Eustace "Chappy" Gardner, along with P.T. Barnum, has set himself apart from the ranks of ordinary showmen... The bland press agent in a moment of exceptional vision perpetrated a monstrous hoax on the daily press... In palming off a Mosetta as an "Ethiopian Princess", little did he allow the ofay public to see of the hand that indirectly pulled their leg—a veritable Mose in the woodpile.

In 1850 Phineas T. Barnum, at the height of his fame as a proprietor of a museum of curiosities, decided that he would like to lift himself from the ranks of the routine... He was tired of exploiting midgets, bearded ladies and trained fleas... He now wanted to be an "impressario"... which is a sort of refined and dicy way of saying showman... He therefore engaged the services of an agent to buy the contract of Europe's reigning concert singer, Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale.

P.T. was known for the crude build-up of his attractions... He worked from the premise that "a sucker is born every minute"... He once said; "It is the editor and his paper that furnish the wind for my sails"... Barnum has been rightly called the outstanding exponent of the School of Notoriety.
A mid the runkest kind of publicity a concert artist had received, Jennie Lind was introduced to the American public...
Newspaper editors swallowed whole the showman's representation of his newest acquisition... all on P.T.'s say so.

The "Swedish Nightingale" had a hatred of Negroes...

But under the guiding genius of Barnum this was amply blanketed...
She sent $100 to Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was buying Negro slaves freedom, and contributed to a colored orphan asylum... The press responded, as P.T. planned, with reams of publicity... Jenny Lind rode into favor in the north on the wave of public indignation over slavery in the south.

The sagacity of the showman reached its peak with the "Swedish Nightingale" affair.

The "Ethiopian Nightingale"

A century has almost passed and Chappy Gardner, a humble Coal Bin inhabitant, emerges to duplicate P.T. Barnum's legitimate extravaganza... This time with more polish and finesse... Following the same school of notoriety, however, he presented to the gullible public plain Islyn Harvey as his "Ethiopian Nightingale"... adorning this unknown singer with the title of "Princess Rossari Neshla Tamanya, cousin of his majesty Emperor Haile Selassie".

Like old P.T. he utilized all sides of his material... and produced a character of unusual dimensions... The "Ethiopian
Nightingale" rode into public acclaim on the wave of public indignation over Italy's aggression upon Ethiopia. Her every spoken word received rapt attention from all the leading dailies... Chappy's genius prompting her through each difficult situation from backstage.

Having trucked about the turf as a newspaper hack, the impeccable Chappy Gardner saw visions of greatness... He had an ample career as a press agent, theatrical agent and promoter... Nothing was too small or too large for this exponent of publicity to handle... Under his signature write-ups were given to warblers, gin mills, grocery stores and beauty parlors... He combined a genial temperament with a tough hide that refused to allow the slings and arrows of outraged editors and citizens to penetrate his heart.

Up to Brother Gardner's recent bid for fame his only distinction was the fact that he was born in the same town as Eddie Stephens--- Steelton Pa. His career up to the time of his contact with the "Princess" was as varied and hectic as his prototype, P.T. Barnum... and there is no doubt that he has as lusty a swing for publicity.

A Dash of Belasco

The Ofay brother works from the unhappy premise that a Jackson is too dumb to fool him... he is also strangely gullible about European royalty. The stage had a perfect setting when the imaginative Chappy phoned their offices and announced the arrival of Haile Selassie's cousin, "Princess Tamanya".

Chappy's pronouncement caused a mad scramble for pencils... The best reporters were assigned to interviewing the "Princess"... and
rewrites ottley-4

returned with such classic remarks as "She disdains the chairs and sofas of white civilization"... and Harlem had seen her spread out on Aunt Dinah's Kitchen benches with consuming ease, to devour some barbecue and greens.

The magnificent directions of Chappy smacked of the technique of a Belasco... Amid synthetic primitive surroundings, especially prepared in a suite at the Broadway Central Hotel, the magic Brother Gardner lifted lovely commoners to the rank of royalty.

Ida Dewey, local blues singer, promptly became a lady-in-waiting... A Mose of the Rev. Washfoote variety, under the promoter's spell became a Moorish consul... The classic touch was his transformation of the humble singer of unknown talent to the role of Princess Tamanya" which, from all reports, was portrayed with success... Chappy, unable to resist the splendor of his own staging, promptly became nothing less than "Monsieur Chappy Gardner", President of the Ethiopian Press Association".

M. Gardner's performance stands out over P.T. Barnum's not only because of the magnitude of the hoax... but because he sold a nightingale wrapped in royalty... The whole scene was awe-inspiring... and carried off without a flaw... until Harlem heard of the "princess" arrival. Someone must have told Monsieur Gardner that Mose can't read.

Bibliography:
Chappy Gardner is one of the persons in whose life or exploits diligent members of the fourth estate often find good copy. Chappy has been in and out of the newspapers for years and, with his propensity for breaking into the public prints bids fair to receive many more similar type tributes before his "obit" is finally slapped in the back pages of most newspapers. (1) His best remembered feat was when he introduced "princess" Leshla Tamanya in 1935 to a group of hard boiled newspapermen who sipped tea and worshipped momentarily at the lady's feet.

Too bad that the International Press Agents Association did not have a Pulitzer prize award for the year of 1935. Undoubtedly Chappy Gardner would have been the recipient, for having executed the slickest publicity stunt of the year.

Lifting plain Iselyn Smith Harvey from relief rolls, Chappy moved her to a rented room at 1890 Seventh Avenue. The black F.T. Barnum's next step was to install her in the Broadway Central Hotel.

The show was on, a great show as everyone was to find out. The crude build-up of F.T. in 1850 when that erstwhile gentleman introduced the Amis "Swedish Nightingale" Jenny Lind, was surpassed in smoothness and finesse by Chappy. This former booster of beauty parlors, butcher shops and gin mills, was bringing his "Princess" in on the wave.
of indignation over the rape of Ethiopia. Just as his prototype P.T. brought Lind in over the fury between the north and the south on the question of slavery. (2)

The "Princess" was really born in the British West Indies in 1906, and from all reports the lady was a regal and imposing figure. After Gardner had prepared the correct background which was to promote Ida Dewey, a local blues singer, to a lady-in-waiting, and F. Turner-El (of the Cincinnati, O. Turner-Els) to grand shiek F. Turner-El, who posed as the Moorish Consulate from Brooklyn. (No one took the trouble to see if the Moorish Consulate was registered here. It wasn't.) Gullibles fell right and left for this grand hoax wrapped in royalty. (3) No harder boiled newspaper man ever lived than Theodore Boston who was then the City Editor of the New York Amsterdam News; and if anyone knew their way around town and particularly Harlem it was him too, and plenty hard.

The Times described the dark handmaidens as Sheba and Cumba Portez. The "Princess" lady-in-waiting, according to the Daily News, approached at regular intervals to "sprinkle" her black hair and headdress with an exotic perfume, and to straighten the many folds of her voluminous attire. The lady's garment was described as being, "vivid red, yellow and green in color."

Chappy's dress rehearsal for the great premiere played to no less a personage than Gov. Pinchot of Pennsylvania in June 1935, in Harrisburg. After granting the gullible governor a royal audience, Mrs. Harvey----she is married and has an 11 year old ---
daughter was able to rush back home to Harlem in time to meet the Home Relief Investigator. There was also a repeat at the camp of Jo Louis the heavy weight champion.

Chappy knowing that sooner or later the public would get wise to his regal trick, carried his ward to the offices of the New York Times. After having arrived the "Princess" informed the cream of the newspaper crop that they had made a "slight mistake", in its full column story of the previous Sunday. She also denied relationship to Emperor Haile Selassie, but stated that she had kinship with Prince Lij Yosu, grandson of Emperor Menilik. (Lij Yosu is reported to have died in a mountain prison.)

Sinclair Bourne of the New York Amsterdam News in one of his columns on sport related a Gardner background that was not generally known. It seemed that Jimmie Powers prominent sport writer for the Daily News, who has long decried the barring of Negroes from the Baseball Writers’ Hall of Fame, listed a few outstanding colored oldtimers whom he felt deserved consideration. And lol among
the names was that of Chappy Gardner's.

In all the years of Mr. Gardner's sojourn in the field of publicity he had never bothered to give airing to one of his best records, the one carved in sports. A surprising amount of information was culled from the background of this small man's athletic past.

The athletic career of Chappy's dates back as far as 1894, when he was captain of the Steelton, Pa., High School team. It is reported that he was the only Negro player on the team at that time. He organized and captained the Steelton Cyclones, Jr. the following year, and in 1896 was taken to Wayland Seminary and College (now Virginia Union) by an aunt. At Wayland Chappy directed his energies to the organization and instruction of the school's first eleven, on which he played quarterback. There are still a number of that original three hundred pound line still alive.

Chappy played on Union's first baseball team, and wound up his athletic career there pitching eight hitless innings against Howard University in 1898. Jumping seven years we again find Gardner bobbing up as a member of the Harrisburg Giants Baseball team, and later played with the Brooklyn Royal Giants. In 1911-12 to become the first salaried athletic coach or physical director at a Negro college.

Chappy played pro baseball with a number of teams which include the New York Colored Giants, Cuban Giants, Havana Red Sox, Quebec Royals and the New York Red Sox. In the fall of 1915 he organized New York's first professional Negro football team. In the same year he also organized and operated the Majestic Basketball
Team. His interest in the court game is said to have resulted in the discovery of "Pappy" Ricks, "Phenom" Perry and J. Mercer Burrell, the later now one of New Jersey's most prominent lawyers and former assemblymen. During 1927-28 Chappy turned coach again, this time serving as athletic director at Morris Brown University.

Bibliography:
1. Sinclair Bourne, New York Amsterdam News Feb. 12, 1938
This is an account of an interview with Chappy Gardner. It is presented in an informal style - justified, I felt, by the nature of the subject. In fact many of the characteristic extravagances of the man are omitted. Gardner, who is noted for his great natural joviality, has been subject to economic ills. This had made him more reserved than he has been in recent years.

Chappie Gardner's talk is like the work of a sleight of hand artist - you don't know how he does it nor what is coming next. And the stories about him no more compare with his actual presence than the write up of a concert with actually hearing it.

Chappy "believe-it or not" Gardner was born, his face and his ideas to the contrary, back in 1879 in Steelton, Pennsylvania. He went to Howard, and Virginia Union University, getting an MA from the latter. It was while a student there, that Chappie made an auspicious debut as a speaker. At a gathering in honor of Senator Mason of Illinois and Paul Dunbar, Chappie's gift o gab showed itself, and the Senator was moved to declare that he "would one day be a leader of his people". Dunbar was also impressed; and Chappie's recitation in the Dunbar style eventually won him a year's tour with a Negro troupe.
Thus began the unique encyclopedia of careers which is Chappie's life. Let us quickly dispose of the more mundane of these—brickyard worker, machinist's helper, head bellman at various hotels. Next enter Chappie the baseball player and manager: with the Harrisburg Pa. Giants in 1906, with the Brooklyn Royal Giants in 1910. Then for the next five years, as the Negro ball player came more and more into his own, he played with the well known Cuban Giants. In 1923 and 1924 he became manager of the N Y Med Sox, which took the Canadien championship of a 10 club league by licking the two leading clubs in the same afternoon. (He has a bunch that Chappie won both games single-handed) In New York he organized the Metropolis' first Negro team, the N Y All Stars, back in 1915. With this experience behind him, he is being boosted at the present time as a Czar for Negro baseball.

The scene shifts, and enter Chappie in the role of newspaper man. (When I asked: "What is your newspaper experience?", Chappie said "That's a great question - great; Im proud to answer that") He scribbled back in 1910 and 1911 for the Indianapolis Freeman and the Chicago Defender. And then from 1911-15 for the Amsterdam News and the N Y News. He became one of the first reporters on the staff of the former. (Chappie is prouder of his ability to be the first, in a hundred different things, than the D A R is of a ship called Mayflower and a rock called Plymouth)

Being a reporter and staff writer was not enough so in 1930 he published his own paper, the "New Jersey Teller". In 1933 he worked as a Theatrical editor for the Pittsburgh Courier; after that as a sports writer. Practically all that hadn't felt his gifted touch in the newspaper field, was the news syndicate—so a few years back he formed one with the resounding title... International Ethiopian Press Syndicate.
Though, a rapidly shifting kaleidoscope of occupations, we see Chappie as the Athletic Director, and as Dean of Psychology and Sociology at Morris Brown University in Atlanta, Georgia. About 7 years back he was connected with a stage show "Harlem" which lasted 7 weeks at the Majestic theatre on Broadway, salary trouble, he explained, forced it to close although it "wants over "big"; when the show went on the road, Chappie was made the show’s publicity representative — the FIRST Negro to be designated in that capacity.

Around 1933 Chappie organized the FIRST Negro bathing beauty contest, with a total of 18 states.

He spent a couple of amiable years on the Writers Project (we forgot to ask whether he was the first Negro to be hired).

Chappie in 1935 discovered the Ethiopian Thrush, the inimitable Princess Heschle Tamanya. He became her manager, and soon a lot of people, including a few people reading from right to left of the New York Times and the Freiheit, knew that she was a real Ethiopian princess who could speak in 14 and sing in 9 languages including Hebrew.

A recently-completed work of which he is both author and publisher, is the Negro Baseball Guide for 1936. This includes a history of the Negro ball player and comments on the game generally.

At the present he, in association with a couple of partners, has been working on the Gardner Negro all-expense Economy Tours to the Fair ("Three Glorious Days in N Y C, all expenses paid $17.50"). This however, he concedes, doesn't take up much of his time as it means that his name is being "used as a drawing card".

And now that we have seen Chappie in all these parts, there is still something new, different ahead. We are soon to witness that hitherto concealed phase of his character — Chappie the Humanitarian.
For he is going within the next few days to open the "Harlem Welfare Association", offices at 72 125 st. This will be an agency to distribute free food and clothing to those in need (whom Chappie will investigate personally). The aforesaid request articles will come pouring in at Chappie's from eager Harlem merchants. "It is only right that those who take $50 million dollars out of Harlem should give in this way", he said. Large cash donations (about $2,000 yearly) he expects from such groups as Negro Actors Guild, Apollo Theatre; he will tap Rockefeller, Rosenwald and philanthropists who have given to Negro causes. Generally, Chappie expressed the greatest respect for what he calls the "economic question".

No one, least of all Chappie himself, can tell the turn of his fortunes; but as long as the gift o' gab remains there's sure to be same thing. For Chappie Gardner is a little man in a big way.