of the population is under some form of correctional control

Racial Disparities in Incarceration

- African Americans now constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million incarcerated population
- African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites
- Together, African American and Hispanics comprised 58% of all prisoners in 2008, even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately one quarter of the US population
- According to *Unlocking America*, if African American and Hispanics were incarcerated at the same rates of whites, today's prison and jail populations would decline by approximately 50%
- One in six black men had been incarcerated as of 2001. If current trends continue, one in three black males born today can expect to spend time in prison during his lifetime
- 1 in 100 African American women are in prison
- Nationwide, African-Americans represent 26% of juvenile arrests, 44% of youth who are detained, 46% of the youth who are judicially waived to criminal court, and 58% of the youth admitted to state prisons (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice).

Drug Sentencing Disparities

- About 14 million Whites and 2.6 million African Americans report using an illicit drug
- 5 times as many Whites are using drugs as African Americans, yet African Americans are sent to prison for drug offenses at 10 times the rate of Whites
- African Americans represent 12% of the total population of drug users, but 38% of those arrested for drug offenses, and 59% of those in state prison for a drug offense.
- African Americans serve virtually as much time in prison for a drug offense (58.7 months) as whites do for a violent offense (61.7 months). (Sentencing Project)

Contributing Factors

- Inner city crime prompted by social and economic isolation

- Crime/drug arrest rates: African Americans represent 12% of monthly drug users, but comprise 32% of persons arrested for drug possession
- “Get tough on crime” and “war on drugs” policies
- Mandatory minimum sentencing, especially disparities in sentencing for crack and powder cocaine possession
- In 2002, blacks constituted more than 80% of the people sentenced under the federal crack cocaine laws and served substantially more time in prison for drug offenses than did whites, despite that fact that more than 2/3 of crack cocaine users in the U.S. are white or Hispanic
- “Three Strikes”/habitual offender policies
- Zero Tolerance policies as a result of perceived problems of school violence; adverse affect on black children
- 35% of black children grades 7-12 have been suspended or expelled at some point in their school careers compared to 20% of Hispanics and 15% of whites

Effects of Incarceration

- Jail reduces work time of young people over the next decade by 25-30 percent when compared with arrested youths who were not incarcerated
- Jails and prisons are recognized as settings where society’s infectious diseases are highly concentrated
- Prison has not been proven as a rehabilitation for behavior, as two-thirds of prisoners will offend again

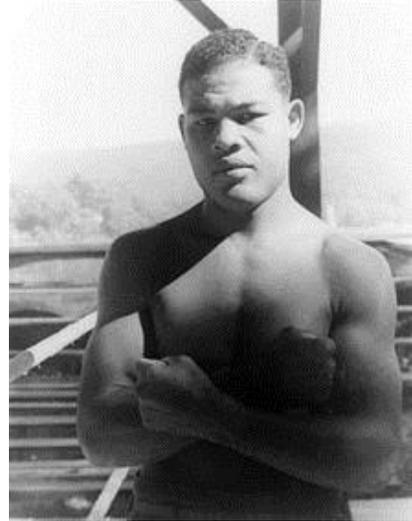
Exorbitant Cost of Incarceration: Is it Worth It?

- About \$70 billion dollars are spent on corrections yearly
- Prisons and jails consume a growing portion of the nearly \$200 billion we spend annually on public safety

Further reading: [An article](#) about “missing” African American men currently in the US:

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Joe Louis – An African American professional boxer. He was the world heavyweight champ from 1934-1949. His reign lasted 140 consecutive months.

**60**

Alfalfa – An important forage crop for many. It can be used for grazing, hay, and silage, as well as a green manure and cover crop.

**61**

Mellon – Andrew Mellon, an American banker, businessman, and politician. From a wealthy family of Pennsylvania. He served as the US Secretary of the Treasury from 1921-1932, during the boom years of the 1920s and the crash of 1929. Leaving office after the Great Depression he also served as the US Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

64

Fridgidaire – A refrigerator brand. Here’s what one looked like in 1957:



67

Penitentiary – A prison for people convicted of serious crimes

74

Please Mr. Engineer let a man ride the line. The words are a little distorted, so as not to be taken from a specific song. However, the trope exists in classic Blues. Here’s an example of a song recorded in 1961: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDJTWjnml-g>

A motherless child has got a hard time – Another trope in classic blues music. A 1930 recording by Elvie Thomas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmj23UrVF80>

84

Marine Corporal – A junior noncommissioned officer. Usually command small contingents of Marines in combat and operations, including four-man fireteams or eight-man squads.



85

Corporal Stripes: A badge or patch indicating your military rank.



Pallbearers – a person helping to carry, or officially escorting, a coffin at a funeral.

87

Uncle Sam:

Uncle Sam, popular [symbol](#) for the [United States](#), usually associated with a cartoon figure having long white hair and chin whiskers and dressed in a swallow-tailed coat, vest, tall hat, and striped trousers. His appearance is derived from two earlier symbolic figures in American folklore: Yankee Doodle, a British-inspired nickname for American colonials during the [American Revolution](#), and Brother Jonathan, a rural American wit who, by surprising displays of native intelligence, always triumphed over his adversaries in plays, stories, cartoons, and verse.



The origin of the term Uncle Sam, though disputed, is usually associated with a businessman from [Troy, New York](#), Samuel Wilson, known affectionately as “Uncle Sam” Wilson. The barrels of beef that he supplied the army during the [War of 1812](#) were stamped “U.S.” to indicate government property. That identification is said to have led to the widespread use of the nickname Uncle Sam for the United States, and a resolution passed by [Congress](#) in 1961 recognized Wilson as the namesake of the national symbol.

Uncle Sam and his predecessor Brother Jonathan were used interchangeably to represent the United States by American cartoonists from the early 1830s to 1861. Cartoonists such as [Sir John Tenniel](#) and [John Leech](#) of the British humour magazine [Punch](#) helped evolve the modern figure by drawing both Brother Jonathan and Uncle Sam as lean, whiskered gentlemen wearing top hats and striped pants. Probably the first U.S. political cartoonist to crystallize the figure of Uncle Sam was [Thomas Nast](#), beginning in the early 1870s. By 1900, through the efforts of Nast, [Joseph Keppler](#), and others, Uncle Sam was firmly entrenched as the symbol for the U.S. One of the most familiar treatments in the 20th century was shown in [James Montgomery Flagg](#)’s [World War I](#) recruiting poster, also used in [World War II](#), for which the caption read, “I Want You.”

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Promised Land

In the Old Testament, God promises the Hebrews (slaves in the land of Egypt) that he will deliver them to the Promised Land multiple times, including the following:

[Genesis 26:2-5](#)

The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed

[Deuteronomy 9:1](#)

"Hear, O Israel! You are crossing over the Jordan today to go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, great cities fortified to heaven,

[Leviticus 20:24](#)

'Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey " I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples.

[Deuteronomy 31:20](#)

"For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.

[Joshua 5:6](#)

For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, that is, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Noah's Ark

Following is the story of Noah's Ark in its entirety, but to sum up: in the Old Testament of the Bible, God decided to destroy the world in a great flood. But, Noah and his family were good, so God left it up to them to salvage the good bits of the world. He told Noah to build an ark, and on it to bring two of every animal. They would ride out the flood on this ark. Noah did so, and

afterwards a rainbow in the sky indicated to Noah God's covenant with him: that he would never destroy the earth with a flood again.

Genesis 5:32-10:1 New International Version (NIV)

³² After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Wickedness in the World

6 When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³ Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with ^[a] humans forever, for they are mortal ^[b]; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."

⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

⁵ The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷ So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

⁹ This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰ Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. ¹² God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³ So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress ^[c] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. ^[d] ¹⁶ Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit ^[e] high all around. ^[f] Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷ I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the

breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰ Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹ You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them."

²² Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

7 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³ and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴ Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made."

⁵ And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷ And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹ male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹² And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³ On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴ They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵ Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶ The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷ For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. ¹⁸ The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹ They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. ²⁰ The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. ²¹ Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds,

livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. ²² Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³ Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

²⁴ The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ² Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³ The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴ and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

⁶ After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark ⁷ and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸ Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹ But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰ He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹ When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹² He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

¹³ By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴ By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷ Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you — the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground — so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

¹⁸ So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹ All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds — everything that moves on land — came out of the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹ The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though¹⁰ every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

²² “As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease.”

God’s Covenant With Noah

⁹ Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. ² The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. ³ Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

⁴ “But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. ⁵ And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

⁶ “Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans shall their blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made mankind.

⁷ As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³ I have set my rainbow in the

clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

The Sons of Noah

¹⁸ The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) ¹⁹ These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the whole earth.

²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded ^[U] to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father’s naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

²⁴ When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said,

“Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers.”

²⁶ He also said,

“Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem!
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

²⁷ May God extend Japheth’s ^[K] territory;
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth.”

²⁸ After the flood Noah lived 350 years. ²⁹ Noah lived a total of 950 years, and then he died.