

October 2017

# From Servitude to Service , Contributions From the Negro Peoples in American History: A Pageant. 1940

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## Recommended Citation

"From Servitude to Service , Contributions From the Negro Peoples in American History: A Pageant. 1940" (2017). *Plays and Programs* . 12.

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# FROM SERVITUDE TO SERVICE

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The contribution from the Negro peoples to American History  
A PAGEANT IN THREE EPISODES AND FOURTEEN SCENES  
by Anna J. Cooper, Frelinghuysen University

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## EPISODE I. The formative period of the Nation.

### Exiles

SCENE 1. The Landing at Jamestown: Dutch Traders, 20 Africans, English Settlers.

Overture: **Deep River**, Harry Burleigh

Dance of Ethiopia: **Thaba Nabandji**, S. Coleridge Taylor

Sorrow Songs:

"My Way is Cloudy."

"I'm rolling thro an unfriendly world."

"Roll Jordon roll."

"Standin' in the need of prayer."

Enter Spirit of Religion who points the way to consolation.

SOLO—"Steal away to Jesus"

Accompaniment, moans by Exiles

CHORUS, Exiles:

"Everytime I feel the Spirit."

"Nobody knows the trouble I see."

"Swing low Sweet Chariot" (all kneeling)

SCENE 2. Phyllis Wheatley and George Washington

SCENE 3. Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson

SCENE 4. Crispus Attacks and the English Red Coats.

SCENE 5. Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, founders of African Methodism.

"How firm a foundation" (full chorus strong male voices)

**Interlude.** (In lighter vein).

(a) Juba Dance, Nathaniel Dett

(b) Hoe the corn, Dunbar-Taylor

(c) Banjo pickers and a buck dance

(d) Cotton pickers drill, 12 graceful brown girls with baskets of cotton.

(e) Swanee River

(f) **Southland**, Rosamond Johnson.

## EPISODE II. The Clash of Ideals and Civil Conflict.

### The Crux

SCENE 1. Columbia declaims: Battle Hymn of the Republic.

"Glory, Glory Halleluja" (in muffled chorus).

(Narka Lee as Columbia).

SCENE 2. Frederick Douglass, "the Moses of his people."

CHORUS: "Go down Moses"

SCENE 3. John Brown on way to scaffold with colored matron.

"We're coming, Father Abraham."

SCENE 4. G. A. R. Civil War Veterans: Sergeant Carney Color bearer.

"The Flag never touched the ground."

Sojourner Truth—Harriet Tubman.

SCENE 5. Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation.

Jubilee Singers:

"The Year of Jubilee."

"Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel?" Coleridge-Taylor.

"Children we shall be free."

General B. F. Butler's (1818-1893) tribute to Negro soldiers.

Star Spangled Banner. Salute and pledge.

EPISODE III. Community Service.

A National Asset

In the struggle for true Democracy and the Better America Movement.

A dance of Emancipated Service.

SCENE 1. Home Coming of the boys in Khaki: Pickens' Marseillaise.

SCENE 2. Patriots and Heroes: Gold Stars in our Service Flag.

Major Walker, Lt. Kenneth Lewis, Colonel Young, Major Brooks.

"In Flanders Field."

"Bow Your Head, Columbia," E. Lee Williams

SCENE 3. The Church: Surpliced choir with crucifer.

"O God our help in ages past."

ANTHEM—"Twere vain O God," Hill-Johnson.

SCENE 4. Father Time, leading a procession of children from Schools.

His long cloak symbolizes the Constitution, Amendment XIV, visible.

Children carry banners such as "100% Americans," "Not hyphenated," "Genuine F. F. V's.," "300 years on the soil," "Our father's blood seals our patriotism."

ANTHEM: Don't be weary traveller, Nathaniel Dett.

Father Time: Declaims:

"I believe the Negro citizens of America should be guaranteed the enjoyment of all their rights; that they have earned their full measure of citizenship bestowed; that their sacrifices in blood on battlefields of the Republic have entitled them to all of freedom and opportunity, all of sympathy and aid that the American spirit of fairness and justice demands."

SOLO: Invictus, Dr. C. Sumner Wormley.

Procession: Educators. C. F. T. Cook, Booker T. Washington, Fannie Jackson Coppin, Reason, Clark, Peterson, Garnet, Crumwell.

"Lift Every Voice and Sing." Full chorus. All stanzas.

High school cadets, athletes, collegians, Fisk, Atlanta, Howard, Hampton, Tuskegee, scientists, inventors, laborers, stevedores, farmers, porters, riveters, Red Cross, blue triangle, red triangle, community service, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, S. Coleridge-Taylor, Jas. Reese Europe, Layton, Grant, Burleigh, Dett, Tyler, White, Cook, Tanner, May Howard Jackson, Meta Warrick Fuller, etc., etc., artists, painters, sculptors, musicians, seeking the note of inspiration in the common consciousness of race.

Ensemble with special characters in foreground.

Music by Burleigh:

Artists: Come sing us a song of hoeing the corn,  
And picking the cotton in bowls;  
Where the sweet scuppernong scents the dewy morn  
And the mocking bird note trills and trolls.  
Oh sing once again the wild plaintive strain  
Of the land of the westward sun;  
Songs born of the soil from its children of toil,  
Where singing and laughter were one.

Refrain: "We're rolling thru an unfriendly world, Nobody knows the trouble,  
Nobody cares but Jesus, Swing low sweet chariot, swing lower, come, carry me home."

Artists: Nay, is't not your home, O children of song, this land o' the sun o' the West?  
Where new comer's roam finding surcease from wrong and a haven of freedom and rest.

Lo, the land of your birth, of your toil, tears and mirth, where your forefathers' brawn wrought of yore,

Where brave Attucks died and thousands beside on battlefields red with their gore.

Those graves of your sires, those blest altar fires, those hearth stones enshrined in your hearts;

Can you leave them for aye, will you wander away, while the tear of old home longing starts?

Sweet Land, Liberty! Land of the noble free! Just God, do not mock! Mote it be! Sons, gird up anew! Pray, fight, LIVE it true! Till brotherhood resigns from sea to sea.

FINALE: Full Chorus: America, All stanzas.