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THE INDIANAPOLIS TIMES

# 'Green Pastures'

By Robert C. Ruark

NEW ORLEANS, Nov. 20—Roark Bradford, a man whose name is never his talent—was often confused with his own, died suddenly here the other day, of tropic amoeba acquired while he was in the Navy.

Brad was a writer. I would say he is one of the few craftsmen of our time whose work will be remembered as long as books are printed in this country.

It is unusual that Mr. Bradford, a white man, should emerge as the sympathetic Homer of the Southern Negro; the nation's authority on Negro dialect; the interpreter of the levee worker, the cotton-hand, the roustabout, the steamboat deck-hand and occasionally, the indented laborer on the chain-gang.

Brad was not a sociologist. He was not a protagonist of ideology. He rarely dealt with the relationship of mass Negro to mass white, but rather with the relationship of Negro to Negro in certain sections of the South, and the charming, intimate relationship of the Negro to God.

**Nothing Stark or Real**  
IN THE SENSE that highly praised literature today seems to demand the adjectives "raw, stark, grimly real," Mr. Bradford was a flop. He trafficked with no "isms" and injected no stinging editorials into his fiction.

Brad was a mythologist. He drew a picture of a segment of a race, during a time of adolescent naïveté, and I suppose the National Society for the Advancement of Colored People would condemn him for it.

He did portray the deep Southern Negro as a child, sometimes charming, nearly always artless, and occasionally meaner than hell. It is of some interest that the cuttin' colored man, the whiskey-fightin' colored man, generally got his comeuppance via a member of his own race, when Brad needed comeuppance to fulfill plot requirements.

I think that Brad's "O! Man Adam and His Chailun," from which "The Green Pastures" was made, will live about as long as anything written in this country. His "John Henry," a series of tales about the legendary black hero of the levees, is already a better piece of native folklore than the story of Paul Bunyan and the blue ox.

A couple of his parables, especially "How Come Christmas," are classic portrayals of the lovingly garbled interpretation of Scripture by the innocents who lived on the plantations of Mr. Bradford's childhood. His light fiction which he wrote for Collier's magazine, was never the slick pot-boiling of high-velocity hacks.

Mr. Bradford had been an officer in two wars, a newspaperman, a musician of sorts, a cowpoke, and a professional boxer. He long ago quit trying to write think-stuff on unfamiliar subjects, and devoted himself to putting on paper the language, folk tales and stories of his delta childhood. They never lost flavor, and possessed a great delicacy.

**'Rar Back and Pass a Miracle'**  
BRAD WAS probably the only person alive who could inoffensively translate God as a portly Negro who smoked big seggars, who occasionally pronounced that the time had come to "rar back and pass a miracle," and who spent considerable time keeping an eye on the lady angels at a celestial fishery.

Brad continued to write with his microscopically accurate dialect tales in contemporary magazines, at a time when any dialect-writing is poison to the pressure groups, and no humor is supposed to be found in individual frailty of minority races and creeds.

Offhand I would say that Mr. Bradford is good enough to swap bets on longevity with Mark Twain, and that his writings of big doings on Little Bee Bend, with Foreman Giles and the Widow Duck, will eventually be proudly exhibited by a Negro race grown to full national security. In John Henry alone he has provided the Negro with his own Hercules.

There was never anything but affection for his colored friends in Mr. Bradford's writing, and I believe that both Negro and white owe him a great mutual debt.

# Wishy-Washy

By Frederick C. Othman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20—One of Congress' incidental problems is why it costs a fellow so much to wash his face.

And as for you, madam, with your saving of grease in the kitchen, how's to quit palming off so much water to the gentlemen who manufacture soap?

The price of keeping clean, as you and the House Small Business Committee already have discovered, hasn't dropped at all. A cake of soap today costs as much as it did last year.

**Soapers and Greasers Clash**  
BUT THE TALLOW and the inedible grease that go into it have dropped 70 per cent in value in the last six months. The 600 boiler-downers of grease in America claim their being forced out of business. Some say they can't sell their soap-making at any price; others are renting railroad tank cars to store their surpluses.

Rep. William H. Stevenson of Wisconsin thinks maybe the soapers (that's what they call themselves) spend too much money on weepy radio programs when maybe they ought to be trimming the price of soap.

The grease men (I suppose we can call them greasers) claim there is a tremendous over-supply of their product; they blame the government for not letting 'em peddle it abroad.

The soapers, reading from an entirely different set of U. S. census figures, say the greasers have soap in the eye. They insist there isn't enough grease and tallow for comfort yet and urge the government to keep it under export control.

First came a succession of elderly men who run grease-rendering plants in the Midwest. They've given up buying grease turned in by housewives to their butchers.

"Stick a pole into a can of it and the water splashes," said one. "Twenty-five per cent of the grease turned in by the ladies consists of water."

"Which you pay for," remarked Chairman Stevenson.

The greasers agreed further that a lot of the glycerine which used to be distilled from their product now comes out of wells. And, also, said they, too many women (including Mrs. O.) now wash the dishes with chemical detergents, instead of good old soap.

Dr. John Lee Coulter, the consulting economist of the greasers (who washes his white hair in pure soap), said if his clients could get better prices for the grease, the price of steaks and chops would drop. And a fine thing it was, he added, lending foreigners money so they can grow more peanut oil in Africa, when the government won't let grease be shipped abroad freely.

Well-scrubbed and pink-cheeked Andrew Federline, Washington representative of the independent soapers, said the greasers didn't know what they were talking about. His figures indicated there still wasn't enough grease in America.

**The Argument Got Soapy**  
"INCIDENTALLY," said Chairman Stevenson, "have you noticed lately any lower prices of soaps, detergents or washing powders?"

Soaper Federline said, well, his membership had to compete with America's big-three soap makers. "You mean compete with 'em in these giveaway radio programs?" demanded the gentleman from Wisconsin. "These soap operas?"

Mr. Federline didn't answer that one. An Agriculture Department man said he guessed figures could be interpreted any old way.

Wilbur Laroe, representing some grease producers, said yes and how come the Agriculture Department issued the wrong figures a while back on grease stocks? The Agriculture man said that wasn't his fault and from there the argument got a little soapy.

Quietly I departed to wash my hands, free, with the perfumed soap of the House of Representatives. "I've been smelling beautiful ever since."

# Desert Base Test Center for Planes

Largest Natural Field In World Used

MUROC, Cal., Nov. 20 (UP)—America's fighting planes of the future are flying for the first time in the hot, thin air above a closely-guarded base here on the lonely Southern California desert. Eleven miles long and five-and-a-half miles wide, Muroc Dry Lake forms the largest natural landing field in the world. Before World War II, speed-happy "hot-rod" drivers flocked here for auto races against time on the smooth surface.

But Muroc has changed since 1941. The tiny bombing range of World War I has expanded until Muroc Air Force base is Uncle Sam's largest flight test center.

The hangars and engineering buildings today house some of the nation's prime secrets in supersonic jet and rocket plane development. The "hot-rod" has been moved five miles away to Rosamond Dry Lake, and residents of the few nearby towns have grown accustomed to seeing test flights of craft that seem to be straight out of a cartoon fantasy.

Only about 70 miles from Los Angeles, the nation's aircraft production center, Muroc has the perfect geographic and atmospheric setup for speed flying. The current world speed record of 670.95 m.p.h. was set here last Sept. 15 by Maj. Richard L. Johnson in a production model of the North America's jet F-86. Two other previous marks were knocked off last summer.

Young Capt. Charles Yeager first cracked the sonic barrier here a year ago in the Air Force's first rocket ship, a Bell X-1. Designed to hit 1700 m. p. h., the plane is still being tested, but the Air Force doesn't say how fast it's going these days. It probably has done at least 900 miles an hour.

# Frauleins Rebel at Old Idea That They Belong in Home

'Church-Kitchen-Home' Tradition Fades As Women Find Business Opportunities

BERLIN, Nov. 20 (UP)—German women are rebelling against the traditional kirche, kuche, kinder—church, kitchen, home. The majority of male Germans still believe women belong in the home. But the women themselves are beginning to show different ideas.

For one thing, women know that many of them will never be able to marry and have homes of their own.

In all Germany, there are 7.5 million more women than men. In the American zone, according to the 1946 census, there are 124 women to every 100 men. The difference is even greater in the marriageable ages. For every 100 men between 20 and 25 years of age there are 171 women.

This result of two wars has made women increasingly insistent that there be more opportunities for them in business and the professions.

An opinion survey by military government's information service division showed that German women believe a man should have preference in any position he can fill satisfactorily.

American officials assert this attitude runs counter to reality. They say it ignores the excess number of women, the pressing need for reconstruction and export production.

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# Inside Indianapolis: 'We're Getting Too Clever With Christmas'

By ED SOVOLA

Each year the merchants seem to be more eager to get Christmas off to a flying start. Makes a man wonder what it will lead to.

There was a time when Christmas splendor appeared only after another most enjoyable holiday. Thanksgiving, was out of the way. That sequence I like. There's something old-fashioned about it. And when it comes to holidays, serve them to me with a dash of the past, mix well with old friends and close relatives in old and loved surroundings.

Christmas is the season you can leave off the sham, the cheap tinsel, the fake fireplace, scotch whiskey and the paper Christmas tree. Christmas is also the season that ought to come after the last of the turkey has been eaten cold.

**IF WE DON'T** watch out we're going to kill the goose that laid the golden egg and make kids start doubting parents at the tender age of two instead of four.

The idea—"For Him"—a stainless steel pocket extension ruler, "ideal for dad who just loves to putter in the basement." I'd bet my last dollar Dad would enjoy a bucket of beer more.

The idea—"Santa Claus"—

ceeds to throw the mess against the new wallpaper? WE'RE getting so clever with Christmas schemes it wouldn't surprise me one bit if some particularly hard hit citizen didn't start a movement to make Scrooge a symbol of the Yuletide season.

**I DON'T** know exactly what the solution is. All I know is that my head is reeling after what I have already seen "For Him," "For Her," "For Dad," "For Mom," "For Junior," and for the luvva Mike. Wow.

It has been my contention for a long time that women (bless them, I think they're here to stay, I like them better than I do race horses and all that)—women are the worst buyers when it comes to spending when the mistletoe begins to bloom. Mainly, I think it's because of the word cute. A gift has to be cute. Whether it's a watch chain you'll never use or a shaving set that turns your nose sideways, if they think it's cute—you've got it, Jack.

**WOMEN** somehow have lost that fine touch of giving a man

a little token of esteem that is basic. I'm thinking right now, for example, of a guy who has a very lovely wife who knows for a fact that the little bar down in the basement is next to the dearest thing in his heart.

So what does she do? Does she buy the old man a case of some bonded elixir? No. She buys him a cocktail shaker that is so cute it drives him to the neighborhood tavern.

I believe in good, solid, sincere gifts with a lot of thought from the opposite sex. Possibly a little effort mixed in some place along the line would make me happy. Don't you feel that way, Mac?

Leave me out when it comes to "Gift of the Year," "Gift Thrill," "Christmas Every Week," and "A Must This Yuletide" merchandise.

**THERE'S** just enough of the old-time in me to want something such as a 10-pound piece of home-made cheese. There's a gift with feeling. Or a couple of home-made sweaters, three dozen argyle socks, muffer, gloves and perhaps, oh, joy, genuine feather bed. A feather bed made as only lily white,

loving hands can make it. Now, there's a gift that's really a gift. It's basic, it's sincere. Christmas is getting so that "shop early" means the battery in the key chain with the flashlight attached for the "man of the house who opens the garage doors" is a little stronger than that's all. And maybe there are a few more colors to choose from.

**LAST YEAR** a young lady who cost me a nice-sized wad of dough and a small portion of my life, reciprocated with a pocket manicure set. She thought that would be cute because my fingernails happen to be on the other side of how she wanted them. Needless to say, we parted company. I still have the "Gift of the Magi" manicure set. Good as new.

We just have to get back to that real Christmas spirit. In fact, I'm starting today. Right now. The recipients of my gifts are going to be surprised, I'll tell you.

"Shop early." Hah. I've got it made. All I need is feathers. Get to the basic things, brother.

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