

# Bookshelf By GERTRUDE MARTIN

## The Negro and the Navy

**T**HERE is no better time than the present with our young men signing up for the draft to examine "The Integration of the Negro Into the United States Navy" by Lt. Dennis D. Nelson, U. S. N. R., published several months ago. Lt. Nelson is justifiably proud of the fact that the Navy has beat the Army to a trial of a non-segregated training and service program. In fact, "From Revolutionary War days until the latter years of World War I the United States Navy had no definite policy of separation and segregation, as had the Army . . .," writes Lt. Nelson.

However, once it put its mind to it, the Navy learned fast, and by World War II it was able to match the Army in segregation—and exclusion. Today as Lt. Nelson so ably points out the Navy has learned from its past mistakes in working with all-Negro groups. In 1944 the "Guide to the Command of Negro Naval Personnel" stated in unequivocal terms: "The Navy accepts no theories of racial differences in inborn ability, but expects that every man wearing its uniform be trained and used in accordance with his maximum individual capacity determined on the basis of individual performance."

Lt. Nelson traces briefly the role of the Negro in the Navy from the Revolution up to the present, but notes that there is a dearth of records. There is ample evidence that the Negro's role is a gallant one and it is especially interesting that from 1864-1872 six Negroes received the Congressional Medal

of Honor, the country's highest award for gallantry.

The author does not attempt to gloss over the shortcomings (past or present) of the Navy nor to ascribe to it idealistic motives in its decision to try integration. The Navy discovered segregation bred "bitterness, multiple problems and wastage" and found integration of personnel in training and utilization "more practical, desirable and efficient" according to Lt. Nelson. The segregated training program at the Great Lakes Training Center was a fiasco and was finally recognized as such by Lieut. Commander Daniel Armstrong himself, one of the chief advocates of the segregated program.

Today with only three Negro officers on active duty the Navy has far to go before its stated goal of integration is reached. Lt. Nelson points to this and other changes that must be made. His is a forthright presentation of the subject and a very timely one. A number of photographs illustrate the book. "The Integration of the Negro Into the United States Navy, 1776-1947" by Lt. Dennis D. Nelson; Howard University; Washington, D. C.

## White Profile in New Yorker.

The first of two parts of a profile of Walter White by E. J. Kahn, Jr., appeared in the September 4 issue of the New Yorker. Mr. Kahn's writing is up to the New Yorker's best, high praise indeed, and in this first installment he has presented an excellent word picture of the NAACP secretary.

The same issue has an unusu-

al piece on the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood by Edmund Wilson, former book reviewer for the New Yorker.

## Alain Locke On PBK Committee

Alain Locke, professor of philosophy at Howard University, is one of four members appointed to the Key Reporter's Book Committee. The Key Reporter is the Phi Beta Kappa News Magazine. Other new members are Armour Craig of Amherst College, Marc Friedlander of Women's College, University of North Carolina and Eric F. Goldman of Princeton. The two other members of the six-man committee who were reappointed are Bennett Cerf, president of Random House, and Kirtley Mather of Harvard University.

## "Victims of Circumstances"

A Chicagoan, Abel C. Anthony, is the author of "Victims of Circumstances" which tells of the plight of Negroes caught in the slums of a great city. One of the principal characters is Dr. Ricardo, like the author a physician, who befriends the Singleton family.

The author's sincerity and vigorous championing of the underprivileged compensate in some measure for his stylistic faults. The book does fall short of the description on the flyleaf: "The most sensational, illustrated novel of the century." "Victims of Circumstances" by Abel C. Anthony, M. D.; Mid-State Publications; 4641 Westworth Avenue; Chicago 9, Ill.

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