

# **african americans that changed the world**

African Americans That Changed the World: Celebrating Trailblazers and Visionaries

**african americans that changed the world** have left an indelible mark on history through their courage, innovation, and relentless pursuit of justice. From revolutionizing science and technology to reshaping culture and civil rights, their contributions resonate deeply across all facets of society. Exploring these remarkable individuals not only honors their legacies but also inspires future generations to continue breaking barriers and redefining possibilities.

## **Pioneers in Science and Innovation**

When discussing african americans that changed the world, it's impossible to overlook the groundbreaking inventors and scientists whose work transformed industries and improved everyday life. Despite facing systemic obstacles, these innovators brought forth inventions and discoveries that have become cornerstones of modern living.

### **George Washington Carver: The Agricultural Genius**

Often hailed as the "Plant Doctor," George Washington Carver revolutionized agriculture with his inventive crop rotation methods and hundreds of uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other plants. Carver's work not only helped restore depleted soil in the South but also provided farmers with new economic opportunities. His dedication to sustainable farming practices continues to influence agricultural science today.

### **Dr. Charles Drew: Father of the Blood Bank**

Dr. Charles Drew's pioneering research in blood preservation paved the way for modern blood banks that save countless lives worldwide. By developing techniques to store plasma and organize large-scale blood donations, Drew's innovations were crucial during World War II and remain vital in medical emergencies and surgeries. His leadership as one of the first African American surgeons also broke racial barriers in medicine.

## **Champions of Civil Rights and Social Justice**

African Americans that changed the world have also been at the forefront of civil rights movements, advocating tirelessly for equality, justice, and human dignity. Their courage in confronting oppression has reshaped societies and laws, pushing the boundaries toward a more inclusive and fair world.

## **Martin Luther King Jr.: The Voice of Nonviolent Resistance**

Perhaps the most iconic figure in the struggle for racial equality, Martin Luther King Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolent protest galvanized a nationwide movement. His leadership during events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the historic "I Have a Dream" speech during the 1963 March on Washington remains a powerful testament to peaceful activism. King's legacy endures as a beacon of hope and change.

## **Rosa Parks: The Catalyst for Change**

Often called "the mother of the civil rights movement," Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama, sparked a critical turning point in the fight against segregation. Her simple yet profound act of defiance inspired the Montgomery Bus Boycott and energized activists across the country, demonstrating how individual courage can ignite collective action.

## **Trailblazers in Arts and Culture**

The influence of African Americans that changed the world is vividly evident in arts and culture, where they have shaped music, literature, film, and fashion, enriching the global cultural landscape. Their creativity has challenged stereotypes and offered new narratives that celebrate Black identity and experience.

## **Langston Hughes: The Voice of the Harlem Renaissance**

Langston Hughes' poetry and prose captured the joys, struggles, and aspirations of Black Americans during the Harlem Renaissance. His work brought African American culture to the forefront of American literature and emphasized themes of resilience and pride. Hughes' legacy endures as a cornerstone of Black artistic expression.

## **Maya Angelou: The Poet and Activist**

Maya Angelou's autobiographical works and poetry have inspired millions with their raw honesty and powerful messages of empowerment. Beyond her literary achievements, Angelou was a staunch advocate for civil rights and women's rights, using her voice to challenge injustice and celebrate human dignity.

## **Influential Figures in Politics and Leadership**

African Americans that changed the world have also made historic strides in politics, breaking down barriers and representing communities at local, national, and international levels. Their leadership has

helped shape policy and promote social progress.

## **Barack Obama: Breaking the Presidential Barrier**

As the first African American president of the United States, Barack Obama's election in 2008 marked a monumental milestone. His presidency not only symbolized progress in racial equality but also brought significant policy changes in healthcare, climate action, and international relations. Obama's journey from community organizer to the Oval Office continues to inspire leaders worldwide.

## **Shirley Chisholm: The Unbought and Unbossed**

Shirley Chisholm made history as the first African American woman elected to Congress and the first Black woman to seek a major party's presidential nomination. Her fearless advocacy for education, social justice, and women's rights challenged the status quo and opened doors for diverse political representation.

## **Unsung Heroes and Contemporary Influencers**

While many well-known figures have transformed history, numerous African Americans that changed the world contributed in ways that may not always make the headlines but are equally impactful.

## **Katherine Johnson: The Human Computer**

Katherine Johnson's exceptional mathematical skills were crucial to NASA's success during the space race. Her calculations enabled safe trajectories for space missions, including John Glenn's orbit around Earth. Johnson's story highlights the essential contributions of Black women in STEM fields and continues to inspire diversity in science and engineering.

## **Oprah Winfrey: Media Mogul and Philanthropist**

Oprah Winfrey's influence extends beyond entertainment; she has shaped cultural conversations on race, gender, and empowerment. As a media trailblazer and philanthropist, Oprah has opened platforms for diverse voices and championed education and leadership programs that uplift communities globally.

## **Lessons from African Americans That Changed the World**

The stories of these remarkable individuals offer timeless lessons in resilience, innovation, and the power of standing up for what's right. Their journeys teach us that overcoming adversity often requires courage, creativity, and a commitment to community. For anyone seeking to make a difference, embracing these values can be a guiding light.

Understanding the impact of african americans that changed the world also reminds us of the importance of representation and inclusion. By celebrating diverse contributions, societies become richer, more dynamic, and better equipped to face future challenges.

Whether through scientific breakthroughs, cultural revolutions, political leadership, or social activism, the legacies of these trailblazers continue to inspire progress and hope. Their stories encourage us to question limitations, embrace diversity, and envision a world where everyone's potential can be realized.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who was the first African American to win a Nobel Peace Prize?**

Ralph Bunche was the first African American to win a Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for his mediation efforts in Palestine.

### **How did Harriet Tubman change the course of American history?**

Harriet Tubman was an abolitionist and political activist who escaped slavery and then helped hundreds of enslaved people reach freedom through the Underground Railroad.

### **What impact did Martin Luther King Jr. have on civil rights in the United States?**

Martin Luther King Jr. was a leader of the civil rights movement who advocated for nonviolent protest and played a key role in ending legal segregation and promoting equality.

### **Who was the first African American woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction?**

Alice Walker was the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983 for her novel 'The Color Purple.'

### **What contributions did George Washington Carver make to agriculture and science?**

George Washington Carver was an agricultural scientist who developed crop rotation methods and invented numerous products using peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other crops, revolutionizing farming

in the southern United States.

## **How did Barack Obama change the world as the first African American president of the United States?**

Barack Obama, elected in 2008, broke racial barriers as the first African American president, influencing global politics and promoting healthcare reform, climate change initiatives, and social justice.

## **What role did Madam C.J. Walker play in business and philanthropy?**

Madam C.J. Walker was the first female African American self-made millionaire, known for her successful line of hair care products and her philanthropic efforts supporting education and civil rights.

## **Additional Resources**

African Americans That Changed the World: A Legacy of Innovation, Courage, and Influence

**african americans that changed the world** represent a profound and enduring legacy of contributions spanning civil rights, science, art, politics, and culture. Their impact is woven into the very fabric of global history, challenging systemic barriers and reshaping society in transformative ways. This exploration delves into the lives and achievements of key African American figures, highlighting how their courage, creativity, and leadership have altered the course of history and continue to inspire future generations.

## **Historical Context and Significance**

Understanding the influence of African Americans who changed the world requires acknowledging the historical challenges they faced. From slavery and segregation to ongoing racial discrimination, systemic obstacles have often sought to limit opportunities for Black Americans. Yet, despite these barriers, African American trailblazers have consistently broken boundaries across multiple fields, contributing innovations and ideas that transcend race and nationality.

The phrase “African Americans that changed the world” is not simply about individual success stories but about collective progress that has redefined human rights, culture, and knowledge. Their achievements underscore the resilience and ingenuity inherent in communities that have historically been marginalized.

## **Trailblazers in Civil Rights and Social Justice**

One of the most significant arenas where African Americans have changed the world is the fight for civil rights and social equity. The movement against racial segregation and inequality in the United

States became a global symbol of justice and human dignity.

## **Martin Luther King Jr.: The Architect of Nonviolent Protest**

Perhaps no figure epitomizes African American influence on global civil rights like Martin Luther King Jr. His leadership during the 1950s and 1960s led to landmark legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. King's philosophy of nonviolent resistance inspired movements worldwide, influencing leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi.

## **Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott**

Rosa Parks' refusal to surrender her bus seat in Montgomery, Alabama, catalyzed the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a pivotal event in the civil rights movement. Parks' act of defiance demonstrated how individual courage could ignite widespread social change, altering public perceptions and policies regarding racial segregation.

## **Innovators in Science and Technology**

African Americans have also made groundbreaking contributions to science and technology, fields where representation has historically been limited. Their innovations have had lasting impacts on medicine, engineering, and space exploration.

## **George Washington Carver: Agricultural Pioneer**

George Washington Carver revolutionized agriculture with his research on crop rotation and alternative crops like peanuts and sweet potatoes. His work not only improved soil quality for farmers but also fostered economic development in the Southern United States, demonstrating how science can serve both environmental and societal needs.

## **Katherine Johnson and NASA's Space Race Success**

Mathematician Katherine Johnson's calculations were critical to the success of NASA's early space missions, including John Glenn's orbital flight. Her role challenged racial and gender stereotypes in STEM fields, illustrating the profound impact African American women have had in areas traditionally dominated by white men.

## **Cultural Icons and Artistic Influence**

The realm of arts and culture has been deeply enriched by African American contributions, shaping

music, literature, film, and visual arts on a global scale.

## **Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance**

As a central figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes used poetry and prose to express the African American experience with authenticity and depth. This cultural movement expanded notions of Black identity and creativity, influencing generations of artists and writers.

## **Maya Angelou: Voice of Empowerment**

Maya Angelou's literary and performance work addressed themes of identity, trauma, and resilience. Her autobiography "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" became a seminal text in American literature, elevating African American voices in mainstream discourse.

## **Political Leadership and Global Diplomacy**

African Americans have also reshaped political landscapes, breaking new ground in governance and international relations.

## **Barack Obama: Breaking the Presidential Barrier**

Barack Obama's election as the 44th President of the United States represented a historic milestone. His presidency not only symbolized progress in racial equality but also influenced global diplomacy through policies on climate change, healthcare, and international cooperation.

## **Shirley Chisholm: First Black Woman in Congress**

Shirley Chisholm's political career challenged gender and racial barriers in U.S. politics. As the first African American woman elected to Congress and a presidential candidate, Chisholm's advocacy for marginalized communities reshaped the political discourse on inclusion and representation.

## **Economic Impact and Entrepreneurship**

The contributions of African Americans who changed the world extend into business and entrepreneurship, sectors critical to economic development and innovation.

## Madam C.J. Walker: America's First Female Self-Made Millionaire

Madam C.J. Walker's success in the beauty industry was pioneering not only for its financial achievement but also for its role in empowering African American women through employment and education. Her legacy illustrates how entrepreneurship can drive social change and economic upliftment.

## Reginald F. Lewis: Trailblazer in Corporate America

Reginald F. Lewis became one of the wealthiest African American businessmen through his strategic acquisitions and leadership of the TLC Group. His story highlights the importance of financial acumen and vision in overcoming systemic economic barriers.

## The Ongoing Influence of African Americans Globally

The impact of African Americans that changed the world continues to be felt in contemporary society. Their stories are increasingly recognized not only within the United States but also on the international stage, inspiring movements for equality, innovation, and cultural exchange.

Efforts to document and celebrate their achievements—through museums, educational programs, and media—play a crucial role in preserving history while encouraging future trailblazers. Moreover, the intersectionality of race, gender, and class in these narratives offers rich insights into the complexities of social progress.

African Americans who changed the world exemplify how perseverance and visionary leadership can surmount adversity and foster transformative change. Their multifaceted contributions serve as a powerful reminder that the quest for justice, knowledge, and creativity transcends boundaries and enriches humanity as a whole.

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**african americans that changed the world:** *That They Lived* Rochelle Riley, Cristi Smith-Jones, 2021-02-02 Biographies on African Americans who will inspire today's youth. In February 2017, Rochelle Riley was reading Twitter posts and came across a series of black-and-white photos of four-year-old Lola dressed up as different African American women who had made history. Rochelle was immediately smitten. She was so proud to see this little girl so



powerfully honor the struggle and achievement of women several decades her senior. Rochelle reached out to Lola's mom, Cristi Smith-Jones, and asked to pair her writing with Smith-Jones's incredible photographs for a book. The goal? To teach children on the cusp of puberty that they could be anything they aspired to be, that every famous person was once a child who, in some cases, overcame great obstacles to achieve. That They Lived: African Americans Who Changed the World features Riley's grandson, Caleb, and Lola photographed in timeless black and white, dressed as important individuals such as business owners, educators, civil rights leaders, and artists, alongside detailed biographies that begin with the figures as young children who had the same ambitions, fears, strengths, and obstacles facing them that readers today may still experience. Muhammad Ali's bike was stolen when he was twelve years old and the police officer he reported the crime to suggested he learn how to fight before he caught up with the thief. Bessie Coleman, the first African American female aviator, collected and washed her neighbors' dirty laundry so she could raise enough money for college. When Duke Ellington was seven years old, he preferred playing baseball to attending the piano lessons his mom had arranged. That They Lived fills in gaps in the history that American children have been taught for generations. For African American children, it will prove that they are more than descendants of the enslaved. For all children, it will show that every child can achieve great things and work together to make the world a better place for all. That They Lived was made possible through a grant provided by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

**african americans that changed the world: 28 Days** Charles R. Smith (Jr.), 2015 A picture book look at many of the men and women who revolutionized life for African Americans throughout history--

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**african americans that changed the world: African-American Inventions That Changed the World the World** Michael Carson, 2017-07-18 A considerable amount of the world's most influential inventors have been African-American, which is a fact that is often overlooked. Throughout history, African-Americans inventors have played a pivotal role in creating revolutionary inventions that has impacted our lives in various ways. These pioneers have contributed to the fields of medicine, agriculture, science and technology, to name a few. In the 1800's, many of these innovators were born into slavery and were not allowed to acquire a formal education, they were faced with countless obstacles and had to triumph over many adverse conditions. Nevertheless, these inventors have made significant contributions to the World. African-American men and women have left their mark in both American and World History. Many of their innovative creations would not exist today if it wasn't for their brilliant minds and creative ideas. The incredible inventors mentioned in this book have collectively created over 500 inventions. They represent some of the amazing men and women who have impacted our lives through their intelligence and ingenuity.

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such as-- Brigid . . . saint and patroness of Ireland Grace O'Malley . . . pirate queen of Connacht Queen Maeve . . . ancient warrior Clara Dillon Darrow . . . suffragist Mother Jones . . . union leader Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy . . . U.S. first lady Sinead O'Connor . . . singer Mary Robinson . . . president of Ireland Maureen O'Hara . . . actress Sandra Day O'Connor . . . Supreme Court justice Maud Gonne . . . Irish revolutionary This indispensable reference will move, instruct, and empower readers to reach for their dreams as they stand on the shoulders of great Irish women. 50

Fascinating Profiles Gina Sigillito has studied Irish history, art, literature, and politics at the Irish Arts Centre, Ireland House at New York University, and Trinity College, Dublin. She has served as a guest host and producer on the Irish radio program Radio Free Éireann and has traveled extensively throughout Ireland. She is co-author of *The Wisdom of the Celts*, also available from Citadel Press.

**african americans that changed the world: *We Changed the World*** Vincent Harding, 1997-04-24 For all of the continuity of African-American history, including the long history of struggle, the years between 1945 and 1970 represented a new moment. It was a time of new possibilities and new vision, a time when black Americans were determined to be the architects of an inclusive America that championed human rights for all. In *We Changed the World*, Vincent Harding, himself a participant in the Southern freedom movement, documents what was perhaps the most critical chapter in African-American history, the fight for civil and human rights. In the streets and in the courts, a new generation of black activists--including Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, writers James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison, and baseball legend Jackie Robinson--forced the federal government to admit that segregation was wrong and must be remedied. Their efforts paid off. In the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the Supreme Court overturned *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 1896 decision upholding legal segregation. Americans could no longer easily avoid the implications of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s central message: If democracy is to live segregation must die. By 1964, African Americans had much to be optimistic about. Protests in Birmingham and Mississippi and the much publicized murders of civil rights activists forced Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation in public accommodations of every kind throughout the country. The civil rights movement freed all African Americans to move beyond protest and to take charge themselves. The Black Power movement, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the urban rebellions--all contributed to the transformation of American politics and the role of black Americans in the life of the nation. African Americans did indeed change the world, but only after a long struggle that began when the first Africans arrived in this country. It is a struggle that continues to this day.

**african americans that changed the world: *Brave. Black. First.*** Cheryl Willis Hudson, 2020-01-07 Published in collaboration with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, discover over fifty remarkable African American women whose unique skills and contributions paved the way for the next generation of young people. Perfect for fans of *Rad Women Worldwide*, *Women in Science*, and *Girls Think of Everything*. Fearless. Bold. Game changers. Harriet Tubman guided the way. Rosa Parks sat for equality. Aretha Franklin sang from the soul. Serena Williams bested the competition. Michelle Obama transformed the White House. Black women everywhere have changed the world! Published in partnership with curators from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, this illustrated biography compilation captures the iconic moments of fifty African American women whose heroism and bravery rewrote the American story for the better. A beautifully illustrated testament to the continuing excellence and legacy of African American women. -Kirkus Reviews

**african americans that changed the world: *We Changed the World*** Vincent Harding, 1995

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**african americans that changed the world: *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619-1895*** Paul Finkelman, 2006-04-06 It is impossible to understand America without understanding the history of African Americans. In nearly seven hundred entries, the *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1619-1895* documents the full range of the African American

experience during that period - from the arrival of the first slave ship to the death of Frederick Douglass - and shows how all aspects of American culture, history, and national identity have been profoundly influenced by the experience of African Americans. The Encyclopedia covers an extraordinary range of subjects. Major topics such as Abolitionism, Black Nationalism, the Civil War, the Dred Scott case, Reconstruction, Slave Rebellions and Insurrections, the Underground Railroad, and Voting Rights are given the in-depth treatment one would expect. But the encyclopedia also contains hundreds of fascinating entries on less obvious subjects, such as the African Grove Theatre, Black Seafarers, Buffalo Soldiers, the Catholic Church and African Americans, Cemeteries and Burials, Gender, Midwifery, New York African Free Schools, Oratory and Verbal Arts, Religion and Slavery, the Secret Six, and much more. In addition, the Encyclopedia offers brief biographies of important African Americans - as well as white Americans who have played a significant role in African American history - from Crispus Attucks, John Brown, and Henry Ward Beecher to Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, Sarah Grimke, Sojourner Truth, Nat Turner, Phillis Wheatley, and many others. All of the Encyclopedia's alphabetically arranged entries are accessibly written and free of jargon and technical terms. To facilitate ease of use, many composite entries gather similar topics under one headword. The entry for Slave Narratives, for example, includes three subentries: The Slave Narrative in America from the Colonial Period to the Civil War, Interpreting Slave Narratives, and African and British Slave Narratives. A headnote detailing the various subentries introduces each composite entry. Selective bibliographies and cross-references appear at the end of each article to direct readers to related articles within the Encyclopedia and to primary sources and scholarly works beyond it. A topical outline, chronology of major events, nearly 300 black and white illustrations, and comprehensive index further enhance the work's usefulness.

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**african americans that changed the world: Perceptions of a Black Man** Wallace Hall, 2023-03-28 Perceptions of a Black Man is about African Americans and White people. It discusses how the relationship between White people and African Americans started and how it evolved. It shows you how the Founding Fathers of America used the government of this country to undermine African Americans, and it lets you see how African Americans were subjugated. This book discusses how African Americans were able to overcome their subjugation, and it shows you how the election of President Obama made America a new nation, discussing some of the things he did as president. It shows you what Donald Trump did as president, and it discusses the challenges facing Joe Biden as president. Democrats and Republicans want to lead in America, and this book gives the reader an opportunity to decide which of these political parties should lead. White people helped African Americans change America, and I believe White people and African Americans will continue working together to change America into a color-blind society. This book also aims to make the reader see how police officers and the Black Lives Matter organization have factored into the relationship between White people and African Americans.

**african americans that changed the world: African Americans in U.S. Foreign Policy** Linda Heywood, Allison Blakely, Charles Stith, Joshua C. Yesnowitz, 2015-01-30 Bookended by remarks from African American diplomats Walter C. Carrington and Charles Stith, the essays in this volume use close readings of speeches, letters, historical archives, diaries, memoirs of policymakers, and newly available FBI files to confront much-neglected questions related to race and foreign relations in the United States. Why, for instance, did African Americans profess loyalty and support for the diplomatic initiatives of a nation that undermined their social, political, and economic well-being through racist policies and cultural practices? Other contributions explore African Americans' history in the diplomatic and consular services and the influential roles of cultural ambassadors like Joe Louis and Louis Armstrong. The volume concludes with an analysis of the effects on race and foreign policy in the administration of Barack Obama. Groundbreaking and critical, African

Americans in U.S. Foreign Policy expands on the scope and themes of recent collections to offer the most up-to-date scholarship to students in a range of disciplines, including U.S. and African American history, Africana studies, political science, and American studies.

**african americans that changed the world:** *Relations Between Africans, African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans: Tensions, Indifference and Harmony* Godfrey Mwakikagile, 2023-05-18 This is the second edition and an expanded version of the first one. The work examines relations between Africans, African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans and the problems they face when they interact and how they see each other. It also looks at what unites them and what separates them. Relations between members of these groups, which are sometimes described as distinct ethnic groups, are characterised by tensions, harmony and indifference towards each other in spite of their common identity as a people of African origin. The author explains why. This edition includes new material and complements the author's other works, "Relations Between Africans and African Americans: Misconceptions, Myths and Realities," and "Africans and African Americans: Complex Relations, Prospects and Challenges."

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**african americans that changed the world:** **African American History Day by Day** Karen Juanita Carrillo, 2012-08-22 The proof of any group's importance to history is in the detail, a fact made plain by this informative book's day-by-day documentation of the impact of African Americans on life in the United States. One of the easiest ways to grasp any aspect of history is to look at it as a continuum. African American History Day by Day: A Reference Guide to Events provides just such an opportunity. Organized in the form of a calendar, this book allows readers to see the dates of famous births, deaths, and events that have affected the lives of African Americans and, by extension, of America as a whole. Each day features an entry with information about an important event that occurred on that date. Background on the highlighted event is provided, along with a link to at least one primary source document and references to books and websites that can provide more information. While there are other calendars of African American history, this one is set apart by its level of academic detail. It is not only a calendar, but also an easy-to-use reference and learning tool.

**african americans that changed the world:** Ebony , 1977-06 EBONY is the flagship magazine of Johnson Publishing. Founded in 1945 by John H. Johnson, it still maintains the highest global circulation of any African American-focused magazine.

**african americans that changed the world:** **Trabelin' on** Mechal Sobel, 1988-04-21 Originally published, with appendix, in the Greenwood Press series, Contributions in Afro-American and African studies, no. 36, Westport, CT, c1979--T.p. verso.

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