



## Wings Over Jordan: Significant Events

1938

- Wings Over Jordan starts its Sunday morning broadcasts on CBS radio.
- Appointment of Worth Kramer, the second white man in American history to achieve international fame conducting an all black choral group. George White of the Fisk Jubilee Singers was the first.
- Participation in a BBC Goodwill Exchange Program, a shortwave broadcast heard around the world
- Inauguration of a Sunday afternoon Symposium on Negro Affairs at Gethsemane Baptist Church that includes speakers from the Wings Over Jordan radio program, as well as Cleveland-area leaders
- The appointment of Williet Firmbanks, the first woman conductor of Wings Over Jordan and later the first black woman to conduct a professional black choir.

1939

- A travel schedule that includes public and private concerts throughout the eastern and southern parts of the United States
- Incorporation as a nonprofit organization in the State of Ohio on May 6, 1939.
- Attracting the largest audience ever to attend a performance by a Negro spiritual group on June 1, 1939, in Baltimore, Maryland. More than 18,000 persons paid to hear the choir sing, and an equal number are turned away because of overcrowding.
- Nomination of Rev. Glenn T. Settle for the NAACP's Spingarn Award for outstanding achievement by an African American. Marian Anderson received the award that year.
- First choir in WGAR's history to be signed as an exclusive feature.
- Appointment of Neil Collins, the second white man employed with Wings Over Jordan, as public relations agent.

1940

- Program that drew the most mail on the CBS Radio Network.
- Command performance in the office of New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia.
- Performances at the New York World's Fair.
- Performance in Cleveland Stadium before 75,000 paying customers, while 25,000 others were turned away.
- Participation in "The American Negro Spiritual Festival" in Chicago on August 25, 1940.
- Rev. Settle named a presidential elector from Cleveland's 21<sup>st</sup> Congressional District.
- Invited to broadcast directly to England by shortwave radio as part of the "Friendship Bridge" series.
- Second Anniversary program broadcast live from the auditorium of Cleveland's Antioch Baptist Church, with Ohio Gov. John Bricker as guest speaker.

1941

- Purchase of exclusive phonograph recording rights by Albar-Ewick Corp. for \$85,000 a year.
- Choir cited as a major reason for CBS Radio winning the first George Foster Peabody Radio Award for public service.
- Rev. Settle named to the board of trustees of Cleveland's Boys Town Corp.
- Director Worth Kramer demands that white musicians stop swinging and jazzing Negro spirituals.
- Choir appears on the same radio program with Eleanor Roosevelt and Marion Anderson dedicating the opening of the Negro Art Center in Chicago.
- Inauguration of a daily broadcast from July 28 to August 27, 1941.
- Gov. John Bricker proclaims September 29, 1941, as Wings Over Jordan Day in Columbus, Ohio.
- International Association for Cripples of the United States selects Wings Over Jordan to promote its work nationwide.
- Entertainment impresario Louis J. Alber assumes personal control and devotes full attention to Wings Over Jordan.
- The choir records for CBS.
- First Western and Southwestern tour that culminates in a performance with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra.
- Branch offices established in Chicago, Illinois; Knoxville, Tennessee; New York City; Los Angeles, California; Atlanta, Georgia. Two additional offices opened in Cleveland to deal with the choir's increasing business operations.
- Rev. Settle named to *Who's Who in America*.

1942

- Radio broadcasts concerts throughout the United States to inspire and sustain morale and spiritual values.
- Gladys O. Jones, a graduate of the Dillard University School of Music, appointed as the first full-time black professional conductor, replacing Worth Kramer.
- Annual Race Relations Polls cites the choir as the choral and religious-educational broadcast that reaches the most listeners in the U.S. and abroad.
- Federal government uses the Wings Over Jordan Program as an official organ to dispense official information covering Negro troops and their war activities, as well as to sell War Bonds and War Stamps.
- *Thunder an' Lightnin' Britches* tells the story of Rev. Glenn T. Settle and the Wings Over Jordan Choir.
- Appearance on *Columbia School of the Air*, a cultural program broadcast in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

1943

- Appointment of Maurice Goldman as the second white conductor.
- Appointment of Hattie Easley as the second full-time black professional woman conductor.

1944 and After

- Performance with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.
- Establishment of the Spiritual Preservation Fund.
- Tour of Europe for the War Department that includes:
  - Participation, along with the all-black 92<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, in a Christopher Columbus Memorial ceremony where the explorer's remains are restored to their original resting place. Partisans had moved his ashes to the mountains for safekeeping before the Nazi occupation.
  - Performance for Pope Pius XII in Rome.
  - Participation in the International Red Cross convention attended by President Harry S Truman.
- A contract to perform in the film, *The Robe*, by Lloyd C. Douglas.
- Two performances in Madison Square Garden.
- Performance in New York's Town Hall, the first-ever appearance by a choir there.
- Second album produced by Queen Recording Co.
- Performance with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Choir conductor James Lewis Elkins invited to conduct the Philharmonic,
- A world tour at the behest of the War Department that includes Korea and Japan.

- Appearance with the San Antonio Symphony.
- Presented with the New York Turner Society Award for \*\*\*\*
- Sets a precedent by using two conductors for each program.
- CBS cancels the program in 1947. Mutual Broadcasting System picks up the broadcasts.
- John Hall dedicates his award-winning novel, *In the Heat of the Night*, to Rev. Settle.



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