

BOOKS

By DICK MILLER
Highland School Librarian

DOUBLEDAY AND CO. of Garden City, New York, has launched a most interesting publishing venture known as Zenith Books.

"The aim of Zenith Books is to present the history of minority groups in the United States and their participation in the growth and development of the country," according to Doubleday. "Through histories and biographies written by leading historians in collaboration with established writers for young people, Zenith Books will increase the awareness of minority group members of their own heritage and at the same time develop among all people an understanding and appreciation of that heritage.

The well-known Long Island publishing house claims, "Zenith Books are today's answer to the long-ignored need for accurate and interesting literature on the heritage of American minority groups--and on the important roles these

groups played in building this nation. Through narrative histories of significant periods in the backgrounds of the groups--such as the Civil War and the Negro--and through dramatic biographies of the men and women who made this history, Zenith Books tell the fascinating stories of some of the people, important but overlooked, who have given America its wonderful diversity. To guarantee both authenticity and readability, each book



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is co-authored by a prominent historian and a professional writer."

First books in this series came off the presses last month. They are available in either hard cover or paperback. This writer received copies of the first two books and they look fine, indeed.

GREAT RULERS of the AFRICAN PAST, by Lavinia Dobler and William A. Brown, tells the stories of five great African leaders. The scope stretches from the 13th century to the seventeenth and the themes--all true--are full of color and action, shifting borders, religious conflict and foreign domination.

The authors are tops in their field. Lavinia Dobler is head librarian for Scholastic Magazine. She has taught in several areas of the United States and in Puerto Rico, and has written numerous books and articles.

William A. Brown is an historian who has specialized in African lore. He has done a great deal of study and research in Africa as the recipient of a Foreign Area Fellowship.

Dr. Philip Curtin acted as special consultant to the authors of **GREAT RULERS of the AFRICAN PAST**. He is Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin and head of the African Studies Program at the university. His latest book is **THE IMAGE of AFRICA**.

Certain individuals who believe that Africa is a continent with little history will be surprised by some of the facts set forth in **GREAT RULERS of the AFRICAN PAST**. Contrary to popular conception, the search for African unity is not new. Askia Muhammad, who was born

one year after Columbus discovered America, brought scholars and leaders to his African kingdom from all over the continent. He wanted to replace force with one government and one religious faith and he exchanged letters with leading religious and political authorities in North Africa in an attempt to do so.

LIFT EVERY VOICE, by Dorothy Sterling and Benjamin Quarles, contains the exciting biographies of four leaders whose accomplishments and ideals significantly influenced the stature of the Negro in American life. Here are a few highlights from the book:

"Did you know... that Booker T. Washington, the president of Tuskegee Institute, was the first Negro to receive an honorary degree from Harvard University?"

"Did you know... that Dr. William E. B. DuBois, a man who frequently disagreed with the views expressed by Booker T. Washington, was an outspoken founder of the NAACP and the author of over twenty books?"

"Did you know... that Mary Church Terrell, a graduate of Oberlin College, was instrumental in forwarding the causes of equality, peace and women's rights throughout the world?"

"Did you know... that James W. Johnson--a teacher, lawyer, poet and editor of the first Negro daily newspaper in the United States--served as a diplomatic consul under President Theodore Roosevelt?"

Dorothy Sterling is an author of proven ability. She has written many successful and highly praised books for young people, including **FREEDOM TRAIN**, **FOREVER FREE** and **MARY JANE**, the latter referred to at some length in this column on Sept. 23.

Dr. Benjamin Quarles is Professor of History at Morgan State College in Baltimore and was formerly Dean of Instruction at Dillard University in New Orleans. He is the author of many books, among them, **FREDERICK DOUGLASS**, **THE NEGRO in the CIVIL WAR**, **THE NEGRO in the AMERICAN REVOLUTION**, **LINCOLN** and **THE NEGRO and THE NEGRO in the MAKING OF AMERICA**.

Other outstanding Zenith Books:

WORTH FIGHTING FOR, the history of the Negro during the Civil War and Reconstruction, brings to light the many courageous deeds of both northern and southern Negroes and captures the spirit that inspired the Abolitionists, the "conductors" of the Underground Railroad, and the writing of the Emancipation Proclamation.

A GLORIOUS AGE in AFRICA reveals the magnificent history and heritage of the African people, destroying, once and for all, the centuries-old, still-lingering myth that Africa "was a continent without history."

A GUIDE to AFRICAN HISTORY tells the proud story of the African people from their earliest origins and their independent past through the days of the slave trade--and finally to the new Africa of today.

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