

# Dig the Folk, Man - Jean Shepherd

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Voice: Gin Bridges

JACKIE ROBINSON AT PUBLIC SCHOOL 701

## How to Steal Bases:

### Jackie Robinson Tells Them It's the 1st Step That Counts

A stocky Jackie Robinson, looking far more like the business executive he is than the baseball star he was, last Thursday morning spoke to the students of P. S. 701, the school for problem children on Greenwich Avenue. He talked in a simple, direct manner, disregarding totally the TV lights that flooded the auditorium.

"I lost my father when I was your age . . . my mother went out to do domestic work. What you did," he told the boys, "could not be half as bad as what I had done."

The assembly began with a color guard of boys executing a military maneuver—a march-in and presentation of the flag—with impressive aplomb despite the presence of a national hero, several VIPs from the Board of Education, and a mass of TV equipment. This was followed by a youngster named Gregory reading the 23rd Psalm.

#### Standing Ovation

Edward Carpenter, a teacher, introduced the guest speaker, who, he reminded, once greeted him in a crowd. Mr. Robinson received a standing ovation. He promised the audience not to preach, and didn't. The talk was short and earnest. After it was over he took questions from the floor. The first one brought a quick laugh: "How do you steal bases?" "It's the first step that counts," he answered.

Robinson admitted that his first years in baseball were rough. He told about a Southern teammate who ran into a streak of bad luck during a poker game. He got up and announced for Jackie's benefit: "Back home when I want to

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## Views and Opinions:

### 'Fortune' Joins Battle To Close the Square

Despite the fact that an impressive list of professional city planners have given their support to the plan to close Washington Square to traffic, the proposal has been stigmatized as "unrealistic" and "nonsensical" by its detractors. This month, Fortune magazine, one of the country's more hard-headed and influential publications, became the latest partisan to the cause that is supported by so many Villagers.

Fortune gave its blessing to those fighting the battle of the Square in an editorial entitled "The City Eviscerated." Because of the enormous interest in the subject, The Voice is reprinting, below, the portion of the editorial that refers to the embattled park.

#### 'The City Eviscerated'

" . . . In the name of urban renewal and progress, planner Robert Moses is ready to run a four-lane highway smack through the middle of Washington Square. For anyone who likes cities, whether he is a New Yorker or San Franciscan, the fight is well worth watching; in bold relief it shows why the present course of urban renewal has become so disturbing to many citizens.

"Washington Square is one of the finest examples of the kind of amenity that city planning, presumably, is supposed to bring about. Times have changed—only

a few old Georgian houses are left—yet the square is as functional as ever. It is a pleasant oasis for the people who live in the new apartments nearby; it is a fine place for older people to meet and play chess; for children to play in; and for the students of NYU, whose buildings adjoin the square, it is a perfect campus.

#### OMELETS AND EGGS

"Why, then, cut it in two? To help urban redevelopment, it is said; specifically to help 'Washington Square Village,' a big superblock project abutting on West Broadway just south of the Square. It is a Title I project—that is to say, the taxpayers are footing the difference between the high cost of land and the write-down price offered the private investors. But the investors wanted something more—a Fifth Avenue address—and Moses promised it to

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Voice: Gin Bridges

WASHINGTON SQUARE Outdoor Art Show: PETER HAYWARD, top, took the Grand Prize this year with his oil, "Rainy Sea." He won Grand Prizes twice before, which is about as often as he has entered. The portrait painter, just above, is completing a "sitting" in the street. Below, two artists play chess in a curbside game in front of house on Washington Square North. The show will continue through June 30.

## The Night People

### Dig the Folk

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Some night when the espresso tastes flat and you tire of hearing third-rate poets shout above fourth-rate jazz groups and you happen to be near a radio, I would suggest you dig a few sounds that are truly closer to the pulse beat of America than anything around today.

Most of the stuff that passes for Americana is as contrived and phony as a class-B English-movie version of Chicago mobsters. It has a dated self-consciousness that would be amusing if it weren't so embarrassing. The average urban "folk"-singer, for example, would be totally unintelligible to a genuine hill-country audience of today. The folksiness they sell to hip-type, guitar-playing, subway-riding, undergrad neo-folk has all the authenticity of an Amsterdam street band playing New Orleans jazz.

#### The Way It Is

It is pretty hard being a genuine nineteenth-century folk midway through the twentieth century, especially if you live on MacDougal Street and majored in business law at Syracuse U. So what can you dig, man, if you want to really get at the roots of now and feel the way it is? The way it really is. That is, short of picking up a '47 Hudson, a ready broad, and doing the turnpike

scene like. It's tough being beat when you can only wait after office hours and on the two-week vacation. Like it doesn't make it. Ya' dig? Excuse the use of the

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### Playground Approved By Planning Commissioner

Plans for a West Village playground moved forward last Wednesday when the City Planning Commission adopted the requisite "map change." The proposed site, bounded by Horatio West 4th, Gansevoort, and Hudson Streets, contains three houses and 27 tenants, who will be evicted. If the project goes through.

They have protested to the Borough President and the Park Department. A number of them in letters to city authorities, have expressed their willingness, however, to give up their apartments to make way for a low-rent housing project.

The final decision on the projected playground is now up to the Board of Estimate,

