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Program, 1975 May 4, "Vision 75: Bicentennial Salute to the Green County" by Eva Jessye

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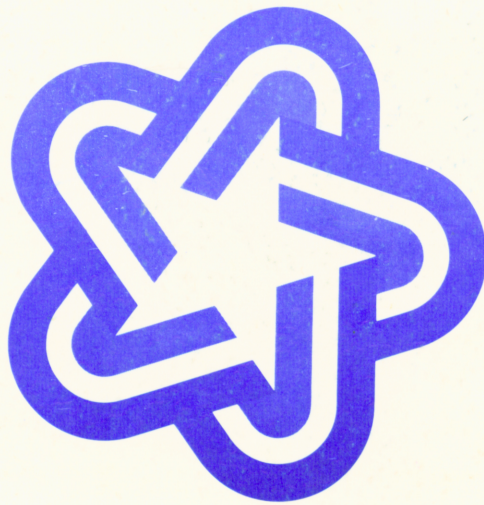
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TAFT BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Presents

“VISION '75 - A SALUTE TO GREEN COUNTRY”



**May 4, 1975
3: P.M.**

**Civic Assembly Center
Muskogee, Oklahoma**

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the citizens of Taft, Oklahoma, and Muskogee, Oklahoma, wish to pay a special tribute to Dr. Eva Jessye, well known for Her political, literary, and musical contributions, and

WHEREAS, among the high-lights of her activities are; graduate from Western University at Quindara, Kansas, another degree from Langston, and numerous honorary degrees, and

WHEREAS, her great devotion to the cause of racial equality and understanding among all people has made her name a household word in connection with America's musical life and show business.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ROBERT H. LOMAX, do hereby proclaim Sunday, May 4, 1975, as

"DR. EVA JESSYE DAY"

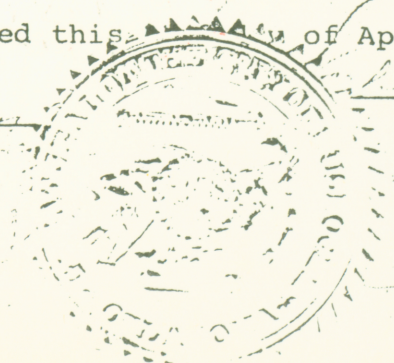
and call upon the citizens of Taft and Muskogee to respect said day in her honor and recognition,

Dated this _____ of April, 1975.

ATTEST:

W. R. H. H. H.

Robert H. Lomax
Mayor



TAFT TOWNSHIP BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

P. O. BOX 128

TAFT, OKLAHOMA 74463

Dear Friends:

We are proud to present "Vision '75 - A Salute To Green Country," a historical musical drama written and directed by Dr. Eva Jessye.

Special thanks to participants from Muskogee, Checotah, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma City, Bacone College, University of Oklahoma and University of Michigan.

In addition to welcoming our guests, we are especially pleased to be able to bring Dr. Eva Jessye back home to Oklahoma.

We hope you enjoy the production.

Glorietta Russell
Glorietta Russell
Chairperson

Charles McGee
Charles McGee
Project Director

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Eva Jessye is internationally acclaimed as teacher, writer, composer, choral director, humanitarian: and the artists whom she has discovered, tutored and guided to success are legion.

Dr. Jessye, founder of the Eva Jessye Afro-American Music Collection, and former school teacher in Taff, Haskell and Muskogee was the first Black woman to earn international distinction as a choral director. Eva Jessye directed the music for "Hallalujah", one of the first "colored" film musicals. She organized her first girls group when she was only twelve years old.

She has served on the faculty at Morgan State College, Chafin College, Maryland State College and is a veteran Radio and Television Director. But she will perhaps be best remembered as Director of her choir which dominated the choral field from the early twenties; appearing in concert, musical productions and with symphony orchestras.

The Eva Jessye Choir, with a repertoire of encompassing spirituals, work songs, mountain ballad ragtime jazz, and light opera, has performed with symphony orchestras, before princesses and presidents, and as background for both Broadway and movie musicals.

An impressive list of original works includes "Paradise Lost and Regained" which received ovations from public and press upon its rendition at the famous Washington Cathedral in 1972.

Dr. Jessye has been active in Civil Rights, participated in the Historic March on Washington, with recordings aided in the Freedom of Kenya, Africa, and is among leaders for the welfare and advancement of Black people everywhere.

She has been praised in the Congressional Record and declared outstanding patriot of this era by the Governor of Pennsylvania, Mayors of Philadelphia, Ann Arbor, Detroit and Windsor, Canada.

Mrs. Jessye has recently given her extensive personal collection of black music memorabilia to the University of Michigan. She has also been devoted to the cause of racial equality and understanding throughout the world. She started gathering the Eva Jessye Afro-American Music Collection over twenty years ago. It consists of her own mementos and substantial donations from others. Photos of jazz and blues performers are among the collection. Included are also original plays, manuscripts, opera scores, recordings, books, photographers and various objects of art.



Dr. Eva Jessye

Eva Jessye
Jan 30, 1995

BRIEF HISTORY OF TAFT

Taft, an all-Black community, 10 miles west of Muskogee, grew up because of the large number of Negro Freedmen who settled near the confluence of the Arkansas and Verdigris Rivers shortly after the Civil War. The United States required the Creeks to adopt their former slaves as citizens and many allotments in this district were given to Negroes, who were thus listed on the rolls of the Creek Nation. The original townsite was platted on 16 acres, upon the arrival of the Midland Valley Railroad.

A Post Office was established in Creek Nation on March 28, 1902. The Post Office was officially named **Taft** on November 18, 1904, for the then Secretary of War, and later the President of the United States, **William Howard Taft**.

News of the flourishing little place called **Taft** began to spread and by Statehood, migrants were here from Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Tennessee. With them came bright ideas and the town began to boom. By 1910, this community of 1200 persons was a thriving center, and by 1921, the community of more than 2000, was overly populated. Farming was the largest source of income, primarily cotton, corn and wheat. Farming of this kind soon became obsolete and the decline of this community was similiar to the decline of agricultural communities all over the State of Oklahoma. The passage of the principal cash crops forced residents to move on, seeking public employment for livelihood; thus causing the decrease to the present population of 525.

Education has always had its bearing, and there were Blacks interested in seeking knowledge for their own. This became a reality with the establishing of the **Halochee Institute**, (later known as the Deaf, Blind and Orphan Institute) and presently the Oklahoma Children's Center, North Campus. The original public school site was located on **Bridges Mountain View**.

The Year, 1974 brought a new and brighter light. Taft re-entered the picture. Many people across the country have been re-introduced to Taft and are again realizing there is still hope and prosperity for this almost ghost town. The Year '74 was also the beginning of a relationship with television star, comedian **Redd Foxx**, who became Chief of Police, and founded the **Redd Foxx Foundation**.

Our present City Officials are: The Honorable Lelia Foley, (1st Black Woman Mayor in the U.S.), Council members - Leonard Jackson and Billy Phillips.

Yes, here we go again.....and our dreams are to move forward.

WELL WISHERS

Mrs. Clydia Lawson Andrews
Mr. and Mrs. James Belton
Mrs. Estella Hale Burnett
Mrs. Lois Johnson Carter
Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Chandler
Mrs. Georgia Coleman
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Dilwood
Mrs. Edna Bailey Elliott
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Fields
Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Fields
Mr. and Mrs. C. Felton Gayles
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold L. Glenn
Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Guillory
Dr. E. P. Henry
Mr. O. D. Hutton
Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Jennings
Mrs. Alma Ford Mason

Dr. and Mrs. Virgil D. Matthews
Mrs. Ethel McPhaul
Mrs. Ruth Ford Norton
Mr. and Mrs. Pete O'Bryant
Mr. and Mrs. T. Homer Perkins
Mr. and Mrs. William Purvey
Mr. and Mrs. Boston Russell
Mrs. Hazel Gandy Shipp
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Simmons
Mrs. Ruby Stanback
Mr. and Mrs. Willie Strong
Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Twine
Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Warrior
Mr. and Mrs. Claude Wiley
Mr. and Mrs. Seymore Williams
Mr. Henry Young
Mr. and Mrs. James Young

THANK YOU'S

Mr. Raleigh Bowen
Mr. Jimmy Cope
Mr. Kevin Cox
Mrs. Betty Davis
Mr. Elmer Davis
Mr. Forrest Hayes
Mayor Robert Lomax
Mrs. Ruth Ford Norton
Mr. Grant Scott
Mrs. Carol Tice
Mr. E. W. Warrior
Mr. Linzy W. Wilson

KBIX of Muskogee
KMUS of Muskogee
KMMM of Muskogee
KTUL of Tulsa
Black Dispatch
Muskogee Daily Phoenix
Oklahoma Eagle
Tulsa Tribune
Information Service - U of M



THOMAS CAREY
Baritone

Thomas Carey was born in South Carolina and raised in New York where he began his formal music studies at the Henry Street Settlement School. Awards included the John Hay Whitney and Rockefeller Grants. He studied in Europe with Hans Hotter and Rupert Gundlach. In the United States, his distinguished teachers included Rose Bampton and Wilfred Pelletier. Acclaimed as a superb recitalist and Oratorio Singer, Mr. Carey has been soloist under Europe's leading conductors. He has been heard in leading roles of standard repertory in the opera house of Munich, Stuttgart, Belgrade, Zagreb, Covent Garden, created the baritone lead in the new opera, "The Knot Garden," in London. He has been heard in "Lost in the Stars," Manuel De Falla's Atlantida, Canticle to Pope John XXIII, under the director of Markevitch at the Festival of Cuenca in Spain, also Schoenberg's Survival of Warsaw. London, Amsterdam, Madrid, Stockholm, Berlin, Brussels, Munich are but a few cities that have been lavish in their praise of this exceptionally gifted singer.

Mr. Carey is on the opera faculty of the University of Oklahoma. Immediately following the Bicentennial appearance, he will leave for Rome, Italy.



CAROL BRICE
Contralto

A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Miss Brice grew up and received her early education at Palmer Institute in North Carolina. She majored in music at Talladega College in Alabama and won a fellowship to the Juilliard Graduate School which was renewed for five successive years. She won the coveted Naumberg Award. Fritz Reiner engaged her for appearance with the Pittsburg orchestra and with it, she recorded Falla's "El Armor Brujo" and Mahler's "Lieder Eines Fahrenden Gessellen" on the Columbia Masterworks label. She also recorded the Sacred Arias of Johann Sebastian Bach. She has sung ten times with the Boston Symphony, also at Tanglewood and in New York City. She has sung with leading orchestras in Canada, South America and Europe...including the San Francisco...Hollywood Bowl and Chicago Symphonies. She has toured America with the Berlin Symphony under the direction of Herbert Von Karajan. She is equally at home on the musical comedy and concert stage appearing in "Finian's Rainbow," "Gentlemen, Be Seated," "Saratoga." For the past four years, Miss Brice and her husband, Thomas Carey, have appeared in the Vienna VolksOpera's production of "Porgy and Bess," in the roles of Porgy and Maria...repeating the roles in a Los Angeles production last summer and recently in Lisbon, Portugal at the Teatro Nacional. Miss Brice holds a honorary Doctorate of Human Letters from her alma mater, Talladega College. Both she and her husband are on the voice faculty at the University of Oklahoma. They appeared most recently together with the Oklahoma City Symphony when their "Symphony with Soul" received critical acclaim.



THOMAS ANDERSON
Actor

Thomas Anderson, native Californian, is one of the most sought after character actors in the entertainment field. His range of interpretation is fantastic. His 40 year experience in the theatre has been mainly in New York and other cities in the Network in starring roles and also in support of such well known personages as Paul Douglas, John Randolph, Phil Sterling, Edward Matthews, Ethel Waters and Richard B. Harrison. He has had a long career in radio and television appearing on all major networks in leading programs.

On Broadway, he was the Judge in "Hello, Dolly," starring Pearl Bailey, the Deacon in "The Great White Hope" starring James Earl Jones and with Canada Lee in Richard Wright's "Native Son."

In motion pictures, he will be remembered for his performance as the Pastor in Gordon Park's "The Learning Tree," Harlem Tailor in the Belafonte Production "Angel Levine," Shadow in "Legend of Nigger Charlie," and Mr. Percy in "Don't Play Us Cheap," Yeah, Inc. Production.

He played featured role of St. Guiseppe in original production of the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein Opera, "Four Saints in Three Acts" for which Eva Jessye was Choral Director.

In 1974, he was featured in the National Theatre of France, in the all french play, "La Dispute," by Marivaux.

Presently, he is enroute to Arkansas to play second starring role in a historical motion picture which will have a romantic Bayou locale.

HERMAN HEMMITT
Singer-Actor

Mr. Hemitt, whose parentage hails from Poteau, Oklahoma, has carved an enviable position in oratorio, concert and on the musical stage. He has been soloist with the De Paur and Eva Jessye choirs and was awarded the Distinguished Singer and Opera Star Award, 1974, by the Illinois Citizens for the Performing Arts. He has had numerous television and radio appearances. Mr. Hemmitt is active in church circles, Vice President of Monumental Baptist Church Senior Choir, Chicago and Director of the Children's Choir. He has toured extensively in a featured role in "Porgy and Bess," the Gershwin Folk-Opera.

GWEN CROSS
Mezzo-Soprano

Miss Cross, vocal student in the Music School at the University of Michigan, appears frequently in oratorio and concert recitals. Her unusual talent and ability have won for her renewed scholarships at the University and the famous Summer Music Camp at Interlochen, Michigan. She is soloist with the Eva Jessys Choir in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and a pupil of Mary Russelll at the University of Michigan.

BETSY BORN
Flautist

Betsy occupies an enviable position in orchestra ranks. She plays in the University of Michigan Band and Campus Orchestra. Prior to entering the University and still in high school, she toured Europe with the Youth For Understanding Wind Ensemble. From the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, she was selected to perform in solo at the Governor's Concert...a signal recognition.

KWASI ADUONUM
Dancer-Singer-Choreographer

Kwasi, from the University of Ghana, via University of Michigan, is a student-teacher in the dance department. In Ghana, he taught Speech, composed music and published books on African rhythms and instruments. In his native country, he obtained a degree in general music as well as African music. He is presently pursuing a course in Music Education towards a doctorate.

MARVIN HARPER

Narrator, Moderator, Actor

Marvin is an instructor in English and Speech in the Washington, D. C. Schools. He is much in demand and recently won high praise from the very critical Washington Post for narrative excellence in a production of Eva Jessye's folk-oratoria, "Paradise Lost and Regained" at the famous Washington Cathedral. He impressed the same capacity for composer Edward Boatner's "Freedom Suite" in the nation's capitol.

TONY COOK

Narrator-Secretary

Tony is a senior at Fort Gibson High School and a member of the Society of Distinguished American High School Students, a national organization. Of Oklahoma and Arkansas parentage, he was born in Muskogee. Following graduation this spring, he plans to enter Oklahoma Baptist University to prepare for the ministry.

BARBRA SIMMONS

Artistic Director

Beginning her career as a dancer in Washington, D. C., her native city, Mrs. Simmons' early training was with Doris Jones, Claire Hayward School of Dance, founder of the famous Capitol Ballet Company. She studied with Ethel Butler, Louis Johnson and Arthur Mitchell, appeared professionally for a number of years with the Dansations and choreographed many ballets, and also performed in theatres in the East and Mid-west. Thru her love of ballet, she is dedicated to enriching the lives of young dancers in the Muskogee area in the Creative Dance Workshop.

JAMES DISMUKE

Tap Dancer

James, a native of Jennings, Louisiana, came to Oklahoma in 1948 and presently resides in Checotah, Oklahoma. "Louisiana Slim," as called by his friends, began dancing when he was four years old and dances whenever possible because he "enjoys it."

SURPRISE PACKAGE

Taft is the home base for this jazz-rock group composed of Larry Phillips, Lead Guitar; Danny Lolles, Jr., Electric Piano; "Poncho" Lolles, Bass, and Daniel Henderson, Drums.

BEST WISHES

The presentation of Dr. Eva Jessye in our Bicentennial celebration will be remembered in many hearts after the Nation's 200th Birthday in July, 1976.

May the Taft Bicentennial Committee continue in their good works.

Mayor Lelia Foley and Children

Taft, Oklahoma Presents "Vision 75"
BICENTENNIAL SALUTE TO THE GREEN COUNTRY
 Written and Directed by Eva Jessye

PROGRAMME

NARRATORS: **Marvin Harper**, Washington, D. C. **Tony Cook**, Fort Gibson High School

GREETINGS
 Gladys Warren, Director Oklahoma Bicentennial Commission
 Lelia Foley, Mayor of Taft
 Robert Lomax, Mayor of Muskogee

STAR SPANGLED BANNER
RECOGNITION OF MILITARY Smith-Liliedahl

MOTHER COUNTRY Muskogee High School Chorus
 Charles Klingman, Director
 Scott Davis, Accompanist

NATIONAL REPORT
 MARVIN HARPER, Chairman TONY COOK, Secretary

SCOUTS
 Herman Hemmitt, Gwen Cross, Hardy Athone, Thelmar Sourie

MOTON SR. HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS
 Patricia Springs, Director Emery Shaw, Accompanist

BACONE COLLEGE CHOIR
 JEANNINE RAINWATER, Director KENNETH GROWCOCK, Accompanist

THE LORD'S PRAYER Malotte
 TWENTY-THIRD PSALM
 Sign Language Interpretation

TAKE ME HOME, COUNTRY ROADS Ed Lojeski

DANCERS:
 Chumla Hill ... Yakima-Creek Ora Watt ... Navajo Balles Beatty ... White Mt. Apache
 Logan (Roger Ditzler, Conducting)

"PALE MOON"
GIRLS' SELECT CHORUS, MUSKOGEE HIGH SCHOOL
 MARJORIE MALONE, Director JOELINE WHEELER, Accompanist

FANCY CHEROKEE WAR DANCE Bill Blair, Fort Gibson High School
 FLUTE SOLO "Flute de Pan" (for unaccompanied flute) Debussy-1912
 Betsy Born, University of Michigan

"BY THE WATERS OF MINNETONKA" (Indian Love Song) Lieurance

GIRLS' ENSEMBLE OF FORT GIBSON HIGH SCHOOL
 ADA G. KNIGHT, Director JANELL ARNDT, Accompanist

Betsy Born, Flautist

"LIFE IS A SONG WORTH SINGING" (Bell-Creed)
 OKLAHOMA CITY NORTHEAST HIGH SCHOOL CHORUS
 CAROLE HARDEMAN, Director REGINALD THOMAS, Accompanist

DEDICATIONS
 DUKE ELLINGTON (prolog by Stephen Hooks)
 CREATIVE ARTS WORKSHOP, Muskogee Barbra Simmons, Choreographer

"SOPHISTICATED LADY" Marilyn Rucker, Evon Harlin
 "SATIN DOLL" Lisa Stewart, Patricia Brown, Gavla Fuller
 "YOU ARE THE SUNSHINE OF MY LIFE" Stevie Wonder, Moton High School, Taft
 "THE ENTERTAINER" Scott Joplin, Oklahoma City Northeast High School Chorus

TO MAHALIA JACKSON GOSPEL
 GOT TWO WINGS-Taft Community Choir-Emery Shaw, Director
 (a) GOD'S GONNA MOVE THIS WICKED RACE" (b) "FIGHT, WATCH AND PRAY"
 SPIRITUAL HARMONIZERS: Willie Sells, Charles Marchall, Larry Porter, Don Sells, Charles Ragsdale-Guitar:
 Marlon Brown, Clarence Brooks.

BONDAGE AND FREEDOM
"Jubilo Is On The Way"

SOLO—Gwen Cross, with Moton Sr. High School, Deanne Carter, Romell Springs, James Dismuke, Warrior Jr.
 High School, Taft.

SOLO "Have You Seen Him?"
 Carol Brice, Contralto - Accompanist Glenn Burleigh

THE DREAMERS A EULOGY
 for Martin Luther King, John Kennedy, John Brown, Abraham Lincoln

SOLO "THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM"
 Thomas Carey, Baritone - Accompanist Glenn Burleigh

GRASS ROOTS
 DANCE OF GHANA, AFRICA Kwasi Audounom University of Ghana, University of
 Michigan with Gwen Cross, University of Michigan, Students of Moton Sr. High, Taft.

INDIAN TERRITORY FOLK DANCE TALE Taft Elementary School
 Geraldine Tipton, Music Instructor

"AMAZING GRACE" (song of our forefathers) Jo Helen Robertson, English-Ruth James, Choctaw

SOCIAL COMMENTARY
 "ALL ABOUT THE BLUES" Oklahoma City Northeast High School Chorus
 Jay Huckaby, Trumpet

SCENE FROM "RAISIN IN THE SUN" Hansberry
 Anita Nero Pat Brown (Fort Gibson High School)

"SHAKE HANDS" Herman Hemmitt, Gwen Cross
 "HARD TIMES" Surprise Package:
 Danny Lolles, Daniel Lolles, David Henderson, Larry Phillips

NOSTALGIA
 THE OL' CIMMARON Traditional-Jessye
 Herman Hemmitt

WAY BACK IN OKLAHOMA Ellington-Jessye
 Moton Senior High School

THE IMMEDIATE PRESENT
 "HEAR ME, YE WINDS AND WAVES" (From Julius Caesar) Handel
 Thomas Carey, Baritone

PRESENTING THOMAS ANDERSON, ACTOR

MESSAGE TO THE WORLD
 "MY SOUL IS A WITNESS" (Spiritual) arr. Hall Johnson
 Carol Brice, Thomas Carey

"TELL THE NEWS 'TIL I DIE" Traditional
 Herman Hemmitt and Moton Senior High School

"SOMEDAY, SOMEHOW" Cunningham
 Moton Senior High School, Sherri Newsome, soloist.

CITY OF MAN
 "DAY BY DAY" From 'Godspell'
 "BEAUTIFUL CITY" Girl's Ensemble, Muskogee High School

"THE TORCH HAS BEEN PASSED" (from speech by John F. Kennedy) McLin
 Oklahoma City Northeast High School Chorus

FINALE: OKLAHOMA

Muskogee High School Chorus
 Oklahoma City Northeast High School Chorus
 Quotations from Carl Sandburg Langston Hughes, T. S. Elliot and others