

Una Marson, poet, author, journalist and broadcaster was born in 1905 in Santa Cruz, St. Elizabeth and educated at Hampton High School. After leaving school she held various secretarial posts before joining the editorial staffs of the Daily Gleaner and the Jamaica Standard.

In 1929 she broke new ground with the publication of the Cosmopolitan Monthly Magazine, the first magazine in Jamaica to be edited and published by a Jamaican woman. A number of poems and articles by local writers were featured in the magazine. In 1930 her first volume of poems Tropical Reveries was published and for this she was awarded the Silver Musgrave Medal of the Institute of Jamaica. A second volume of poems Heights and Depth was published in 1931.

Shortly afterwards she moved to England and identified herself with the league of coloured people, serving as assistant secretary of the organization from 1933 - 1935 and as editor of their magazine, Keys. Her play At What Price produced under the auspices of the league in 1934 was the first play written and performed by coloured colonials to be staged in London.

As a member of the Ethiopian Legation in London, she accompanied Emperor Haile Selassie in 1936 to the League of Nations in Geneva, when he sought - unsuccessfully - to arouse the world's conscience against the Italian attack of his country.

Disillusioned with the League of Nations, Una Marson returned to Jamaica and resumed her literary and social welfare activities. She published a third volume of poems The Moth and the Stars, wrote two more plays, London Calling and Pocomania which were staged at the Ward Theatre, founded the Readers and Writers Club (1937) and the Kingston Dramatic Club. She also contributed several articles to Public Opinion, the weekly Journal.

Returning to England in 1939 she worked with the B.B.C. during the war years producing the very popular radio programme "Calling the West Indies". Back home after the war she organized the "Pioneer Press", ^a publishing venture of the Gleaner Company and served as its general editor from 1949 - 1953. The Pioneer Press was designed to bring out affordable editions of work by Jamaican authors. About 25 books were published in all; but Una herself contributed to only one: Anancy Stories and Dialect Verses.

In the late 1950's Miss Marson spent some time in Washington D.C. and attended courses in Drama, Writing for Theatre and Television, and Writing for Children. Several of her children's stories were published.

In 1965, while on an assignment in Israel related to her work in Community Service. She took seriously ill, returned home and died three weeks later. She was buried in the Cemetery at St. Andrew Parish Church, Half-Way-Tree.

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