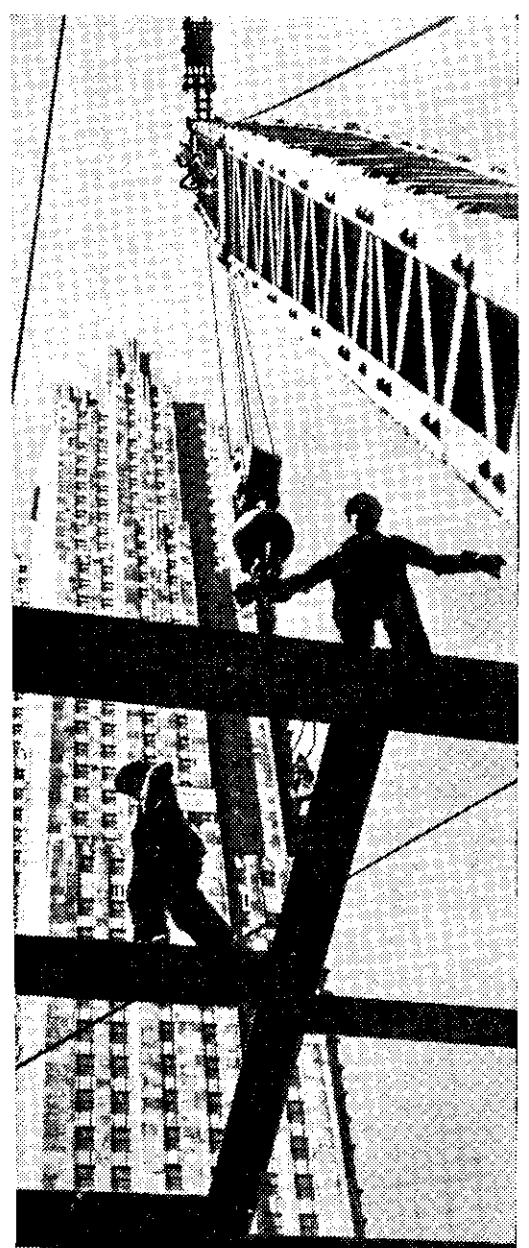




Left: Immigrants from Europe climbing the stairs of Ellis Island, entrance to America

Above: Paul Robeson, negro bass, who sings "Ballad for Americans" in the NBS programme

Right: Upward from rock foundations the steel skeletons of Manhattan skyscrapers rise



# HAIL AMERICA!

## An Impression Of The United States

IT is impossible to say much about America in a couple of pages in a magazine; the country is too vast and too diverse. It is equally impossible to give a true picture in one book, or in one set of books, however fully illustrated. The phrase we use so glibly, "The United States," refers to 48 States, nearly all of them larger than New Zealand, most with a history longer than New Zealand's history, and made up of more diverse ingredients.

Only a whole library could give a comprehensive picture of the United States of America; and although even a library would leave out the imponderables — the thoughts and impulses of men, their fears and hopes, and the spirit of the common people—that conception of a vast library of books is the way in which we suggest you consider America—"the arsenal of democracy," "the land of the stars and stripes," of Henry Ford and Hollywood, of the Mississippi and the Melting Pot, of Roosevelt, skyscrapers and cowboys.

Friday, July 4, is Independence Day, one of the great festivals of the American republic. In honour of the republic and in appreciation of its magnificent assistance to the cause of democracy, the NBS has prepared a feature programme entitled "Hail America," to be given from the main National stations on Saturday, July 5, from 7.30 until 9 p.m.

In that hour and a-half of song and story, a kaleidoscopic impression will

be conveyed of the rich resources of American life. But it can be no more than an impression. To accompany that programme, and to fill out that impression, *The Listener* here envisages a Library of America, in which, if it existed, you would still need to spend years of study before you even approached an understanding of what the United States really are.

### Men of the Past

First, there would be many volumes devoted to the history of America from its settlement, through the 150 years (longer than New Zealand's modern history), that elapsed while the colonists were a part of England's Empire, and then through another 150 years of nation-making.

One whole wing of the library would have to be devoted to the leading personalities of those 300 years. In the NBS programme you will hear the recorded voices of Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, and Franklin Roosevelt, but great men as they are, these four Presidents are but the recent leaders of an army of men and women who have created out of the virgin American continent a modern industrial civilisation without parallel in history. Granted that they had vast new lands and untapped resources, the country was not developed without hard work and brilliant leadership. Men like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton, should have volumes to commemorate the sound foundations they laid.

Then there are the stories of the "frontier"—stories written by filibusters

like "Buffalo Bill," and by Brigham Young and other nation-makers of the quality of our own early pioneers.

### Business and Philanthropy

Many volumes have already been written on the rise in modern times of great business leaders, the creators of "Business Empires," and in fact one book has been published under the title of *The Robber Barons*. Whatever opprobrium may be attached to the big oil trusts, our imaginary library would also have a shelf-ful of books commemorating the Great Philanthropists. Endowments running into millions of pounds have been made by wealthy Americans for universities, for research into diseases, for some of the best-equipped hospitals in the world, and for such purposes as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Smithsonian Institute in Washington for the study of natural history, the Rockefeller Foundation for the Advancement of Learning, and the National Art Gallery in Washington, built by the late Andrew Mellon and containing his gift of some of the greatest art treasures of Europe.

### The Field of Amusement

But let us turn to a lighter section of the library, for the NBS programme is far from dull history; it is, as much as anything, entertainment. Let us look at the field of Amusement, in which the average American man and woman occupy themselves in their leisure hours. Should the largest volume be devoted to Hollywood and the cinema stars, or to football and baseball? Probably the most significant thing about both base-

ball and the cinema is that they are now great industries. But Americans love the casual picnic, the lazy way of filling in a sunny Sunday afternoon, or the party round the fire, as much as we do.

But the cinema world does loom large. In the NBS programme you will hear the voice of John Barrymore ("The Great Profile" as some Americans call him), and also some of the dialogue recordings, from the very first talkies. Alas, there will be little reference to the New York stage, which, in this war-torn world not only keeps alive theatrical traditions but is also forging ahead with a vitality which augurs well for the future, nor to the equally vital sphere of American literature. There are enough books by important American authors to fill a large library by themselves, and now that their ranks have been added to by emigrés from Europe, an even greater output seems assured for the future.

### Explorers and Architects

But let us return to our imaginary library with its conspectus of American life and culture. Here is a shelf devoted  
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