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Curriculum for teaching the black experience through music and dramatic history.

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CURRICULUM FOR TEACHING THE BLACK EXPERIENCE
THROUGH MUSIC AND DRAMATIC HISTORY

A dissertation Presented

By

WILLIE L. WILLIAMS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts
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CURRICULUM FOR TEACHING THE BLACK EXPERIENCE THROUGH MUSIC AND DRAMA

A Dissertation

by

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(Member)

July 1972

(Month) (Year)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is especially dedicated to my deceased brother and friend—Lonnie G. Williams

My wonderful and patient wife—Hazel

Martha Williams—my mother, and a beautiful Black woman

Treatha Collins—my sister—who encouraged me to "Keep On Pushing" when times got hard

Dr. Gloria Joseph—my chairman—who steered me into knowing what "Black Is"

Dr. Roland Wiggins—a friend and fellow musician—who taught me the Aesthetic Experience in music

Dr. Robert Wellman—a very cooperative person—who took time out of his schedule to help me

John Williams—my father—who told me, "Son, always be a man"

My children—Marva, Michael, Cynthia, Elena, and Troyman

My brothers—John Jr., Willie T., Milton
My sister—Carrie
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The subject of this dissertation is "Curriculum For Teaching The Black Experience Through Music And Dramatic History." It is an attempt to incorporate the Black experience into the public schools curriculum. During the past two decades, the plea from Black students and the community has been to obtain an effective Black studies program. These voices have spread to the colleges, universities, and the public schools. Their plea has led many administrators and teachers to implement some form of a Black studies program.

The results have left many questions unanswered, such as: 1. When should I begin teaching a Black studies program? 2. When should I begin teaching about Negro and race relations? 3. What methods can I use to teach Black History? 4. What resources are available for the teaching of the Black experience? 5. How can I obtain them? 6. Should I teach Black studies separately or as a part of my regular school curriculum?

A flood of material on the Black experience has been produced in recent years. Abundant material, however, do not in themselves solve the classroom teacher's pedagogical problem. He must determine how the materials can be most effectively used to attain the objectives that he has formulated. The intent of this study is to prepare a
curriculum for incorporating the Black Experience in the classroom. Various components of this curriculum have been tried throughout the New England area. As a result of these trial efforts, an improved curriculum will be developed that advocates a mandate for change in education today in regard to an innovative approach for incorporating the Black experience in the public schools curriculum.

Background Information

Since 1963, there has been a growing emphasis upon the realization that historical and cultural contributions of Afro-Americans have been omitted from our textbooks. In a number of urban areas, white and black students have clashed in violence. Black students have boycotted classes and openly expressed hostility toward white teachers and administrators.

...Our nation is moving toward two societies, one white, one black—separate and unequal...the most fundamental (cause of the riots) is the racial attitude and behavior of white Americans toward black Americans...Race and prejudice has shaped our history decisively; it now threatens to affect our future...White racism is essentially responsible for the explosive mixture which has been accumulating in our cities since the end of World War II.¹

In recent years, research in the behavioral sciences has documented the urgent need for both black and white children to develop more positive racial attitudes. The Clarks study shows that the Black child by the age of five is a mark of inferior status.² The Moreland studies reveal that Black children prefer white playmates and white dolls.
This indicates that a preference for whites by children of both races develops early.\(^3\)

Research shows that most black children not only express negative racial attitudes and rejection of self, but that they also tend to have low concepts of themselves. Studies conducted by Banks show that most black children not only express negative self-evaluation and racial attitudes but that they often express hostility toward whites.\(^4\) Respect for others, regardless of race, creed, economic status, or national origin, reflects a central tenet of 'American democratic ideology'. The schools have a major responsibility to help children develop racial attitudes that are consistent with our democratic ideals.

**Statement of the Problem**

This racial blind spot, the omission of the black experience, in our educational system, has created some problems of great magnitude in the schools across the nation. One of the manifestations of these problems is that educators have been pressured by demands of black students to implement the teaching of black history. The problem of including a black curriculum in the schools has become so great that the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have taken steps to do something about this problem. Their findings show the need for a constructive black studies curriculum.
In December of 1966, the National Educational Association held a national conference in Washington D.C. and conducted workshops with leading educators and textbook publishers in an effort to resolve some of the basic problems involved in creating a realistic multi-ethnic curriculum. One of the major findings was the difficulty of securing adequate teaching materials needed to implement changes in the course of study. A scarcity of materials was acknowledged to be the prime obstacle in the path of immediate implementation of Black history in the curriculum. Until this time, only a few of the producers of text materials had anticipated the social changes which were taking place. They did not realize the urgent need for black history teaching tools.

In January of 1967, a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers in Washington, D.C. convened. The title of the conference was "Integrated Education." Here, more attention was devoted to the social aspects of the problem of a black curriculum than to the solution of curriculum needs. The historical significance of black pride in integrated education was emphasized. It was concluded that the total teaching system must reflect the multi-ethnic composition of the country.

Since that time, several state and municipal governments have made the teaching of black history mandatory. Unfortunately, the lack of adequate curriculum materials
and trained teachers in the subject-area have stymied the progress of implementing the subject in many school systems.

At the present time in the Springfield schools, Springfield, Massachusetts 1971-1972, this author has found that dissension still exists between black and white students and in the community. There is very little effort to introduce the black students to an effective Black History program. The only history that is set aside for black students is during Black History Week in February of each year. When this 'token gesture' is over, the schools return to business as usual. Many of the contributions of blacks to this country are not in the standard textbooks of the Springfield schools. The vast majority of teachers follow these standard textbooks and know very little about the black experience. Apparently well meaning, a substantial number of teachers manifest tendencies toward racist behavior. This behavior seems to stem from lack of exposure in dealing with the problems of students who are from different backgrounds.

This kind of attitude about the Negro is still embedded in the thinking of most teachers in the Springfield School System. Black students enter this system and are taught negative attributes about themselves and their people. How can one expect these students to have a positive attitude about education? Many black students feel as if they are
outcasts and have nothing to offer this country. They are unable to take pride in American democracy because it does not include a significant Black historical background. There are no constructive Black experience courses in any of the junior high or high schools in the Springfield School System. Another case in point is that the elementary schools are still segregated except for a few blacks that have moved to white neighborhoods. These few Blacks do not form a majority.

The junior high schools began busing students in 1969, and the vast majority of the Black students were, and still are, bused to a school which is located about two miles from Winchester Square in Springfield, Mass. The school, Van Sickle Junior High, is mostly white; most of these white students are the children of blue-collar workers. Possibly because of this, most of the white students at this school generate animosity toward the educational system in this society.

Purpose of this Study

It is now recognized that Black people have played a positive role in history since the dawn of civilization. Black people's contributions have been relatively ignored by historians, and his face has rarely appeared in history textbooks. Even Paul Rever's famous drawing of the Boston Massacre portrays a battle exclusively among whites, despite the fact that Negroes were present. One black
leader, Chrispus Attucks, was among the first five American martyrs.

The distortion of the Negro's past has always had a purpose. The assertion that the Negro has no past worth mentioning is basic to the theory that he has no humanity worth defending. Deliberate misinformation has been used to justify slavery and discrimination. The Richmond Enquirer of 1851 went to great lengths to prove that:

"...No such thing as a Negro government ever existed in Africa." The writer apparently was ignorant of the accomplishments of the powerful Songhay Empire in West Africa before 1492, and its famed University of Timbuctu that taught literature, law and surgery to students from Africa, Europe and Asia.

These distortions of black history did not end with slavery or remain the exclusive property of Southerners. The Growth of the American Republic by Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager gave this view:

As for Sambo, whose wrongs moved the abolitionists to wrath and tears, there is some reason to believe that he suffered less than any other class in the South from its "peculiar institution." The majority of the slaves were adequately fed, well cared for, and apparently happy. Although brought to America by force, the incurably optimistic Negro soon became attached to the country, and devoted to his "white folks."

In light of the foregoing distortions, the primary purpose of this study is to present the truth about black
history in the classroom. The curriculum will consist of three parts: 1. Music identity collage concept; 2. Historical drama; 3. Social implications through drama. Before a teacher can guide a student's learning experiences in any area of social knowledge, he must possess a rather sophisticated grasp of the content. For example, if a teacher is teaching music and drama, he must be able, not only to teach from the text, but he must be able to add materials that include the experiences of the major contributions of musicians and actors or thespians that are not in the textbooks.

In many instances, the teacher is not aware of his negative disposition towards blacks. A unit taught by a teacher who has an unfavorable attitude toward blacks may be more harmful than helpful to children. Unconsciously, the teacher may convey to the students his lack of interest, respect, and appreciation for the black experience. It is not suggested that a teacher has to be free of racial prejudices before he can successfully teach the black experience, but he should examine and clarify his biases so that he is sufficiently aware of them. By doing this, the teacher will less likely convey negative attitudes and beliefs as factual truths to be mastered and believed by students.

Because the teacher's attitude in the education of children with different backgrounds from his own is so
important, librarians are concentrating on providing the school with a professional collection of books about Black life and culture. These collections include not just sociological treatises full of statistics, but books that reflect the attitudes and aspirations of children in the inner city.6

A teacher may develop more feeling and understanding from reading such books as: 1. *The Poetry of the Negro* by Langston Hughes and Anna Bontemps; 2. *On Being Negro in America* by Saunder Redding; or 3. *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin; than from struggling through some of the more technical presentations and analyses of the American problem or how it relates to the Black people.

In teaching the Black experience curriculum, it is essential that the teacher make his biases explicit so that students can accept them for what they are. Therefore, the elements of the curriculum advocated will have the following specific purpose:

1. To present a positive identity for black students in the public school.

2. To provide white students with a better knowledge of exposure to the black experience.

3. To encourage teachers with a curriculum model to encourage others to experiment with it as it relates to their courses.

4. To stimulate the administration to incorporate a similar curriculum throughout the Springfield School System.

5. To urge institutions to use this study in teacher training and understanding the Black experience.
Content of Study

The main content of this study will be based upon a proven curriculum in music and drama. The courses will be set up in a manner that will enable students to achieve success early in their classroom experiences. The main theme will be the incorporation of the valuable contributions of the Black artist. The music literature in the Springfield School omits the contributions of Samuel Taylor, a Black English composer, George Bridgetower, composer, violinist, James Bland, composer of Southern songs, and William Grant Still. Also omitted are W. C. Handy, father of the blues, Duke Ellington, noted jazz composer and great bandleader, William L. Dawson, spiritual arranger, the world renown conductor, Dean Dixon, Hazel Scott, pianist, Leontyne Price, opera, Grace Bumbry, opera and Ella Fitzgerald; as for thespians, there are Ira Alderridge, Charles Gilpin, Canada Lee, Sidney Poitier, Ruby Dee, Diana Sands, Ethel Waters, and many others who are not in the textbooks depicting music and drama in courses in the public schools of Springfield, Massachusetts.

This kind of integration must be implemented into the school systems because the American Negro will be living tomorrow with the very people against whom he is struggling today.

In the struggle for national independence one can talk about liberation now and integration later, but in the struggle for racial justice
in a multiracial society where the oppressor and the oppressed are both "at home," liberation must come through integration.7

Therefore, the Black identity must come through an integrated curriculum that will show his contributions to this country as well as any other group of people in America. Once this is accomplished, the cry will be for a better America for all its people.

The need is for innovative education in our school system. In America, this means that a better America will be one which will benefit not some alone but all citizens; so long as there is starvation and joblessness in the midst of abundance, we are inviting deluge. All education, whether children or adults, is important and necessary because it makes for an enlightened mind for unbiased impulses. These are essential because without them discrimination may not be done away with at all and barriers to opportunity may never be destroyed.

Social Implications

The social implications of music and drama have had a tremendous impact on the social life of American people - white and black. The elimination of race conflict is a task of social engineering. But what of education?

It is often said that our school systems must make themselves responsible for ending race prejudice, and attempts have been made to achieve tolerance by special instruction. This is of great importance, but we should be quite clear about the limit of its effectiveness;
otherwise, in the end we shall cry that we were betrayed because it has not succeeded.  

This study will advocate that incorporating the black experience can succeed in the school systems with a positive curriculum that will depict these circumstances in our social society.

If we are to make good use of the great powers of education in combating racism, two goals should be kept clearly distinct. On the one hand, it is desirable to teach in the regular social studies the facts of race and of the contributions of different races to our civilization. On the other hand, it is necessary to help children to understand the mutual interdependence of different groups; it is necessary to encourage comparisons of our social conditions which are better than ours as well as those that are worse. It is necessary that they be taught to think of unsatisfactory conditions not as inescapable facts of life but as ones which with enough effort can be done away with. Only through such education can school instruction lay the basis for melioration of race relations.

The program that will prevail against racism is termed 'making democracy work'. If it is to be achieved in America, it will be the result of a mutually supporting in-group change. This change is tremendously difficult, but if we know the direction in which we move, we can resolve to pay the necessary costs of change.
Our founding fathers believed that a nation could be administered without creating violence. It is up to us to prove that they were not mistaken.\textsuperscript{9}

Thus, this study is advocating not only a positive change in the public school curriculum, but a change in the social attitudes as well.

Every experience of race is finally a personal experience, but the assumption of any community is that personal experiences may be articulated and, thereby, shared. Sharing leads to understanding of the other, but it involves a better understanding of self.

The purpose of my study and proposed curriculum guide is to show the reader that students can be more honest about their feelings and their complexities, and recognize that their responses and attitudes when confronted by the facts of race are a peculiar combination of the particular and the general. Their attitudes are uniquely theirs, but they are very like the humorous responses of others.
Chapter II
MUSIC CURRICULUM FOR THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

The phrase, 'Rock Revolution', may sound like a metaphor or hyperbole; it is neither a figure of speech nor a rhetorical exaggeration. The phrase characterizes what has occurred in American music in the nineteen sixties that being a complete unpending of the pop music scene. To mention a few examples, Pablo Casals termed it "poison put to sound" while Frank Sinatra damned it as "a rancid smelling aphrodisiac." However, cries of frustration such as a St. Louis, Missouri radio station demonstrated when it smashed stacks of rock and roll discs over the air, and repeated prophecies of rock's early demise proved futile. At this time, the historically evident Black rhythm and blues was flourishing and was influencing the emergence of the Elvis Presley rockabilly movement and later, Bob Dylan and folk rock. Concurrently, in Europe Beatlemania was the overwhelming craze and would soon proceed to enundate the American teenagers.

When the Rock Revolution first manifested itself in the mid-nineteen fifties, it was dismissed as an aberration and abomination. Today, we have soul, raga rock, and psychedelic rock as well as an influx of exotic
instruments, electronic sounds, and magnetic tape music, all rattling the rafters of the entire music world.

For the first time in the history of popular music, canons of criticism are developing. Just as there has long been a phalanx of concert and jazz critics, pop music now has an under-thirty group of reviewers whose work appears regularly in rock publication like: "Crowdaddy," "Rolling Stone," "Cheetah," and "Eye," and is beginning to find space in "The New Yorker," "Esquire," "Life," "Vogue," and other over-thirty periodicals.

Rock is a collage, capable of absorbing the most diverse styles and influences, such as folk, blues, bluegrass, jazz, soul, country and western, rhythm and blues, motion picture themes, broadway show tunes, Indian ragas, baroque, tape, computer and chance music.

There is an increasing crossover between popular song-writing and serious composition. Rock is reaching an audience once imperious to and snobbish about pop music and rock and roll. Whereas the college crowd once went for jazz, folk, and symphony, it is now buying rock records and supporting rock groups.

The traditional tension between generations has grown to a point where the gap is almost like that between classes in a revolutionary era, primarily because the teeny-boppers, flower children, hippies and yippies all represent something more than mere rebellion against
over-thirty values. Condemning the supermaterialism, duplicity and hypocrisy of the older generation, they are raising the banner of a new ideology embodying communal showing, nonviolence, plain talk and equality. This is the first song culture, not only for under-thirty, but of and by under-thirty.

This data is important to a black experience curriculum in music in the public schools. Why? Historically, the immediate origin of rock antedates the white groups of today and even Bill Haley and His Comets. Unknown Black groups were recording for an Atlantic label that were putting out so-called race records. An unknown group, predominately Black, called "The Chords" recorded a song entitled "Sh-boom" and it was a hit for Atlantic records. Following, Mercury Records recorded the same song with a white group, "The Crewcuts," and the song became a hit and remained on the hit parade through the summer of 1954, causing music business pros to sit up and wonder whether a new sound was on the way in.

This opens up one mechanism for implementing a significant aspect of the black experience in the public schools because the music of today is what the youth want incorporated in their school curriculum. The point is that youth wants to work and understand music from their own perspective and from what they would like a music curriculum to be for self-gratification. Therefore, the music of the youth, the pop scene, should be
implemented for study in the public schools in addition to the classics of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, and the other so-called great composers.

Popular songs have woven themselves into the very fabric of life in this country, and they are extricably bound up with memories of most Americans. They have served to crystalize a feeling of national identity, and to provide a common bond for otherwise discordant groups. In this urbanized society, the popular song has assumed the function once performed by the attitudes, aspirations and daydreams of the essentially inarticulate masses. Indeed, popular music has a great deal in common with folk art. It agrees with the folk music of the world in combining such characteristics as monotony of rhythm, simplicity of melody, distinctness of tone color, and the spirit of improvisation.

By far the most significant and influential group in popular songs has been the Black. Not only has he served as subject for hundreds of songs, but his spirit and mood are evident in innumerable others. It is through song that the personality of the Black has been most richly revealed. The happy-sad "blues," which grew out of the spirituals and plantation songs of the nineteenth century, express the complex overtones of feeling in a people who from necessity learned to laugh within the spheres of their sorrow.
In the music world today, the influence of the Black in music is being felt in all phases of the arts. The Black has played one of the largest roles in the history of pop music in this country, both as a subject and as a shaping force. The Black influence really became a power in music after 1950, when in the form of "Rhythm and Blues" and "Rock and Roll," the influence of the Black on hit songs generally became more pronounced than ever before.8

The cult of popular music has now, in the seventies, become very active among young people, teenagers predominately. They have become so absorbed in this "Rock" music until it is now a part of their culture. The radio stations, which were playing the popular music of the fifties and sixties that related to the older generation who liked the music of the Boston Pops, Henry Mancini, Mantovani, and others, changed their format. Due to the fact that nearly eighty percent of the records are purchased by teenagers, the radio stations began to cater to this audience. Thus, the "Rock or Hard Rock" became respectable and legitimate, and this legitimacy was solidified when famous groups such as the Boston Pops began playing the songs of the Beatles and other known rock groups.9

One of the last bastions in American society to accept the legitimacy of the Rock pop music has been the music
intellectuals in American schools. In the Springfield schools, many students drop out of music the first semester while many others stay only for the credit that is mandatory for graduation. Although, there are many aspects to be looked into in order to remedy this concern about music in the public schools, one effective remedy is through the aesthetic experience.

Aesthetics

The aesthetic experience is the ability to utilize one's senses: seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and tasting. One learns, most profoundly, about one's senses by using them. One learns, most profoundly, about a bird not by knowing how to spell bird, but rather by seeing, touching, and hearing a bird. By the usage of one's senses, new insights and understanding are gained. One has a greater awareness of what color red is by seeing red. One may thoroughly understand peace, or in contrast to war, by being peaceful. Presently, human development is out of touch with being human. We have suppressed our senses, and by doing so have eliminated a valuable learning source. We have forgotten how to look and listen and instead we close our eyes and quote.

It is important for an individual student to be creative, and to deal with unknown as well as the known. One only has to read a chapter, follow a formula, or trace a drawing and he can be filled with information.
There are books written on countless topics elucidating ideas and expounding data. Man and his environment have been qualified, analyzed, and ultimately stylized into neat, little categories. Once consumed, this wealth of information, unless synthesized, will result in the individual becoming a repository for fragmentary knowledge. These fragments or particles of information have no relationship to one another except for the 'container' in which they lie. Creatively it is the seeking and altering of divergencies. It can initiate metamorphosis of the fragments, can turn them into new elements and/or can unite them. This process and ultimate achievement makes the individual the subject, a profound part of the information, rather than merely endure his life.

The role of education is to provide an environment that will encourage and support the growth of an individual. By aesthetic experience, the role of the learner is no longer that of a computer, but instead it becomes that of a decision maker. He chooses from the environment those experiences that will encourage and support his growth. His goal is no longer that of becoming a 'particle of information' but rather his growth is aligned with the discovery process. The student seeks answers to the questions he writes. An aesthetic experience, by encompassing both the mental as well as physical qualities inherent in man's nature, is a learning
experience that is of undeniable value. Therefore, the
growth of an individual can be encouraged and supported
by an aesthetic curriculum.14

The aesthetic musical experience can be important in
incorporating the black experience in the schools.
Music and art can add new dimensions of experience for
some students. Opportunities for self-expression and
for the acquisition of knowledge and skills are provided
as children become acquainted with books, music, and the
use of a variety of art media.15 These areas of curric-
ulum can make possible a wide range of vicarious
experiences involving people, places, situations, and
feelings.

Through the use of paint, crayons, chalk, and other
art materials, children develop an awareness of color,
form, and design. No attempt is made to teach children
to draw or to use patterns to produce an end result.
Each child is encouraged to use materials in ways that
are meaningful to him. Songs, rhythmic response to music,
and the use of rhythm instruments to interpret movement
and feelings provide additional means for self-expression.
No effort is made to establish stereotyped movement in
rhythmic response; the child is encouraged to respond
as his senses mandate in terms of the music.16

Presently, the students at Van Sickle are not sensi-
tive to a traditional music curriculum in the school
which consists of the study of the traditional classical
composers and their symphonic and sacred writings. Many students become bored and 'turned off' before their ears have had a chance to listen and understand the music. The music of their own culture or subculture is denied approval or acceptance as authentic art. They are made to feel ashamed of the music of their background and teachings in the home. This type of curriculum will not work for the student in the seventies because he is aware of the fact that the musical component of his culture is accepted and played in auditoriums and theatres across the world. It is time for his culture to be brought into the classroom experience as authentic music.

The Black Creative Arts

The Black attainments in America's creative and artistic fields are broad and the contributions are many. The successful Black in the creative arts expresses the experience of his race, for much of the art of the American Black derives from and reflects the precariousness of his position in American society. If protest is the bedrock of all artistic endeavors, it is all the more so in respect to the art of the American Black. (Since this study is limited to the Black in music and drama, it will deal with the Black in music in this chapter and dramatic implications in chapters three and four.)

America's music has been enriched by the contributions of Paul Robeson, William Dawson, Dean Dixon, Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and
Harry Belafonte, as well as Todd Duncan, William Warfield, George Shirley, Dorothy Manor, Roland Hayes, and Ann Brown. Marian Anderson was the first American Black to sing at New York's Metropolitan Opera. Since her performance, Leontyne Price, Mathewilda Dodds, Grace Brumby, and Robert McFerrin have followed. The contributions of these Blacks in music must be included within the music curriculum of public schools for black identity and white identity.

The renowned composer, conductor, and performer, David Amram,\(^\text{17}\) states that: "the message is that music is for all people and that everyone can make music and enjoy it at his own level of understanding. The 'walls' between classical music, folk music, and jazz are artificial. The true musician is involved in all phases of music because the 'wall' makes each a better musician and person."

"I am one of those in music who has had their life changed by the jazz experience. Working with those in jazz has made me a better conductor, musician, a better person than I ever would have been. Jazz musicians love music. They - Negroes - are open to any kind of music. I find jazz musicians are the least narrow-minded of any. They are interested in playing with other people and have other people play with them.\(^\text{18}\)

**Historical Significance**

One white person has written: "Just as in childhood, I envied Negroes for what seemed to me their superior masculinity, so I envy them today for what
seems to me their superior physical grace and beauty. I have come to value physical grace very highly, and now I am capable of aching with all my being when I watch a Negro couple on the dance floor, or a Negro playing baseball or basketball."19

Why envy the Black's grace, his physical skills? Why not ask what it is that hinders grace and physical skill in the young of America. It can be said that young people today are desperately trying to imitate and become a part of this rhythm and physical grace of Black people.20 The music curriculum in the Springfield Schools are still following a standard classical musical format. The youth are hungry for a modern musical aesthetic experience in Black and white music.

In the beginning of the era for modern Black music, he came as a thief in the night. The thief knew that with impunity he could show his face in the market place, sell his loot, and with his head in the clouds, would only duck and whisper and hear, see and speak no evil. Thus Elvis Presley came strumming a guitar, 'ripping off' fame and fortune as he scrunched his way sowing seeds of a new rhythm and style in the white souls of the white youth of America. The aesthetic need of youth was no longer satisfied with the antiseptic white shoes and white songs of Pat Boone.21

During this period of ferment and beginnings, which coincided with the historic bus boycotts of Montgomery,
Alabama, and a rising Black consciousness, somewhere in the universe a gear, a new realization gained popularity; Bing Crosbyism, Perry Comoism, and Dinah Shoreism had been rejected and the creative vanguard of white youth recognized it.  

Song and dance are, perhaps, only a little less of age than man himself. It is with his music and dance, the recreation through art of the rhythms suggested by and implicit in the tempo of his life and cultural environment, that man purges his soul of the tensions of daily strife and maintains his harmony in the universe. Popular music of urban Black, which was known as rhythm and blues before the whites appropriated and distilled it into a product they called Rock and Roll, is the basic ingredient, which the Beatles of Liverpool drove their hordes of ultra-feminine fans into catatonia and hysteria.

In view of the historical data and the contemporary reality, the music of the Black should be implemented in the public schools. Because the classroom teacher can be called the kingpin of the educational process, he must ultimately be responsible for the effective incorporation of Black music in the curriculum. The music curriculum should incorporate the musical contributions of all ethnic groups and especially the contributions of black people, the vanguard in American music.

Beauty, to be beauty, must be appraised on its merits, not for any possible relationships to a future reward. A
woman, a painting or a sonata, may well be associated with sensual satisfaction, but that association is not necessary. Beauty can exist irrespective of any functional value. Beauty cannot be beauty in a true human sense if there is some other 'payoff' which is making it 'beautiful.' The animal considers only the potential fulfillment of its hunger, water for its thirst, etc.; 'beauty' in an objective or goal contributes nothing to the appeal. The appreciation of beauty often requires quiet, perceptive contemplations. Aesthetic pleasure is more profound than sensory stimulation. Beauty is more than the sum of its parts. It is an organic unity deprived from underlying order and harmony. It is an abstract integration which is privately perceived and subconsciously blended within the individual psyche. Beauty is recognized only by man.

Thus the ecstasy experienced from listening to the last movement of Mahler's Second or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony transcends specific sensations and satisfactions, if the audience has the language or largo of the music form. It is the supreme instantaneous emotions of supreme exultation. Therefore, the aesthetic experience for children in music, drama, and art is very pertinent for their educational growth, not only in terms of cognitive awareness, but in terms of self-awareness.

The music curriculum in this study is a mandate for using the aesthetic concept for music that will facilitate
self-awareness and self-identity for all students involved. The curriculum is outlined in its various phases. Each phase will be described or explained for any lay teacher to use in his or her classroom. (See conclusion for the results of students', parents', teachers', and administrative reactions to the curriculum).

Most inner-city students have never been exposed to these forms of music in their homes, and attempts to teach it from the onset of the school year produces only negative reactions from the students. The inner-city student cannot relate to this fragmented information that has no significance to his lifestyle for him. Consequently, he has no reason to relate to the curriculum.

The student must be exposed to the music of his culture through a classroom context. Once the student is made aware of an appreciation for the music of his lifestyle, then he can be motivated to seek a deeper grasp of all the phases of music.

The music curriculum advocated in this study is implemented to achieve the following goals:

1. To make the students aware of the many and varied sounds that their ears can detect and identify (both music and noise).

2. To develop their creative imagination by translating the sound that they hear to a particular shape, size, and color on construction paper, canvas or other material.
3. To aid the students in developing dormant creative talent and artistic ability through sound paintings.

4. To develop an awareness of form, color, rhythm, and harmony with elements found in both music and art.

5. To stimulate the students' musical and artistic imagination.

6. To have fun with music and color.

7. To give the students a personal uplift.

By implementing this curriculum through the use of popular songs as well as the classics, we will assume that pop music is very relevant to students of today in the public schools. In relationship to white life, popular songs furnish valuable insights into the role of the mother in the twentieth century American society. These songs indicate that the mother was regarded with an almost religious adoration until about 1925. It is likely that during the early years of the 20th century, she served as a symbol for vanishing virtues of the old agrarian society.25

Furthermore, popular songs have had a profound influence on national attitudes toward the American Black. On the one hand, they have contributed to the stereotyped Black, carefree, improvident, ne'er-do-well. On the other hand, they have provided a medium of expression for Black entertainers, many of whom have been major influences in American society.
The Curriculum

The curriculum can be implemented in various ways to achieve effective results. The method used in this study is based around the collage concept. There are four six-week periods in the school year, and a different musical setting and instruction can be implemented during each stage. The student begins in an elementary stage of studying basic music criteria and using his cultural experiences for classroom interpretation at the junior high level.

Each musical collage phase will be described in detail later in this chapter. A brief description of each phase is as follows:

**Phase One** - (six weeks) The student brings in material from the public media in order to create his own musical identity through the collage concept. This will allow each student an opportunity to present the music of his culture in the classroom. The instructor presents an atmosphere for the appreciation and understanding of different nationalities, and why the various nationalities view their music as being beneficial to their society.

**Phase Two** - (six weeks) The student will now build a second collage based upon the fundamentals of music. The instructor presents the notes, scales, musical terminology and a history of musical literature. The student will use his materials from the public media and attempt to depict the various notes of music. Each student is assigned a specific musical note on the staff and he is to build his
collage related to this note. For example, if the student is assigned the note "C," he may create a staff showing this note on his collage and then incorporate pictures of cars, candy, cable, chicken, or whatever he wishes using the letter "C." This allows the student not only to learn a note, but also gives him something to identify with when remembering the notes as well.

**Phase Three** - (six weeks) The student is now ready to experiment with finding his own aesthetic experience in music. The instructor will provide paints, brushes, and an inexpensive easel, preferably about twelve inches square. The student will paint his collage at this stage. The method will be to utilize any composer, singer or instrumentalist with whom he can identify, and paint his life or career on the collage. The musician may be modern, classical, or pop. The selection is left up to the student.

**Phase Four** - (six weeks) At this stage, the student is, or should be, ready to create his own, inner self-expression in music. The paints and easel are still provided by the instructor. Hopefully, every criteria that has been presented in a classroom context will appear in the student's collage at this point, depending on age, maturity, history and skill. The instructor will provide various kinds of music played on phonograph records and the students are to draw whatever they feel that is meaningful to them as individuals. This will develop an awareness of form, color, rhythm, and harmony with elements found in both
music and art. It will prod the students' creative imagination and enable him to have fun with color and music; most important, it will contribute to the students a personal uplift.

Description of the Course

Phase One. Self-identity through a collage is important in this first phase of the curriculum because it will allow for the personal aesthetic experience of the students involved. The collage is a display of pictures depicting whatever is relevant to the students. By having the students bring in pictures of their own music idols, they will feel that they have offered something to the class. This will make them feel important or give them a sense of belonging to the school environment.

The majority of Black students at Van Sickle identify with such music groups as The Jackson Five, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, etc.; just as the white students identify with The Osmond Brothers, The Partridge Family, Carly Simon, Carole King, and so on. As a result, the collage will offer something to all the students in the classroom.

The Method. The students bring pictures from various art medias into the classroom. Many materials can be provided by the teacher by bringing in old magazines and newspapers, preferably the music section. Each student prepares his own kit for collage reproduction. The kit is a large portfolio of a collection of pictures of famous
artists in music. No attempt is made to teach children how to use his pictures on the collage or to produce an end result. Each child is encouraged to use materials in ways that are meaningful to him. If he wishes to work with others on his project in this phase, he is encouraged to do so or speak freely. The music in this phase, only are records that the students bring from home.

Song and rhythmic response (dancing) to the music is encouraged, and at times the use of instruments, i.e., bongos, congas, or drums, are used to interpret movement and feelings, providing additional means of self-expression. No effort is made to establish stereotyped movement in rhythmic response; the child is encouraged to respond as he sees fit in terms of the music. Children learn to discriminate between differences in pitch, tempo, and intensity by spontaneity.

Childrens' attention span at the junior high school level is very short. Therefore, a breakdown of a forty-five minute period for this phase in music should be as follows: a history of the beginnings of music - fifteen minutes; exercises in group interaction, role playing, and talking to each other - fifteen minutes; and independent study to work on individual collages - fifteen minutes. The students will then get to know each other better and understand and develop friendships while making personal contacts that would not be possible under normal school conditions.
The author feels that one of the most important things that the curriculum advocates is no assigned seats. Let the students sit where they are comfortable at first, and through group interaction, they will sit with whomever they wish in order to get their work done. In the beginning of this phase, whites sat with whites and blacks sat with blacks; but as they began to feel each other out and discover that there were things in common for the production of a good collage (A reward was given each six weeks of the best one created, judged by the principal of the school.), they came together for artistic and personal relationships.

When a student felt that his collage was finished, it was put on the billboard for display, and the excitement generated by other students was intensified. That is to say, each student would get ideas from the ones already completed to make his collage a better one. This kind of competitiveness, which even the lowest achiever could do, really increased the students' interest in music.

Phase Two. This phase should begin about the seventh week of the school year. The students are now less interested with the self-identity collages and want to go a step further. Following, the instructor presents worksheets on the fundamentals of music. This will include the study of the notes and scales. A piano should be available for playing the notes as the students are required to sing them. Then they are taught how to write the notes on music paper.
Now the students are to amass material from the public media depicting the fundamentals of music. Thus, each student is assigned a specific note from the grand staff as his own expertise. He is to draw this note on a staff on his canvas and put pictures depicting the name of the note on his collage. For example, a student has the note "A" on the second space of the music staff, treble clef. He is to write the note where it belongs and decorate the rest of the collage with pictures starting with the letter "A", such as apple, ape, apricot, etc.; until the collage is a thing of beauty to the student. This process is continued with all other students until all the notes are depicted in collage form on the classroom wall. Along with the formal mastering of the fundamentals of music, the student can glance at the classroom wall or billboard for help whenever needed to learn the notes. The class time is broken down as follows: formal instruction - fifteen minutes; playing and singing simple songs and the scales - fifteen minutes; creating the collage while relaxing to pop records - fifteen minutes. This latter method will allow the students an opportunity to have fun while learning music. It will also give them a chance to work together on projects that will enable them to get along together and know each other as human beings.

**Phase Three.** This stage is initiated during about the thirteenth week of school. The students are now ready for something new and different in the concept of studying
music. The formal structure is for the teaching of the life of famous men in music. The instructor will have to furnish material on the lives of black composers not listed in the standard musical literature. One of the best sources for material on Black composers can be found in the Russel Adams book, "Great Negroes, Past and Present," (pages 171 through 190). There have been Black musicians and composers from the time of Beethoven until the present. George P. Bridge-tower was a violinist and friend of Beethoven. Samual Coleridge Taylor wrote the famous work "Hiawatha" and taught at the Croyden Conversatory of Music in London. He was the first black composer to make a living entirely from his compositions and public appearances. James Bland composed "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" in 1878, and it became the official state song of Virginia. Such information about Black composers is not in the Springfield schools' music texts. Therefore, the instructor should be versatile enough to deviate from the text and present the contributions of these composers to all the students in his classes.

In order to keep the class stimulating, the students are provided with paints, brushes, and a canvas. They are to depict and paint the story of one of the composers as the serious music is played. His canvas will consist of a written report or an article from the news media about the life and works of a composer, singer, or instrumentalist. He then uses the paints to create the collage in the image that he imagines the artist is like.
This instructor used paints and colors on a canvas that was eraseable. This allowed the students to correct mistakes and start again with the paintings until they were satisfied with their work. Many of the students' works are still on display at Van Sickle Junior High School.

**Phase Four.** This phase covers the last six weeks of the school year, and the students have experienced freedoms that will now allow some of them anyway to work independently in the classroom. Almost everyone should be working together and have good feelings about each other at this point. Paints, brushes, and canvases are still provided by the instructor. Various kinds of pop music, classical music, electronic sounds, tapes, and sound effects are all played at different intervals on phonograph records provided by the students and the instructor. The students are to paint whatever they feel meaningful to them as individuals. They are to develop form, color, rhythm, and harmony with elements found in both music and art.

Some students painted the sounds of cars crashing, train whistles, running water, explosions, and many other types of pictures. This soon became a game whereby students brought their own canvases and painted sound colors in music. This created such excitement in the music department until other music teachers began to use this method. The principal of the Van Sickle Junior High School, Mr. John Shea, presented an award for picture of the week.
(The Springfield schools' music supervisor presented a workshop of the collage concept to all the music teachers in the Springfield system.)

The class breakdown was as follows: formal instruction - fifteen minutes; paintings and independent study - thirty minutes. The students were also taken on field trips to WHYN Channel 40 television station in Springfield and to visit the Moog synthesizer electronic music machine at Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass. These trips allowed the students to attend local and professional activities as a group. Also, these excursions enabled the students to have a mixing experience in an unfamiliar setting which was a positive factor for the teacher and the students.

The important thing is for junior high school students to like and enjoy school. It should be a place for learning in a happy medium, especially in music. The classroom should be a place where students can feel comfortable and get to know each other as people. Lastly, the main force of implementing this kind of atmosphere depends upon the attitude of the teacher working in the classroom. He has to be the catalyst for creating the classroom curriculum and making it work.
Chapter III

BLACK HISTORICAL DRAMA AT VAN SICKLE JR. HIGH SCHOOL

Van Sickle Jr. High School, in September of 1971, had a student body consisting of thirteen hundred students, forty percent of whom were Black, fifty eight percent were white, and two percent were Puerto Rican.

There were no courses that included the Black Experience in a positive manner. The social studies department presented tidbits of Black History during Black History Week. The majority of the teachers have little knowledge of Black History except for negative images associated with such as the Slave Trade, King Cotton, Jim Crow Laws, and the present Black Revolution.

Most of the Black students have no positive image of themselves. The expression 'Black is Beautiful' came as a shock and was regarded with disbelief by the Black students. They had never, or hardly ever, been taught about Blacks like: Monroe Trotter, Madam C. J. Walker, Carter G. Woodson and Elijah McCoy, to name a few.¹

The main problem was how to create a curriculum that would be serviceable to the students and yet not conflict with the administering of the processes. The author was approached by the principal of the school and asked to create a drama club for extra-curricular activities after school. At the first meeting of the drama club, called the Van Sickle Players, thirty Blacks and sixteen white students
appeared. The question was raised, "What is the purpose of theatre?" In order to answer that question, one must resort to research.

Since its founding, theatre has mirrored the life customs, mores and habits of people. It has recorded human endeavor. Its purpose is to entertain and instruct. Morals and customs have actually been changed as a result of religious, social, and human complications in the theatre.\(^2\)

Theatre has never been the sole property of any one group of people. It has been found among American Indians, South Sea Islanders, Australian Aborigines, Central Africans, Greeks, and Romans. The theatre, in short, is the living expression of that people, inextricably and inseparately intertwined with their present and past history.\(^3\) In America the theatre has reflected the society which has stood on Black people's shoulders, yet failed to acknowledge this fact. And these shoulders were strong ones.

Theatre in America was virtually nonexistent until the middle of the eighteenth century. Prior to that time the New World was being discovered, developed and violently disputed. This new World was a harsh, vast wilderness. Forests had to be felled, roads and cities built, crops planted. The Thirty Years' War and other conflicts had depleted Europe's manpower. To develop the New World the Europeans had but one place to turn for labor. That place was Africa.
The Europeans wrote in blood that savage crime known as chattel slavery. They dumped chained Black Africans into slave ship holds, transplanted them from the dark beauty of their homeland and denied them their family ties, traditions and cultural continuity. Black were sold into both Southern and Northern areas of the New World.

The American theatre has never reflected the real meanings of the times. "Cato" by Joseph Addison was one of the earliest plays to be shown to white America in 1749. On April 27, 1767, "The Prince of Parthia," said by many to be the first American play, was shown. The Black as subject matter was introduced to the American theatre in 1769. This was in "The Padlock," a comedy that had a West Indian slave named Mungo, who was a profane clown of little authenticity. Lewis Hallam played the role. In the words of the author, Sterling Brown, "Hallam fathered a long line of comic Negroes in drama."4

In 1792, the play "The Yorker's Statagem" was shown. This dealt with the marriage between a white New Yorker and a West Indian mulatto. But this was followed in 1795 by Murdock's "The Triumph of Love," which introduced a shuffling, cackling, allegedly comic Black servant. "The Politicians" in 1797 continued this stereotype. The course was therefore established that was to lead the Black man to be represented on the American stage as something to be ridiculed and a creature to be denied human status.
At Van Sickle Jr. High School in January of 1970, Negro History Week was the talk of the school. All the teachers were requested to implement some form of a Black Experience criteria in their classes. The Van Sickle players wanted a vehicle which would "sock-it-to" the Van Sickle student body during Black History week.

With this background, the instructor began to interpret the history of Black people for Van Sickle Jr. High students through dramatic presentations. This created problems because the players could meet only once a week for one period. This was a period set aside for school activities, the last period on Wednesdays. The administrators were beseeched to appropriate a regular schedule for drama in the school. Their reply was that such a change would alter the function of the entire school program since it was during the middle of the school year.

Another problem was that most of the players were Black students who were bused to this school. In order to stay after normal school hours for rehearsals, a late bus run would have to be scheduled. The author described the situation to the central office, and finally the superintendent granted the late bus run. This led to the implementation of a daily rehearsal schedule.

The first vehicle that the author provided was his own play, "Black Culture Center in Heaven." The players really became excited over this play because it not only told of the history of Black people from ancient Africa to
the present, it also used a vernacular language that the students could relate and 'turn on to' in their own terminology.

When the play was presented during Black History Week, it had such an impact on the students and the administration that invitations were pouring in from other schools, requesting a presentation of the play to their student bodies. The positiveness of Black and white students working together in a production that had a Black theme created a positive feeling among the Black students in particular.

The remainder of the chapter will consist of an original play written and directed by the author, "Black Culture Center in Heaven." In addition, the play "Black Treasures," a reading exercise in Black History, will also be presented. Many plays were written by the author but the ones chosen for the student players were selected because they depicted normal Black experiences for to relate to in a positive manner. The plays were performed as shown below:

**Black Culture Center in Heaven:**
2. Duggan Jr. High School, April 2, 1971
4. University of Massachusetts, April 19, 1971
5. Holyoke Community College, April 25, 1971

**Black Treasures:**
Van Sickle Jr. High School Presents
"Black Culture Center in Heaven"

A One Act Play
Written and directed by Willie L. Williams

Fanfare: Williams
Blues
Theme: Williams

Trumpets: Thomas Joyal
          Robert Randall
          Michael Deliefde
          Michael Radawiec

Tympany: William
         Palazzi

Cymbalist: Michael
          Vandall

Cast of Characters (by appearance)

Demonstration leader .................. Valerie Bass
Simple .......................... Charles King
Gator ................................ Keith Flathers
Angel ................................ Donna Hughes
God ........................................ Mark Stevens
Joe Whiteman ......................... Steven Smith
Askia, the great ...................... Carlo Thomas
Menelik II .......................... Bruce Foggs
Estavanico ........................... Leon Jackson
DeSable ................................ Floy James
Smalls ................................ Rayford Hopper
Revels ................................ Robert Craig
McCoy .................................. Hubert Massey
Matzeliger ............................ Quintan Fowkes
Madam C. J. Walker .................. Karen Rucks
Mr. Trotter ............................ Eric Headly
Ida B. Wells .......................... Valerie Bass
Carter G. Woodson .................... Tony Wakens

Choreography: Darlene Bryant

Dancers: Jackie Epps  Valerie Bass  Art Work:
         Debra Walker  Karen Rucks  Ronald Watts
         Brenda Burt  Margeritte Hall  Steven Thomas
         Tyron Barnett  Sharon Long
Scene I

(The cast is seated throughout the audience and the demonstration leader, Valerie, bursts from the center of the curtain and shouts the following lines:

Valerie: Hey! All you angels out there. (Points) It's about time you recognized me for what I am... Black and Beautiful...if you can 'dig' where I'm coming from. Listen, Simple has been trying to get this across to all people on earth and they killed him...his beautiful soul came to heaven and he is still trying to get it together. He is preaching blackness to God and all the angels...are you with him?

Man: Hey sister, I'm with you all the way...talk on!

Valerie: Simple has shook up heaven so much until they called him the Martin Luther King up here! Man! He has white and black angels on his side...'can you dig it'?

All: Right on!

Valerie: The Lord told Simple to cool it, but that 'ain't' what's happening up here. We want to be recognized...we want a Black Culture Center in Heaven.

All: Right on!

Valerie: All right, let's shake up heaven and let them know that now is the time.

All: Now is the time!
Valerie: Demonstrate!

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Come together! (The cast begins to get out of their seats and go to the stage.)

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Simple will lead us!

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Come on up here!

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Shake up the prophets!

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Shake up the elders!

All: Now is the time!

Valerie: Shake up God!

(Thunder, lightning and rain) (Blackout)

Scene II

(Darkness) (A trumpet fanfare is heard)

Soothsayer: Hear ye, hear ye. One black angel by the name of Simple is causing a demonstration in heaven for a black culture center. All the angels, white and black, are calling for a hearing to bring order. The hearing has been granted and God will preside. He is still on the throne.

(Short pause)
(Gater and Simple enter from behind the curtain at the far right and left of the stage; they meet each other at the center.).

Gater: Simple, don't you think that you have carried this thing too far! What are you trying to do men, get us all thrown in hell. God ain't gonna go for this stuff.

Simple: Hey man, I didn't get my just dues on earth and it was promised to me in Heaven by the good book. Now, you with me or ain't you Gater?

Gater: Now Simple, you know that I'm with you all the way, but they got Joe Whiteman for the prosecution and he's tough.

Simple: He was a tough lawyer on earth with everything going for him. I want to see how he does when the odds are even. Yeah, man, I'm going through with this thing...a black culture center in heaven or burn in hell. Can you dig it?

Gater: Oh hell, I'm not the best angel but I do believe in equal rights for all angels. Let's get it on!

Simple: Right on!

(Blackout)

(The scene is set up with a desk and chair for the Lord to preside at the far right of the stage. Simple and Joe Whiteman's chairs are facing the audience. They are next to the Lord's desk. All the players enter and take their places except the Lord. As the Lord enters, all stand and sit when the Lord is seated.)
Angel: This tribunal hearing is called to order. We need no Bible swearing in here for God is all powerful and he is a just God to all his servants. Will Mr. Joe Whiteman and Simple rise and face the Lord. (They both rise and face the Lord seated at his desk.)

Angel: Lord, these are the two gentlemen who called for this hearing and they shall be the main spokesmen here. The Lord nods approval.) Gentlemen, you may be seated. (Joe, Simple, and Gater whisper and finally Simple rises and faces the Lord.) (The Lord is looking over many papers on his desk. Silence. Then, he slowly looks up at Simple and begins to speak in a majestic manner.)

Lord: Simple, what is this I hear about you wanting a black culture center in heaven? What did you offer to the world besides slave labor?

Simple: I'm surprised at you, Lord, my people have done great things and made great contributions to mankind but the white folks didn't put it in the books.

Lord: Well, Joe Whiteman, what do you have to say? I entrusted you with the knowledge to write the books.

Joe: (Sarcastically) I wrote what happened, Lord.

Simple: Lord, I would like a hearing; I have before me witnesses from all stages of history who will testify.
Joe: Don't listen to him, Lord, I'm your chosen one.

Angel: The book says that every claimant shall have a hearing.

Lord: So be it, as it is written, it shall be done. The court will come to order.


Askia: Lord, I built Songhay into one of the most powerful African countries in the Sudan. I went to Egypt and studied trade, uniform weights and measures, government administration and religious tolerance. I returned to my country and instituted efficient collection of taxes and honesty in trade and commerce. I created the famed University of Sankere, where literature, law, and science were my main subjects of instruction located in the fabled city of Timbuctu. Students came from all over the world to study there. I had valuable salt mines and conquered all the nations around my kingdom. I ruled black and white nations. I ruled in peace for thirty-six years.

Lord: My, my, my, you were quite a fellow. Now, Mr. Menelik?

Menelik: My country has been a symbol for black people for over two thousand years. It is the only
country with a continuous record of independence. My kingdom started with the Queen of Sheba and her son, Menelik I. We had been a nation of tribes. I finally brought them together in 1868. The colonizers tried to take over the country, but I rallied all of Ethiopia behind me in a fierce battle with Italy. I left some 12,000 Italians killed and took over a thousand prisoners. We finally got peace in 1896. I outsmarted the colonizers of France, Britain, Russia, and Turkey. I kept the country unified until I died in 1913. Then Haile Selassie took over and is still governing the country. Ethiopia is still a great nation.

Angel: That is the truth, Lord.

Joe: I would like to object...

Simple: Objections over ruled; I'm not through yet! Let's go to early American history, that is, before the Mayflower jazz! I call Estavanico and Jean Batiste De Sable.

Angel: Gentlemen, come forth.

Lord: Well, well, well.

Estavanico: Your Grace, many African slaves accompanied the Spaniards on their explorations of the Americas from Florida to Mexico, Colorado and Arizona. I left for the new world with Pan- filo De Narvaez seeking gold and land. We
lost many men and by the time we reached Galveston, Texas, in the summer of 1528, we had only eight men out of a crew of 600. The Indians captured us and then there were only four of us. We discovered that we could heal the Indians by our medical knowledge. They set us free and we wandered all the way to California and met other Spanish explorers. With my experience, the captain led me on a search for the seven lost cities of gold. I accidentally led them to what is now Fairbanks, Arizona. No one, Lord, ever found the lost civite of gold, but they did settle a state to where I led them. It is now called Arizona.

Lord: Uncanny! You suffered much hardship; I do admire you. What about Mr. DeSable?

De Sable: I founded Chicago more than 150 years ago, but the city does little to commemorate my name. I came from Haiti and settled in New Orleans. I began to travel up the Mississippi River in the fur trading business. I founded a campsie near Lake Michigan and Chicago was born. I traded up in Canada and as far down as Peoria, Illinois. In 1800, I sold my land in Chicago to John Kinzie, who is reputed as the founder of Chicago. When the United States began disposing of the Northwest Territory, I could
see the handwriting on the wall. I left and settled in Missouri. I was buried in an unmarked grave on August 28, 1818. On October 25, 1968, in a ceremony marking the grave with granite stone, the state of Illinois recognized me as the founder of Chicago.

Lord: (Silence) Simple, this is incredible! Do you have more evidence?

Simple: Yes, your Grace, I do. I call Mr. Robert Smalls and Mr. Hiram Revels, Negroes in politics during the reconstruction period.

Angel: Gentlemen, come forth and be heard.

Smalls: I was born in slavery in Beaufort, South Carolina on April 5, 1839. I moved to Charleston and became quite familiar with its harbor. I learned navigation there. I knew every brink and shoal in Charleston harbor. I was working on a Confederate ship called "The Planter" when the Civil War broke out. One night, I conceived of a daring plan. You see, "The Planter" was a ship that hauled guns from Cole's Island to James Island. After a run, the captain and white crew would go ashore for merriment and only the slave crew were left behind. So, about four a.m. with my wife and family aboard I set "The Planter" underway. I knew that I was taking an awful chance but freedom was worth it. By the time the South
discovered who we were, we were heading for the Union forces and out of reach of the Confederate cannons. "The Planter" was turned over to the Union Army and I made pilot of another ship called "The Crusader." My ship routed the Southerners in many a battle and my daring exploits was a high point in the Civil War. Also, when the white captain panicked in the heat of battle, I took over the ship and led it to safety. For this, I was made a pilot in the United States Navy. After the war, I served in the House of Representatives in South Carolina and the State Senate. I served in Congress from 1875 to 1887. I advocated full civil rights bills for the Negro to own property and to enjoy full protection of the law.

Lord: You are a man after my own heart; give him a seat in the kingdom!

Angel: It shall be done as you have spoken, your Grace most high.

Joe: Now just a minute, your Grace, I demand a rebuttal.

Simple: Hey man, you'll get your chance. You wrote the book, now let me talk. Go on Mr. Revels.

Revels: Lord, I am a minister of your gospel. Let me explain...

Joe: Hey! What in hell does a preacher have to do with... excuse me, Lord.
Lord: Never mind him, Mr. Revels. I know what he's like; please go on.

Revels: Like I said, I am a minister. I was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1822. Negroes were forbidden to learn to read or write, so I left for Ohio and lived with a Quaker family. I learned to read and, later, graduated from Knox College, in Galesburg, Illinois. I preached your gospels in Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, and Kansas. When the Civil War broke out, I left the pulpit in Maryland to recruit Negro soldiers for the state militia. I followed the Union Army Scout and started churches, schools, and lectured to freedmen. I finally settled in Mississippi and completed the Senate term vacated by Jefferson Davis. I worked hard at building Alcorn College in Mississippi and, lastly, preached at a Methodist church in Indiana.

Simple: Your Grace, I would like to move over into science and industry; I want to cover as many areas as I can before this tribunal becomes bored with our achievements. You see, we have people in all fields of human and spiritual endeavor. I call Mr. Elijah McCoy and Mr. Jan Enrst Matzeliger.

Lord: Now, Simple, are you going to give me the real McCoy?
Simple: It may seem trite your Grace, but this is the honest to God truth. This is the real McCoy! Speak man!

McCoy: Yes sir, I am the real McCoy. Let me tell you how it all started. I was born in Canada in 1848. My parents were slaves who fled from Kentucky. They came back to the United States after the Civil War and settled in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

I have been fascinated with machines and tools all my life. In 1870, I turned my attention to machines in motion. I worked on this problem for two years. Finally, in the spring of 1873, I developed a small, oil filled container with a stop clock to regulate the flow of oil to the inwards of moving equipment. Now, this is important in American industry because the Reconstruction Period was quickly followed by a tremendous increase in the exploration of national resources. This period ushered in the machine age. The machine age was the harnessing of steam energy to complicated devices with many moving parts. Now, these machines had to be halted at intervals for oiling and operations had to be shut down. My drip cup device put an end to all of this; my famous drip cup device is the key device in perfecting the over-all lubricating system in large industry today. My device
became so popular until inspectors checking oiling systems of a plant would ask, "Is this the real McCoy?"

Jan Matzeliger: I was young, slim, rather handsome, some say, when I arrived in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1876. I could speak very little English; no one knew me. I was very poor and had no friends. Before I arrived in Massachusetts, men had worked for many years at trying to complete a shoe machinery. I heard of this problem in the shoe industry and began to work in a shoe factory. As I worked in factories around Lynn and Boston, I heard people say that it was impossible to lace shoes by machine. I began working secretly to perfect such a machine. I toiled for ten years. Finally, in 1882, I felt that I had perfected such a machine to solve the impossible problem. I sent it to Washington, and they couldn't even understand the blueprint. On March 20, 1883, patent number 274,207 was granted to me. Now, millions can wear shoes at reasonable prices because I dedicated my life to them. Many men dedicated their lives to mankind in many different ways. I tried and did my part.
Simple: We got to move on; time is running out. Let us go on to business. I call Madame C. J. Walker and Maggie L. Walker. Speak sisters!

Madame Walker: America has produced hundreds of millionaires, but I was the first woman of any race to become a millionaire. I invented a hair softener and a special straightening comb for Negro women to fix their hair; this was in 1905. My business was so successful until I built schools, a manufacturing company and employed thousands of Negroes. I founded an academy for girls in West Africa and left $100,000 for it to continue after my death. I laid the foundation for the cosmetic industry among Negroes and spurred the interest in personal beautification among Negro women.

Lord: Well, well, well, how about that! You a Walker, too? Are you sisters?

Maggie Walker: No, Lord, but we both worked for the good of the black people. I founded the St. Luke's Bank and Trust Company in Richmond, Virginia. I edited my own newspaper, The St. Luke Herald. I established a home for delinquent girls. I organized white and black groups to build the Richmond Community Center. My work was centered around the
order of St. Luke. I built it into a membership of over 100,000 members. The governor of Virginia paid tribute to me in 1924, proclaiming me as one of the state's outstanding citizens.

Simple: There are many others, but we still have a lot more ground to cover.

Joe: Your Grace, I would like to recess to prepare a rebuttal; this could go on forever, besides....

Simple: Hey man, you didn't think about that when you had me in slavery. You tried to let that last forever, and furthermore...

Lord: Here, here, there will be no fighting in heaven! You two did enough of that on earth. We have nothing but time unless you two would like to settle it in hell!

Joe & Simple: No, Lord, let us go on by all means.

Angel: Call the next witnesses.


Mrs. Wells: One cold night in March 1892, a mob of white men broke into a jail in Memphis, Tennessee. Three black prisoners were taken out into a field and shot to death. Their crime was being 'uppity' and successful in the grocery business. I was writing for my newspaper, The Free Speech Journal, and I wrote all about it the next day. For this, the whites ran me out of town and destroyed
my paper plant. I went to New York and continued to write about lynchings in the South in a paper called The New York Age. Later, I went to Chicago and married a newspaperman, Ferdinand Barnett, and we initiated the call for a black conference which led to the founding of the NAACP. I wrote for many newspapers in my time and was acclaimed as one of the world's great journalists in a field dominated by men at the time. My chief contribution to Negro History was the exposure of the brutal lynchings that took place in America upon innocent Negroes.

Lord: Those were evil crimes and you were a brave woman. Now, Mr. Trotter?

Trotter: I feel that my contributions are important because I spearheaded the protest techniques for equality for black people at a time when it was not popular to do so. In 1903, Booker T. Washington was talking about maintaining the racial status quo. I wanted full equality in all things, civil, governmental, political, and judicial. I founded a newspaper, The Boston Guardian with George Forbes, and we fought hard against racial discrimination. I led black delegates to the White House and protested to President Wilson. He excused me
angrily and told me not to return. I was invited back later by Wilson's successors. I fought for equal rights for Negro troops in the Army and I also organized picket lines against the anti-Negro movie, *Birth of a Nation*. I was not popular in my day among the whites, and many Negroes resented my techniques, but I'm happy to say that fifty years later, my same methods of protest were used by Martin Luther King and others. Can you understand that?

Lord: Yes, I can, or shall we say 'I can dig it'.

Joe: Now, Lord, let me tell you how much trouble those protest acts cost the government in troop protection for law abiding citizens and...

Lord: Gentlemen, you are arguing again!

Joe & Simple: Sorry, Lord.

Lord: Simple, are you ready to make a final summation?

Simple: I have one more witness, Lord... Mr. Carter G. Woodson.

Woodson: Before my time, many great Negro scholars had done research in Negro History, but they wrote on various aspects about the Negro. I began a systematic study of the Negro in history and organized an association for the study of Negro life and history. My association published many volumes in this field. In 1916, I began
publishing the journal of Negro History. Students throughout the world are still using this journal. I initiated an observance of a Negro History Week in 1926. I started the Negro History Week because I believed that the achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human process a maker of modern civilization.

Lord: It does make more sense to me now. I'm aware of your achievements much more now that I have heard some of your people's testimony. Many earth people probably were just ignorant of what the Negro has really done. Thank you, sir. Well, Simple, Joe - which one of you would like to sum your case first?

Simple: I will, Lord. You see, I don't have much to add to what has already been said except to say that it is impossible to state everything about the Negro in one hearing. I believe that we have enough evidence to grant us a black culture center in heaven. For example, we haven't talked about the Negro in medicine, entertainment, and the arts. These things can be put on display in our center. Therefore, I ask you and the jury to decide in favor of the Negro having his rightful place in the universe. Remember, when you showed Noah the rainbow sign...you said, "No more rain, it will be the fire next time." Thank you.
Gentlemen, I would like to say that the defense has made a beautiful case, and I do not plan to dispute the things that have been said here in this tribunal. I would like to say that most of our white people acted in good faith in trying to help the Negro. It may not have been beneficial in many people's eyes. I also know that many committed brutal acts against the Negro, but God you have all the facts and you promised to give every person, white or black, what is coming to them when the book is straight. Therefore, I ask you not to judge the entire white race. Think! Many of us didn't know what we know now. Many people on earth are recognizing these facts and they are changing. I hope that it won't take too long; some are trying. Thank you.

(Give Joe a standing ovation)

(Give Joe and Simple a standing ovation)

Outside the curtain

Gator: (To audience) Well, there you have it folks. I think that this is the end so I guess I'll go back up in heaven to see what the verdict was. In the mean time, I want all you out there to...

Simple: Hey, man, get on in here. We got our culture center, and we are shouting all over heaven. Listen to that carrying on, man. Just like on earth, 'can you dig it'.
The Culture Center

(Paintings of famous Blacks are on the walls and in back of the center stage. Everyone is clapping their hands as a dance act performs in a shouting manner.)

THE END
"Black Treasures"

This reader lesson play was the vanguard of implementing activities related to the Black experience, at Van Sickle Jr. High School. Mrs. Wells had visualized the need for a constructive identity of Black awareness before I arrived at this school. Her untiring efforts have done much to enrich the culture of Black people at this school.

The author directed this play as a second event for the Van Sickle Players. Mrs. Wells worked very closely with me in understanding the problems of the inner city students in the Springfield Schools System. Together, we have worked to give a positive identity to Black people, not only in Springfield, but to all the communities who have witnessed our Black productions in Western Massachusetts.

Cast of Characters

Speaker . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Patricia Smith
Answer . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Valerie Bass
Reader One . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Karen Rucks
Reader Two . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Charles King
Reader Three . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Pamela Jenkins
Reader Four . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Veida Perry

(Gospel records played at intervals)
(A Round Table Discussion)

What is this?

It looks like a big book.

It has an unusual title. I wonder what it is all about.

"Black Treasures"; oh, I know! It is the history of Black Americans. It tells of their early years, their years of promise, their years of achievement down to the present time.

I would like to know some of those things. They are never in the history books we have in school.

Let us sit here and read this book together. In 1619, a Dutch ship carrying 20 Negroes, landed in Jamestown, Virginia. They were at first treated as servants. Between 1640 and 1750, laws were passed which made slavery legal and these servants became slaves. However, during this time, some of them became proficient in various fields. They had great patience, and at night in their homes, they would raise their voices in song. They sang of the day of deliverance from bondage. Eventually some of them were allowed to enter into the military of this new land. Now, let us see what the pages of this book unfold.

Crispus Attucks was a Negro who entered into the battle for Boston during the Revolutionary War. On the night of March 5, 1770, there
were a number of fights between the citizens of Boston and the British soldiers. Attucks was a leader for the Boston citizens. As he went into battle, he yelled to his followers, "Do not be afraid." A few minutes later, he lay dead on the Boston Commons. Attucks was the first Black patriot to die for American liberty.

Reader Two: Here is another one. Peter Salem, a former slave, from Framingham, Massachusetts. He won fame and glory in the battle of Bunker Hill. He shot a British officer who was about to make this famous battle a victory for the British.

Reader Three: Speaking of famous people, listen to this! Benjamin Bannecker was an astronomer, a mathematician, a surveyor, and a mechanical genius. He, as well as Benjamin Franklin, wrote an almanac. As a surveyor, he was appointed to the commission which defined the boundaries of Washington D.C. and created a street plan for the city. He suggested in 1793 that the United States create a post of Secretary of Peace who would promote and preserve perpetual peace in our country.

Reader Four: Or Phylis Wheatley, who was brought to America while still a girl and became a maid in the
Wheatley home; she was taught to read and write. Later, she became a famous poetess and at the age of twenty, she was invited to go to England where her poetry had attracted much attention. Her most famous poem was written when she returned to this country.

(A group sings the spiritual, "My Lord, What a Morning")

Speaker: So many of the early slaves in America became famous during the early years of slavery. What happened after slavery was over?

Answer: After the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, many Negroes believed that the promise of freedom would be fulfilled. They continued their journey down freedom's highway.

Reader One: Richard Allen was a man who was able to do extra work and purchased his freedom. He felt the call to the ministry and he began to preach in Philadelphia. After him, a few other Negroes were refused the right to worship in one of the Methodist churches. They withdrew and formed the African Methodist Episcopal church. Henry Garnett was born free and urged the overthrow of slavery. He later became a Presbyterian minister. Augustus Tolton became the first Negro priest in the United States.
He was born a slave but was released. Raised in Quincy, Illinois, in 1880, he went to Rome to study for the priesthood and was ordained there. He served as a priest in his first parish in his home town of Quincy, and later went to Chicago. So you can see that the Negro was rooted in religion.

Reader Two: Even in politics, as far back as the eighteen hundreds, many men served the government. P. S. Pinchback and Oscar Dunn, both ex-slaves, served as state Senator and Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana. John R. Lynch was the first Black chairman of the Republican National Convention and representative from Mississippi.

Reader Three: Hundreds of textbooks on American History have been written without ever mentioning Frederick Douglas, one of the greatest historians of America. Born a slave, he became the unwritten leader of the Blacks after they had been liberated. Other great leaders during that time were Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. Both of these women were acclaimed by the Blacks with the initiation of the Underground Railroad.

Reader Four: During this period, medicine was another field in which the Negro was distinguished. Dr. Dan Williams was a pioneer in open heart surgery.
Dr. Theodore Lawless became one of the nation's greatest skin specialists. Two skin clinics have been named for him.

(Gospel song, "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross")

Speaker: Is there much more to be learned about the Negro?
Answer: One by one the roadblocks were overcome. Negroes became better educated. Organizations to gain equal rights were formed. Negro art and music were enlisted to tell the Negro's story and plead their cause.

Reader One: At last there is a newspaper whose founder was a Negro, Robert Allen. The paper, the Chicago Defender, is the beginning of the Negro in positive journalism. Dr. W. E. B. Dubois, a graduate of Fiske and Harvard Universities, was one of the great authors of our times.

Reader Two: Langston Hughes came into his own during this period. He is a versatile writer of poetry, novels, plays, biographies, and children's books. Another outstanding poet was James Weldon Johnson. Two of his poems are considered masterpieces; "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is called the Negro National Anthem. Another of his poems, "The Creation," relates that man is created equal in the model of God Himself.
Reader Three: In science, we find people like George Washington Carver, who experimented with the peanut and found many uses for it. A motto of Carver's, which should be remembered by every young person, is "Start where you are, with what you have, make something of it, and be satisfied." Percy Julian was another scientist who did for the soy bean what Carver did for the peanut. He developed a hormone which is useful to the production of cortisone. The great Charles Drew, who was an outstanding athlete while attending Amherst College, was responsible for the blood banks and blood plasma. However, he died for the lack of a blood transfusion because he was not admitted to a white hospital.

Reader Four: During these years of achievement, we find that the military was represented by the Negro. Benjamin O. Davis Sr. became the first Negro general of the United States. His son, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., graduated from West Point; he was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson to the rank of Lieutenant General, the highest rank ever to be achieved by a Negro in the United States Armed Forces.

Speaker: How, when and where did the present day protest movements begin?
Answer: No one can name the day or incident which created this. It may have begun with the Supreme Court decision in May, 1954, or with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Perhaps Negroes took a look at the calendar and observed that it is almost 100 years since the Emancipation Proclamation and look where we are. What began as a whisper soon became a shout. Some of the people who helped to bring this about were...

Reader One: Edward Brooke who became the Attorney General of Massachusetts, and, later, the first Black Senator since Reconstruction days. Thurgood Marshall, who was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1963. Later he was appointed by President Johnson to the position of U.S. Solicitor General, where he argued the government's cases before the Supreme Court. Ralph Bunche was a prominent figure in the United Nations and the first Negro winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. William Hastie, who has held many prominent government posts, is now the Federal Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Philadelphia.

Reader Two: In education, we find that Booker T. Washington, who was born a slave, went on to higher education and later established Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama, where he encouraged Negroes to
become educated. It was in this school that George Washington Carver taught and made his many experiments with the peanut. Mary McCloud Bethune started her career as a missionary, but ended by establishing Bethune-Cookman College in Florida.

Reader Three: Charles Johnson became the first Negro president of Fisk University in 1946. Dr. Mordecai Johnson, a great orator, became the first Negro president of Howard University in Washington, D.C. Dr. Benjamin Mays, an influential baptist minister, as president of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, is a staunch fighter for civil rights.

Reader Four: In the area of social service and other organizations, we look to Lester Granger, who served as Executive Secretary of the Urban League, a strong civil rights organization; he also served on a committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Forces. Roy Wilkins has been the leader of the N.A.A.C.P. since 1955. Whitney Young, the late director of the Urban League, was a young man filled with hopes and desires for a better tomorrow.

Reader One: If you read your Springfield Daily News, you will find that one of the contributing writers on the editorial page is Carl T. Rowan.
Although he was appointed to many political positions by both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, his first love and the one in which he felt that he could make a greater contribution was in the field of journalism.

Reader Two: Many of the good will ambassadors of the United States are found in the sports world. Today, we can look at Joe Louis, who became boxing champion in 1937 and retired undefeated in 1949. Jesse Owens was the first Negro Olympic star, having won many races for the U.S.; he is still active in the sports world by teaching the New York Mets baseball players how to run faster.

Reader Three: Jackie Robinson made history when he broke baseball's color line and became the first black man in the big league by becoming a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1962, he was the first Negro to be made a member of the Hall of Fame.

Reader Four: Roosevelt Grier, six feet five inches tall and weighing 290 pounds, was a member of the Fearsome Four of the Los Angeles Rams. He gives the youth and people of America these words, "This is our house. You see, we've got a great 'thing' going in this country if we
take care of it. This is where we all live and we make it what it is."

Reader One: And how about entertainers, they all have put in a plug for freedom and liberation. Bill Cosby, Dick Gregory, Leroi Jones, these men are putting into action what the piets, fighters, historians, and abolitionists were talking about a long time ago.

Speaker: In the distance we see a line of people walking arm in arm down freedom's road. They represent Americans of all ages, races, and creeds. Their voices are filled with hope as they sing, "Free at last, free at last, Great God Almighty, we're almost free at last."

Answer: And in the words of the immortal Martin Luther King, the modern Moses, we will all have a dream come true. (Curtain) (All sing the freedom song, "We Shall Overcome")

(THE END)
Chapter IV

"Social Implications Through Black Drama"

"FROM COUNTRY, CITY, TO MAN"

This play was written to depict the social implication that has and is still happening to many Black migrants that have left the South. The story is up to date, but the idea started back in the early 1900's.

Practically stripped of political power and without hope of an improved social atmosphere, the Southern Black entered the twentieth century looking toward the North or a longsought promised land. Nearly eighty percent of America's population still lived in the eleven states that had comprised the Confederacy during the Civil War. Those were largely unskilled, and as a consequence, their employment was generally limited to common labor, domestic service, and sharecropping. Many of those who went North found themselves competing with European immigrants for even the most menial jobs.

The forces of nature also helped push the Negro off the Southern farms and toward the industrialized North. In 1915 and 1916, the cotton plantations were severely hit by worms of the boll weavel; then floods came and doomed the harvests. As World War I drained away America's youth and European immigration was cut off, labor recruiters from the North went South to recruit Negroes to work in defense plants, shipyards, steel mills, and packing houses. 1 With
railroad tickets in their pockets and glowing reports of freedom in the North to entice the hungry and oppressed Negroes, the recruiters helped thousands leave the South. They accepted the promise and headed North.

With the death of Booker T. Washington in 1915, the Negro population found itself without a major spokesman. The void of personal leadership was slowly filled by a new institution, the Negro press. Negro newspapers performed the dual role of exposing social discrimination and of bolstering morale. Perhaps the most dramatic example of Negro journalism in this century is the Chicago Defender, founded by Robert S. Abbott.

Thus the play, From Country, City, To Man, depicts some of the events of the Negro's plight in a cognitive and social aspect. Hopefully, it will entertain and teach the American public as well as the audience who have seen this play in Western Massachusetts.
"FROM COUNTRY, CITY, TO MAN"

A Three-Act Play by William L. Williams

Cast:

Bessie Smith .... Mother of about fifty years old
Booth Smith .... Father of about fifty-five years old
Bob Smith .... Son, twenty years old
Joe Shea .... Plain clothes cop
Conductor .... On train trip
Waiter .... On train trip
Kevin Henry .... Racketeer
Crook one .... Thug
Crook two .... Thug
Mabel Trollop .... A moll doll
Valerie Jones .... Social worker
Jayne Johnson .... Middle-class Negro
Elaine Smith .... Black community leader
Extras - street walkers, cops, two black bucks, and nightclub patrons; two dance acts and nightclub singer solo
Scene I: Down on the farm

Setting: The Smith family living room; Bessie sitting in a rocking chair.

Bessie: Oh Lord, how much longer can Black people go in a world like we live in. I have suffered and toiled through slavery and destitution. I have worked in white folk's kitchens. My man has worked hard in the fields and provided for the slave master. I can remember my great, great grandmother say that we are the descendants of kings of West Africa. Why we ruled the world at one time about 800 to 1300 A.D. Oh Lord, when will our burdens be made light; you are a just God and you are supposed to make everything all right! When, oh when shall our day come. I pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior...Amen (Rocks and sings a hymn)

(Booth enters)

Booth: Bessie, why are you still in that chair looking so sad. The world is not coming to an end. Honey, you have to believe that there will be a better day. Our son will make it. The Lord will provide because he said he would.

Bessie: Oh Booth, I feel so sad today. When is our suffering going to end. Honey, you look tired. Your food is on the table in the kitchen. Eat and lie down for
a while and we can talk later. Oh Booth, Booth, Booth (Cries)

Booth: Now Bessie, don't feel so depressed. Why we have a nice farm and the white man has been good to me and my crops are coming along fine. We will have a good harvest this year. Just think, I can buy you that new refrigerator and then we can throw away that old ice box. Cheer up, Bessie, I love you... We will overcome someday.

Bessie: Martin Luther King said that and he is dead... the Kennedy's - Robert and John - said that and they are both dead, Malcolm X, our greatest leader, is dead. Oh Booth! Where are all the men who believe that we are equal. I look at the world around me and Blacks are still at the bottom... no jobs... no money... no social life... I'm losing my faith... oh God!

Booth: Bessie, Bessie, Bessie, you mustn't talk like that; I'm a man of God and my people depend upon me for the deliverance of their sins. I have been a farmer and country preacher for the most of my life. I have raised my son to become a preacher after me. God works in mysterious ways and he has wonders to perform. Bessie, get yourself right with God. You are a preacher's wife. You must not despair and show so little faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.
Bessie: Oh Booth, help me, I need strength to go on. (Booth hugs her head in his arms.)

(Bob enters)

Bob: Hello mom, dad. Hey! What's going on here?

Bessie: (Composing herself) Bob, you look tired. What is the matter?

Bob: I don't know, mother. I met some guy today from the big city. He says that there are great things for the Negro if he goes North. I'm going to the big city and try to find myself.

Bessie: What are you talking about, boy! You don't know anybody up North. Booth, he must be losing his mind, too.

Bob: No, mom, I have been working here and helping dad with the farm and I'm getting nowhere. I want to be more than just a farmer and country preacher.

Booth: Bob! You are speaking as if you are ashamed of your father...haven't I done the best I could for you!

Bob: Oh dad, you know I love you and mom very much. I know that you have done your best for me. I'm twenty and almost a man, but I can never become a man down here on the farm.

Bessie: Bob, you can become a man right here! God is going to bless you. Each generation of black people does better than the other. Why you have a high school education. We didn't get past the fifth grade.
Bob: True, but that's not progress enough for me. I want a good job. Look at the other Blacks down here, still sharecroppers, maids, service station workers. I want to be somebody.

Booth: We had big ideas mother; maybe, we gave him too much freedom. Maybe that is God's way of liberating the Black people everywhere. Everybody is talking freedom nowadays.

Bob: That's right, father, you see, I read in the books that throughout history the Negro has left the South and found useful ways for survival without bowing to the white man.

Bessie: Yes, and many have starved and died and couldn't be hired in the North, even when they were qualified for work. Many have come back home poor and destitute. Bob, the city is no place for you. You got no kin folk up there in the North.

Booth: You are right, mother, but Bob is almost a man and he must learn for himself. If this is his calling, then let him go. Son, you will always have a home here with us no matter what.

Bessie: I just don't know; him going away to the city and all by himself...he is still my baby. Bob, what if things go wrong?

Bob: You always taught me to be myself. Well, my mind is made up. I want the chance to try for a better life. If I fall, I return home and gracefully accept the
will of God as a country preacher like dad.

Booth: (Worried) And what if you do make it?

Bob: Then you can sell the farm and preach in a large church where people will appreciate you. Mema, my father delivers great sermons every Sunday and only about twenty-five to fifty attend his little church. My father is just as good as Billy Graham, Vincent Peale, or Bishop Sheen, but he will never be recognized as a great minister of God down here on the farm.

Bessie: Oh, Booth, what have we done to him, his head is so full of great things. I know you are right, Bob, but I'm so scared.

Booth: (Preachingly) You are not alone, mother. Jesus was scared on the cross; Columbus was scared on the seas; Washington was scared at Valley Forge; Lincoln during the Civil War was scared; Jackson at New Orleans; Wilson in World War I; Roosevelt in World War II, and even Joshua at the battle of Jericho. Many great men had a fear of making important decisions in their lives but they were God-fearing men and they went on to victory. Bob must have the right to seek for his own star the same as any other man created equal under God.

Bob: You have said it father; I'm going to pack my bags. Mother, I got to go. I feel it in my bones and soul; if I don't leave now, I never will. (Exits)
Bessie: Booth, are you really going to let him go?

Booth: God has already spoken to him. He didn't do this all by himself. The Lord knows what is best for all who believe in him. Bob is doing the right thing.

Bessie: We have trusted in God for so long and we are still suffering. When, when, when...

Booth: I don't rightly know Bessie, but maybe Bob will make a way out of no way. We'll be alright; don't cry honey. (Hugs her)

Bob: (Enters with suitcase) Well, mom, dad...this is it; but it is not goodbye.

Bessie: (Holds him as he leaves) Now you call me when you get there and be sure to go to bed early; find yourself a church; pray every night, and...

(Bob leaves out the door chanting O.K. mom after her phrases.)

Booth: (Center stage to audience) My son is going to become a man. Praise be to God. Hallelujah! So long man. Goodbye son. (Waving)

(Train is heard coming into station off stage)

(Black out)

Scene II: The train to the big city.

Setting: Simple chairs placed in two rows on each side of center stage with an aisle in between. Two vacant chairs upfront stage for Bob and Joe.

Conductor: (Offstage) All aboard; last train for New York City, Springfield (or whatever place to be decided by director.)
(Joe enters and takes the front seat and begins to read a paper. Later, Bob takes the seat beside Joe and looks out the window for a last look at the farm.)

Bob: Are you going to New York, mister?

Joe: Yes, I am; I was only here visiting some relatives of mine during my vacation.

Bob: That's nice. Say, haven't I seen you somewhere before?

Joe: No chance, I've only been here for three days. I barely went out of the house except for some good old country vegetables. (Smiles)

Bob: Hey, where did you buy your groceries and vegetables?

Joe: Why, at the 'Smith's' groceries stand.

Bob: Then you must be the guy from New York that talked me into coming to the city.

Joe: Your face looks familiar...huummmmmmmmm...I do remember you now. You are the guy who wanted to get away from it all down here and go to the North and better yourself. Am I right?

Bob: Yeah, man! That's right. I took your advice but I had no idea that we would be on the same train traveling back to the big city.

Joe: Listen, kid, the city is a great place for those who know how to make it there; but, it is no place for a green horn just out of the sticks to go without knowing all of the pitfalls that can happen to a black man or white man in the city.
Bob: Tell me more... what are you trying to say?

Joe: O.K. Let me tell you like it is... er, er, what did you say your name is?

Bob: Robert, Robert Smith... just call me Bob.

Joe: All right, Bob... I'm Joe Shea, just call me Joe. The city is a place where people don't care if you are black or white. The only methods are survival for the fittest. One must struggle to make it no matter what his thing is. A green horn like you will die in two months if he doesn't know the tactics for making it in the big city.

Bob: What do you mean? I'm a hard worker and I will be a good employee for anyone that will give me a job.

Joe: That's just my point, Bob, the city doesn't care about how qualified you are to get a job; you have to know somebody that is honest and in a good business that will give you a job... can you understand what I'm trying to say to you?

Waitress: Gentlemen, it is now time for your early evening drink. What will you have?

Joe: I'll have a scotch and soda.

Bob: I'll have a soda pop.

Waitress: But sir! It will cost the same as a whiskey sour.

Bob: I don't drink. Soda pop will be good for me.

Waitress: (To Joe) Is this guy a friend of yours? (Smiles)

Joe: Yes, dear lady. He wants soda and I want scotch. Now beat it!
Waitress: No harm done, sir! We have accommodations for all of our passengers...NOW!

Bob: Now Joe, you were about to tell me about survival in the city.

Joe: Oh yeah. Well there isn't too much to tell about the big city really. It's a place where pimps, prostitutes and hustlers try to make you become a degenerate like they all are.

Bob: Pimps, Prostitutes, Hustlers; who are they? Workers in the city?

Joe: Man, you are green. Let me tell you how it is in the big city, especially for a green horn like you. Your brothers don't care whether you are yellow, green, orange, or blue, they will screw anyone they can in order to make it to the top. Many die trying, and only the strong survive. My white brothers will do the same thing to you and me if they get the chance. The rackets are ruining life in the city for the poor people. (Kevin comes up front and leans over the two of them)

Kevin: Hello folks. I got bored with those squares back there and I would like to join your party to talk about something heavy, man!

Joe: I'm afraid you have the wrong party, mister. We are just a couple of squares going to the big city ourselves.
Kevin: Well, you have a brother with you and that tells me that he must be 'hip' or he wouldn't be talking to a white man in this part of the country...you know how the South is! Now brother, if you have any trouble in the city, just check me out; here is my card.

Bob: (Takes the card) Mr. Kevin Henry, helper of all the Black immigrants from the South to the North to find better jobs, equal opportunity and justice for all Black people in America. When arriving in New York for the first time, please call 783-8417. We are open twenty-four hours a day.

Kevin: (To Joe) Say, haven't I seen you in New York?

Joe: I don't think our paths have crossed. New York is a very large place and many faces seem the same in the city.

Kevin: No offense man; I just seen your face somewhere. Anyway, faces are not important in my business, customer service is our first criteria.

Bob: Say, sir, your agency sounds very encouraging to me, since I'm trying to find a job when I get to the city.

Kevin: Right on, brother! Just call me Mister Henry and when you get to the city, look me up. Our society is called TCBFOR, Taking Care of Business for the Black Brothers from the South Land.

Joe: What are you doing in this part of the country, Mr. Henry?
Kevin: Hey man, I'm on a recruiting drive to get all the brothers to leave the South and find a better place for themselves in the North through my agency. Why, we are really working guys like Bob and his lost brothers down here who are the victims of the oppression of white racism. Can you dig it?

Joe: Yes, I can, Mr. Henry, if it is for real. I have known many people like you who only took advantage of the Black people when they arrived in the city. Can you dig it?

Kevin: Yeah, man, I'm a true liberal. I know what the struggle for guys like Bob is all about.

Bob: I'm trying to get what the both of you are saying, but I'm confused. Where do I go from here? What do I do when I get to the city?

Kevin: Check my agency out, man, and you will be in good hands.

Bob: Well, Joe, what do you have to say? I listened to you first.

Joe: Bob, I can only tell you what I have said before, be careful and watch out for people on the make.

Kevin: That's good advice, son; take it and come to see me when you get to New York. I got to leave now. I have a traveling companion and I mustn't keep her waiting. Good luck, Bob, and I hope to see you around. Later man. (Goes back to his seat with his companion)
Bob: Well, Joe, what do you think?

Joe: He's a crook and a hustler. I don't know him but I'm sure that he has a record of some criminal activity. I can spot a crook a mile away...and he is a crook!

Bob: You must be prejudiced, Joe. He seems C.K. to me.

Joe: I have known many like him in the city. Guys trying to take advantage of the poor. They work in many different ways, Bob; first, they get you a job and then you owe them a percentage of your earnings for the rest of your life. They get you to taking dope and your salary will not pay for the cost of your habit. You then have to rob and steal in order to support your habits for drugs. It seems small and beneficial at first, but then later, when you have had it, you are then a victim for the big city oppression 'thing'.

Bob: What do you mean? How is this so? I don't plan to get into any of these things that you are talking about. I'm a Christian man and I plan to go straight and live for God and help my parents better themselves if I make it here.

Joe: That is good thinking, Bob, and I wish you much success. My advice to you is only get your jobs from the want ads in the papers and go to the legitimate advertising agencies in the news media. I say check out everything and then decide for yourself about what you want to do in life. The big city is no utopia and you will
have to hustle in your own way; but do it the right way. Only follow the ways that are legitimate and within the law.

Bob: You sound like a law man. By the way, what do you do for a living, Joe?

Joe: I'm a cop and I do my job!

Conductor: Next stop New York City...New York City

Bob: (Center Stage) Wow, a cop and talking to me and giving me advice...

Paper boy: Extra, evening paper, read all about...etc.

(Offstage)

Bob: (Still center stage) Hey paper boy...paper boy...

Give me a paper. I got to find what is going on in the big city. I got to make it the right way.

(Still blackout; phone rings; voice and Bob speak)

Bob: Hello, is this the Bop City Club?

Voice: Yes, this is the Bop City Club.

Bob: Is the job for dishwasher still open?

Voice: Yes, do you have references?

Bob: Yes, I do, lady, let me run it down to you: Cooks' Cafe, Greasy Spoon, Dew Drop Inn, Margos, and...

Voice: Are you over twenty-one?

Bob: Yes, mam, I just turned twenty-one and I'm a man. Not almost no more, I am a man...a grown man...when do I report for work?

Voice: Immediately lover man. We'll see you tomorrow at nine o'clock.
Bob: (Loudly center stage; still black out) Thank you... thank you... thank you... I got a job... I got a job... I got a job... I got a job in the biiggggg ciittyyy... 

Scene III  Act I

Setting: Broadway or any street in the big city

(People milling back and forth across the stage in street wares)

Bob: Wow! Look at this action, man! I'm really living. Hey baby, how about a date? Say, man, you got a cigarette? Hey baby, what are you doing tonight?

Kim: (Strolling) Hey, man, how much money you got? Like do you have any bread?

Bob: Right on, baby. I got money to burn; take me to your place.

Cop: (Blows whistle) All pimps and prostitutes get off the streets. This is the law. Hey you! (Chasing a guy offstage)

(Bob and Kevin meet each other at the center stage)

Bob: Hey dude, I'm ready to talk business. What you got going?

Kevin: Man, I got a plan to make you a rich soul brother! Are you ready for the big time action?

Bob: Yeah, man, action is my name. What you got going?

Kevin: Listen, cat, I got a plan where we can make a fortune!

Bob: A fortune? Wow, tell me more.

Kevin: O.K. That broad that works for the society of Black people and owns the Bop City Club, she has a crush
on you. Now, you can do anything you want while working at that club. Can you dig it?

Bob: Yeah, I can dig it! But she is a nice girl and I wouldn't want her to get into any trouble.

Kevin: Look man, you run the club right?

Bob: Right!

Kevin: O.K. I give the stuff to you and you sell it to the guys that know you are a pusher. Being the emcee in a night club, no one will ever suspect you.

Bob: But what about the police?

Kevin: They never bother people in clubs. They only bust guys in the streets. Dig it man. You got a good thing going and don't know it.

(Sexy chick walks across the stage)

Bob: Wow, look at that broad!

Kevin: You like that? I can fix you up with many broads that has lots more class than that. Are you in with us men?

Bob: Well, it sounds good. Let me think about it some more. I got to check out the scene some more...hey baby...(exits)

(Two thugs enter)

Crook one: Hey boss, this guy is a square, he is not 'hip' to our scene.

Crook two: Yeah, he is just a square from the country. I don't want to deal with no square like him.

Kevin: We can give the cat a try. You guys are jumping the gun too soon.
Crook one: With that guy, I say forget it, boss.
Crook two: Yeah, boss, you are coping out. This guy is a loser. Why, he is even a Christian, ain't he?
Kevin: Listen, you bums, we have been busted in the streets, now we have to go legit and this guy is going to make us respectable. He is the perfect fall guy. We can make a fortune off this cat. Now are you with me or do you want to go back pushing tomatoes on the streets.
Crooks one & two: We dig it now boss. Sucker the black people and we stay in the clear; that is the way to the big time. What do them black dudes say, 'right on'!

(Bob returns)

Bob: Man, I'm back on the scene. That bitch just kicked me out but I got over.
Kevin: Hey man, are you ready to deal with us?
Bob: I feel good...yea, I'm ready to become a rich man... what do you want me to do?
Crook one: Hey this guy is all right. Put it there brother; we is partners; we is together!
Crook two: Right on! (Hand shake and slap ass A-La-Flip Wilson)
Bob: What about the broads man, you promised to turn me on.
Kevin: That's where all you Black dudes make your mistake up here. I want you to be hip only to one chick.
Fast women sent a lot of your brothers home broke.
I want you to make it. We like you, ain't that right fellas.

Crooks one & two: Yeah, boss, we really dig this cat; he is outta sight and something else; he is just too much!

Kevin: Now beat it Bob, we'll fill you in on the details later.

Bob: I can dig it! See you fellas later. (Exits)

(All laugh uproarously)

Crook one: Man, what a live one. That cat is soooo square!

Crook two: Speaking of the sticks, that cat is from the woods. (Laughs) I got to hand it to you, boss, you sure know how to pick em!

(Enters Big Mabel)

Crooks one & two: Oh, oh! Here comes trouble, I guess we better split. So long, boss. (Both exit)

Mabel: Hey lover, what do you mean by standing me up all day. I have been calling and looking and searching and here you are out in the streets.

Kevin: Business baby. I had to take care of business.

Mabel: Well, I want some attention from you sometimes, honey. (Tries to hug him)

Kevin: (Kisses her) Well here is looking at you...fine legs fit for a king...be at my pad in about an hour.
Mabel: Hey, you just can't shove me off like that, baby. I want to talk to you.

Kevin: Now wait a minute, baby! You like nice things, don't you? Money, prestige, and all that jazz?

Mabel: (Lovingly) Yes, baby.

Kevin: Well, blow! Get out of my life for about an hour. Here is the key. Wait for me. Hell, I got to blow this scene right now! (Exits)

Mabel: One of these days I'm going to bash his little ass to pieces. (Strolls back and forth across the stage)

(Joe enters and looks Mabel over)

Joe: Hello, good looking. Lonely, worried, have heart trouble, Joe Shea at your service.

Mabel: Huuummmmmmmmmmmmmmm! Tall, good looking, what can I do for you?

Joe: I'm the guy that looks after innocent people... especially a beautiful girl.

Mabel: Man, do you have a line. For your information, I'm not lonely, just frustrated.

Joe: Helping frustrated beauties is my business.

Mabel: Aw come on, buster, I'm no flusy. What do you want?

Joe: (Flashes badge) Information, baby, and you are the girl that can give it to me or help me to find out what I want to know.
Mabel: Well I'll be...a cop...I don't associate with no cops...good day!

Joe: Oh yeah! How would you like to see your boyfriend, Kevin Henry, behind bars?

Mabel: Quit kidding! Kevin is clean; he is no crook.

Joe: Let me give the facts to you, honey. Rap one - selling narcotics in Harlem; two - street peddling in Brooklyn; numbers rackets; taking advantage of recently arrived Blacks from the South. Want more?

Mabel: Hey cop! What does this have to do with me...I'm clean.

Joe: I'm working with the humanities commission now and we are trying to stop gangsters like Kevin from taking advantage of Black people to do their criminal acts and then get busted and put away in jail for the rest of their lives.

Mabel: I don't have nothing against Black people. What does this have to do with me?

Joe: Kevin plays tough but you can handle him. I want you to cater to him like a leech and find out what he is going to do next. His operations have gone legitimate. We have reason to believe that the Bop Club is his next hangout for drug peddling.

Mabel: The Bop Club! Why that's the most respectable club in this town. The lady that runs it is the best known civil rights worker all over New York City.
Joe: Now you are getting hip. She has fell hard for a young man just recently up from the South. He is smart, intelligent and runs the joint for her. He was also spotted talking to Kevin and his boys.

Mabel: So! What do I do?

Joe: Simple; you just hang out there and get to know the people. I'll drop in every now and then and you let me know what is happening.

Mabel: Kevin will kill me if he found out!

Joe: That's why it's such a perfect setup. What with you being there, you can keep an eye on Kevin and he will dig that his girl likes the scene that he has with black people.

Mabel: Heyyyyyyyy! Then he can't get away from me so fast. You are a smartie!

Joe: Right on baby! I'm a cop; I do my job; see you at the club!

(Black out)

Act II

Scene I  (Meeting at the Bop City Club)

Val: Greetings people and welcome to the Black Ibo Society. We are gathered in my club because we have a lot of action things to implement for the betterment of Black people in America.

Jayne: Tell me, Val, why do we call it the Black Ibo Society? Why not a Black Society?

Val: The Ibos are a proud African people that was sold
into slavery. I want to tell how they resisted the tyranny of slavery and went through all kinds of changes to keep from being sold into slavery.

Jayne: Many Blacks from Africa refused to become slaves and rebelled once they knew what their conditions were all about.

Val: That is true, Jayne, but none resisted as the Ibos did. Why they even killed themselves and cut the throats of their children before they would submit to the peculiar institution of slavery. They were a proud people and I am a descendant of the Ibos or I claim them as far as my research will show.

Jayne: How do you know this?

Val: I don't know it for a fact, but according to Herskovitts in his book on "Myths of the American Negro Past," he states that Negroes who lived in certain areas were brought over by trading companies that had contracts with tribes of the West African Regions.

Jayne: Being new to this society and coming from a middle class background, I'm very nil about my people and our history. Tell me more about the Ibos?

Val: Most of Nigeria's Ibo speaking villagers live by farming in the early civilization of Africa. They were great at the cultivating of crops. Therefore, when the white man wanted workers for his fields in the new world, he wanted the Ibo because they could
stand the heat and hardship required for the picking of cotton and tobacco in the new colonies of the Americas.

Jayne: Granted, but the Ibo were not the only African people brought to this country by the slave trade. What about the Yorubas, Fulanis, Ashantis, Berbers, Beduins, Arrelis. They all contributed to African history and the slave trade.

Elaine: I can dig what all of you are saying, but tell me, what has this to do with the black problems of today? We are persecuted, denied welfare and branded as misfits. What has Africa and our heritage to do with all this shit of what’s happening today? What are we here for?

Val: I really don’t know Elaine; but I do know that what we were is going to be what we are...nothing from nothing leaves nothing is something if only we have something that is nothing. A race that doesn’t know where it came from cannot dig where it is going. Am I making sense?

Jayne: You just said, Val, that we came from a proud stock and once we know this, we can be somebody because somebody is somebody if we know that we are somebody who came from somebody.

Elaine: You girls are still talking about Africa and all that jazz. I repeat, what has that goal to do with the betterment of Negroes today in America? The vast majority of Blacks still think of Africa as a foreign land of savages and spear-throwing
cannibals. We have to show our Black people in America that Africa is a land that they can be proud of...that African peoples have contributed a lot to our Black heritage right here in this country.

Val: Elaine, what you are saying is true; but how can we get the populace of Black people and white people to recognize us for what we really are?

Jayne: I have friends, black and white...they both love me for what I am. Prejudice has not been a thing in my life but I do have compassion for all my Black brothers who are suffering because of ignorance and not understanding the ways of city life.

I don't hate people...I love everyone.

Val: But what is love? To be nothing or something? What is race - black and white as it is today? What is truth or untruth? It still remains the same...nothing from nothing leaves nothing; something is something means something if it is something! Our club is the real thing because we take life as it is and dedicate ourselves to helping all Black people in trying situations to better themselves. Isn't this what our club is all about?

Elaine: Right on! Now you are saying something. We got to fight on righteously.

Jayne: I say right on, too, but how can we get all of our people to get our thing together?
Val: Simple! Our African brothers got their thing together and many are independent nations now. They fought against the tyranny of African colonization and won their freedom.

Elaine: That is true; but what has the African nations' freedom got to do with our struggle for freedom in America? Tell me, sisters.

Jayne: Our scene is to get Black people together and learn how to live with the whites in this country. We have been here for almost four hundred years. We adopted their ways and customs of life. Val, why can't we use our club as a stepping stone for people to realize that we are now ready to combine all people in America to come together, get together, live together and respect and love one another right now.

Val: Jayne, you made one thing clear to me. I love Black people and I have chosen one Black man, Bob Smith, to be my husband, manager, and overseer of my club. He has made my club into one of the most prosperous in New York City. Bob is doing so well until he is bringing his father and mother up here to live. Our program will work for Black people, I know it will.

Elaine: Speaking of the club, isn't it time for the evening show?
Jayne: Yeah, why not adjourn the meeting and catch the show?

Val: The meeting is adjourned. Enough for seriousness, let's have some fun and relax.

All: Right on!

(Blackout)

Act II

Scene II - The Bop City Club

Setting: Bar in the rear center of stage. Customers talking silently, standing. Three tables to far left; open space to far right with a microphone for the evening show.

(Val, Jayne, and Elaine enter and sit at table)

Jayne: Gee Val, this is really a nice club.

Val: It's O.K., but we are going to make it better. Bob is doing a fine job. Where is that man?

Elaine: Who is that cool cat over there?

Val: Hey, that's Bob. (Jesting) Service please!

Bob: (Coming over) Well, well, well, look who's here. Welcome honey. You haven't been around for quite sometime.

Val: I have some important people with me tonight and they wanted to have a little fun. Elaine, Jayne, this is Bob Smith.

Jayne: Hi Bob.

Elaine: Hello, we have heard so much about you.

Bob: The feeling is mutual. I understand that you ladies
are doing some fine work for our people in New York.
Elaine: We are not here on business. This is party time.
What do you have going tonight?
Bob: Ladies, you picked the right night. I have a great show lined up. (Bob spots Kevin entering) I'll see you later, Val, got to take care of business. (Goes over and talks to Kevin at the bar)

(Joe enters and goes to the ladies table)
Joe: Good evening, ladies. Val, what brings you here tonight?
Val: Joe, how are you? I was about to ask you the same thing. Girls, this is Joe Shea. He works with our humanities commission. He is doing fine work in keeping the rackets out of our neighborhood.
Elaine: I hope you are on the job now. (Smiles)
Joe: A good cop is always on the job.
Jayne: I hope you are joking.
Val: Don't, girls, my club is clean. Right, Joe?

(Mabel enters)
Mabel: Oh there you are. I've been looking for you all day!
Joe: I've been very busy trying to get things together. Do you know these ladies. This is the fabulous lady that I work for, Miss Valerie Jones. Valerie, this is Mabel.
Val: I know you. According to Bob, you are one of our favorite customers. Do you really come here every night?
Mabel: Well, almost. I really like the atmosphere here and my boyfriend is a good friend of Bob's.
Val: Oh yeah! Bob never told me about him.

Mabel: He is not much to talk about. You see that little, short guy over there talking with Bob.

Elaine: I've been noticing him. He is a peculiar little fellow.

Jayne: How can you not notice him. Look how active he is. He seems right at home here.

Joe: You can say that again, madam. No one knows that better than I do.

Val: Joe, you have been acting strange all evening, is there something wrong?

Joe: I'll explain later, Val. Looks like we got company.

(Kevin comes over)

Kevin: Hello folks, mind if I join the part. Mabel, baby, why didn't you let me know you were here.

Mabel: You were busy when I came in, so I decided to wait until you were finished talking.

Val: Mabel tells me that you are a good friend of Bob's. He never told me about you.

Kevin: Are you Miss Valerie Jones?

Val: Yes, I am.

Kevin: Wow! Tonight is a real treat. The first lady is here and Bob has this great show all lined up. Everybody is here. Man are we going to have a swinging time tonight!

Joe: Yes, and some people will be swinging behind bars for a long time.
Val: Oh Joe, be human for a change; tonight is a special night for everybody.

Elaine: Maybe he knows something that we don't know.

Jayne: I have given that a thought too, Elaine.

Val: Now wait a minute, this is becoming serious. Joe, what is going on here.

Kevin: Hey man, don't you ever stop playing cops and robbers? Why don't you cool it?

Joe: Some people I know should have cooled it a long time ago.

Kevin: Look, cop, you can't talk to me that way. (Rises from chair)

Mabel: Joe, Kevin, stop it or I'll.....

Kevin: Hey bitch! When do you begin to tell me what to do. I'll break your ass!

Joe: There are ladies present if there are no gentlemen!

Jayne: (Fanning) My, my, my, this fellow is something else. Oh my goodness!

Elaine: I think it is time for me to leave this table.

Val: Now wait just a damn minute! I own this club and I'll have you thrown out of here if you don't conduct yourself properly. Do you understand Mr. Kevin Henry?

Kevin: What is this? I came over to be sociable with some friendly people and I'm made to look like an ass by this cop. O.K., O.K., I'm sorry, ladies.

(Music fanfare to introduce the show)

Elaine: Forget it, let's enjoy the show.

(Bob rushes on stage at the microphone.)
Bob: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to another evening of excitement at the Bôp City Club. We have a great show lined up and to start things off here is the fabulous Rightlets doing their thing. (Afro dance number) Wow! Ain't they something else. Thank you ladies and gentlemen. And now here is the Bop Club's sensational new find...the fabulous Renee Silvera from Jamaica. (She sings a torch song) Thank you again and now to end our show, here is the pride of the Bop Club, the Bopetts. (They perform in sexy costumes while the lights are out and a strobe light is on or colored stage lights flashing) (During the end of this number, sirens blast, whistles blow. People are running back and forth across the stage in complete chaos.)

Voice: This is a raid. Book everybody. Hold it lady. Put your hands up. Stop or I'll shoot.

(Black out)

Voice: (Stage still dark) Extra, extra, read all about it. Bob Smith booked on trump charges for racket involve- ment. He pleads innocence. Extra, extra, read all about it.

(Curtains)

Intermission: Whites and Blacks mill into the audience and take up collections for the Free Bob Smith Fund. It is very important that the actors stay in character even though they see their
parents and friends. They must maintain the roles that they are playing in order to make this an effective scene. The way that they solicit funds must be in the same manner of the way they react in their roles. This scene might be worked out at the discretion of the director.

ACT III

Setting: Valerie's office with members of her organization.

Val: We have all waited for this day to come and I'm thankful for all the help that each and everyone of you has offered to help clear Bob from this awful mess that he got himself into.

Elaine: We must forget about that now, Val, and try to get Bob to return to the community and still do good things for the people. Anybody can make a mistake, but the hardest part is the rehabilitation process. Many Black men have gone to jail and returned to do good things for our people.

Jayne: Like who for instance.

Elaine: Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, James Farmer, and....

Jayne: O.K., O.K., O.K., what do we do now?

Val: I'll tell you what we are going to do! We are going to make this a community for Black people to live and know themselves. We are going to make this now defunct club a place where people can have a voice in
what to do about their destiny. With the help of people like Joe and Mabel, we are going to make it!

(Enter Joe, Mabel, and Bob)

Joe: Good evening, ladies. I made it as soon as I could. Here is Bob and everything is legally O.K. now. Bob is a free man! Thanks to all of you and the Black community which stood together in this time of crisis. All of you made my job easy.

Val: Hello Bob, I'm glad to have you back with us.

Bob: Thank you, honey, but I'm not glad to be back.

Val: What do you mean, Bob?

Bob: I came to the city looking to make the big time and I turned out to be a failure. Now, I'm nothing but a nigger convict. Where can I go but down. I can't even go home to my Christian parents. What will they say about a son returning home a convict. And to think I wanted to bring them to New York in glory.

Val: You are not a convict! You are a free man. You were judged to be innocent and you have nothing to be ashamed of. You are still a man!

Bob: A man! I'm tired of that shit. That's all they tell a Black convict...you are a free man. Hell, I'm a nobody and Joe, the great white liberal, is trying just like you to make me believe that I'm somebody. You people should have left me in jail. I would have been better off.
Joe: I've been trying to tell Bob, Val, that his case is no different from anyone else's, who has become a victim of the gangster society that is prevalent in our cities. He won't listen to me.

Bob: Like I said before, Joe, you probably have told this story to every convict that you have tried to rehabilitate.

Jayne: How can you feel that way after all that we have done for you and in getting the poor people who didn't even know you pay their hard earned money to help you because they believed in success stories like yours.

Elaine: You must realize Bob that many of our people rallied to your behalf because they saw in you a Black strength that can lead them out of their troubles.

Bob: All that stuff sounds good, but I'm still a convict and who will listen to a convict. A man without a country; a man with nowhere to go; I don't have nothing to look forward to but a life of shame. I can't even go home with respect.

Joe: I'm not Black, so I can't say where you are going and where you need to go. I will say that you are wrong in your outlook; you should listen to your people.

Jayne: You must get yourself together, Bob, and continue to work for our cause in the manner that you were doing before, but only this time, help us to do something that is good for all of our people. We
all believe that you can do it. That's why we fought so hard to free you.

Elaine: I have one last thing to say to you, Bob. The whole Black community believes in you. We could have let you rot in jail as many others; but you have something to offer the people. This club was nothing until you came along and took it over and made it into something that Black people could be proud of. You and the Bop City Club were a symbol of pride to our city.

Bob: How can a convict do all that when he is a nobody...a nigger convict without a country. No nothing to hold his head up for. I give up the ghost of the Black man in America. I'm dead, dead, dead, dead.....(cries)

Val: (Angry) I've had enough of this shit! What do you mean, nigger, you don't have a country. Your Black ancestors built this country by the backs of their labor. Your father and father's fathers fought and worked in the cotton fields so that you could be a free man. You speak convicts. Damn! This whole country was populated by convicts and religious misfits thrown out of Europe. Now, because of one shitty thing, you call yourself a criminal. All of America is infested with criminals, black and white. Your case is no different than anybody else's. Nigger, get off your damn begging knees and be a man. We fought for you and now you are going to do something for us.
Now get up...damn it! Get up and rise to the occasion.

Goddam!

(Drums, preferably bongos, beat in an African chant. Color lights go on and off. The actors freeze at this point for about one minute. Elaine moves toward Bob and begins to chant get up, get up, get up, get up, get up)

Elaine: Get up, get up, get up, get up, get up, get up.

Bob: I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't.

All: Get up, get up, get up, get up, get up, get up.

Bob: I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't.

All: Get up, get up, get up, get up, get up, get up.

(Two strong, muscular blacks dressed in tights and no shirts wearing only broken chains around their shoulders move slowly toward Bob lying on the floor)

Two blacks: (Grab Bob's hands and lift him slowly) Man, man, man, man, man........

All: Be a man, be a man, be a man, be a man, be a man, be a man...

Bob: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no,

Two blacks: Yes you can, yes you can, yes you can, yes you can...

All: Be a man, be a man, be a man, be a man, be a man...

(Thunder, drums, lights flashing on and off) (Bob breaks loose from the two blacks and rushes to the front center stage. He raises his arms high and twists his body in a God-like manner and shouts)
Bob: (Yelling) I'm a man, I'm a man, I'm a man, I'm a man, I'm a mannnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn!

(Black out)

THE END
CONCLUSION

Less widely recognized, or admitted, is the need to change the schools in the urban setting. Indeed, schools administrators and teachers tend to bristle at any suggestion that they are not already doing the best job, "under the circumstances." Aside from overcrowding and inferior equipment, which are common in depressed areas, they are reluctant to concede that there are inadequacies in the nature and quality of the school experiences provided for the inner-city young people.

The prevailing pattern of schooling in America was cast in a middle-class mold, and is largely alien to the experience of economically lower-class youth. This is true of the school's administrative organization, its curriculum, its instructional methods and materials, and the education of its professional personnel. It does not seem right to assume that, somehow, lower-class children must be made to slough off most of the characteristics developed in their encounters with the environment and "fit into" school structures and processes developed in response to presumed middle-class needs.

What is there in America's monolithic school systems that has kept it from reaching the inner-city students? A piece of the answer is that the system, in the face of its gargantuan task, has attempted to standardize what could not be standardized, to set up "norms" that were middle-class ones, and to reward what was most expedient conformity to
the middle-class measuring stick. But the system is no longer working for some; some children are no longer learning. The measuring stick is changing, and unless we find another more realistic one, we shall have lost the minds and hearts of countless more children.

We have only a beachhead of knowledge on how to teach children in the inner city. In the past, one of the principal tasks of the American public schools has been to assimilate and Americanize the European immigrant and to help him take his place in an industrial society. Today, it is to educate millions of newcomers in the slums of America's big cities. The preservation of the democratic way of life, the demands of the economy, and the mental health of our people all require that we learn how to educate our children effectively. Thomas Jefferson hoped that this nation would remain agricultural, because he distrusted city mobs. If millions of newcomers in our cities are alienated because they are inadequately prepared to cope with the dynamics of urban living, Jefferson's prophecy may be partly realized.

Again, this country has been shifting occupations that require more skill. With automation already on the horizon, the demand for unskilled labor seems inevitably declining and the need for trained workers is rising. This suggests that we must look to the culturally deprived to fill shortages of skilled manpower.

Also, we must offer these children the best opportunities to develop a wholesome respect for themselves and
society. Failure to do so will inevitably produce heavy costs, in the form of police protection, courts, jails, and mental institutions. It will surely be less expensive, in the long run, to organize schools which can meet the needs of the inner-city students.

A curriculum that takes the readiness of the culturally deprived child into account always takes as its starting point his existing knowledge and sophistication in the various subject matter areas and intellectual skills no matter how far down the scale this happens to be. This policy demands rigid elimination of all subject matter that we cannot economically assimilate on the basis of his current level of cognitive sophistication.¹

In terms of readiness for a given level of work, a child is no less ready because of a history of cultural deprivation, chronic academic failure, and exposure to unsuitable curriculum than because of deficient intellectual endowment. Hence, realistic recognition of this fact is not undemocratic, reactionary, or evidence of social class bias, of intellectual snobbery, of a "soft" patronizing approach or a belief in the inherent uneducability of lower-class children. Neither is it indicative of a desire to surrender to the cultural deprived child's current intellectual level, to perpetuate the status quo, or to institute a double, class-oriented standard of education. It is merely a necessary first step in preparing him to cope with more class differentials in academic achievement. To set the same initial standards and expectations for the academically retarded, culturally deprived as for the nonretarded middle or lower class child is automatically to insure the former's failure and to widen prevailing discrepancies between social class groups.²

Another answer is that many teachers come to the school ill equipped to teach low-income youngsters. Such a
youngster's world may be alien, fearful, and confusing to the teacher, just as the classroom is to the child. Much of what was taught in college applies only in a limited way to a child who is hungry, is burdened with responsibilities at home, and speaks another language (whether that language is Spanish, Chinese, or the language of the streets).

How do we get these two together and how do we get them to appreciate, respect, and really understand each other as human beings? Many innovations have been offered and are already in process in regard to the child-crash remedial courses, preschool programs, increased guidance services, and with the individual child and his family, whether that problem is labeled psychological impoverishment, subcultural deprivation, or whatever, and that the school is trying to patch up, in some way, what has gone wrong. The validity and vital necessity of these programs should not be minimized. But this is not a one-way street. Certainly the child is deprived, yet isn't the middle-class teacher just as deprived, as isolated, and as disconnected from a large portion of our society as the child?³

The beginning solution, it seems to me, must stem from our teacher-training institutions. We must work out a whole new system of pedagogy geared to teaching of children from low-income families. Larger doses of sociological and anthropological material must be dispensed to teacher trainees in order to develop an appreciation of other ways
of living, other realities. Concurrently, there should be community field trips, home visits, and student teaching in a variety of situations. Teachers should have an understanding of what it is like to eat rice and beans everyday on a welfare budget, how it feels to wait five hours in a city clinic before being seen, why a family would choose to have a television set before a second pair of shoes.

Teachers should have knowledge of low-income culture and particularly its strengths, which is revealed in its attitudes toward education, and in areas of creativity and cooperation. But this learning must not be limited to the reading of relevant material from the behavior and social sciences.

In our breathing, changing society, the use of contemporary art forms is an invaluable device which we should make full use of. Reading Warren Miller's novel, "The Cool World," or engaging in a seminar discussion about the works of James Baldwin might evoke a more honest realization of the way other people view the world than a dozen courses in traditional pedagogy. Contemporary movies, workshops in Black history, the learning of Spanish, or an understanding of the language of the streets would all contribute sharply to the teacher's "sensitivity training" toward low-income groups.

There is yet another fertile area that must be plowed in teacher education, and that is style. This art, springing as it does from the unique and intuitive roots of each human
being, can be developed by future teachers while they are in college, and it can also be developed by future teachers while they are in college, and it can also be developed in the service programs.

One kind of teacher is the "Maverick." Everybody loves this teacher but the boss. He or she gets upset because the maverick is always raising difficult questions and presenting ideas that disturb. The "Maverick" has a fresh quality that comes through to the students, this helps develop a closer link with the young and eager students.

Then there is "the coach," an informal, earthy person who uses his hands, his senses, in a very specific way. He sometimes is an athlete himself, but more basically he is physically expressive and that is how he conducts his dialogue with the world. Many low-income youngsters like this method. Coming from homes in which the accent is often on activity and motion, they are able to connect with the quality of physical expressiveness quickly and in a very natural way--a way more natural for everyone, really, than sitting still at a desk for two or three unbroken hours.

In sharp contrast is "the quiet one," who is able to reach much the same goal through sincerity, calmness, and definitiveness. This teacher's essential dignity pervades the classroom and commands both respect and attention from the pupils.

There is also, "the entertainer," a colorful, melodramatic, and most important, not afraid-to-have-fun-with-
the-children type of person. Frequently, he makes mistakes through his sheer flair for the comic. When this happens, he is free enough to laugh with the children at his own blunders. His inventiveness may cause furrows in his supervisor's brow when he has children make western hats instead of writing a paper about cowboys. But, later, they may be more interested in reading about cowboys than if a traditional had been followed. This teacher actively involves children. Their opinions count and they know it.

All too often, the classroom teacher affords anything but a proper model of how to teach. One of the deepest criticisms which can be made of the present system of teacher education is that it does not touch the life of its students; it does not arouse in them a delight in what they are doing; it does not engage them in action through which their own lives may be fulfilled.

Many innovations are needed in the educational system in America today, especially in urban areas. The lives of children are at stake and they are crying desperately for help. We are now at the stage where Black students want a clear picture of their life and history presented in the public schools. They are raising their voices to be heard for what they are in American society.

The majority of Blacks seek a society that operates for the benefit of all the citizens. They are well aware, intellectually and ignoramusly that the earth's most explosive and pernicious evil is racism, the inability of God's creatures to live as one, especially in the Western
After two years of my innovative curriculum in music and drama at Van Sickle Junior High School, the parents were asked to respond to the program. Many came to visit my classes, and others, I visited personally within their homes. Their reaction was most favorable in the sense that their children felt good about themselves in my classes. They, the students, were happy in what they were doing and viewed the instructor as being a Black man who dealt fairly and equally with all students. If a teacher is effective in the classroom, students will respond to the teacher as human being to whom they can relate. The color of his skin will influence the teacher's perspective on certain issues, but he or she must still be an individual that students relate to in a positive manner.

I did not consider myself aloof from the student's living environment at Van Sickle Junior High School. The white students hung around at the Springfield Plaza and the Black students hung out at the Winchester square area in Springfield. I would visit equally at both areas and the students felt pleased that I cared enough about them to visit their neighborhoods. I wanted them to know that I was no better, more or less, than they were. We all had the same problems in different ways - and that we are all trying to make it, one way or the other. I feel that it is important for a teacher to be aware of the situations of his students' living conditions. For example, when I
would drive students home in my car, they wanted me to drop them off about a block away from their home, because they were ashamed of their living conditions. But, once I had their trust and was sincere, they opened up their hearts and inner thoughts to me, their friend.

The junior high school is the level where students need guidance more than ever. It does not have to be a cesspool as described by Charles Silberman in "Crisis in the Classroom." It should be a place for adolescents to find themselves. They are trying to find themselves and make the transition from junior high to senior high school. During the two years of this study, I feel that the incorporation of the curriculum in music, dance and drama productions, helped the students make this transition.

The main emphasis is to incorporate the Black experience because American society has outcasted this segment in our culture. The implementation of courses related to the Black experience as advocated in this study present a positive path for all teachers to follow if they are seriously concerned about positive education in the public schools. Springfield School System should only be the beginning and, hopefully, other systems will adopt this curriculum for positive use.

In retrospect, the drama curriculum was a thing initiated by the author in getting or acquiring a positive identity for Black students at Van Sickle Jr. High School. The plays produced such an impact that the school became
known all over Western Massachusetts for its innovative productions in the Black experience. The student players and their parents, developed a communal bond that brought them together for the first time since busing began at the school in September of 1969. My innovative curriculum was approved by the Van Sickle Jr. High faculty and it is now in the hands of the music and social studies supervisors for implementation in the public schools of the Springfield School System.

One thing, for sure, is that something must be done for the Black identity of the Black students in the Springfield schools. For example, my music curriculum was a force in implementing the Black experience in a classroom context and it produced positive results at Van Sickle Jr. High School. When the play, "Black Culture Center in Heaven" was performed for the University of Massachusetts school of education during Marathon Week, April 19, 1971, it was the first time that any production from any public school in Springfield had received such recognition.

A letter sent to the Superintendent of Schools in Springfield stated:

During the week of April 12-16, the School of Education held a week-long Marathon, consisting of 300 seminars, lectures, discussions, movies and other presentations. We were privileged to have the play, "Black Culture Center in Heaven," by Willie Williams, as part of the Marathon. The students from Van Sickle did an excellent job in presenting an informative and entertaining play. Mr. Williams deserves credit for his writing and directing of a play that I'm sure has been educational for the students who
All of the criteria presented in my programs were to get teachers at Van Sickle Jr. High School to 'turn on' to a Black experience and be able to relate to the Black students at the school. This has proven to be effective because the other departments, social studies, science, English, and art, have implemented the collage concept in their teaching methods as related to the subject matter taught. Many teachers are now trying to incorporate the Black experience in their classes. The positives of this experimental study present a mandate for change in education for the future because we stand at the opening of a new era in American history.

If we cannot give the Black and other minorities their rightful and equal access to the values of a true society, then this country, as we want it, cannot survive. Slavery and a hundred years of pseudo-citizenship have left their scars on the American Black and on his relations with the white majority in America. In spite of a long, harsh century of effort to measure up to the white man's demands, the Black is still the last hired and first fired, as his economic conditions will attest. He needs better opportunities for education and training. His cultural experience, like his creativity, have been severely truncated. He is forced to make a racial appraisal of whatever he encounters. There is a long struggle ahead. To confront it successfully
will take dedication and honesty. It will cost much in time and money. The Black must find complete acceptance into the mainstream of American culture and life. If he does not, there will be a lame and tragic future for all Americans. There is not too much reason for hope. True, there are some signs that the tide is turning, that America and its leaders are hearkening to the call for freedom for all people, but they are few and far between.

Any curriculum in any public, private, or secular school and the various institutions throughout the country that doesn't depict the Black his rightful place in the building of this country, America, is a misnomer. If the American Black is to be seen in proper perspective as a part of contemporary American society, it is important to know something of his origins and the peculiar set of circumstances which has marked his pilgrimage from bondsman to responsible citizen. And, if he is ever to be appreciated as an American, the Black must be seen in the full context of America's growth and development. American history is his history and his history is part of America's. Any account of what happened in America which does not fully reflect the Black's presence and activities is to that degree unfaithful to reality.

Therefore, the vintage point in education for innovations and incorporating the Black experience in its right perspective is: 'Ain't' no mountain high enough, 'ain't' no valley low enough; and 'ain't' no river deep
enough to prevent the changes that are needed from occurring in the education of younger and older generations in America today.

For cities, such as Springfield, to overcome their racial problems and riots, they must stop trying to live with the contradiction of democratic government and racial injustice. The problems in Springfield and in other communities like Springfield throughout the country are by no means solved. It is clear that continually temporizing our racial problems is an invitation to disaster. Perhaps we are ready to face realism and fortitude, the greatest changes to come.

An effective Black studies curriculum in the public schools can really be a significant start because the future is with the children. When the children become aware of the problems and injustices of our society, then the future imposes mandates for changes in attitudes of Black and white people.
NOTES TO THE CHAPTERS

Chapter I


5Winchester Square is considered to be the heart of the Black Neighborhood.


8Ibid., p. 386.

9Ibid., p. 252.

Chapter II


2Ibid., p. 5.

3Ibid., p. 18.

4Ibid., p. 19.

6Ibid., p. 2.

7Ibid., p. 123.

8Ibid., p. 196.

9Boston Pops Symphony Orchestra in Boston, Massachusetts.


11Ibid., p. 2.

12Ibid., p. 3.

13Ibid., p. 4.

14Ibid., p. 4.


16Ibid., p. 198.


22Ibid., p. 341.


Chapter III

1Russel Adams, Great Negroes, Past and Present (Chicago, Afro-Am, 1969), pp. 61, 84, 109.


3Ibid., p. 14.

4Ibid., p. 16.

Chapter IV


2Ibid., p. 85.

Chapter V
(Conclusion)


2Ibid., p. 239.

3Ibid., p. 342.
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