Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance

Volume 1 and Volume 2
A–Z

Cary D. Wintz
Paul Finkelman
Editors

Routledge
New York · London

Encyclopedia of the
Harlem Renaissance

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DEDICATION

We dedicate this work to John Wright, agent par excellence. He was a part of this endeavor from the beginning and guided the project through difficult times.

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Preface

The Harlem Renaissance today is a topic of great interest, celebrated as the most creative period in African American cultural life. Yet even now, some seventy-five years later, there still is little agreement about the extent of the renaissance, either in time or in content, and there is still debate about the quality of the creative work it spawned, its impact on African American and American history, and how it affected race relations. Part of the problem is that even the African American intellectuals who created and tried to define the movement, and who provided its critical framework, disagreed among themselves and with the African American writers and artists who provided its creative force. During the Harlem Renaissance, as well as today, participants and scholars alike disagreed about when it began; when it ended; what its artistic, political, and aesthetic focus should be; whether it was a success or a failure; whether it was a positive or a negative development in African American culture; and, ultimately, whether it served the interests of blacks, the interests of whites, or both.

Although the *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* will not resolve these debates, it is based on the belief that the Harlem Renaissance was one of the most significant developments in African American history in the twentieth century. It also takes a very broad view of the renaissance and the connection of this movement to the major social, political, and intellectual developments in early twentieth-century African American history. Consequently, the encyclopedia not only addresses the artistic and cultural events directly related to the Harlem Renaissance but also examines the political, economic, and social environment in which the movement took place. Placing the Harlem Renaissance within this broader context is necessary in order to fully understand the movement and its achievements, and to understand the work of individual artists, writers, and performers. With this in mind, we structured the encyclopedia to provide deep coverage of the literary and artistic aspects of the movement as well as broad coverage of the political, social, economic, and legal issues that confronted African Americans during the early twentieth century.

Our coverage of the artistic elements of the Harlem Renaissance includes essays on the literature, art, and music of the movement. There are extensive essays on major writers, artists, and performers, as well as pieces on most of the lesser-known figures. In addition, there are discussions of the major creative works, especially those that had an impact on the development of the Harlem Renaissance. Along with the so-called higher arts (poetry, literature, painting, sculpture, theater, classical music, and

dance), expressions of popular culture are covered, especially musical theater, musical reviews, and motion pictures. In other areas, the line between popular culture and art is not entirely clear. Jazz, blues, and spirituals are treated as art forms, although they were also an expression of folk or popular culture. Although not everyone who wrote a poem, sang a song, or performed onstage is covered in this encyclopedia, we have attempted to include everyone who played a significant role in the renaissance, and those whose activities reflected or influenced some aspect of African American culture in the early twentieth century.

The Harlem Renaissance was, of course, situated in time and place. We see the movement as a phenomenon of the 1920s and the 1930s, beginning at about the end of World War I and fading out in the late 1930s. Its temporal boundaries are not exact, however; they vary somewhat from one artistic category to another, and there are powerful antecedents existing as early as the turn of the century. For example, we include entries on individuals such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Henry Ossawa Tanner, whose major work predates World War I but who had a significant influence on later writers and artists. Furthermore, the social, political, and economic developments intertwined with the movement are much less easy to contain; accordingly, various entries can range back into the late nineteenth century and extend into the 1940s. The focus, though, is on the two decades following World War I.

The geographic boundaries of the Harlem Renaissance are also complicated. Clearly Harlem was central to the movement, and a large number of entries examine multiple aspects of Harlem's life and history. The Harlem Renaissance was not confined to one location, however. For example, blues and jazz, two developments in music that helped define the renaissance, had their origins in a number of locations—New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis, the Mississippi delta—and were transported north by people who migrated to Chicago, New York, and other cities. Likewise, most of the writers, poets, actors, and artists moved to Harlem from other parts of the country; many emerged from artistic and cultural movements in places like Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, New Orleans, and Atlanta. Also, African American communities in other Northern cities like Washington, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago had their own cultural movements, which contributed to the Negro Renaissance. Furthermore, neither the movement nor its influence was confined to the United States. Caribbean writers and artists immigrated to the United States and participated in the movement; others from this region influenced the political and cultural life of Harlem. African American writers, artists, and performers traveled to the Caribbean, Africa, and Europe, where they interacted with the artistic and political life of Europeans and immigrants from the European African and Caribbean empires. A number of entries examine the connection of the Harlem Renaissance to this broader world.

Finally, race in all its complexity is fundamental to the Harlem Renaissance. Each African American writer or artist confronted in his or her own way the racism and colonialism of the United States and the Western world; at the same time, each was connected to the emergence of the struggle for civil rights and the anticolonial movements. These issues had an impact on the Harlem Renaissance and on the lives and work of those who participated in it. This encyclopedia contains numerous entries that examine race and racism, both within the United States and abroad, especially in terms of how these issues defined the African American experience in the early twentieth century and how they affected the life and work of the participants in the Harlem Renaissance.

One aspect of the racial experience that is the subject of several entries is the role of whites in the Harlem Renaissance: White authors writing about African Americans; white patrons and supporters of the Harlem Renaissance; white publishers,

producers, and booking agents; white critics and promoters—they all influenced African American culture for better or worse. A closely related subject is the interaction between blacks and whites: most often black artists reacting with white publishers, promoters, and critics, but also the more complex interaction between the black intelligentsia and black writers and white publishers and intellectuals. Both W. E. B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson were black civil rights leaders, novelists, and poets in their own right, and both published, promoted, and critiqued the work of black artists and writers. Carl Van Vechten, a white novelist, wrote a major Harlem novel of the period and also served as a patron and promoter of black literature, art, and music, and as a documenter of the Harlem Renaissance.

The *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, then, examines all phases and all aspects of the Harlem Renaissance, as well as the broader cultural, political, social, and economic environment in which the renaissance, and indeed African Americans, functioned in the first half of the twentieth century. Entries address individual participants and major works and a wide range of related issues that fall into several large categories. Entries on individuals include participants in all aspects of the creative arts as well as journalists, political and cultural figures, and others who were simply personalities in Harlem and contributed to the ambience of the era. Entries on creative works cover all artistic fields but focus on books, anthologies, plays, motion pictures, and musical shows or revues. The encyclopedia also includes entries on significant newspapers, literary magazines, and periodicals that either were directly connected to the Harlem Renaissance or helped define the political and social milieu. Likewise, we provide entries on artistic and cultural organizations along with political and civil rights groups. Harlem itself is covered in essays on its history and social and economic issues, as well as its nightlife and specific institutions and places in the neighborhood. Finally, a number of thematic and interpretive essays provide a general overview of specific aspects of the renaissance such as music, literature, and the visual arts, and several somewhat shorter essays address specific concepts, events, and movements.

Through its breadth and diversity, this encyclopedia attempts to meet a common demand. Students, scholars, and the public at large are looking for information on the rich and complex culture of the Harlem Renaissance. Whether readers seek the broad outlines or the fine details of the era, they will find here, in one work, an unparalleled resource—contributed by those dedicated to studying its achievements.

Organization

The *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* is divided into two volumes. The entries are organized alphabetically. Volume 1 contains entries from A to J, and Volume 2 contains K to Z and the index. To assist the user in finding material, each entry has cross-references ("See also") to related entries, and, as necessary, blind entries ("See") direct the reader to the proper essay. An extensive index also assists the reader in finding specific information that may not have its own entry or may be found in several entries. Each entry also includes a relatively short bibliography directing the reader to further information. The illustrations provide visual material for specific entries and for the Harlem Renaissance in general.

Contributing Authors

The encyclopedia includes some 640 entries, representing the work of about 260 contributors. The contributors represent academic faculty members and independent scholars, writers, and artists. They include specialists in history, art, music, theater, dance, politics and political theory, economics, sociology, and African American

studies; and they come from across the United States as well as from abroad. Their work reflects the latest scholarship in their respective fields.

Language

This encyclopedia, in general, uses the terms "African American" and "black" interchangeably. It also uses "Negro," "Afro-American," "Aframerican," and similar terms of the early twentieth century in direct quotations and when these terms are appropriate to reflect the usages of the time and place. "Negro" is always capitalized, unless it was lowercased in a source that is quoted directly. The use of the term "nigger" and its derivations is more complicated. This term has not been used here to denote a pejorative attitude toward African Americans. As necessary and appropriate, however, it has been used in direct quotations to capture accurately the language of poetry or literature, or to reflect and understand racist language. Phrases like the book title *Nigger Heaven*, and terms like "niggerati" and "negritude" that refer to specific concepts, have been used as they were during the Harlem Renaissance. Our approach to the use of words is to be true to the language of the period, maintain a language appropriate for scholarly discourse, and address racial issues accurately and honestly while avoiding needlessly offensive phrases.

Acknowledgments

A number of people have contributed to this project. First, our associate editors provided the broad knowledge of the period necessary to review the entries. They, along with our advisory board, also reviewed the list of entries and helped identify contributors. Vincent Virga provided us guidance and significant insight during a conversation at the Library of Congress. Rita Langford at the University of Tulsa performed some of the initial work in organizing the entry list. We want to add a special word of thanks to Arnold Rampersad, who served as an associate editor during the early phases of the project but had to withdraw as the demands of his administrative duties at his university increased. We also received a great deal of assistance from the publishers. First, at Fitzroy Dearborn, where the project began, Paul Schellinger embraced our vision of this encyclopedia, and Robin Rhone and Audrey L. Berns guided the project during its initial phase. When Routledge took over from Fitzroy Dearborn, it committed the resources to help us complete the project quickly. Sylvia Miller, Mark Georgiev, and Kate Aker provided overall leadership, while Susan Gamer worked directly with us on an almost daily basis. We especially appreciate Susan's energy and hard work that kept the project moving and brought it to its completion. Finally, we wish to thank all our contributing authors for the expertise they brought to their essays; for completing their work in a timely manner; for completing revisions or taking on new assignments, often on a short schedule; and for maintaining their belief in the project as we moved toward its completion.

CARY D. WINTZ
PAUL FINKELMAN

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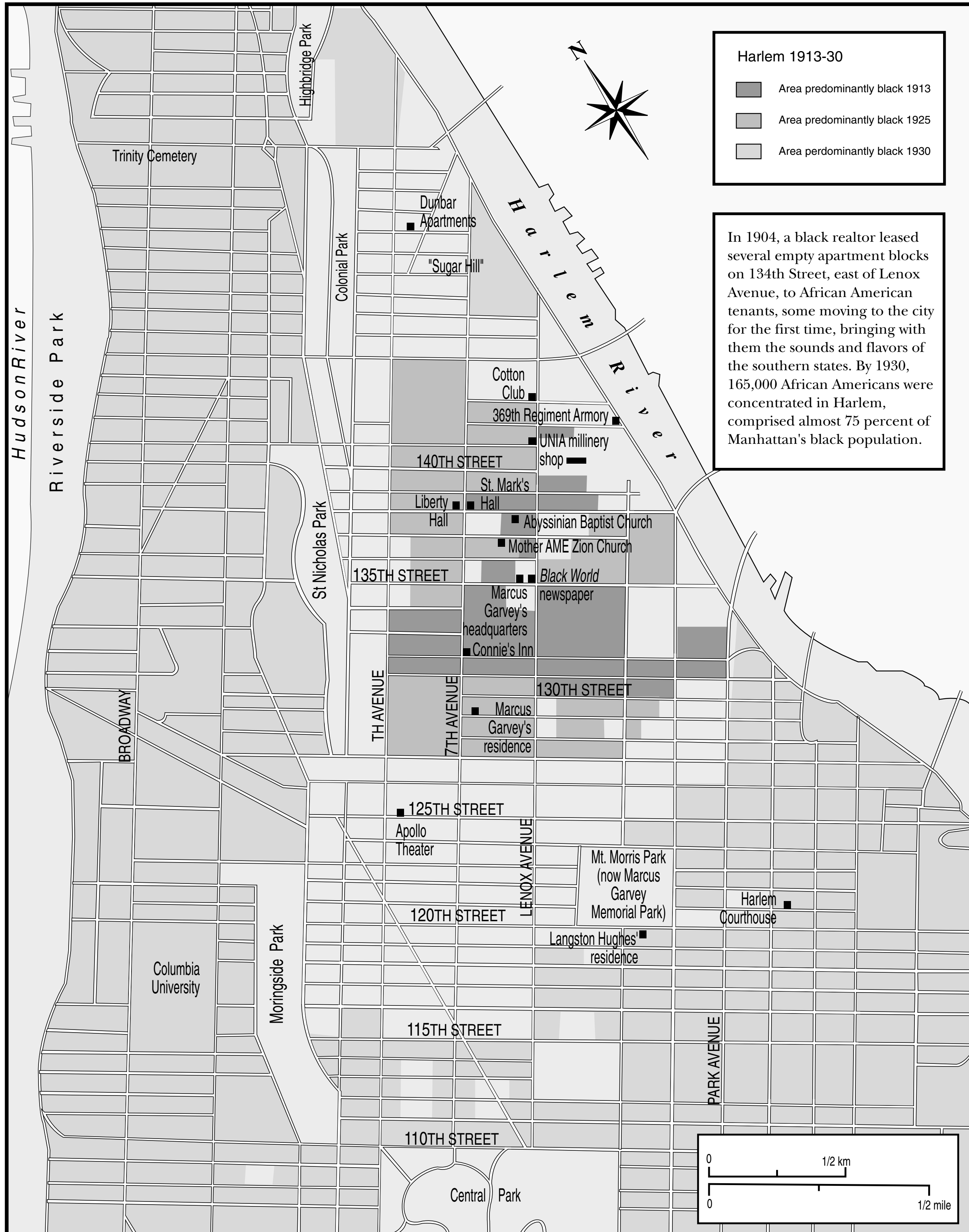
MAP



Thematic List of Entries

PERSONS

Actors

Anderson, Edmund Lincoln
Brooks, Clarence
Bubbles, John
Bush, Anita
Campbell, Dick
Dudley, Sherman H.
Dunn, Blanche
Fetchit, Stepin
Gilpin, Charles
Harrington, James Carl "Hamtree"
Harrison, Richard
Hunter, Eddie
Kirkpatrick, Sidney
Lee, Canada
Mabley, Jackie "Moms"
Madame Sul-Te-Wan
McClendon, Rose
McKinney, Nina Mae
Moore, Tim
Morrison, Frederick Ernest
Preer, Evelyn
Robeson, Paul
Sissle, Noble
Thomas, Edna Lewis
Washington, Fredi
Williams, Egbert Austin "Bert"
Wilson, Arthur "Dooley"
Wilson, Frank

Artists

Alston, Charles
Barthé, Richmond
Bearden, Romare
Covarrubias, Miguel
Delaney, Beauford
Douglas, Aaron
Farrow, William McKnight
Fuller, Meta Warrick
Harleston, Edwin A.
Hayden, Palmer C.
Jackson, May Howard
Johnson, Malvin Gray
Johnson, Sargent Claude
Johnson, William H.
Jones, Lois Mailou
Lawrence, Jacob
Motley, Archibald J. Jr.
Porter, James Amos
Prophet, Nancy Elizabeth
Reiss, Winold
Savage, Augusta
Scott, William Edouard
Tanner, Henry Ossawa
Van Der Zee, James
Waring, Laura Wheeler
Woodruff, Hale

Dancers

Dafora, Asadata
Forsyne, Ida

Robinson, Bill "Bojangles"
Tucker, Earl "Snakehips"

Filmmakers and Celebrities
Beavers, Louise
Chenault, Lawrence
Ellis, Evelyn
Johnson, Noble
Lowe, James
Micheaux, Oscar
Moreland, Mantan
Muse, Clarence

Personalities
Dean, Lillian Harris
Harmon, Pappy
Holt, Nora
Jackman, Harold
Madden, Owen Vincent "Owney"
Peterson, Dorothy Randolph
Walker, A'Lelia

Journalists
Abbott, Robert Sengstacke
Baker, Ray Stannard
Barnett, Ida B. Wells
Bruce, John Edward
Ferris, William H.
Fortune, Timothy Thomas
Matthews, Ralph
Murphy, Carl J.
Vann, Robert Lee
Walton, Lester

Musicians
Armstrong, Louis
Bechet, Sidney
Blake, Eubie
Bradford, Perry
Calloway, Cabell "Cab"
Cole, Bob
Cook, Will Marion
Cuney-Hare, Maud
Dett, Robert Nathaniel
Ellington, Duke
Europe, James Reese
Fields, Dorothy
Forsythe, Harold Bruce
Gershwin, George
Gruenberg, Louis
Handy, W. C.
Henderson, Fletcher
Jessye, Eva
Johnson, Hall
Johnson, James P.
Johnson, John Rosamond
Joplin, Scott
Jordan, Joe
Mack, Cecil
Morton, Jelly Roll
Oliver, Joseph "King"
Ory, Edward "Kid"
Razaf, Andy
Smith, Willie "the Lion"
Still, William Grant
Waller, Thomas "Fats"
White, Clarence Cameron
Williams, Clarence

Playwrights
Anderson, Garland
Anderson, Regina M.
Edmonds, Randolph
Green, Paul
Heyward, DuBose
Lyles, Aubrey
Miller, Flournoy
Miller, Irvin
Miller, Quintard
O'Neill, Eugene
Richardson, Willis

Politics and Culture
Ali, Duse Mohamed
Anderson, Charles W.
Becton, George Wilson
Bethune, Mary McLeod
Boas, Franz
Briggs, Cyril
Brown, Hallie Quinn
Cullen, Frederick Asbury
Daddy Grace
De Priest, Oscar
Domingo, Wilfrid Adolphus
Du Bois, W. E. B.
Father Divine
Fauset, Arthur Huff
Ford, Arnold Josiah
Ford, James William
Frazier, E. Franklin
Garvey, Marcus

Greene, Lorenzo
Hamid, Sufi Abdul
Harrison, Hubert
Haynes, George Edmund
Herskovits, Melville
Johnson, Charles Spurgeon
Johnson, James Weldon
Johnson, John Arthur
Jones, Eugene Knickle
McGuire, George Alexander
Mencken, H. L.
Miller, Kelly
Moore, Frederick Randolph
Moore, Richard B.
Morton, Ferdinand Q.
Moton, Robert Russa
Nail, John E.
Ovington, Mary White
Owen, Chandler
Padmore, George
Patterson, Louise Thompson
Payton, Philip A.
Powell, Adam Clayton, Sr.
Randolph, A. Philip
Rogers, Joel Augustus
Schomburg, Arthur A.
Scott, Emmett Jay
Spingarn, Arthur
Talbert, Mary Burnett
Trotter, William Monroe
Villard, Oswald Garrison
Walker, Madame C. J.
Washington, Booker T.
Wise, Stephen Samuel
Woodson, Carter G.
Work, Monroe Nathan
Wright, Louis T.

Promoters and Patrons

Barnes, Albert C.
Braithwaite, William Stanley
Brawley, Benjamin
Campell, Elmer Simms
Cunard, Nancy
Draper, Muriel
Holstein, Casper
Locke, Alain
Loggins, Vernon
Mason, Charlotte Osgood
Meyer, Annie Nathan
Nance, Ethel Ray
Redding, J. Saunders
Van Vechten, Carl

Publishers

Buttitta, Anthony J.
Calverton, V. F.
Eastman, Crystal
Eastman, Max
Isaacs, Edith
Kellogg, Paul U.
Knopf, Alfred A.
Knopf, Blanche
Liveright, Horace
Pace, Harry H.
Spingarn, Joel
Van Doren, Carl

Singers

Anderson, Marian
Baker, Josephine
Bentley, Gladys
Bledsoe, Jules
Brooks, Shelton
Brown, Ada
Burleigh, Harry Thacker
Clough, Inez
Cox, Ida Prather
Hall, Adelaide
Hayes, Roland
Hegamin, Lucille
Holiday, Billie
Hunter, Alberta
Lovinggood, Penman
Mills, Florence
Mitchell, Abbie
Rainey, Gertrude "Ma"
Smith, Ada
Smith, Bessie
Smith, Clara
Smith, Mamie
Smith, Trixie
Snow, Valaida
Spivey, Victoria
Ward, Aida
Washington, Isabel
Waters, Ethel
Wilson, Edith

Theater Owners
King, Billy
Leslie, Lew
Lewis, Theophilus
McClendon, Rose
Shipp, Jesse A.

Writers
Anderson, Sherwood
Attaway, William
Bennett, Gwendolyn
Bonner, Marieta
Bontemps, Arna
Brooks, Gwendolyn
Brown, Sterling
Césaire, Aimé
Chesnutt, Charles Waddell
Cohen, Octavus Roy
Corrothers, James D.
Cotter, Joseph Seamon Jr.
Cowdery, Mae Virginia
Cullen, Countee
Cuney, Waring
Damas, Léon
Delany, Clarissa Scott
Dreiser, Theodore
Dunbar, Paul Laurence
Ellison, Ralph
Fauset, Jessie Redmon
Fisher, Rudolph
Frank, Waldo
Griggs, Sutton E.
Grimké, Angelina Weld
Hayden, Robert
Horne, Frank
Howells, William Dean
Hughes, Langston
Hurst, Fannie
Hurston, Zora Neale
Johnson, Fenton
Johnson, Georgia Douglas
Johnson, Helene
Kerlin, Robert
Larsen, Nella
Lee, George
Lewis, Sinclair
Lindsay, Vachel
Maran, René
Matheus, John Frederick
McKay, Claude
Morand, Paul
Nelson, Alice Dunbar
Nugent, Richard Bruce
Peterkin, Julia Mood
Pickens, William
Schuyler, George S.
Senghor, Léopold
Spencer, Anne
Stribling, Thomas Sigismund
Tannenbaum, Frank
Thurman, Wallace
Tolson, Melvin B.
Toomer, Jean
Walker, Margaret
Walrond, Eric
West, Dorothy
White, Walter
Williams, Edward Christopher
Wright, Richard
Yerby, Frank

WORKS

Plays, Films, Theater Productions
Amos 'n' Andy
Appearances
Birth of a Nation, The
Birth of a Race, The
Black and White
Blackbirds
Chocolate Dandies, The
Come Along Mandy
Emperor Jones, The
Fool's Errand
Four Saints in Three Acts
Green Pastures, The
Hallelujah
Harlem: Play
Hearts in Dixie
Hot Chocolates
Liza
Lulu Belle
Madame X
Mulatto
On Trial
Pa Williams' Gal
Porgy and Bess
Porgy: Play
Rachel
Revue Nègre, La

Runnin' Wild
Saint Louis Blues
Servant in the House, The
Show Boat
Shuffle Along
Stevedore
Taboo
They Shall Not Die
Three Plays for a Negro Theater
Within Our Gates

Books

Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, The
Batouala
Birthright
Black Manhattan
Blues: An Anthology
Cane
Color
Conjure Man Dies, The
Copper Sun
Dark Laughter
Dark Princess
Ebony and Topaz
Fine Clothes to the Jew
Fire in the Flint, The
God's Trombones
Harlem: Negro Metropolis
Harlem Shadows
Home to Harlem
Infants of the Spring
Negro: An Anthology
New Negro, The
Nigger
Nigger Heaven
Not Without Laughter
Passing: Novel
Porgy: Novel
Quicksand
Their Eyes Were Watching God
There Is Confusion
Tropic Death
Walls of Jericho, The
Weary Blues, The

TOPICS

Topics, Concepts, Ideologies, Events, Themes

Algonquin Roundtable
Amenia Conference, 1916
Amenia Conference, 1933
Anglophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance
Anglophone Caribbean and the Harlem Renaissance
Antilynching Crusade
Art Criticism and the Harlem Renaissance
Artists
Atlanta University Studies
Authors: 1—Overview
Authors: 2—Fiction
Authors: 3—Nonfiction
Authors: 4— Playwrights
Authors: 5—Poets
Black Bohemia
Black History and Historiography
Black Press
Black Zionism
Blackface Performance
Blacks in Theater
Blues
Blues: Women Performers
Civic Club Dinner, 1924
Civil Rights and Law
Community Theater
Crisis, The: Literary Prizes
Crisis: The Negro in Art—How Shall He Be Portrayed? A Symposium
Cullen–Du Bois Wedding
Cultural Organizations
Dance
Dark Tower
Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 1—Overview
Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 2—Berlin
Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 3—London
Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 4—Paris
Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 5—Soviet Union
Federal Programs
Federal Writers' Project
Film
Film: Actors
Film: Black Filmmakers
Film: Blacks as Portrayed by White Filmmakers
Francophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance
Francophone Caribbean and the Harlem Renaissance
Garveyism
Great Migration
Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance
Gumby Book Studio
Harlem: 1—Overview and History
Harlem: 2—Economics
Harlem: 3—Entertainment
Harlem: 4—Housing

Harlem: 5—Neighborhoods
Harlem: 6—Public Health
Harlem Renaissance: 1—Black Critics of
Harlem Renaissance: 2—Black Promoters of
Harlem Renaissance: 3—Legacy of
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 1—Boston
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 2—California and the West Coast
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 3—Chicago and the Midwest
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 4—Cleveland
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 5—Kansas and the Plains States
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 6—Philadelphia
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 7—The South
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 8—Texas and the Southwest
Harlem Renaissance in the United States: 9—Washington, D.C.
Higher Education
Homosexuality
House-Rent Parties
Jazz
Jim Crow
Journalists
Labor
Literary and Artistic Prizes
Literary Criticism and the Harlem Renaissance
Literature: 1—Overview
Literature: 2—Children's
Literature: 3—Drama
Literature: 4—Fiction
Literature: 5—Humor and Satire
Literature: 6—Nonfiction
Literature: 7—Poetry
Little Theater Tournament
Lynching
Lynching: Silent Protest Parade
Lyrical Left
Magazines and Journals
Minstrelsy
Modernism
Music
Music: Bands and Orchestras
Musical Theater
Musicians
Negritude
Negrotarians
New Negro
New Negro Movement
Niagara Movement
Niggerati
Nightclubs
Nightlife
Numbers Racket
Opportunity Awards Dinner
Opportunity Literary Contests
Organized Crime
Pan-African Congresses
Pan-Africanism
Passing
Philanthropy and Philanthropic Organizations
Poetry: Dialect
Politics and Politicians
Primitivism
Professional Sports and Black Athletes
Publishers and Publishing Houses
Race Films
Race Men
Racial Iconography
Racial Stereotyping
Racial Violence: Riots and Lynching
Racism
Religion
Religious Organizations
Riots: 1—Overview, 1917–1921
Riots: 2—Red Summer of 1919
Riots: 3—Tulsa, 1921
Riots: 4—Harlem Riot, 1935
Salons
Scottsboro
Second Harlem Renaissance
Singers
Social-Fraternal Organizations
Spirituals
Talented Tenth
Theater
Tuskegee Experiment
Vaudeville
Visual Arts
White Novelists and the Harlem Renaissance
White Patronage
World War I

Higher Education
Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Howard University

Nightlife
Clef Club
Cotton Club
Small's Paradise

Philanthropy
Boni and Liveright Prize
Garland Fund
Guggenheim Fellowships
Harmon Foundation
Rosenwald Fellowships
Spingarn Medal
Wanamaker Award

Places
Abyssinian Baptist Church
Alhambra Theater
Apollo Theater
Black and Tan Clubs
Crescent Theater
Dunbar Apartments
580 Saint Nicholas Avenue
Greenwich Village
Harlem General Hospital
Hobby Horse
Jungle Alley
Lafayette Theater
Lincoln Theater
Manhattan Casino
135th Street Library
Renaissance Casino
Roseland Ballroom
Saint Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church
Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church
San Juan Hill
Savoy Ballroom
Strivers' Row
Sugar Hill
Tenderloin
Tree of Hope
267 House

Politics
Communist Party
New Deal
Party Politics

ORGANIZATIONS

Businesses
Afro-American Realty Company
Black Star Line
Black Swan Phonograph Company
Colored Players Film Corporation
Columbia Phonograph Company
Lincoln Motion Picture Company
Pace Phonographic Corporation

General
African Blood Brotherhood
American Negro Labor Congress
Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and Journal of Negro History
Booklovers Club
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
Eclectic Club
Fifteenth Infantry
Harlem Globetrotters
Harmon Traveling Exhibition
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Association of Negro Musicians
National Negro Business League
National Urban League
Negro Art Institute
Theater Owners' Booking Association
United Colored Democracy
Universal Negro Improvement Association
Vanguard
Works Progress Administration

Publishers
Boni and Liveright
Brimmer, B. J., Publishing House
Cornhill
Harcourt Brace
Harper Brothers
Knopf, Alfred A., Inc.
Lippincott, J. B., Publisher
Macaulay

Viking Press
Witmark, M., and Sons

Theater Companies

Anita Bush Theater Company
Ethiopian Art Players
Harlem Community Players
Karamu House
Krigwa Players
Lafayette Players
National Colored Players
National Ethiopian Art Theater
Negro Art Theater
Negro Experimental Theater
New Negro Art Theater
Provincetown Players
Tri-Arts Club
Utopia Players

PERIODICALS

American Mercury
Amsterdam News
Associated Negro Press
Baltimore Afro-American
Black Opals
Booklovers Magazine
Broom
Brownies' Book, The
Carolina Magazine
Challenge
Chicago Defender
Contempo
Crisis, The
Emancipator
Fire!!
Guardian, The
Gumby Book Studio Quarterly
Harlem: A Forum of Negro Life
Inter-State Tattler
Liberator
Messenger, The
Modern Quarterly
Nation, The
Negro World
New Challenge
New Masses
New York Age
Opportunity
Palms
Pittsburgh Courier
Saturday Evening Quill
Seven Arts
Survey Graphic
Stylus
Vanity Fair
Workers' Dreadnought

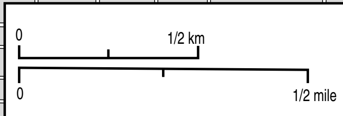
Map

Harlem 1913-30

- Area predominantly black 1913
- Area predominantly black 1925
- Area perdominantly black 1930

In 1904, a black realtor leased several empty apartment blocks on 134th Street, east of Lenox Avenue, to African American tenants, some moving to the city for the first time, bringing with them the sounds and flavors of the southern states. By 1930, 165,000 African Americans were concentrated in Harlem, comprised almost 75 percent of Manhattan's black population.

Hudson River
Riverside Park
Trinity Cemetery
Highbridge Park
Colonial Park
Harlem River
Dunbar Apartments
"Sugar Hill"
Cotton Club
369th Regiment Armory
UNIA millinery shop
140TH STREET
St. Mark's Hall
Liberty Hall
Abyssinian Baptist Church
Mother AME Zion Church
St Nicholas Park
135TH STREET
Black World newspaper
Marcus Garvey's headquarters
Connie's Inn
130TH STREET
Marcus Garvey's residence
BROADWAY
TH AVENUE
7TH AVENUE
125TH STREET
Apollo Theater
LENOX AVENUE
Mt. Morris Park (now Marcus Garvey Memorial Park)
Harlem Courthouse
120TH STREET
Langston Hughes' residence
Columbia University
Moringside Park
115TH STREET
PARK AVENUE
110TH STREET
Central Park



A

Abbott, Robert Sengstacke

Robert Sengstacke Abbott was born in Fredericka, Saint Simon's Island, Georgia. His parents—Thomas, his father; and Flora, his mother—were both former slaves who worked in agriculture. As a youngster, Abbott became interested in the situation of African Americans when his stepfather, John Hermann Henry Sengstacke, encouraged him to consider the plight of former slaves. Abbott had to struggle to get an education. During his time in law school, he reinvented himself by taking Sengstacke's surname as his own middle name and concentrating on the practice of law.

In 1905, Abbott used twenty-five dollars to start the *Chicago Defender* in his home on State Street, proudly announcing the newspaper as the "World's Greatest Weekly." His entrance into journalism was evidently a result of disappointment with law. Several stories explain his sudden change of career. According to one story, he had been told that he was too dark to succeed in Chicago's courts; according to a second, he could not pass the Illinois bar; according to a third, he never really made much money in law and needed to earn his living some other way.

At first, the *Chicago Defender* was a one-man operation. When the earliest versions appeared, Abbott was serving as editor, business manager, and staff and tried to sell the paper to homes along Twenty-ninth and Twenty-fifth streets in Chicago. These original versions consisted of only four pages, printed in his kitchen. The first few years of operation saw modest growth. Abbott encouraged friends to write columns, and he increased the paper's circulation by selling it in local barbershops, churches, and pool halls—places that he also used, brilliantly, as sources of news. Through these venues the *Defender* was able to gain a reputation as the voice of Chicago's African American community.

Abbott used the *Defender* to fight against discrimination, segregation, and disenfranchisement. It became a protest newspaper, highly respected among African Americans in and around Chicago. The *Defender* reported abuses against African Americans and focused on unfair treatment of minorities. It developed a controversial reputation because Abbott published articles on police brutality, racial violence, and bigotry against African Americans. Also, Abbott had copied the masthead of William Randolph Hearst's *Chicago Evening American*; this often confused readers, and he was eventually forced to change the masthead to avoid a lawsuit.

The most important factor in the growth and expansion of the *Chicago Defender* was the mass migration of African Americans from the South after 1915. These emigrants bought the *Defender* and sent it South to relatives, transforming it into a national paper. The *Defender* encouraged African Americans to fight back against racism and injustice. It responded to lynching by adopting the slogan "An eye for an eye" in 1916. By 1917, the paper was encouraging African Americans to leave the South and settle in what Abbott called the "promised land," the North.

Abbott used his success as a newspaperman to become part of Chicago's African American elite. In 1917, he joined other leading African Americans—although unsuccessfully—in trying to make real estate agreements that would be acceptable to whites. The *Defender* supported African American strikebreakers against the American Federation of Labor because the union

discriminated against African Americans. The paper accused the police and local leaders of failing to enforce the law and failing to investigate crimes against African Americans, particularly a rash of bombings: During the migration period of 1917–1921, there were fifty-eight unsolved bombings of African Americans' dwellings.

By 1918, the huge migration had increased the *Defender*'s circulation dramatically, to well more than 230,000. At one time the *Defender* opposed the migration because Abbott feared the effect of the emigrants on the morals and social standing of Chicago's black community. However, he later switched sides and began to write columns of advice—do's and don'ts—aimed at emigrants. Abbott used his paper to criticize the Jamaican leader Marcus Garvey and Garvey's movement; he also joined a group of prominent African Americans in encouraging the attorney general to investigate that movement.

During the Red Summer of 1919, the *Defender* played an invaluable role by presenting the African American side of the story. Abbott was rewarded for his actions during the riot by being named to the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, which issued a report, *The Negro in Chicago*, in 1922. Abbott supported this report, even though it criticized the African American press for overreacting to the riot.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Abbott lent his name and prestige to several causes, including most of the major efforts to improve the condition of African Americans in and around Chicago. He was a board member of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), National Urban League, Hampton Alumni Association, Masons, and Lincoln Memorial Congregational Church. For most of his life, he was politically aligned with the Republican Party. He publicly supported Oscar DePriest, the first African American elected to Congress from the North.

After Abbott's death, the *Defender* was run by his nephew John Sengstacke.

Biography

Robert Sengstacke Abbott was born on 28 November 1868. He attended Beach Institute in Savannah; Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina; and, from 1892 to 1896, Hampton Institute, where he learned the printer's trade. After completing his studies at Hampton, he earned an LL.B. at Kent College of Law in Chicago. He practiced law in Gary, Indiana, and Topeka, Kansas, before retuning to Chicago in 1903. He started the *Chicago Defender* in 1905. Abbott was married twice, each time to a widow. His first marriage, on 18 September 1918, was to Helen Thornton Morrison; they were divorced in June 1933. In August 1934 he married Edna Rose Brown Denison, who had five grown children. Abbott died in Chicago on 29 February 1940, of Bright's disease; he was eulogized by all the major papers of Chicago and the *New York Times*.

ABEL A. BARTLEY

See also Black Press; DePriest, Oscar; Garvey, Marcus; Garveyism; Journalists; Riots: 2—Red Summer of 1919

Further Reading

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Ottley, Roi. *The Lonely Warrior: The Life and Times of Robert S. Abbott*. Chicago, Ill.: Regnery, 1955.

Tuttle, William. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

Abyssinian Baptist Church

The Abyssinian Baptist Church is internationally recognized as a symbol of black spiritual and political power. During the Harlem Renaissance, Abyssinian relocated uptown, after having made several expansive moves from lower Manhattan.

The church was founded in 1808, when a group of African Americans at the Gold Street Baptist Church decided that they would no longer accept segregated pews. After their initial application for autonomy was rejected as too threatening, a core group of four men and twelve women invited Thomas Paul, who had founded the Joy Street Baptist Church in Boston a few years earlier, to petition church officials. Paul, an African American preacher of great renown, prevailed, and the necessary papers were granted. Some Ethiopian merchants in the founding group suggested the name Abyssinian. In its early years, the church moved often. It remained for several years on Anthony Street (now Worth Street), then moved to the Broadway Tabernacle, and later moved to Thompson and Spring streets, all the while following the progression of the African American population northward through the city.

During the 1840s, the church took a strong—and, at the time, radical—stand against slavery. At the turn of the century, Abyssinian owned church property on Waverly Place in Greenwich Village. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the church moved again and acquired additional property on Fortieth Street in the Tenderloin section.

In 1908, when the church could look back on its first hundred years, Adam Clayton Powell Sr. assumed leadership. For roughly the next three decades, he would guide Abyssinian through its most expansive period. He was at the helm when the congregation erected a church on 138th Street in Harlem in the early 1920s, then discharged its indebtedness to the bank about a decade earlier than required. The Gothic and Tudor structure with its imported stained-glass windows, fully paid for through tithing contributions from parishioners, represented the solidity and fidelity of the church membership, which had more than doubled, expanding from 3,000 to 7,000 during the 1920s through 1937, when Powell retired.

Then Powell's only son, Adam Clayton Powell Jr., stepped into the pulpit. He drew new attention to the church and inspired new energy. From the foundation his father had built, the son was able to extend the Abyssinian ministry further into the realm of politics. The younger Powell led a highly publicized labor protest to pressure white owners of stores on 125th Street to employ African Americans. A few years after becoming pastor at Abyssinian, Powell was elected to the City Council. His next step was Congress, where he served fourteen terms in the House of Representatives, championing the legal and social rights of African Americans.

Funeral at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, 1920s. (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.)

Like the founders of Abyssinian, he never shrank from protesting against injustice or from the light of publicity.

Following the younger Powell's tenure and that of Pastor Samuel Proctor, Rev. Calvin Butts maintained the church's respected status into the twenty-first century.

Barbara Brewster Lewis

See also Powell, Adam Clayton Sr.

Further Reading

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Sobel, Mechal. *Travelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1979.

African Blood Brotherhood

The Blood Brotherhood was created by Cyril Valentine Briggs, a Jamaican African nationalist and socialist. Briggs was born on 28 May 1888 in Chester Park, Nevis, British West Indies. He had a very light complexion and was called the "angry blond Negro" in some newspapers. He worked in the printing trade in Saint Kitts and was inspired by the works of the social critic Robert Green Ingersoll (1833–1899), the "great agnostic," who attacked not only religion but also much else that was dear to Americans.

Briggs immigrated to the United States in July 1905. In 1912 he was hired as a writer by the *New Amsterdam News*. In 1915 he served one term as editor of the *Colored American Review*, the mouthpiece of Harlem's black business community. Briggs's writings emphasized racial pride and economic cooperation. Briggs was impressed by the Easter Rebellion of 1916 in Ireland and began to discuss plans for the decolonization of

Africa. During World War I, as a reporter for the *New Amsterdam News*, he was an outspoken critic of what he considered to be the United States' hypocritical aims. Because of his denunciations of American policies regarding African American soldiers and citizens, the paper was officially censured by the federal government. The issue of 12 March 1919 was detained by the U.S. Post Office because of an editorial written by Briggs in which he denounced the League of Nations as a "league of thieves." In May 1919, Briggs severed his ties with the *New Amsterdam News*.

A few months earlier, in December 1918, Briggs had begun publishing the *Crusader*. This newspaper emphasized self-government for African Americans, and Africa for the Africans. It focused on and expressed the ideas of the radical element in the New Negro movement.

After the events of the Red Summer of 1919, Briggs and others came to believe that protecting African American rights required armed resistance. His ideas fit the postwar New Negro movement. The racial violence that followed the war shocked African Americans and made them more aware of their vulnerability. Briggs's response was the African Blood Brotherhood for African Liberation and Redemption (ABB), created in October 1919 after an article was published in the *Crusader*. ABB was made up principally of native Caribbeans, young intellectuals, workers, veterans, and marginal businessmen, and it preached radical revolution; thus it was never able to gain a mass following. Briggs envisioned ABB as an alternative for those who were sophisticated enough to resist the hollow charm of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA).

At its peak, ABB claimed to have 3,500 members and more than 100 branches. However, membership was by enlistment only, and it is virtually impossible to determine the number of members accurately. After 1920, when the leadership of ABB came under communist influence, the *Crusader*—the organization's official mouthpiece—became increasingly anticapitalist, focusing less on African issues and more on the benefits of bolshevism.

Briggs was recruited into the Communist Party with the help of another West Indian, Claude McKay. McKay introduced Briggs to Robert Minor, a famous cartoonist from Texas; and Rose Pastor Stokes, a leading Jewish activist. They were committed to the struggle for black liberation, and they convinced Briggs of the concept of parallel communism: that is, two communist parties—one legal and aboveground, the other secret and underground. As a result, during the 1920s, Briggs increasingly moved his movement toward communism and began to give his rhetoric communist overtones.

Originally, ABB was a semisecret organization with a highly centralized governing structure. Although its name was derived from the blood brotherhood ceremonies of African peoples, ABB was actually modeled after the Irish Republican Brotherhood, which dated from 1858 and led to the Fenian movement. Briggs was also impressed by the Hamitic League, with its system of passwords, secrecy, and oaths. The Hamitic League was founded by George Wells Parker of Omaha, Nebraska; and the *Crusader*, in its first few issues, proclaimed itself the publicity organ of the league.

Briggs served as the executive head of ABB, sharing power with the supreme executive council, which included Ben Burrell (director of historical research), Richard Moore (educational director), Theo Burrell (secretary), Otto Huiswoud (national organizer), W. A. Domingo (director of publicity and propaganda), Grace P. Campbell (director of consumers cooperatives), and William H. Jones (physical director).

ABB was the first black organization in the twentieth century to advocate armed self-defense. It came to national prominence in June 1921, when about 500 of its members—armed with shotguns—surrounded a jail in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to protect Dick Rowland, an African American shoeshine boy who had been accused of assaulting a white woman. In response, white mobs raided gun stores, randomly attacked African Americans, and eventually burned and looted the black section of Tulsa. ABB was widely blamed for this racial violence, but Briggs defended his organization's actions in Tulsa as community self-defense.

In 1921–1924 the leaders of ABB concentrated on criticizing Marcus Garvey and his UNIA. In 1921, at the national convention of UNIA, members of ABB had lobbied outside Liberty Hall, seeking an official link to Garvey's organization, but the UNIA delegates had ignored them. In 1922, Briggs stopped publishing the *Crusader*, creating the Crusader News Agency in its wake. In 1924, ABB was an official participant in a movement called Negro Sanhedrin, which met in Chicago under the leadership of Kelly Miller. Miller wanted to create a federation of black organizations that could coordinate protest activities and develop a unified agenda.

In 1925, ABB was disbanded on orders of the Communist Party of the United States. It was replaced by the American Negro Labor Congress and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. Symbolically, ABB had

been a very important organization. Its insistence on African American rights and protection had placed it in the forefront of the New Negro and black liberation movements. Although its tangible accomplishments were negligible, its psychological effects continue today.

ABEL BARTLEY

See also Briggs, Cyril; Domingo, Wilfred Adolphus; Garvey, Marcus; Jones, William H.; McKay, Claude; Miller, Kelly; Moore, Richard B.; New Negro Movement; Riots: 2—Red Summer of 1919

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Afro-American Realty Company

In the early twentieth century, Harlem became the spiritual center of a new black cultural identity and a famous center of black expression. During the 1920s and 1930s, its writers and artists gave it a worldwide reputation, and the critic Alain Locke described Harlem as an ideal locale for black self-determination. But before all of this talent could descend on Harlem, a series of changes in infrastructure and great foresight were required, beginning in the late nineteenth century. The Afro-American Realty Company, in 1904–1908, illustrates how black businesspeople provided opportunities in Harlem, leading to patterns of migration that permanently altered the community and established an era of expression.

Afro-American Realty was founded in 1904 by Phillip A. Payton, who capitalized on factors that included an economic downturn and the availability of real estate in Harlem. Vast speculative development had penetrated Harlem after the Civil War, when many single-family row houses, tenements, and luxury apartment houses were built. Businesses and religious, educational, and cultural institutions followed. Growth continued in 1873, when Harlem was annexed by New York City and planning for elevated rail service was announced. Proposed subway routes to west Harlem set off another wave of real estate speculation and further inflated market values. By the end of the nineteenth century, virtually all of Harlem was covered by commercial and residential buildings.

The effects of years of overbuilding were exacerbated by a local real estate recession at the beginning of the twentieth century. Loans were withheld, mortgages were foreclosed, rents fell, and residences sat vacant as building owners scrambled to recover their investments. Eventually, landlords sought the services of Payton, who offered to provide regular tenants for buildings on the east side of the district if the landlords would accept black applicants. The landlords agreed, and one of New York's great internal migrations began. Thousands of families began pouring into houses and apartments between Fifth and Seventh avenues, despite opposition from the white Property Owners Protective Association of Harlem. Previously, black newcomers to Harlem had been abetted by real estate speculators seeking to extract high mortgages or rents in a discriminatory process; now, however, nonresident owners gradually realized that Payton's clients were good tenants who were willing to pay higher rents. Afro-American Realty acquired five-year leases on properties owned by whites and rented these properties at 10 percent above deflated market prices. Pent-up demand for new housing and newly created jobs in industry in New York drew thousands to Harlem.

As more black residents moved into Harlem, Afro-American Realty received considerable attention in the national press and considerable support from black leaders, such as Booker T. Washington, who was an associate and business partner of Payton's. The company also lured customers with an innovative advertising program aimed at riders on subways and elevated trains across New York City. Soon, successful black business owners and families who could pay higher rents for a higher standard of living were establishing residences and commercial spaces in Harlem. The migration continued as Afro-American Realty bought more sections of Harlem, whites fled, and a wave of immigrants from the southern United States and the Caribbean arrived, tripling New York's black population. Harlem—no longer a distant community in Manhattan—bustled with activity and a new cosmopolitan culture.

Perhaps Payton's greatest feat was his accumulation of investment capital for his operation. When the

Pennsylvania Railroad bought the property of an African American undertaker, James C. Thomas, at 493 Seventh Avenue for $103,000, Payton induced Thomas to invest much of his profit in Harlem real estate. Over time, Thomas accrued a vast fortune. Payton recruited other investors as well, people who were excited about the rapid growth of Harlem. Afro-American Realty was also boosted by the New York press corps and by the dislocation of residents in other parts of the city. For example, during the construction of Pennsylvania Station in 1906–1910, families and individuals were displaced from the Tenderloin district of Manhattan—historically one of New York's over-crowded nonwhite ghettos—and many of them made their way to Harlem. From 1900 to 1910, T. Thomas Fortune's newspaper, *New York Age*, began to depict Harlem as a vibrant, progressive neighborhood.

Payton had trouble managing his own riches, and he dissolved Afro-American Realty in 1908, but opportunities for black migrants to Harlem continued after his company ceased operations. A new firm, Nail and Parker, began to buy rows of five-story apartments, which it sold to eager newcomers. John Nail and Henry Parker had both been salesmen for Afro-American Realty, and they understood the market. They brokered the move of the black Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Equitable Life Assurance Properties, which included the sophisticated town houses of Striver's Row. Along with the Harlem Property Owners' Improvement Association (founded by John G. Taylor in 1913), these real estate experts continued Payton's legacy of local ownership. The efforts of businesses were matched by those of residents who focused on sustaining their community. To pay landlords, many black tenants took in boarders or gave rent parties on Saturday nights. Many homes were partitioned to create rooming houses; some lodgers even slept in bathtubs. As housing costs stabilized, this dense neighborhood contained the majority of African Americans in New York; in fact, Harlem had the highest concentration of black people anywhere on earth at the time.

The Afro-American Realty Company has not been forgotten by residents or historians of black Harlem. The firm ushered in a new era of direct investment among local renters and buyers and initiated black cultural assimilation in Harlem. Payton firmly believed that the best way for blacks to succeed in New York, and in America, was by establishing economic independence. According to Cruse (1967), Harlem was founded on the basis of "black economic nationalism by the Afro-American Realty Company." This economic gain created a climate for black expression and black cultural life.

R. Jake Sudderth

See also Harlem: 4—Housing; House-Rent Parties; Locke, Alain; Nail, John E.; New York Age; Payton, Philip A.

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Algonquin Roundtable

The Algonquin Roundtable, an institution of the literary scene in the 1920s, was a group of writers and artists who met for lunch at the Algonquin Hotel in New York. When they first gathered in 1919, all but a few of the critics and columnists who were members of this unofficial club were struggling to establish themselves. Years later, nearly all of them had achieved fame,

although amid accusations of back-scratching and logrolling. Scholars often contrast the Algonquin group with other American writers of the period, such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John Dos Passos, who constituted and gained stature as an expatriate "lost generation." The Algonquin Roundtable can also be contrasted with contemporaries who were not expatriates, and particularly—for our purposes—with the writers who personified the Harlem Renaissance. Although some of the individual humorists and essayists in the Roundtable did produce significant work, their famous lunches were characterized by biting, elitist wit, whereas the Harlem Renaissance produced more meaningful and relevant work.

How the Roundtable began is not entirely clear, but according to most accounts, its inception was at a lunch meeting at the Algonquin between John Peter Toohey, a theatrical press agent, and Alexander Woollcott, an influential theater critic and columnist for the *New York Times*. Murdock Pemberton, the press agent who had arranged this meeting, later decided to have a second gathering at the same place. He invited a large group of theater professionals and writers to a party, purportedly in honor of Woollcott's return from World War I, but actually mocking Woollcott's self-indulgent personality. (Pemberton printed a program of speeches related to wartime exploits—all of them to be presented by Woollcott.) Among others, Pemberton invited Franklin P. Adams, a columnist for the New York *Tribune*; Robert Benchley, then an editor at *Vanity Fair*; Heywood Broun, drama critic at the New York *Tribune*; and George S. Kaufman, at the time a drama editor for the *New York Times* and an aspiring playwright.

When Woollcott refused to let Pemberton's joke embarrass him but instead enjoyed the meal and the company, the tradition of dining at the Algonquin began. Later, the group included other writers who were still on their way up, such as Harold Ross, a magazine editor who later founded the *New Yorker*; Dorothy Parker and Robert E. Sherwood, who were beginning their careers as writers for *Vanity Fair*; Maxwell Anderson, a playwright who would later write an antiwar classic, *What Price Glory?*; Ring Lardner, a successful syndicated columnist; and Marc Connelly, a playwright who was Kaufman's collaborator and who struggled as a newspaper writer before achieving success on Broadway.

As Woollcott and his friends began meeting regularly, the group gained considerable fame around New York. Columnists, many of whom were Roundtable regulars, recounted anecdotes and quips from the lunches, boosting the careers of all involved. The owner of the Algonquin Hotel, Frank Case, did not fail to appreciate this free publicity. The group members had at first called themselves "the Board"; they acquired their permanent name when Case replaced the original rectangular dining table with a large round one. Soon afterward, a cartoonist for the *Brooklyn Eagle* drew a caricature of the gathering with the caption "Algonquin Round Table."

Droll wit and sarcasm were criteria for success at the Roundtable; as a result, some visitors attended it only once. Clare Booth Luce found the environment "too competitive," claiming that "you couldn't say 'Pass the salt,' without somebody trying to turn it into a pun or trying to top it." Some other writers of the period saw the Roundtable as elitist and self-enchanted. According to the screenwriter Anita Loos, the members were "self-styled intellectuals . . . concerned with nothing more weighty than the personal items about themselves that were dished up in the gossip columns."

Those outside the circle also said that the members of the Roundtable promoted each other's work, excluding new thinkers and writers. The only figure of the Harlem Renaissance known to have joined the Roundtable was Paul Robeson, and even he was not a regular. For all their presumed conceit and cronyism, however, the members of the Roundtable did sometimes write critically about each other's work. Once, after Adams gave a novel by Broun a negative review, Woollcott supposedly remarked that one could "see Frank's scratches on Heywood's back yet."

Whether or not the Algonquin regulars convened for their own professional advantage, they did like one another's company. On Saturdays, the men—calling themselves the Thanatopsis Literary and Inside Straight Club—would extend the meetings beyond lunch, moving upstairs to a suite to play poker, often until the early hours of Sunday morning. The group members also spent time together in their own homes, at restaurants and speakeasies, and on vacations. In 1922, the Algonquin writers collaborated on a musical revue, *No Sirree!* (mocking a popular Russian revue called *Chauve Souris*), which played for one night to an audience of theater insiders. *No Sirree!* featured Broun as master of ceremonies, Sherwood as a song-and-dance man, and Benchley in a solo sketch that eventually led to a career as a comedian in Hollywood. The following day's newspapers completed the role reversal, allowing the performers to roast their critics in printed reviews.

The Roundtable lunches ended some time in the early 1930s, although few sources mention an exact date or give any particular reason for the demise of the circle. In the years that followed, the group became legendary—so much so that many of the writers who had lunched at the Roundtable tried to play down its cultural impact in an effort to move on with their careers. Eventually, over time, the works of the "lost generation" and the Harlem Renaissance overshadowed even the best literature of the Algonquin group. The myth that persisted, therefore, arguably inflated both the significance of the Roundtable and the legacy of the writers who dined there.

JOSHUA A. KOBRIN

See also Robeson, Paul

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Alhambra Theater

The Alhambra Theater building was constructed in 1905 and (as of this writing) still stands at the intersection of 126th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard (Seventh Avenue) in Harlem. At first it was a vaudeville house; it became part of the Keith vaudeville circuit, featuring such leading performers as Julian Eltinge and the young Groucho Marx. The managers of the Alhambra clung to segregationist policies as long as they could, confining black audience members to the balcony and failing to book African American acts, long after the two other major theaters, the Lincoln and the Lafayette, had adapted their policies to accommodate the changing community. On 4 September 1920, *New York Age* reported that the treasurer of the Alhambra had been arrested for refusing to sell orchestra tickets to two black men. By the mid-1920s, however, the Alhambra was catering to African American audiences. A highlight during this period was the Harlem premiere of *Blackbirds of 1926*, a musical revue produced by Lew Leslie to showcase the prodigious talents of Florence Mills. After a six-week engagement at the Alhambra, *Blackbirds* went on to a highly successful six-month European tour. The show that followed it at the Alhambra starred Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Also in 1926, a ballroom for dances and cabaret performances was added to the theater building, at a reported cost of $100,000; white and black audiences attended on alternate nights. In May 1927, the theater introduced a stock troupe, the Alhambra Players, briefly billed as the All Star Colored Civic Repertory Company. Its inaugural production was *Goat Alley*, by the white playwright E. H. Culbertson; this full-length drama of life in a black slum had opened on Broadway in 1921 and was well received. However, the Alhambra Players were more likely to perform nonracial plays, such as *The Cat and the Canary* or *Rain*.

Despite good reviews and good houses, the Alhambra closed briefly beginning in June 1927 because of a lack of capital. When it reopened in late August of that year under the management of Milton Gusdorf, the theater featured musical reviews and motion pictures until legitimate drama was again incorporated into its programs, in the form of short plays complementing the reviews and films, in 1928. Actors who had appeared with the Lafayette Players, including Evelyn Preer, Charles H. Moore, Edward Thompson, J. Lawrence Criner, Susie Sutton, and Alice Gorgas, appeared as Alhambra Players. The company presented a new thirty-minute production, usually described as light drama based on contemporary themes, each week through 1929 and remained active through 1931, when the Alhambra became exclusively a movie theater.

A casualty of the Depression era, the Alhambra closed in 1932, and its ballroom and theater were never again to be used for those purposes. After standing empty for decades, it was converted into an office building. However, it was used once more for a performance on 22 May 2000, when Ingo Maurer, a German lighting designer, presented a happening and light show for an audience of 600 called *Harlem Lights: A Night at the Alhambra*.

FREDA SCOTT GILES

See also Blackbirds; Lafayette Players; Mills, Florence; New York Age; Preer, Evelyn; Robinson, Bill "Bojangles"

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Ali, Duse Mohamed

Duse Mohamed Ali was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to an Egyptian father, Abdul Salem Ali, an army officer who was later killed during an abortive nationalist uprising in 1881–1882; and a Sudanese mother. When he was nine years old, his father sent him to study in England, and eventually he lost his knowledge of Arabic and lost contact with his family. From then on he would live away from his country of birth, traveling widely throughout the African diaspora and residing variously in England, the United States, and Nigeria.

In 1885, at age nineteen, he started a career as a stage actor that would last for twenty-four years. He began in Wilson Barrett's theatrical company, adopting the non-Arabic name Duse; the following year, he left England for tours and performances in the United States and Canada. He quit the company in the United States and worked as a clerk for several years before returning to Britain in 1898 to resume acting.

In 1909 he began a new career in journalism, publishing articles on Egyptian nationalism and the oppression of Africa in *New Age*, an influential socialist weekly literary journal. In 1911 he published a short history of Egypt, *In the Land of the Pharaohs*, reputedly the first history of that country written by an Egyptian. The book received critical acclaim, catapulting him into international prominence.

In July 1912, in London, he founded *African Times and Orient Review*, a political, cultural, and commercial journal that advocated pan-African-Asian nationalism and was a forum for African intellectuals and activists from around the world. The journal covered issues in the United States, the Caribbean, West Africa, South Africa, Egypt, and Asia, including India, China, and Japan. Marcus Garvey, who was then living in London, briefly worked for Duse Mohamed Ali and contributed an article to the journal's issue of October 1913. *African Times and Orient Review* ceased publication in October 1918 and was succeeded by *African and Orient Review*, which operated through most of 1920.

In 1921, Duse Mohamed Ali traveled again to the United States, and thereafter he never returned to Britain. In the United States, he worked briefly in Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association movement, contributing articles on African issues to *Negro World* and heading a department on African affairs.

Having come to the United States to promote his vision of economic pan-Africanism, he sought to set up a commercial link between West Africans and African Americans. In the 1920s he repeatedly but unsuccessfully tried to obtain financing to enable West African produce farmers to secure markets and exports to the United States so as to wrest control from major British firms, such as Lever Brothers. In the 1930s he failed to gain European-American capital for the same purpose.

In 1931 he left the United States for West Africa, settling in Lagos. He founded and was the editor of *The Comet*, which in 1933 became Nigeria's largest weekly. In 1934 he serialized his novel *Ere Roosevelt Came,* which touched on his experiences in the United States. From June 1937 to March 1938 he also serialized his autobiography, *Leaves from an Active Life*. He retired from the newspaper's managing directorship in 1943 and died in Lagos two years later.

Biography

Duse Mohamed Ali was born in Alexandria, Egypt, on 21 November 1866. He was sent to England for schooling in 1875 or 1876. His father was killed during a nationalist uprising in 1882. Duse Mohamed Ali pursued an acting career in England (1885–1909) and traveled to and lived in the United States (1886–1898, and later in 1921–1931). He began a

career in journalism in London and wrote for *New Age* (1909). He published *In the Land of the Pharaohs* (1911). He founded and edited *African Times and Orient Review* (1912–1918) and *African and Orient Review* (1920), both in London. He worked for Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the early 1920s. He settled in Lagos, Nigeria (1931–1945); there, he founded, edited, and managed *The Comet* (1933– 1943). In *Comet*, he serialized a novel, *Ere Roosevelt Came* (1934); and an autobiography, *Leaves from an Active Life* (1937–1938). He died in Lagos, on 26 February 1945.

AHATI N. N. TOURE

See also Garvey, Marcus; Negro World; Pan-Africanism; Universal Negro Improvement Association

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Alston, Charles

Charles H. "Spinky" Alston (1907–1977) was a major figure in the art scene in New York City for fifty years—a trailblazer as a painter, muralist, sculptor, illustrator, and art educator. He had come to Harlem in 1915 when his stepfather, Harry Bearden (Romare Bearden's uncle), moved the family there. In Harlem, Alston's artistic interests were nurtured and blossomed into a professional career that would significantly influence African American art.

After graduating from Columbia University, Alston became the director of the boys' program at Utopia House, which cared for the children of working mothers; one of his students was Jacob Lawrence, who became an important African American artist. Alston was employed next at the Harlem Arts Workshop, run by the African American sculptor Augusta Savage at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library; this workshop was later incorporated into the Works Progress Administration (WPA). He was introduced to African art by the philosopher and cultural critic Alain Locke, whom he helped install an exhibition of African sculpture at the Schomburg Collection at the 135th Street Library.

As classes at the workshop in the library became too crowded, because of increasing demands for cultural education in Harlem, Alston found new space for the school and himself in an old stable at 306 141st Street. During the next four years, "306" became an interdisciplinary artistic salon as well as a school for the visual arts. In 1935, Alston, Savage, Elba Lightfoot, and others came together to form the Harlem Artists Guild. Also in 1935, Alston became the first black WPA supervisor. He was assigned to the WPA's Federal Arts Project Commission and was in charge of the murals to be painted at Harlem Hospital. These murals became a source of controversy in 1936, when the white

director of the hospital and the city's commissioner of hospitals sought unsuccessfully to block their display. In 1938, Alston obtained a Rosenwald fellowship and began a tour of the South that became the basis of his *Family* series, renderings of the life of southern blacks.

During World War II, Alston worked for the Office of War Information, creating posters and cartoons to mobilize support among blacks for the war effort. In 1950, his career in the fine arts was revitalized when the Metropolitan Museum mounted an exhibition of contemporary art, and his submission, *Painting*, was one of the few works purchased by the museum. Alston soon became an instructor at the Art Students League. His social and racial consciousness led him to join other black artists, such as Hale Woodruff, Norman Lewis, Romare Bearden, and Emma Amos, to form Spiral, an organization concerned about the relationship of black artists to the civil rights movement. Charles Alston died in 1977, leaving behind a legacy as a pioneering artist and educator whose work was quite varied in style, but always expressive and interesting.

Biography

Charles H. Alston was born on 28 November 1907 into a prominent black family in Charlotte, North Carolina. His mother was Anna Elizabeth Miller Alston; his father was Rev. Primus P. Alston, an Episcopalian minister. Primus Alston died of a cerebral hemorrhage in 1910. Three years later, Anna Alston married Harry Pierce Bearden (the uncle of the artist Romare Bearden), who moved the family to New York. In New York, Alston attended DeWitt Clinton High School and Saturday classes at the National Academy of Art. In 1925, he received a scholarship to the Yale University School of Fine Arts but decided to attend Columbia University; there, he was introduced to modern art, including the work of Modigliani. Alston graduated from Columbia in 1929 and received his M.A. from the university's Teachers College in 1931. He worked with Utopia House, the Harlem Arts Project, and the WPA during the 1930s; with the Office of War Information during World War II; and with the Art Students League in the postwar years. He was the recipient of a Julius Rosenwald fellowship and one of the founders of Spiral. Mayor John V. Lindsay appointed him to the New York City Art Commission in 1969. Alston died in 1977.

LARRY A. GREENE

See also Artists; Bearden, Romare; Harlem Hospital; Lawrence, Jacob; Locke, Alain; 135th Street Library; Rosenwald Fellowships; Savage, Augusta; Woodruff, Hale; Works Progress Administration

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Amenia Conference, 1916

Arriving at Troutbeck, the setting for the three-day Amenia Conference of August 1916, W. E. B. Du Bois "knew it was mine. It was just a southern extension of my own Berkshire Hills." Troutbeck, in Amenia, New York, was the home of Joel Spingarn, chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); it was just thirty miles South of Du Bois's hometown, Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Not only were the sylvan surroundings familiar to Du Bois, but he also sensed that this rural estate would inspire the conference, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Although the Amenia Conference was described as an "independent" retreat for the national civil rights leadership held "under the auspices" of the NAACP, the association had a clear investment in sponsoring the meeting. In just its sixth year, the NAACP—and in particular its officers Du Bois and Spingarn—perceived an opportunity to unify civil rights leaders and to fortify its own role in the struggle for freedom for African Americans. Before 1916, unity had been all but unachievable. For more

than a decade, meaningful cooperation had been prevented by deep fissures and contention between African American leaders who sympathized with Booker T. Washington's program of accommodation and those who were committed to confronting Jim Crow squarely. Even within the NAACP, unity had involved a struggle. Since its founding in 1909, the association had grown in strength and numbers, yet it continued to experience internal conflict and uncertainty. Although communities from Los Angeles to Boston had responded to the appeal of the NAACP's strategy of protest and had founded local branches, Du Bois acknowledged in 1916 that the association was "a precarious thing without money, with some influential members" yet "never quite sure whether their influence would stay with us if we 'fought' for Negro rights." But when Washington died in late 1915, Du Bois and Spingarn believed the moment had arrived to ensure the NAACP's survival within a more unified civil rights movement.

Spingarn offered to hold the conference at his estate and mailed 200 invitations—an ambitious number—to a wide spectrum of activists, philanthropists, and politicians ranging from the radical Bostonian William Monroe Trotter to Robert Russa Moton, the conservative bearer of Washington's legacy. President Woodrow Wilson and former presidents William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt were among those who replied with regrets, but more than fifty of the invitees arrived in Amenia on 24 August, an unusually cool and misty morning. They included the novelist Charles Chesnutt; Mary White Ovington of the NAACP; John Hope, the president of Atlanta University; Emmett Scott, who had been an associate of Washington's; Kelly Miller, a sociologist at Howard University; and Mary Burnett Talbert, president of the National Association of Colored Women. In a short while, in Du Bois's words, the conferees were having a "rollicking good time." It had taken considerable delicacy to persuade leaders of "all shades" of opinion to convene at all, let along in this unique setting. The NAACP had arranged for Spingarn's guests to camp among several canvas army tents pitched on the lawn at Troutbeck. If this rusticity had at first raised eyebrows, the congenial atmosphere—hikes through the woods, turns on the tennis court, and comedy on the croquet pitch—eventually charmed the delegates and created a cooperative spirit. "Now and again, of course," Du Bois observed, "there was just a little sense of stiffness and care in conversation when people met who for ten years had been saying hard things about each other; but not a false word was spoken."

What *was* said, however, was meant to remain private—conducing not to secrecy but rather to candid discussion. Over three days, the participants in the Amenia Conference discovered, with little surprise, their common conviction about the principal goals of their work. Although—again, to no one's surprise—disagreement arose over how to reach these goals, no conflict prevented a united statement of purpose. The group expressed a collective belief, summarized in the resolutions of the conference, in the need to support education for African Americans, "every form" of which "should be encouraged and advanced." They also considered it essential to achieve "complete political freedom" and to abandon factionalism.

Looking back on the Amenia Conference a decade later, Du Bois asserted that "on account of our meeting, the Negro race was more united and more ready to meet the problems of the world." His words may suggest hyperbole, but the NAACP had emerged from the meeting of 1916 with renewed vitality. Following the Amenia Conference, the association founded local branches in the South, backed litigation that protected citizenship rights for blacks, and lobbied for federal antilynching legislation. By the mid-1920s the NAACP had become the nation's foremost civil rights organization.

EBEN MILLER

See also Amenia Conference, 1933; Chesnutt, Charles Waddell; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Miller, Kelly; Moton, Robert Russa; Ovington, Mary White; Scott, Emmett Jay; Spingarn, Joel; Talbert, Mary Burnett; Trotter, William Monroe

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Amenia Conference, 1933

On Friday, 18 August 1933, Abram Harris, an economist at Howard University, arrived at Troutbeck, Joel Spingarn's estate in Amenia, New York, for the second Amenia Conference, along with W. E. B. Du Bois; Virginia Alexander, a physician in Philadelphia; and Pauline Young of Wilmington, Delaware, who was a librarian and an activist in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These four had traveled together in Du Bois's automobile. They were soon joined by more than two dozen fellow delegates and observers of the three-day conference to discuss the past, present, and future of the NAACP within the struggle for civil rights.

The idea of reprising the Amenia Conference had come to Du Bois and Spingarn, who were officers of the NAACP, in 1931. Fifteen years earlier, they had also arranged for a conference of civil rights leaders at Troutbeck, in the southern Berkshires. That meeting had resulted in a newfound unity of purpose, which helped the NAACP to become a powerful nationwide organization. By the early 1930s, however, the association's future appeared uncertain. For several years membership had been dwindling, leaving formerly dynamic branches from Boston to Baltimore nearly moribund. One board member of the NAACP argued in the spring of 1932 that even the appeal of the association as a civil rights organization had diminished significantly. The association was "losing ground with the average man on the street" and was just as clearly failing to "attract and hold the minds of the young people." In the context of the Depression, the NAACP's historic commitment to the legal and political rights of African Americans seemed to fall short—especially in contrast to the radical left, particularly affiliates of the Communist Party such as International Labor Defense and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, which articulated the need for social progress through economic transformation. The leaders of the NAACP had long debated developing an economic program, and in 1933 the association accepted Spingarn's offer to host a second Amenia Conference devoted to this concern, among others.

Unlike the conference of 1916, the retreat of 1933 was limited by the NAACP to a small group representing the up-and-coming generation of African American leaders. Of the twenty-seven conferees who met in Amenia in August 1933, the youngest (Juanita Jackson, an activist from Baltimore) was twenty, and the oldest (the sociologist E. Franklin Frazier of Fisk University) was thirty-eight. Five of the conferees, including Harris, Emmett Dorsey, the lawyer Charles Houston, the political scientist Ralph Bunche, and the "New Negro" poet Sterling Brown, taught at Howard University. Frances Williams, Marion Cuthbert, Wenonah Bond, and Anna Arnold represented the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Most of the group—like the attorney Louis Redding of Delaware, a graduate of both Brown University and Harvard University's law school—held degrees from prestigious northern universities and conformed to Du Bois's vision of a well-educated and socially responsible elite upper stratum of racial leadership.

Among the remaining delegates, Abram Harris had perhaps looked forward most keenly to the second Amenia Conference. Harris had spent the past decade arguing that the struggle for civil rights would succeed only by fostering a cooperative movement for economic justice between black and white workers. Until the publication of *The Black Worker* in 1931, Harris's analytical work had never earned him the stature of his celebrated contemporaries, who were poets of the Harlem Renaissance. At Amenia in 1933, however, Harris was among the most recognized intellectuals of his generation; during the election of conference officers, he was given the responsibility of formulating the group's Findings Report.

As in 1916, the deliberations of the conference were kept private to allow frank conversation. During morning, afternoon, and evening sessions held among the tents at Troutbeck, the delegates, as well as several older observers from the NAACP, such as Du Bois and Spingarn, vigorously debated the future shape of the struggle for civil rights. Whereas Harris and Emmett Dorsey (his colleague at Howard University) enunciated the power of interracial working-class unity, E. Franklin Frazier stressed the need to take black nationalism seriously. Armed with charts, graphs, and visual aids, Du Bois similarly argued for the necessity of separatism as a means to end segregation. Although the final consensus leaned toward accepting Harris's point of view, it was only after a conversation ranging from New Deal politics to the delegates' personal experiences.

The NAACP leaders had hoped that the conferees at Amenia would offer specific guidance for shaping the association's program, but the problems discussed that weekend proved too vast to address in such terms. Rather, once Abram Harris began to develop the Findings Report, he was purposefully broad—and he unabashedly drew on arguments he had already made in *The Black Worker*. Considered in the black press as the statement of a new generation, the idea that civil rights leaders needed to cooperate with the labor movement went back to the 1920s and even earlier, but it had taken on new significance during the Depression. Harris, in particular, would continue to work with the NAACP to implement an economic program, but the challenge of uniting black and white workers in a broad effort for social change remained unfulfilled over the next generation.

EBEN MILLER

See also Amenia Conference, 1916; Brown, Sterling; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Frazier, E. Franklin; Spingarn, Joel

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American Mercury

The magazine *American Mercury* (1924–1980) began monthly publication in January 1924 under the editorship of Henry Louis (H. L.) Mencken (1880–1956) and George Jean Nathan (1882–1958). At its peak in 1927, more than 77,000 copies were sold each month. The editorial team and the content went through several major changes, especially after 1933, when Mencken's resignation led to a drastic drop in readership; but the magazine continued to come out each month, in green-covered 128-page issues, until November 1950. In 1952 it was reorganized as a right-wing journal with no resemblance to its founders' original vision; publication stopped in 1980.

American Mercury was founded, as announced in a press release before the appearance of the first issue, to "offer a comprehensive picture, critically presented, of the entire American scene." That scene included a nonconformist spectrum of ideas in diverse fields, including literature, science, politics, economics, and "industrial and social relations." The magazine devoted itself to debunking platitudes, challenging assumptions about authority and propriety, and providing an educated and discerning readership with the best available writing in a variety of genres and on a wide range of topics.

Mencken approached many of the best writers of the day to ask for contributions to the magazine: among the first were Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and James Weldon Johnson. Realist writers, whether or not they had achieved popular or critical success, were prominently featured throughout Mencken's editorship. Volume 1, number 1 of the *Mercury* presented four poems by Theodore Dreiser; number 2 included *All God's Chillun Got Wings (A Play)* by Eugene O'Neill and "Caught (A Story)" by Sherwood Anderson. Later issues would include work by Ambrose Bierce, Sinclair Lewis, Carl Sandburg, William Faulkner, and others.

The *Mercury* widely publicized its interest in discovering new writers; it encouraged and accepted submissions by housewives, convicts, panhandlers, and many others whose stories were otherwise unlikely to be told. The magazine was also well known as a showcase for writings about racial tension and featured many contributions by African Americans, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, George S. Schuyler, and Kelly Miller.

In addition to short stories, poems, plays, and essays, the *Mercury* was read for its regular features. Editorial essays and monthly columns on "The Theatre" and "The Library" provided strongly opinionated recommendations. The popular and much copied column "Americana" featured brief sketches of scenes from city or country life, as well as samples of entertaining sayings heard on the street or reprinted from American newspapers.

American Mercury, especially in its first decade (1924–1933), is credited with challenging and changing expectations of what a magazine could be. By actively

seeking contributions from a wide variety of writers, and by providing a hearing for unpopular viewpoints, the *Mercury* served as a forum in which members of the "civilized minority," as Mencken described his varied readership, could explore and debate the social constraints under which they lived.

ROSEMARIE COSTE

See also Anderson, Sherwood; Cullen, Countee; Dreiser, Theodore; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Hughes, Langston; Johnson, James Weldon; Lewis, Sinclair; Mencken, H. L.; Miller, Kelly; Schuyler, George S.

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American Negro Labor Congress

African Americans in the Workers (Communist) Party of America organized the American Negro Labor Congress (ANLC) in Chicago on 25–31 October 1925. Increasing conservatism in the United States after 1920 had brought the collapse of all-black organizations such as the African Blood Brotherhood, and ANLC was intended to fill the gap. Its principal founder was Lovett Fort-Whiteman, an African American Marxist who had studied at Tuskegee and who also initially edited ANLC's journal, *The Negro Champion*. ANLC eschewed black nationalism and separatism; it sought to achieve black liberation by concentrating on the working class and on economic issues. However, this communist emphasis often conflicted with African American sensibilities; for example, ANLC believed that lynching was caused by capitalist exploitation and control and could best be countered in the economic arena.

ANLC wanted to eliminate discrimination in employment, to open segregated unions to black members, and to create all-black unions when necessary; it repeatedly cited the failure of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to organize black workers. ANLC demonstrated its goals in 1926 through its support for striking black theater projectionists at the white-owned Lafayette Theater in Harlem. Unfortunately, ANLC's agenda, which was extremely unfocused, also included the global elimination of discrimination against all black peoples and the liberation of victims of American and European imperialism overseas. Such sweeping objectives held little appeal to workers, who were more immediately concerned with earning a living; as a result, the membership of ANLC was never very large. William Green, the president of AFL, made ANLC's objectives even harder to attain: He considered ANLC so radical that he threatened member unions with expulsion if they participated in it. Labor activists in Harlem such as A. Philip Randolph, who was launching the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters at the time ANLC met in Chicago, also gave the congress a wide berth.

ANLC made an effort to incorporate black nationalism and racial issues with its communist focus on the class struggle but failed miserably. At the founding convention in Chicago, the emphasis on communism (and Russia) overshadowed African American concerns. For instance, the thirty-two black delegates and one Mexican-American delegate met before a primarily white audience and were entertained by Russian ballet and theater groups, but no black artists. Lovett Fort-Whiteman attended the congress dressed in a *rabochka* (a Russian peasant blouse) and announced that a group of black young people had been selected for revolutionary training in Moscow and would study Marxism and Leninism at the University of the Toilers of the East. Also, in the United States ANLC focused on large eastern cities and industrial centers, failing to represent the masses of southern black workers.

Within one year, in an attempt to focus on issues more important to average African Americans, Richard Moore replaced Fort-Whiteman as the leader of ANLC and as editor of *The Negro Champion*. ANLC moved its headquarters from Chicago to New York in 1928. Although ANLC was nearly moribund after its move to Harlem, the desire for a black labor organization resulted in intermittent calls for its resurrection. In late 1930, ANLC dissolved and was replaced by the League of Struggle for Negro Rights (LSNR). Lovett Fort-Whiteman emigrated to Russia in 1930; he was arrested in 1937, during the Stalinist purges of the Bolshevik leadership, and he died in 1939 in a Soviet gulag, at age forty-four.

JOHN CASHMAN

See also African Blood Brotherhood; Communist Party; Lafayette Theater; Moore, Richard B.; Randolph, A. Philip

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Amos 'n' Andy

The face of entertainment was changed forever by the comedy series *Amos 'n' Andy*, originally called the *Sam 'n' Henry Show*, which was broadcast on radio from 1928 to 1960 and on television from 1951 to 1953. On radio, the white actors Charles Correll (1890–1972) and Freeman Gosden (1899–1982), who wrote and performed the shows, won audiences over with slapstick comedy and buffoonery as two southern black men hoping for success and prosperity in the city of Chicago. Correll and Gosden had begun as "harmony boys" at WGN, the radio station in Chicago where they developed what became *Amos 'n' Andy*. They made their program popular among black and white audiences alike with a combination of music, minstrel comedy, and dramatic dialogue.

Although *Amos 'n' Andy* emerged during the later part of the Harlem Renaissance, this form of entertainment worked against what many artists and scholars were attempting to achieve for blacks. As the radio program continued, black audiences became more perplexed by offensive connotations that mocked the progress of black Americans. Correll and Gosden skillfully imitated black vernacular English to give the characters authenticity and alert audiences to each character's social status—"dialect" indicated a black person, "nondialect" a white person. Also, there were mixed responses to their use of racial stereotypes as central characters. The episodes centered on Amos, who was presented as shiftless and inept; and Andy, who was lazy and pompous. Both characters reflected stereotypical minstrel caricatures that had been popularized during the nineteenth century. Still, the series continued to remain a favorite in American households.

In 1927, Correll and Gosden entered a critical period that led them to examine the future of their radio program. Their popularity had been growing not only because of the program but also because of promotional offerings such as recordings, books, and toys. Correll and Gosden decided that they wanted to distribute the program to other radio stations in order to expand their audience; however, WGN rejected this proposal.

WGN's refusal aroused the interest of WMAQ, the radio station of the *Chicago Daily News*. WMAQ offered Correll and Gosden a contract with distribution rights, which they accepted. They changed the name of the program to *Amos 'n' Andy* when WGN refused to release the original name, *Sam 'n' Henry*. On 19 March 1928, *Amos 'n' Andy* made its debut at WMAQ.

Amos 'n' Andy was similar to *Sam 'n' Henry* in centering on the adventures of two southern black men who come to the North seeking success and fortune. But now the two black men were from Atlanta, were blundering businessmen, and were members of a fraternal order, Mystic Knights of the Sea. Although the new radio series received some harsh criticism for its portrayal of blacks, it continued to be very popular on the east and west coasts, running six days a week, sometimes twice a day to accommodate time differences.

As *Amos 'n' Andy* reached the peak of its fame during the 1930s, the controversy surrounding it intensified. Correll and Gosden's uncensored use and imitation of facets of black culture disturbed black audiences and black comedians, and protesters argued that the program was baneful and demeaning to blacks. In 1931, reportedly, some 750,000 signatures were gathered by the *Pittsburgh Courier* in an effort to have the radio show canceled; this petition alleged that the program inflated misconceptions about black

culture and defamed black women. Nevertheless, the program continued to be broadcast and was converted from a daily serial into a weekly half-hour presentation.

The growing popularity of the radio program led to the development of a television series, which began in the summer of 1951 on CBS. The television program was produced by Correll and Gosden, but they did not act in it: There had been an intense search, lasting more than a year, for the most appropriate black actors for the television version. The television program also differed from the radio program in that many of its episodes focused on George "Kingfish" Stevens (played by Tim Moore), the head of the Mystic Knights of the Sea lodge; Stevens typically placed Amos Jones (played by Alvin Childress) and Andy Hogg Brown (played by Spencer Williams) in situations where they—or at least Andy—might be revealed as hapless and artless. The characters in the television version also included Kingfish's wife, Sapphire (played by Ernestine Wade), and his overbearing mother-in-law, "Mama" (played by Amanda Randolph). This program was television's first all-black comedy, and the story lines involved the lives of two types of characters: stereotypical and true-to-life. Some of the characters, as on the radio program, were reincarnations of figures in nineteenth-century minstrel shows—the coon, the Uncle Tom, the mammy. Such types, of course, precluded authentic representations of black life and reaffirmed notions of segregation and inequality.

Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll as Amos and Andy.
(Photofest.)

The CBS network received criticism from various civil rights groups, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which believed that the show promoted racial stereotypes and negative images of blacks. Walter White of the NAACP led a significant protest and filed a lawsuit against the CBS network. This protest, however, deterred sponsors from supporting not only television comedies that exploited blacks but also comedies that featured blacks; thus the efforts of the civil rights group may have been a factor in the failure of CBS to cast any blacks as main characters in dramatic series. (After the cancellation of *Amos 'n' Andy*, no television network cast a black person in a dramatic series until 1965, when Bill Cosby starred in *I Spy*.)

The television series *Amos 'n' Andy* was canceled at the end of its second season in 1953. But during the following decade, *Amos 'n' Andy* appeared occasionally in at least 218 markets across the world, including Australia, Bermuda, Kenya, and western Nigeria; and it continued to thrive afterward through syndication. There is still debate about whether the show was actually racist, because while it did incorporate common stereotypes, it also portrayed blacks in positive, professional roles—for example, as attorneys and entrepreneurs. Eventually, though, as a result of widespread civil rights demonstrations and continued protest against local broadcasts of *Amos 'n' Andy*, CBS removed the show from the television circuit permanently in 1966. Correll and Gosden had meanwhile continued the radio series, with new material, until the program went off the air in 1960.

GENYNE HENRY BOSTON

See also National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; White, Walter

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Amsterdam News

Amsterdam News, the leading African American weekly in New York City since the Harlem Renaissance, was established in 1909 at a site close to Amsterdam Avenue—hence its name. With an expense account of $10, James H. Anderson assembled the paper in his apartment on 65th Street in San Juan Hill, where many African Americans lived before relocating to Harlem. One year later, the paper joined the exodus to Harlem. Between 1910 and 1920, Harlem was evolving into a hub of black America, and the *Amsterdam News* chronicled the change.

That a newspaper begun with such minimal resources managed to survive and thrive suggests the demand in the community for its image in print. The limited funds also indicate the strong odds against the black press. This was a difficult, although heady, time. World War I helped create a distinction between "old" and "new" Negroes, but the soldiers of color who participated in the Allies' victory were rarely allowed to benefit from their efforts. Some soldiers were lynched, and bloody riots erupted in several cities, with hundreds of casualties among African Americans. Decent jobs were scarce. But African Americans transformed themselves in the urban market, and they were ambitious to learn and improve, with the black newspaper as their secular bible. They read it religiously to find out where they were and what they were doing within and outside their own communities, and a single copy often passed from hand to hand.

Much of the newfound excitement of African Americans as they remade themselves in their new environment was expressed artistically. This expression culminated in the Harlem Renaissance, which was largely the work of their hands and pens. In the 1910s and 1920s, T. Thomas Fortune, then a dean of journalists, wrote regularly for the *Amsterdam News*. In later years, so did John Henrik Clarke, W. E. B. Du Bois, Roy Wilkins, and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Two women who were pioneers in arts journalism—Nora Holt and Marvel Cooke—contributed to the paper during and after the Harlem Renaissance, as did the novelist Ann Petry.

Sara Warren, whose husband had worked with its founder, bought the *Amsterdam News* in 1926. A decade later, it was in receivership and was sold for several thousand dollars to two physicians. Under the Powell-Savory partnership, younger writers were hired, and coverage became national as well as local. The paper also became one of the first in the country to unionize. In the 1950s and 1960s, the *Amsterdam News* was in the vanguard of civil rights journalism and was quick to recognize Malcolm X, with a column called "God's Angry Man." In 1971, a consortium of businesspeople and politicians, including Clarence Jones, John Procope, and Percy Sutton, bought the paper for $2.3 million. Twelve years later, it was sold to another group of businesspeople, headed by Wilbert Tatum, who practiced hands-on control. In 1997, Tatum retired and turned the reins over to his daughter Eleanor, who then served as publisher and editor-in-chief.

BARBARA BREWSTER LEWIS

See also Black Press; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Fortune, Timothy Thomas; Holt, Nora

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Anderson, Charles W.

Charles W. Anderson was born in Oxford, Ohio; he was educated in public schools, and after brief training at business and language schools, he arrived in New York in the late 1890s. There, he quickly rose to prominence as the recognized leader of state Republican politics; by the time of his death, he was one of the most famous black politicians in the country.

Anderson held a variety of minor posts in New York early in his career—at the customs house, as private secretary to the state treasurer (and later chief clerk of the treasury), and with the state racing commission—all the while building a network of political contacts within Manhattan, mainly through his presidency of the Colored Republican Club. He was thus positioned to receive political appointments near the top of the civil service hierarchy.

The Colored Republican Club had been formed in the early 1900s, primarily to get out the black vote for Theodore Roosevelt, which it succeeded in doing; and when Roosevelt became president in 1905, Anderson was appointed collector of internal revenue for New York's second district (which included Wall Street). He was also a member of the New York State Republican Committee (for a long while, the only African American) for ten terms and a delegate-at-large to three Republican conventions. His influence on the political empowerment of African Americans was so pervasive that at his death in 1938, *New York Age* commented, "You just can't think of Republicanism in New York without remembering Charlie Anderson."

Anderson's forceful rise in Republican politics was largely a result of his friendship with Booker T. Washington, with whom he had aligned himself in the late 1890s. Anderson, like Washington, believed that solutions to the emerging "Negro problem" could be found by doing what could be done, within existing limitations, as soon as possible. This set him at odds with W. E. B. Du Bois and the Negro Democrats, a group that Anderson characterized as people "to whom nothing is desirable but the impossible." Anderson was so faithful to Washington's beliefs that he even planted spies in rival black organizations that he thought might threaten Washington's goals and carefully reported on their activities to his ally.

In character and temperament Anderson was distinctive. Savvy and freewheeling, he had a reputation as a classy dresser and as a master of the endgame in political deal-making. Versatile and apparently of inexhaustible energy, he seemed never to stop working. According to his friend and admirer James Weldon Johnson, Anderson's solution to fatigue was to stop in the nearest hotel bar for a pint of champagne, and then press on. As an astute politician, Anderson was also well read and fond of discussing contemporary culture, drawing widely on his self-taught knowledge of the English poets, the Irish patriots, and the contemporary leaders of the British parliament.

Ill health forced Anderson to retire in 1934, but there can be little doubt that he was one of the most important African American politicians of either party in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth.

Biography

Charles W. Anderson was born on 28 April 1866 in Oxford, Ohio, to Charles W. and Serena Anderson. After attending public school, he received further training at Spencerian Business College, Cleveland; and Berlitz School of Languages, Worcester, Massachusetts. He was private secretary to the state treasurer of New York in 1893–1895; he was appointed collector of internal revenue for the Second District in New York City in 1905 and for the Third District in New York City in 1922. He died in 1938.

James M. Hutchisson

See also Du Bois, W. E. B.; Johnson, James Weldon; New York Age; Politics and Politicians

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Anderson, Edmund Lincoln

Edmund Lincoln (Eddie) Anderson's career as a comedian and actor stretched from stage roles during the

latter days of the Harlem Renaissance to stardom on radio, in films, and on television during the 1950s and 1960s. Anderson was always called Eddie in private, but in public he was often referred to as "Rochester," the name of the character he made famous in radio and television programs and in films with the white comedian and actor Jack Benny.

Anderson's mother, Ella Mae, was a circus tightrope artist; his father, Ed, was a minstrel performer. Although Anderson would later be most famous for his role as Rochester, he had gotten his start on the stage. One of his earliest stage appearances was in the chorus of *Struttin' Along*, an all-black revue, in 1919. He traveled the vaudeville circuit, singing and dancing with his brother Cornelius and another performer as the Three Black Aces in the show *Steppin' High*; their bookings included the Roxy on Broadway and the Apollo and the Cotton Club in Harlem. After *Steppin' High*, Anderson struck out on his own, touring as a solo song-and-dance act and eventually incorporating comedy into his routine.

His big break came when he auditioned for and won the role of a porter in a train sketch for Jack Benny's radio program. The character of the porter and Anderson's performance in the role were hugely popular with the audience, and in 1937 Anderson became a regular on Benny's radio show. His character was now Jack Benny's valet, Rochester, and in this role he stole the show on Benny's radio and television programs as well as in Benny's films. Audiences loved the fun-loving, quick-witted servant who often had the last laugh with regard to Benny's miserly character. One factor contributing to Anderson's success was the comic effect of his raspy voice, a result of damaging his vocal cords while hawking newspapers as a boy. The character of Rochester might seem stereotypical by today's standards, but at the time it was considered a step up from the antics of black characters on the vaudeville and Broadway stage in the 1920s and 1930s. Anderson became so identified with this role on Benny's program that he was sometimes credited only as "Rochester" in his subsequent films and public appearances, and he achieved such success as Rochester that for several years during the 1940s he was the highest-paid black actor in Hollywood.

In addition to radio and television, Anderson appeared in more than fifty films. His first film was *What Price Hollywood?* (1932); he also played Noah in *The Green Pastures* (1936). His biggest starring role was Little Joe Jackson in the critically acclaimed *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), a film that also featured other veterans

Eddie "Rochester" Anderson in a photo from Paramount Pictures, 1940. (Photofest.)

of vaudeville and Broadway, including Ethel Waters and Lena Horne. Anderson continued to appear with Jack Benny on radio and television and in films until 1965.

Biography

Edmund Lincoln Anderson was born in Oakland, California, on 18 September 1905. He studied at public schools in Oakland, San Francisco, and San Mateo, California. His work as an actor included Jack Benny's radio and television series, 1937–1965; *The Green Pastures*, 1936; *Jezebel*, 1938; *You Can't Take It with You*, 1938; *Gone with the Wind*, 1939; *Cabin in the Sky*, 1943; *Brewster's Millions*, 1945; and *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World*, 1963. He was a member of the Screen Actors' Guild, Actors Guild of Variety Artists, and Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences. Anderson was married first to Mamie Sophie Wiggins, who died in 1954, and then, in 1956, to Eva Simon, with whom he had three children. His second marriage ended in divorce. Anderson died of a heart ailment at the Motion

Picture Country House and Hospital in Los Angeles, California, on 28 February 1977.

HEATHER MARTIN

See also Film; Film: Actors; Waters, Ethel

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Anderson, Garland

The playwright Garland Anderson (1886–1939) was a former shoe shiner, singer, dancer, and bellhop (he was called the "San Francisco bellhop playwright"), a philosopher advocating constructive thinking, and a minister and lecturer. He was the first African American to have a serious full-length play produced on Broadway, *Appearances* (1924), which opened doors for other African American dramatists. This work is an autobiographical "courtroom melodrama in which a morally upright bellhop"—Anderson himself—"is tried and exonerated of the charge of raping a white woman" (Peterson 1990, 1997).

Anderson achieved success against considerable odds. At a young age, he ran away from home after his mother died. He set up a shoeshine stand and sang and danced for money. The hoboes he met taught him how to cadge meals, find a place to sleep, and "steam a ride on a moving train." Passengers on trains hid him beneath their seats; black hotel workers gave him food, money, and a bed. He educated himself by reading the Bible and studying books on Christian Science, psychology, metaphysics, practical psychology, and constructive thinking.

Anderson's philosophy of constructive thinking was criticized as reflecting an "Uncle Tom" mentality. *Appearances* drew the same criticism; Anderson was accused of selling out in order to appeal to white audiences. As a bellhop at the Braetum Hotel in San Francisco, he had impressed the guests with his optimism: He believed that all things were possible through faith and that he was called to serve mankind. After seeing Channing Pollock's moralistic drama *The Fool*, Anderson decided to write a play to convey his own philosophy, although he had no training in playwriting or stage technique. He completed it in only three weeks but then spent seven months finding a producer; during this time, Al Jolson paid Anderson's expenses in New York and helped him seek financing for the play. Anderson gave public readings of his play (inviting the governor of New York to one of them); he also went to Washington, D.C., to get support from President Calvin Coolidge.

Appearances opened at the Frolic Theater on Broadway on 13 October 1925. In 1925, the policy on Broadway was to avoid mixed casts by having white actors play "colored" roles in blackface. (In 1924, the press had demanded that an off-Broadway production, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, be banned because Paul Robeson kissed the hand of the white actress.) However, *Appearances* succeeded with a cast of fourteen white and three "colored" performers and a Negro as the principal character. In 1927–1929, the play toured Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, and San Francisco. On 1 April 1929, it opened again in New York City, at the Hudson Theater. In March 1930, it opened at the Royalty Theater in London, where Anderson would become a celebrity.

Anderson also became famous as a minister of constructive thinking and a lecturer to white audiences in the tradition of Booker T. Washington. His message that hard work could overcome social obstacles was well received in America and elsewhere. He and his wife, Doris, a white Englishwoman, had met when she went to a lecture of his at the International New Thought Alliance on Oxford Street in London, where he spoke twice a week. At one of Anderson's Mayfair Tea Talks, "Dick" Sheppard (then the canon of Saint Paul's and royal chaplain) was the guest of honor. In London, Anderson lived in Lowndes Square, an exclusive neighborhood; became a member of the Poets' Club; and had his portrait painted by A. Christie. He left London for America in 1935 and published a

book on his philosophy, *Uncommon Sense*, in 1937. An excerpt from it suggests why African Americans rejected his teachings:

> The white race is the superior race of this age. In making this statement I do not feel that it is a reflection on my own race. The white race has centuries of civilization behind it, while the Negro race has less than a hundred years since its slavery in America in which it can lay claim to any civilized status.

Another passage, however, suggests Anderson's sense of serving humanity:

> Service to me is the rent I pay for the space I occupy on earth. . . . I realized that if I succeeded, in spite of apparently unsurmountable obstacles, in writing a play, . . . the production of that play would prove to my audience, that they would be able to do the thing they wanted to do.

Biography

Garland Anderson was born c. 1886 in Wichita, Kansas. He completed only four years of schooling there before his family moved to Sacramento, California; he was mainly self-educated. He worked as a bellhop in the Braeburn Hotel in 1907–1924 and began writing *Appearances* in 1924. He also wrote three other plays; the only one whose title is still known is *Extortion* (it was not produced). He was ordained by Rev. Netta Holmes of the Church of Constructive Thinking in Seattle, becoming the first African American ordained in a white church to minister to a white congregation. He served as a minister at the Truth Center in 1929–1939. He visited Honolulu, speaking to Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Hawaiian Christian churches. Anderson opened a "colored" café in San Francisco and eventually bought the Braeburn Hotel, although he later sold it back to his boss. Anderson died in New York Hospital of heart disease in 1939.

FELECIA PIGGOTT MCMILLAN

See also Appearances

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Anderson, Marian

The career of the contralto Marian Anderson concided during its early years with the period of the Harlem Renaissance and continued long afterward, until 1965,

when she retired from the concert stage with a final performance at Carnegie Hall.

In 1923, Anderson won a competition for soloists held by the Philadelphia Philharmonic Society. In 1925, as a result of winning a competition at Aeolian Hall in New York City, she appeared at Lewisohn Stadium with the New York Philharmonic. In 1930 and 1933, she received fellowships from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. In 1933–1935, she undertook a concert tour of Europe that established her career. After her performance at at the Salzburg Festival in June 1935, the conductor Arturo Toscanini told her, "Yours is a voice such as one hears once in a hundred years." Anderson had already been well received by African Americans, but her successes abroad gave her an entrée into mainstream American concert halls, theaters, and university auditoriums.

Anderson grew up in an environment filled with music—at home, at church, at school, and in the community. She was born into a happy, close-knit "black bourgeois" family in Philadelphia and showed a natural talent for singing at a tender age, although her parents—who had little money—did not seek professional instruction for her. When she was eight years old, her father, John Anderson, bought a piano. She at first took little interest in it, but one day, as she strolled along a street, she heard a piano being played eloquently by a "dark woman" and became inspired to study the instrument. There was no money for lessons, so she used a note chart propped above the keys. She also bought a violin in a pawnshop for $3.98 and struggled with it, helped by musical acquaintances who tuned it for her until the strings wore out. Anderson, who was in some ways self-taught, played the piano and the violin by ear and matched her voice to the tones. At about this time, an aunt who was arranging a concert to raise funds for a ministry included Anderson on the program. Anderson knew nothing of the plan until she found a flier on the street with her photograph and name: "Come and hear the baby contralto, ten years old." Actually, she was still only eight, but she was tall and looked older (later, she would join her church's adult choir at age thirteen, while still keeping her membership in the junior choir, which she had joined at age six). When Anderson was ten, her father died, and she and her mother and sisters went to live with his parents, who owned an organ that she played while singing spirituals.

John Anderson had been a supervisor of ushers at Union Baptist Church, and the child Marian was introduced to choir music there. She gave her first public performances in church at about age eight: a duet with her neighbor Viola Johnson, who sang the upper part while Anderson sang the lower part, the range that would become her comfort zone; and a duet with her father's sister as the soprano and herself as the alto. Anderson soon joined a girls' church quartet. These early performances led to solo pieces, as Anderson filled in for absent soloists in the senior choir. Soon she was representing Union Baptist Church at various events as a soloist or in ensembles. One such event was at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. When Anderson was a teenager, the tenor Roland Hayes gave a fund-raising concert for Union Baptist, and she was permitted to appear on the program. Hearing Hayes sing French songs, German lieder, and Italian airs inspired her to take up classical song. (Anderson later said that Hayes was one of three musicians who most decisively influenced her style; the others were Sigrid Onegin and Ernestine Schumann-Heink.) Hayes recommended his own vocal instructor, Arthur J. Hubbard, in Boston, but Anderson's grandmother would not allow her to travel there, so Anderson approached a music school in Philadelphia, where she was snubbed.

At William Penn High School, where she studied typing and shorthand in preparation for the civil service, Anderson sang in the school choir, often performing brief solos. After she sang at a school assembly, the principal was persuaded to transfer her to South Philadelphia High School, which had a college preparatory track that might lead to a music scholarship.

Anderson belonged to the Camp Fire Girls and performed in their chorus. She gave amateur performances—sometimes for a stipend of a dollar or two—at Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist churches; the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA); and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). When she realized that people would pay to hear her sing, she began to charge at least five dollars a performance. Anderson also joined the Philadelphia Choral Society, a professional group. Her name became known in and around Philadelphia, and she began to give frequent concerts in nearby towns. Roland Hayes helped by recommending her to churches and colleges.

Anderson's studies with her first vocal teacher, Mary Saunders Patterson (who charged no fee), culminated in a performance in an operetta that Patterson presented for promising students. Anderson next studied with the contralto Agnes Reifsnyder; then, the musician Lisa Roma—who had heard Anderson sing

at William Penn and had recommended her transfer to South Philadelphia High—arranged an audition with the tenor Giuseppe Boghetti. When Anderson became Boghetti's student, Roland Hayes performed in a concert that raised $600 to pay the fees. She then studied with Frank La Forge, on a scholarship, for more than a year.

After graduating from high school, Anderson decided to make a career of singing. William ("Billy") King became her accompanist and later her manager. On tour, she met R. Nathaniel Dett, choir director at the Hampton Institute, who took an interest in her career. After a performance at Howard University, Anderson felt confident enough to have a promoter book her at New York City's Town Hall, but her appearance at Town Hall was poorly attended and received unfavorable reviews, and she went home to ponder her next step. Encouraged by her family, she signed on with Arthur Judson's prestigious management firm. Her fees rose, and she appeared at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall as a soloist with the Hall Johnson Choir; but her career remained stagnant, and she felt that she could establish herself only in Europe.

Anderson's first trip abroad was in 1930: She went to England for about a year. There, she stayed in the homes of the expatriate African American actor John Payne and the painter Vicky Newburg; met, among others, Amanda Ira Aldrich (the daughter of the actor Ira Aldrich); studied German at the Hugh Institute; and performed at Wigmore Hall and the Promenade Concerts directed by Sir Henry Wood. However, her performances were more as a student than as an accomplished artist, and she did not achieve greater recognition from booking agencies in the United States after her return.

In 1933, Anderson returned to Europe for two years. She went first to Germany to perfect her performance of lieder, and after studying with Michael Raucheisen and Sverre Jordan, she financed her own appearance at the Bachsaal in Berlin. She received mostly favorable reviews, but this was the beginning of the Nazi era, and she would not perform again in Germany until 1950. During this trip she also sang in many other cities: Salzburg, Vienna, Brussels, Copenhagen, London, Helsinki, Paris, Tiflis, Leningrad (Saint Petersburg), Moscow, Kharkov, Kiev, and Odessa.

When Anderson returned to the United States, her new manager was the famous Sol Hurok, who wanted to broaden her audiences beyond African Americans. His ambition led to a legendary episode. In 1939, Hurok tried to arrange for a concert in Washington, D.C., at Constitution Hall, which was controlled by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). The DAR said that it had "no available dates" and, furthermore, that its policy was "concerts by white artists only." This rejection aroused widespread anger from many individuals and organizations that were working to end racism, and the injustice to Anderson became a cause célèbre even in the White House—the first lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, resigned from the DAR in protest. Harold Ickes, secretary of the interior, then invited Anderson to sing to the people of America in a public concert at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday, 9 April 1939. On the platform with Anderson were senators, representatives, cabinet members, a Supreme Court justice, Walter White of the NAACP, and representatives from Howard University and African American churches; the diverse audience numbered 75,000, and the concert was broadcast on radio to millions more. (Eventually, the DAR amended its policy, and Anderson appeared at Constitution Hall in 1943.)

Anderson's star rose after the Easter Sunday concert. The general manager of the Metropolitan Opera, Rudolf Bing, approached her about performing in an opera. She accepted, although with some trepidation, and studied with Max Rudolf, the artistic administrator, who prepared her to audition with Dimitri Mitropoulos, the conductor of the opera orchestra. Anderson's opera debut on 7 January 1955, at age fifty-seven, was a milestone: She was the first African American opera singer to appear onstage at the Metropolitan.

In addition to her contributions to classical music (in which she was especially renowned for her interpretations of Bach, Brahms, Handel, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss, Rachmaninoff, and Wolf), Anderson presented classical renditions of African American spirituals—the socioreligious folk songs of an enslaved people, which W. E. B. Du Bois called "sorrow songs." She brought this art form, cherished by African Americans, to international audiences in places where spirituals might otherwise not have been heard. Her performances of "Crucifixion," "Deep River," "Go Down, Moses," "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," "My Lord, What a Morning," "Oh, What a Beautiful City," and "Were You There?"—mostly in arrangements by Harry Thacker Burleigh—are memorable for her interpretation of dialect and her embellishment, phrasing, rhythm, and tempo, which remained true to the nature of the spiritual. Anderson, who

Marian Anderson, 1940. (Library of Congress.)

always sang with her eyes closed, opened the eyes of the international community to the value of this music.

Biography

Marian Anderson was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 17 February 1897. She studied voice with Mary Saunders Patterson, Agnes Reifsnyder, Giuseppe Boghetti, Frank La Forge, Raimund von zur Mühlen, Mark Raphael, Amanda Ira Aldrich, Michael Raucheisen, Sverre Jordan, Madame Charles Cahier, and Steffi Rupp. Her many awards included the Spingarn Medal from the NAACP in 1930. She sang the national anthem at the inauguration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953; made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City in 1955, as Ulrica in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*; was the United States' goodwill ambassador to Asia in 1957; was appointed by President Eisenhower as an alternate delegate to the American delegation to the United Nations in June 1958; sang at another presidential inauguration—John F. Kennedy's—in 1961; and sang at the Lincoln Memorial as part of the March on Washington in 1963. She received honorary degrees from Temple University and several colleges. Anderson was married in 1943 to the artist and architect Orpheus H. "King" Fisher. She died in Portland, Oregon, on 8 April 1993.

GERRI BATES

See also Burleigh, Harry Thacker; Dett, Robert Nathaniel; Hayes, Roland; Johnson, Hall; King, Billy; Music; Rosenwald Fellowships; White, Walter

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Anderson, Regina M.

Regina M. Anderson Andrews was instrumental in the development of the Harlem Renaissance because of her vision of community cultural awareness and her ability to inconspicuously implement the ideas of others.

Anderson shared an apartment with Ethel Ray Nance and Louella Tucker in Sugar Hill, at 580 Saint Nicholas Avenue, which became known as the Harlem West Side Literary Salon or simply "580." Andrews began promoting the arts by opening the apartment to community gatherings and cultural activities. She helped organize the famous Civic Club dinner of 1924, which evolved from an event at "580" and was attended by 110 guests, including W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes. Readings at the dinner inspired Alain Locke, who edited the anthology *The New Negro* in 1925; this collection of rising African American writers is sometimes considered to mark the birth date of the Harlem Renaissance and to be its definitive work. Gatherings and events at "580"—and a similar salon in Harlem's East End, that of Dorothy Peterson and her brother Jerome Bowers Peterson—were reflected in Carl Van Vechten's fifth novel, *Nigger Heaven* (1926).

Anderson, a librarian, worked at several branches of the New York Public Library, notably as an assistant to Ernestine Rose at the 135th Street branch (renamed the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture). She felt that her career as a librarian was an opportunity to educate the community about its artists and the scope of its arts, and in that capacity she instituted a series of cultural events within the library system. These included Family Night, which was a setting for activities such as art exhibits and lectures (one of the guest speakers was Marcus Garvey). The cultural initiative also provided homes in the basement of the 135th Street Library for the Crigwa Theater (which moved to the parish house of Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church in 1931), the Harlem Suitcase Theater, and the Harlem Experimental Theater.

Anderson was a significant figure in theater in several ways. She helped Du Bois with the work of the Crigwa Theater (founded 1924–1925), later known as the Krigwa Theater or Krigwa Players. (Its original name was an acronym for Crisis Guild of Writers and Artists, after the official publication of the NAACP, *Crisis Magazine*.) When the Krigwa Players disbanded, Anderson and Dorothy Peterson founded the Negro Experimental Theater in 1929, on the same principle—as theater by, for, about, and near blacks. Their first production, in June 1929, was Georgia Douglas Johnson's *Plumes*. This group was later called the Harlem Experimental Theater, and Anderson served as its second executive director. She was also a playwright: The Harlem Experimental Theater produced her one-act dramas *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* (written under the pseudonym Ursula Trelling) and *Underground* (also pseudonymous) in 1931 and 1932, respectively. *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* was about a lynching coinciding with a church service and was profoundly influenced by the activist Ida B. Wells. The Harlem Experimental Theater was a factor in the decision of the Federal Theater to come to New York.

Biography

Regina M. Anderson Andrews was born on 21 May 1901, in Chicago, Illinois. Her parents were William Grant Anderson (an attorney in New York) and Margaret Simons Anderson. She was educated at Normal Training School, Hyde Park High School, Wilberforce University in Ohio, the University of Chicago, and City College of New York; she received a master of library science (M.L.S.) degree from Columbia University Library School. She married William T. Andrews (an attorney and assemblyman) in 1926; they had a daughter, also named Regina. In 1936, Anderson was the first African American to be appointed acting supervising librarian, at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. She was recognized for her contributions at the World's Fair of 1939 in New York. In 1947, she became the supervising librarian at the Washington Heights branch of the New York Public Library. She retired from the New York Public Library system in 1967. Anderson wrote a two-volume work (unpublished) about black New Yorkers, originally intended for "Harlem on My Mind," an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1968; and coedited *Chronology of African Americans in New York, 1621–1966* with Ethel Ray Nance. Anderson served as the second vice president of the National Council of Women, represented the National Urban League with the United States Commission for UNESCO, and worked with the State Commission for Human Rights. She was a recipient of the Musical Arts Group award, Community Heroine award, and Asia Foundation award. At the time of this writing, she was apparently still living, in upstate New York.

JULYA MIRRO

See also Barnett, Ida B. Wells; Civic Club Dinner, 1924; 580 Saint Nicholas Avenue; Johnson, Georgia Douglas; Krigwa Players; Nance, Ethel Ray; Negro Experimental Theater; Nigger Heaven; 135th Street Library; Peterson, Dorothy Randolph; Saint Philip's Protestant Episcopal Church; Salons; Van Vechten, Carl

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Anderson, Sherwood

Sherwood Anderson had an important role in the development of modern writing in the United States. His immense influence was based largely on a myth that developed around his life, on his extraordinary fourth book, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), and on several enduring short stories. At a time when the short story was a generally moribund form, Anderson revolutionized it by rejecting what he called the "poisoned plot"—the artificially pat narrative used by O. Henry—and turning it into a vehicle for a serious examination of American realities. Anderson was a tutor and mentor to Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, and he influenced the vision and style of such diverse writers as Jean Toomer, Thomas Wolfe, John Steinbeck, William Saroyan, and Henry Miller.

Two towns where Anderson's family lived—Camden and Clyde, Ohio—figured large in Anderson's imagination, providing him with themes and characters for his many novels and poems. Camden gave him images (largely invented) of preindustrial America: attractively human in its relations and proportions, a utopia that would be ravaged by capitalism. Clyde gave him a wealth of complex American characters who balanced repression and meanness with generosity and untrammeled imagination. Almost all of Anderson's writing was woven from this material.

Anderson, who became the president of a manufacturing company, was never happy with the moral and ethical compromises he had to make as a businessman; and on 28 November 28, 1912, the pressures of his life intensified. He walked out of his office in the middle of the morning and did not turn up until four days later, when he wandered into a drugstore in Cleveland, not knowing where he was. This episode became a legend in American literary history, a moment when an important writer turned his back on American materialism and worldly success and took up a quest for creative accomplishment.

Anderson eventually left his first wife and their children and started a new life in Chicago as a writer. What became known as the Chicago renaissance was then in full swing, and Anderson found himself in the company of important writers and publishers, who welcomed and encouraged him. Anderson immersed himself in the tumult of ideas circulating in bohemian Chicago, including current notions of socialism and psychoanalysis, as well as the writings of Gertrude Stein, who became a close friend, and James Joyce.

Anderson had already written three novels when his first story, "The Rabbit-Pen," was accepted for publication by *Harper's* in 1913. He published *Windy MacPherson's Son* in 1916 and *Marching Men* in 1917. He was forty-three years old in 1919 when his masterpiece, *Winesburg, Ohio*, was published by B. W. Huebsch and became an immediate critical success. In this work, Anderson pioneered a new form, the unified short-story collection, that later in the century represented a significant alternative to the traditional novel. The language of *Winesburg, Ohio*—inspired, according to Anderson, by Stein's *Tender Buttons*—is spare and direct; and the narrative is honest, provocative, and indefinite: Anderson represents with stark simplicity and power the alienation that pervaded life in small-town America when industrialization began. This work strongly influenced a generation of younger writers that included Hemingway (whom Anderson introduced to Stein and Faulkner, and whose first novel Anderson got published) and Toomer, among many others.

Over the next several years, Anderson, at the height of his powers and his reputation, published in quick succession *Poor White* (1920), the story collections *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) and *Horses and Men* (1923), *Many Marriages* (1923), the autobiographical *A Story Teller's Story* (1924), and *Dark Laughter* (1925).

With *Dark Laughter*, Anderson joined a few writers who were trying to cross the deeply entrenched color line in American culture, by drawing on and recounting the experience of African Americans. Given the political climate of the United States in the 1920s, his attempt was definitely progressive. However, it was hobbled because his treatment of African Americans never went beyond the symbolic. African Americans came to stand for all the vital impulses of the body that Anderson felt were stifled and repressed by American Protestantism. (In this regard his work was not unlike Ishmael Reed's representation of Jes' Grew and The Wallflower Order some fifty years later in *Mumbo Jumbo*, but without Reed's humor.) Ernest Hemingway parodied *Dark Laughter* in his own *Torrents of Spring* (1926), and Toni Morrison subjected both books to critical scrutiny in her essay "Whiteness and the Literary Imagination."

Sherwood Anderson, photographed by Carl Van Vechten in 1933. (Library of Congress.)

During his remaining years Anderson published some twenty books, but none of them matched the creative accomplishment of his earlier works.

Biography

Sherwood Anderson was born in Camden, Ohio, on 3 September 1876. His family moved to Clyde, Ohio, in 1883 after living briefly in Mansfield and Caledonia. Anderson's father, a harness maker, was never very well off. When his mother died in 1893, Anderson moved to Chicago and worked as an unskilled laborer. After serving in the Spanish-American War, he went back to school for a year, then got a job writing advertising copy in Chicago. In 1904 he married Cornelia Lane, the daughter of a successful businessman. After working his way up in several manufacturing companies, in 1906 he took over and became president of Anderson Manufacturing, later renamed American Merchants Company, in Elyria, Ohio. In 1916 he and his first wife (with whom he had three children) were divorced. He then married Tennessee Mitchell; in 1924 that marriage also ended in divorce—as did his third marriage, to Elizabeth Pral, in 1932. Anderson then traveled from Chicago to New York to Reno to New Orleans and eventually settled in Virginia. In 1933, he married Eleanor Copenhaver. In 1941, on a trip with his wife to South America, he died of peritonitis in Panama.

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See also Dark Laughter; Toomer, Jean

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Anglophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance

Anglophone Africa—which consisted of British colonies in western, eastern, and southern Africa; and the independent country of Liberia, founded by freed American slaves in 1847—occupied a central place in the discourse of the Harlem Renaissance. Like its counterpart, francophone Africa, anglophone Africa provided an imaginative resource that contributed to the cultural

and aesthetic base of the Harlem Renaissance. Also, one focus (if not a preoccupation) of the renaissance movement was racial origin and pride, and in this regard the idea of Africa represented many possibilities, of which anglophone Africa provided one. The Harlem Renaissance, for its part, provided anglophone Africa with avenues of self-expression to oppose British colonial rule, develop an agenda for self-rule, and intervene in discourses about a pan-African and pan-Negro philosophy and movement that promoted a unifying agenda for racial self-determination and political freedom. The themes of self-determination, self-assertion, and black pride that defined the Harlem Renaissance resonated favorably in anglophone Africa as it struggled against British colonization. The exchange of ideas about politics, culture, racial roots, and heritage defined the relationship between anglophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance and their opposition to colonial and racial suppression and domination. The English language, which provided a readily available means for intercultural and transatlantic communication, facilitated this connection between anglophone Africa and the Harlem movement.

In the consciousness of the Harlem Renaissance, anglophone Africa was a rallying point for envisioning racial equality and self-determination. In "The Negro Mind Reaches Out" in Alain Locke's *The New Negro* (1925), W. E. B. Du Bois drew attention to racial and political imbalances in anglophone Africa, with an emphasis on British colonial rule in west Africa (Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast, later Ghana), British East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan), and South Africa. He implied that there was a contradiction in Harlem's appropriation of the idea of Africa as a route to envisioning the New Negro while the African continent was subjected to colonial exploitation and domination. He highlighted Britain's brutal colonial policies, which he characterized as the "shadow of England"—policies that, for example, displaced Africans from their lands in Kenya and South Africa. Du Bois's essay, published in the representative text of the renaissance movement, explained that anglophone Africa was more than a geographical entity. Du Bois portrayed anglophone Africa as a culturally and economically diverse territory marked by economic exploitation, political subjugation, and racial oppression; the Harlem Renaissance addressed these issues in the United States and should also confront them in the wider context of the African diaspora. To do so, and to appeal to the mind of Harlem, Du Bois interpreted British colonial rule in anglophone Africa as fundamentally racist, with white British rulers and black African subjects. However, Du Bois was not alone in focusing on anglophone Africa as an aspect of the aesthetics of the Harlem Renaissance.

The magazines and newspapers of the Harlem Renaissance provided the best indicators of its interest in anglophone Africa. Publications such as books, edited volumes, and anthologies that dealt with topics ranging from folklore to the ancient and modern history of anglophone Africa were highlighted in reviews and articles in *Opportunity*, *The Crisis*, and Marcus Garvey's newspaper *Negro World*. Regular columns in *Opportunity* variously titled "Africana," "Africana and Exotica," and "Anthropology and Africana" listed books on anglophone Africa. Two columns that Du Bois wrote for *The Crisis*—"Opinion" and "The Looking Glass"—covered culture, politics, and aesthetics in anglophone Africa. Editorials, opinions, and letters to the editor in Garvey's *Negro World* promoted an agenda for anglophone Africa that insistently opposed British rule and affirmed African self-governance. At the time of the Harlem Renaissance, the International Institute of African Languages and Culture began to publish a journal in English, *Africa* (1928–1929), which offered scholarly and intellectual materials on Africa and anglophone Africa, and was therefore favorably reviewed in publications of the renaissance. In addition, reviews of texts on adventure, religion, geography, missionary activities, apartheid in South Africa, art in west Africa, and the "natives" and "primitives" of anglophone Africa appeared regularly in the newspapers and magazines of the renaissance.

For some anglophone Africans, Harlem's newspapers and magazines provided opportunities to question and oppose British colonial rule. Because of British censorship, newspapers in the colonies did not publish anticolonial writings. Not surprisingly, then, anglophone Africans in the colonies sent letters, opinion pieces, stories, and poems to publications in Harlem, calling for political self-representation and self-determination. Through their contributions, anglophone Africans shared in the aspirations of the Harlem Renaissance, which linked its ideology of racial equality in the United States to a call for the end of colonial rule in Africa. Harlem reciprocated not only by publishing the contributions of writers from anglophone Africa but also by espousing anticolonialism. Harlem's newspapers published profiles of various anglophone African countries, such as Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Kenya. Moreover, some of the major figures of the Harlem Renaissance—for example,

W. E. B. Du Bois and Langston Hughes—visited anglophone African countries, particularly in west Africa, and wrote about their experiences; these accounts were also published in the magazines and newspapers of the renaissance. Writers of the Harlem Renaissance also used anglophone Africa in their works, although their depictions were sometimes stereotyped. For example, Langston Hughes set the major action of his short story "Luani of the Jungle" in Lagos, Nigeria.

Literary works of anglophone Africans were also printed in publications of the Harlem Renaissance. For example, in 1922, *Negro World* published "The Sojourner," a poem by William Essuman Gwira (Kobina) Sekyi of the Gold Coast—a lawyer, nationalist, Africanist, and pan-Africanist. The anglophone African strain in the Harlem Renaissance was evident in *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets* (1927), edited by Countee Cullen. This anthology included poems by Gladys Casely Hayford (1904–1950), west Africa's first modern female poet. *The Messenger* and *Opportunity* also published poems by Hayford. Her poetry captured the cultural and aesthetic mood of the Harlem Renaissance, and in particular the discourse on racial uplift through celebrating and affirming Africa and black beauty, praising individuality, and debunking Western myths and stereotypes of Africans.

In her biographical entry for *Caroling Dusk*, Hayford said that she was born in Axim, Gold Coast (Ghana), and that her parents were Ephraim Joseph Casely Hayford (1866–1930), a Ghanaian; and Adelaide Smith Casely Hayford (1868–1960), a Sierra Leonean. Hayford's parents were prominent in the culture and politics of west Africa and had contacts with important figures of the Harlem Renaissance; Du Bois stayed in the Hayfords' home when he visited Freetown in 1924. Hayford's mother visited Harlem twice—in 1920 and in 1927—to raise money for a vocational school in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and during these visits she promoted African culture among African Americans. On her first visit, the *Crisis* of 20 August 1920 informed its readers in Harlem that Mrs. Casely Hayford was the "first West African woman to lecture in America" (169). With her niece, a Miss Easmon, she contributed to the production and performance of a pageant, *Asheeko* (1922), about the contributions of African Americans to the greatness of America. As a political activist, she was one of the black women (the only African) in Harlem who organized to raise funds for the fourth Pan-African Congress, held in New York in August 1927. The African countries represented at this congress, drawn primarily from anglophone west Africa, were Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Liberia.

Gladys Casely Hayford's father, Joseph Casely Hayford, was a prominent politician in the Gold Coast; because of his anticolonial, nationalist, and pan-Africanist views, he had contacts with significant figures of the Harlem Renaissance, such as Du Bois and Marcus Garvey. In 1920, he founded the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), the first political movement in colonial west Africa, which comprised the British colonies of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and the republic of Liberia. The main goal of NCBWA was the liberation of anglophone west Africa from British colonial rule; thus the organization was a natural ally of the anticolonialists of the Harlem Renaissance. Du Bois and Garvey saw NCBWA in west Africa and the pan-African and pan-Negro movements in Harlem as part of a global effort by black people to unify Africa and the African diaspora in the struggle against racial and colonial domination.

Politics was no doubt the most significant aspect of the relationship between the Harlem Renaissance and anglophone Africa. The political vision of self-determination and self-governance, articulated in the aesthetics of Harlem and transformed into political capital by Du Bois and Garvey, became very influential in anglophone Africa. Du Bois's pan-African movement was initiated at about the time—the 1920s—when modern political consciousness and nationalism were taking shape in anglophone west Africa (as is evident in the formation of NCBWA); and Garvey's vision and ideology of black empowerment were defined by his call "Africa for Africans."

From Harlem, Garvey transformed his United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) into an anticolonial movement, demanding that whites leave Africa; this position appealed to anglophone Africans under colonial rule. In 1922, Garvey told the British government that UNIA stood for the liberation of African colonies, particularly the British colonies of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and southwestern and east Africa. In the 1920s, branches of UNIA were established in anglophone west Africa, although the British colonial governments disapproved of UNIA and monitored its activities in the region. In 1924, Garvey negotiated with Liberia for an immigrant settlement by UNIA in southern Liberia; but this attempt was thwarted by the English and French, who feared anticolonial Garveyite ideas in Africa, especially near their colonies. Garvey's anticolonial *Negro World*

was very popular in anglophone Africa; the British considered it seditious, disloyal, and a threat to their interests in Africa, and therefore banned it in most of their African colonies. But despite government regulations and monitoring, *Negro World* was being received by African nationalists in South Africa as late as 1933. Garvey's political and anticolonial philosophy had an especially strong influence on anglophone west African political consciousness during its formative period, the 1920s. NCBWA, in defining its anticolonial position, incorporated Garvey's ideas on African and racial self-determination. On the eve of Ghana's independence, Kwame Nkrumah expressed his allegiance to Garvey's philosophy; and in his autobiography, he noted that as he formed his political ideas, he was influenced by Garvey's *Philosophy and Opinions*. Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of the Mau Mau and later president of Kenya, described

> how in 1921 Kenyan nationalists, unable to read, would gather round a reader of Garvey's paper the *Negro World*, and listen to an article two or three times. Then they would run various ways through the forest, carefully to repeat the whole, which they had memorized, to Africans hungry for some doctrine which lifted them from their servile consciousness in which Africans lived. (James 1963, 397)

Garvey's wife recounted how the king of Swaziland had stated that the only two black men he was aware of in the Western world were the boxing champion Jack Johnson and Marcus Garvey.

Music was another link between anglophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance, and in this regard, the music of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) was particularly significant. Coleridge-Taylor, who was born to a British mother and a Sierra Leonean father, was a famous composer of choral music, including *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* (1897); Du Bois, in *Darkwater*, eulogized him as the "immortal child." In his work, Coleridge-Taylor expressed his African and black identity, a theme many Harlem Renaissance musicians would later incorporate into their own compositions. He based some of his compositions on African and African American subjects and melodies. His *African Romances* (1897) and *African Suite* (1898) reflected his African heritage; *Sorrow Songs* (1904) and *Six Negro Melodies* (1905) drew on both African and African American song traditions. Coleridge-Taylor wanted to reclaim black identity—and even more, the dignity of the black man—through music; and he inspired African American composers of the period leading to and including the Harlem Renaissance who used their music to inquire into their cultural roots and heritage. He directly influenced composers of the Harlem Renaissance such as Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949) and, especially, Clarence Cameron White (1880–1960).

Anglophone Africa and Harlem shared a vision that was anticolonial and antiracist. The Harlem Renaissance contributed significantly to the development of political consciousness and activism in anglophone Africa, either through pan-Africanism and pan-Negroism, which provided political capital for self-empowerment and opportunities for addressing oppression and subjugation; or through art, which provided aesthetic capital for transatlantic contacts and cultural awareness. For its part, anglophone Africa became one of the many regions in Africa that the Harlem Renaissance used to conceptualize the meaning of heritage, roots, and history and to articulate racial pride. It should be noted, though, that the discourse of the Harlem Renaissance occasionally reproduced uncritically the stereotypical rhetoric about anglophone Africa that was part of the colonial representation of Africa as a whole.

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See also Burleigh, Harry Thacker; Crisis, The; Cullen, Countee; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Francophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance; Garvey, Marcus; Hughes, Langston; Messenger, The; Negro World; Opportunity; Pan-African Congresses; Pan-Africanism; United Negro Improvement Association; White, Clarence Cameron

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Anglophone Caribbean and the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance and the anglophone Caribbean presence in the United States are intimately and inextricably bound together. Claude McKay, Eric Walrond, Marcus Garvey, Hubert Harrison, Cyril Briggs, Amy Jacques Garvey, Wilfred A. Domingo, and Joel A. Rogers are only a few of the better-known Caribbean immigrants who were closely associated with the renaissance, which was as much a political as a cultural movement.

Caribbeans (especially those from English-speaking territories) distinguished themselves during the Harlem Renaissance as writers, editors, publishers of newspapers and magazines, organizers of political and cultural forums, street-corner orators, founders of dissenting political movements, and raisers of political consciousness. Their contribution is all the more remarkable when one considers that during this period, the foreign-born component never exceeded 1 percent of the black population in the United States. And were we to include those of Caribbean descent born in the United States, other notable figures of the period would be among them, such as W. E. B. Du Bois (whose father was born in Haiti but had roots in the Bahamas), James Weldon Johnson (whose mother was Bahamian), William Stanley Braithwaite (whose father was from British Guiana), and Grace Campbell (whose father was Jamaican)—all of whom expressed pride in their Caribbean background.

McKay’s role as poet and novelist was pivotal in the renaissance. Eric Walrond’s collection of short stories *Tropic Death* (1926) was an artistic triumph; but perhaps because the stories are set in the Caribbean and Central America and because the author was a pioneer in using regional creole languages for artistic expression, *Tropic Death* is less known and less appreciated in the United States than in Caribbean literary history and criticism. Although Walrond also wrote short stories set in the United States, he is recognized there more as a journalist and editor. Between 1921 and 1923, he served as associate editor of *Negro World*, the organ of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) founded and led by Marcus Garvey. Two years after his break with Garvey, Walrond was the business manager and contributing editor for *Opportunity*, founded and edited by Charles Johnson under the auspices of the National Urban League. In all his writings—short stories, book reviews, essays—Walrond revealed himself as a master prose stylist and a serious thinker. Wallace Thurman, the enfant terrible of the Harlem Renaissance and the most unsparing critic of his contemporaries (and himself), showered Walrond with praise. Of the renaissance writers, observed Thurman, “None is more ambitious than he, none more possessed of keener observation, poetic

insight or intelligence. There is no place in his consciousness for sentimentality, hypocrisy or clichés. His prose demonstrates his struggles to escape from conventionalities and become an individual talent." Thurman, however, felt that Walrond's talents were not fully realized, even in *Tropic Death*. He hoped that Walrond's promised novel on the Panama Canal, "The Big Ditch," which Walrond had received a Guggenheim fellowship to write, would prove an even greater triumph. But Walrond left for Britain in 1928 and never returned to the United States; he worked with the exiled Marcus Garvey in London on the latter's journal, *Black Man*, but the "The Big Ditch" was never finished. Resident mainly in Britain, Walrond traveled widely in Europe, despite failing health. He collapsed and died of a heart attack, his fifth, on a London street in 1966.

Caribbeans not only founded but also edited radical journals and newspapers such as *Voice*, *Crusader*, *Negro World*, *Promoter*, *Emancipator*, and *New Negro*. Hubert Harrison, an immigrant from the Virgin Islands, was a pioneer in this area of New Negro radical journalism; A. Philip Randolph called him the "father of Harlem radicalism." Harrison, a legendary orator, created *Voice*, the first journal of its type, in 1917. Two years later he brought out a short-lived magazine, *New Negro*, and before his own sudden death (from a ruptured appendix) in 1927 he had founded another journal, *Voice of the Negro*. Ephemeral though Harrison's magazines and journals were, his writings and example had a vast influence on the journalism of the time. Hodge Kirnon, in his obituary of Harrison, noted that *Voice* "really crystallized the radicalism of the Negro in New York and its environs." Kirnon, an immigrant from Saint Kitts, would draw on Harrison's example in founding his own magazine, *Promoter*.

Another Caribbean immigrant, Cyril Briggs, founded the magazine *Crusader* in 1918; it was the organ of the African Blood Brotherhood, which Briggs organized and led, between 1919 and 1923. W. A. Domingo (from Jamaica) and Richard B. Moore (from Barbados), two black socialists, founded *Emancipator* in 1920 mainly as a challenge to Garvey's movement. But *Emancipator*, although it had some influence over the black movement, especially through a famous exposé of the finances of Garvey's shipping company, the Black Star Line, was no match for UNIA; and unlike its black nationalist rival, *Negro World*, it lasted for only a few months.

Negro World, founded in 1918, was by far the most influential of these organs. During Garvey's tenure, each issue carried on the front page an editorial by him addressed to the "Negroes of the World"; this newspaper would outlast Garvey's departure in the late 1920s, although it died slowly as UNIA imploded and disintegrated in the 1930s. During its heyday, *Negro World* attracted the writing of some of the most talented figures of the Harlem Renaissance: Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, J. A. Rogers, Arturo Schomburg, Walrond, and others. Distinguished African American intellectuals such as T. Thomas Fortune, a firebrand from the 1880s; William Ferris, a graduate of Yale; and John Edward Bruce, the venerable black nationalist, served as editors on *Negro World* during the 1920s; and it was in the pages of *Negro World* that Hubert Harrison, who was its managing editor and later a contributing editor between 1920 and 1922, reached his widest audience. Harrison revamped *Negro World*, included more book reviews, and regularly ran "Poetry for the People," a forum, often filling an entire page, that carried a wide variety of poems by ordinary black people in the United States and around the world. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of *Negro World* was "Our Women and What They Think," a deliberately unorthodox women's page, edited by Amy Jacques Garvey (a Jamaican immigrant, Garvey's second wife), which ran in 1924–1927. Amy Jacques, who combined militant black nationalism and feminism, won the admiration of black women within and outside UNIA and alienated some of its more conventional male leaders; the movement killed her column in 1927.

Apart from their involvement in publications owned and run by Caribbeans, the immigrants made significant contribution to others. Domingo was Garvey's first editor of *Negro World* but was fired by Garvey in 1919 for his socialist writing and immediately became a contributing editor for the *Messenger* magazine, edited and run by the African American socialists A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen. Claude McKay returned from a yearlong sojourn in Britain in 1921 and became associate editor of the influential revolutionary socialist magazine *Liberator*, edited by Max Eastman. Rogers, Walrond, McKay, and especially Harrison contributed to a wide range of mainstream and black periodicals during the 1920s. Additionally, several of these Caribbean writers contributed to major anthologies. Alain Locke's influential *New Negro* (1925) included the work of McKay, Walrond, Rogers, and Domingo; V. F. Calverton's *Anthology of American Negro Literature* (1929) included McKay (poetry and prose) and Walrond. McKay's poems appeared in all of the anthologies of black poetry published in the

1920s: James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1922); Robert Thomas Kerlin, *Negro Poets and Their Poems* (1923); Countee Cullen, *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets* (1927); and Alain Locke, *Four Negro Poets* (1927).

McKay and Walrond were among the immigrants who published volumes of their own work. The prolific McKay produced two highly influential and acclaimed volumes of poetry—*Spring in New Hampshire and Other Poems* (1920) and *Harlem Shadows* (1922)—and two pioneering and controversial novels: *Home to Harlem* (1928) and *Banjo* (1929). Hubert Harrison published two remarkable and influential collections of his essays: *The Negro and the Nation* (1917) and *When Africa Awakes: The "Inside Story" of the Stirrings and Strivings of the New Negro in the Western World* (1920). J. A. Rogers published several antiracist books before publishing, in 1931, the antiracist classic *World's Great Men of African Descent* (later revised as *World's Great Men of Color*). His most influential work in the 1920s was *From "Superman" to Man*, a Socratic dialogue in the form of a novel that first appeared in 1917 and was reprinted several times during the next decade. This book was acclaimed by all of the factions engaged in the black struggle, a rare accolade; UNIA made it required reading for members; and Du Bois wrote: "The person who wants in small compass, in good English and an attractive form, the arguments for the present Negro position should buy and read and recommend to his friends" Rogers's book. Hubert Harrison, who dished out praise sparingly, described *From "Superman" to Man* as the "greatest book ever written in English on the Negro by a Negro."

The great comedian Bert Williams (from Antigua) was a pioneer of black theater and helped open up Broadway to blacks. Williams received both praise and criticism. Theophilus Lewis, the theater critic for *Messenger*, averred that Williams "rendered a disservice to black people" by encouraging Broadway not to "countenance the Negro in serious, dignified, classical drama." Walrond, writing in *Negro World*, disagreed. He held that Williams had made it possible for black shows such as *Shuffle Along* to be staged on Broadway and also had been "directly responsible" for bringing to Broadway more serious dramas, such as *The Emperor Jones*: "There is no doubt about it—Bert Williams will go down in history alongside the great artists of the theatre of all time. To us, to whom he meant so much as an ambassador across the border of color, his memory will grow richer and more glorious as time goes on."

Much of the literature on the Harlem Renaissance focuses on the role of white patrons. Consequently, the role of the only notable black patron—Casper Holstein, born in the Virgin Islands—is often overlooked. Holstein made his money as a "numbers king" in Harlem; he was the most successful and most honest pracitioner of this gambling game (unlike many others, he paid out when bettors won), and by far the most generous. Beginning in 1925, Holstein put up the prize money for *Opportunity*'s annual contest for Negro writers (which extended to composers of music as well). In 1926, this amounted to more than $1,000—a not inconsiderable sum. Holstein explained that he had always been a "firm and enthusiastic believer in the creative genius of the Negro race, to which I humbly belong." He congratulated *Opportunity* for organizing the contest, which he believed would "go far towards consolidating the interests of and bridging the gap" between black and white people in the United States. The contest, he wrote, "will encourage among our gifted youth the ambition to scale the empyrean heights of art and literature." Holstein also made individual gifts to needy young artists. Eric Walrond was one of his beneficiaries and dedicated *Tropic Death* to him. Another was Holstein's compatriot Hubert Harrison, who endured a mainly hand-to-mouth existence; Holstein also paid for Harrison's funeral. When Garvey's Liberty Hall was threatened with repossession, Holstein came to the rescue. From his associations, it is discernible that Holstein was not a conservative, despite his success in business. He had time and money for some of Harlem's most radical citizens, and he spoke out in uncompromising terms against American rule in his native Virgin Islands (purchased by the United States from Denmark in 1917), publishing articles on the subject in *Opportunity* and *Negro World*. Through his various efforts, Holstein contributed to the artistic and political culture of the Harlem Renaissance.

Caribbean immigrants also distinguished themselves as some of Harlem's and Afro-America's most accomplished orators. Harrison was by far the most erudite and experienced, but Garvey was more popular as a platform speaker. Richard B. Moore quickly earned a reputation as a great orator—passionate, eloquent, and informed—surpassed only by his elders Garvey and Harrison at their best. In the 1920s and 1930s, Moore's oratorical talents would be exploited to good effect by the Communist Party, which he had joined by 1923. J. Edgar Hoover's spies from the Justice Department were not only alarmed but also impressed by these men's eloquence, force, and impact as orators.

Men dominated the speakers' platforms in Harlem, on the street corners as well as indoors, but women were by no means absent. An African American, Henrietta Vinton Davis, the highest-ranking woman in UNIA, was among the very best orators of either sex. The fact that she had a successful stage career before devoting herself full time to Garvey's movement probably contributed to her effectiveness on the podium at Liberty Hall. Amy Jacques Garvey was a highly effective and popular public speaker, although she seldom spoke, preferring to devote her time to writing. Among the black socialists, Elizabeth Hendrickson, a Virgin Islander, was also considered among the best by her contemporaries.

But it was in radical politics, both black nationalist and socialist, that the Caribbean presence was most conspicuous during the Harlem Renaissance. Hubert Harrison once again stands out as a pioneer; amazingly, he won black converts to both revolutionary socialism and black nationalism. This apparent paradox is explained by the fact that Harrison was a member of the Socialist Party between 1909 and 1914 and subsequently moved toward black nationalism but never abandoned his deeply ingrained Marxism. Harrison left the Socialist Party because of the racism he encountered within it, even among its leaders. He felt that the party preached "class first" but practiced "race first," discriminating against the black working class, especially in the South; and that so as not to offend its southern white working-class members, the party had compromised its principles and succumbed to what he called "southernism"—the trumping of working-class solidarity by white supremacy. Harrison was suspended by the party in 1914 and subsequently resigned. (He apparently rejoined in 1918 but left again soon thereafter, never to return.) He insisted that because white socialists, except for the Industrial Workers of the World, practiced "race first and class after," African Americans should also practice "race first," if only in self-defense. To forward this ideology, Harrison formed the Liberty League of Negro-Americans in the summer of 1917. As Harrison put it, this league was part of Afro-America's "bold bid for some of that democracy for which their government [had] gone to war."

Moore, Domingo, McKay, and Frank Crosswaith first encountered Harrison during his socialist phase and were deeply affected by him. A. Philip Randolph recalled that when he and Chandler Owen encountered Harrison, they explained to him: "We want to develop a street forum comparable to yours. We don't plan to have any competition, but we want to extend your work, what you're doing." The extension of Harrison's work would go beyond the street forum into the publication of *Messenger*, and by 1926 Randolph would also embark directly on the organization of the black working class in the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, in which Caribbean immigrants such as Ashley Totten, Thomas Patterson, and Frank Crosswaith would play leading roles.

When Garvey arrived in the United States in 1916, Harrison (then in his black nationalist phase) was the first to offer him a public platform in Harlem. Harrison would later work with Garvey, especially on *Negro World*, but apparently never joined UNIA. It was from Harrison that Garvey borrowed the slogan "race first," and much else. Garvey developed the largest black organization the world had ever known and mobilized ordinary African Americans to an unprecedented degree, especially in the South. The leadership of UNIA in the United States and abroad was disproportionately of anglophone Caribbean origin (Vincent, 1970)—as was Cyril Briggs's African Blood Brotherhood (ABB). ABB, founded in Harlem in 1919, began as a classical black nationalist organization. But its leaders, increasingly attracted by the anti-imperialism and antiracism of the Russian revolution and the Communist International, dissolved the organization and joined forces with the Communist Party of the United States in 1923.

At both the cultural and political levels, anglophone Caribbeans played a disproportionate role during the Harlem Renaissance. The reason for this is complex, but we can briefly outline some of its key components.

Approximately 143,000 black people immigrated to the United States between 1899 and 1932. About 80 percent of these came from the Caribbean. Although they made up less than 1 percent of the black population in the United States, Caribbean immigrants and people of Caribbean descent constituted 20 to 25 percent of the black population in Harlem during the 1920s. Thus their weight was far greater, and they were more conspicuous, in Harlem and New York City than nationally.

Far more than their African American counterparts in Harlem and elsewhere, Caribbean immigrants, especially those who came to New York, had a high level of literacy and professional training. These black immigrants were far more literate than European immigrants entering the United States at the time, and they were also more literate and generally better-educated than

the native-born white population. Some, such as McKay, Walrond, and Garvey, had begun their literary and journalistic careers before emigrating to the United States. By the time McKay left Jamaica, he was a well-known literary figure who was widely published in newspapers there and abroad and had written two highly acclaimed volumes of poetry. Walrond had started out as a journalist in Panama, where he grew up; Garvey had started in this field during his stay in Costa Rica and London, and then in Jamaica, before he came to the United States.

In the British Caribbean, the population was overwhelmingly black, and immigrants who came from there to the United States found it difficult to adjust to a minority status, or to being maligned, persecuted, and considered pariahs. McKay's reaction was typical: "It was the first time I had ever come face to face with such manifest and implacable hate of my race, and my feelings were indescribable. . . . I had heard of prejudice in America but never dreamed of it being so intensely bitter." When Hugh Mulzac first came to the United States, he was barred from entering a church because of his color; he quickly concluded of white America: "These people are not Christians, but savages!" Shock and frustrated hopes (especially among the most highly educated) contributed to Caribbean immigrants' radicalization and their disproportionate involvement in dissident political projects. McKay, in particular, would express bitterness and anger in his literary work and his politics. Moreover, the immigrants' shock and outrage were exacerbated by certain entrenched features of American society at the time they arrived, particularly Jim Crow (which was official in the South and unofficial in the North) and lynching.

The extensive travel and international experience of many of these migrants contributed significantly to the pan-Africanist and race-conscious thrust of the Harlem Renaissance. Contemporary commentators, black and white, attributed this internationalist dimension of the movement largely to the Caribbeans. Garvey, in particular, movingly recalled his travels to and experiences in Central America, Europe, and Jamaica, where he found that blackness was "the same stumbling block." He asked himself: "Where is the black man's Government? Where is his King and his kingdom? Where is his President, and his ambassador, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs?" He could not find them, and vowed: "I will help to make them."

Relations between Afro-Caribbeans and Afro-Americans were by no means untroubled. Ethnic epithets such as "monkey chaser" and "coon" were not unknown. Wallace Thurman, McKay, and especially Rudolph Fisher scrutinized this tension in their fiction and elsewhere, making intraracial interactions a subject of the literature that emerged during the Harlem Renaissance. The moment of greatest tension was during the "Garvey must go" campaign of 1922–1923. But the historical literature on the relations between these two parts of the African diaspora in Harlem have tended to overstate ethnic conflict and understate the remarkable level of collaboration and cooperation between them. Afro-Americans and Afro-Caribbeans married one another; shared their culture (including cuisine, music, and sartorial tastes); learned to live with one another in a very densely populated place; and joined forces, fighting shoulder to shoulder, in political movements against racism and class oppression. The tension that did exist was largely confined to the petit bourgeois and professionals of both groups, and this tension abated significantly during the Depression, which was a calamity shared by Caribbeans and African Americans alike and brought the exuberance of the Harlem Renaissance to a sudden end.

The Caribbean legacy of the Harlem Renaissance in the arts and politics would continue in subsequent generations: Paule Marshall, Shirley Chisholm, Kenneth Clark, Malcolm X, Louis Farrakhan, Harry Belafonte, St. Clair Drake, Lani Guinier, and Constance Motley Baker are some of the direct descendants of those who arrived and settled during the renaissance. In their work and contribution to the black struggle and the life of the republic generally, one discerns the continuation of a tradition.

WINSTON JAMES

See also African Blood Brotherhood; Briggs, Cyril; Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Calverton, V. F.; Domingo, Wilfred Adolphus; Emancipator; Garvey, Marcus; Harrison, Hubert; Holstein, Casper; Liberator, The; McKay, Claude; Messenger, The; Moore, Richard B.; Negro World; Numbers Racket; Opportunity; Rogers, Joel Augustus; Thurman, Wallace; Tropic Death; Walrond, Eric; *other specific individuals*

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Anita Bush Theater Company

The Anita Bush Theater Company—also known as the Anita Bush All-Colored Dramatic Stock Company and the Anita Bush Players and eventually renamed the Lafayette Players Stock Company—developed during the period 1910–1917, when Negroes were exiled from the downtown theaters of New York, as a setting in which black performers played to almost exclusively black audiences. This atmosphere offered a new freedom from the constraints of performing to white or predominantly white audiences. The performers in Bush's company came from the days of shows by Isham, Williams and Walker, and Cole and Johnson; they included Anita Bush, Ida Anderson, Andrew Bishop, Laura Bowman, Tom Brown, Jack Carter, Inez Clough, A. B. Comathiere, Cleo Desmond, Evelyn Ellis, Charles Gilpin, Lottie Grady, Sidney Kirkpatrick, Abbie Mitchell, Lionel Monagas, Charles Moore, Clarence Muse, Charles Olden, Susie Sutton, Edna Thomas, Walter Thompson, "Babe" Townsend, and Frank Wilson.

Anita Bush (1883–1974), a pioneer in black theater, founded her company in 1912, after an injury forced her to stop performing as a dancer. The Anita Bush Players toured the vaudeville circuit, presenting dramatic sketches based on life in the Old West and staged plays at the Lincoln Theater at 135th Street and Lenox Avenue until the company moved to the Lafayette Theater. Bush had taken her idea for a new stock company to Eugene "Frenchy" Elmore, assistant manager of the Lincoln Theater, which was newly renovated but was experiencing an economic slump. Elmore quickly signed a contract with Bush, who assured him that the company would be ready to perform in two weeks. Bush also persuaded Billie Burke, a white male director-playwright, to direct the group in his comedy *The Girl at the Fort*. The Anita Bush Players opened in this play at the Lincoln Theater on 19 November 1915, with Charles Gilpin as the leading man and Dooley Wilson in a supporting role. For the next six weeks, the company presented different plays at two-week intervals. However, Elmore left to take a position at the rival Lafayette Theater, and Maria C. Downs, who then managed the Lincoln, demanded

that Bush change the name of the company to the Lincoln Players. Bush refused and, with the help of the drama critic Lester A. Walton, moved to the Lafayette, at 132nd Street and Seventh Avenue.

The company, still bearing Bush's name, opened at the Lafayette on 27 December 1915 in *Across the Footlights* and for a while presented short plays each week. Many of the presentations were adaptations of Broadway melodramas and old favorites such as *The Gambler's Sweetheart* (adapted from *The Girl of the Golden West*); the company also produced a version of Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon*.

By March 1916, as a result of financial difficulties, Bush sold the company, and with her consent its name was changed to the Lafayette Players Stock Company. She remained with the company until 1920, establishing new groups of Lafayette Players at other theaters on the touring circuit. By 1917, there were four troupes of Lafayette Players.

Felecia Piggott-McMillan

See also Bush, Anita; Clough, Inez; Ellis, Evelyn; Gilpin, Charles; Kirkpatrick, Sidney; Lafayette Players; Lafayette Theater; Lincoln Theater; Mitchell, Abbie; Muse, Clarence; Thomas, Edna Lewis; Walton, Lester; Wilson, Arthur "Dooley" Wilson, Frank

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Antilynching Crusade

The crusade to end lynching in the United States began in the final decade of the nineteenth century and continued relatively unabated until the middle of the twentieth. During that time, organizations such as the Council on International Cooperation (CIC), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), National Association of Colored Women (NACW), United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), National Citizens Rights Association (NCRA), National Equal Rights League (NERL), and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) worked toward the eradication of lynching through programs of education, investigation, and publicity and through advocacy for a federal antilynching statute. Sometimes these groups cooperated in their efforts to end lynching, but more often than not, they found themselves at odds with each other over the best means to apply. While activists such as Ida B. Wells Barnett and organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL) fought valiantly for the enactment of federal antilynching legislation, they were never successful. The antilynching crusade nevertheless paved the way for the equal rights movement that followed, and it helped establish the NAACP as a national force to be reckoned with in the pursuit of political and social justice. Accompanying these efforts to eradicate lynching was the work of writers of the Harlem Renaissance, who dramatized the horrors of lynching in their poetry and prose and united to form the Writers' League against Lynching in 1933.

Between 1892 and 1940, there were approximately 3,000 lynchings in the United States; of those lynched, more than 2,600 were African American. This remarkable number and the terrible violence that characterized the lynchings compelled Ida B. Wells Barnett, among others, to organize in resistance. Wells Barnett eloquently challenged the most prominent myth about lynching—that most lynchings were justified as a response to the rape of white women by black men—by investigating lynchings throughout the South. In *A Red Record* (1895), she published her findings: that rape was seldom the charge for which black men were lynched and that the numerous lynchings of African American women directly challenged the connection between rape and lynching. Wells Barnett argued that lynching was more accurately described as a mechanism for depriving African Americans of their constitutional rights. This text—by debunking the myths that were used to justify lynchings, by publicizing the number and violent nature of lynchings, and by seeking to create economic disincentives for southern jurisdictions that were permissive regarding

"lynch rule"—set a precedent for subsequent antilynching campaigns (Brown 2000).

When the NAACP was founded in 1909, a vigorous antilynching effort was already under way. However, two of the NAACP's leaders—James Weldon Johnson and, later, Walter White, whose *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch* (1929) remains an indispensable account—made lynching a primary focus of the organization. Using many of the techniques pioneered by Wells Barnett, the NAACP made its campaign against lynching the basis for numerous fund-raising activities, lobbied for federal antilynching legislation, and used its new prominence in the antilynching effort to draw attention to other racial inequalities. The NAACP hired Johnson in 1916, and by 1918 he had helped launch a five-year, high-priority attack on lynching. This undertaking included conferences, letter-writing campaigns, and countless editorials in the organization's newspaper, *The Crisis*; but the most visible effort was support of the Dyer bill, antilynching legislation introduced by Leonidas Dyer (Republican, Missouri) in April 1918. Although the Dyer bill and others like it—including the Costigan-Wagner bill of 1937—would pass the House of Representatives, no federal antilynching bill ever received the approval of the Senate. Between 1918 and 1923, and again between 1933 and 1937, a large proportion of the NAACP's operating budget and organizational efforts was directed toward the crusade to end lynching (Zangrando 1980).

Other organizations, some occasionally affiliated with the NAACP, worked hard to eradicate lynching. In 1922 the NAACP supported the creation of the Anti-Lynching Crusaders, a group headed by Mary Talbert (of the NACW) and dedicated to raising $1 million from one million members to combat lynching. Although they never reached this goal, the Anti-Lynching Crusaders did raise nearly $70,000. The ASWPL, founded in 1930 by Jessie Daniel Ames, attempted to combat lynching through investigations and publicity, and by seeking pledges from southern law enforcement officials to work against lynching. Despite their shared goal, the ASWPL and the NAACP were frequently at odds because the ASWPL was segregated and did not support federal antilynching legislation. In 1937, the NAACP's field secretary Daisy Lampkin oversaw a "Stop Lynching" button campaign that raised awareness and nearly $10,000.

In addition to these organized endeavors to end lynching through direct political action, there were numerous literary attacks. James Weldon Johnson not only addressed lynching in his official duties for the NAACP but also vividly described the effects of lynching in his *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. Other literary responses came from figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois (in his work for *The Crisis*), Jean Toomer (the poems "Blood-Burning Moon" and "Portrait in Georgia" in *Cane*), Claude McKay (the poems "If We Must Die" and "The Lynching"), Georgia Douglas Johnson, Angelina Weld Grimké, and others. Nella Larsen, Jessie Fauset, Mary White Ovington, Dorothy Parker, Sinclair Lewis, and Upton Sinclair were among the members of the Writers' League against Lynching.

Although its inability to get federal legislation enacted was an important factor in its demise, the antilynching crusade had lost momentum for other reasons as well: a general decrease in lynchings during the period of World War II; widespread interest in atrocities abroad, rather than at home; and the NAACP's shift in focus to more pressing matters—notably, segregation in the armed forces, housing, and the workplace. Despite the explicit failure of many of the antilynching crusaders, their work drew attention to the horrors of lynching, gained recognition for the NAACP, and laid the groundwork for other efforts on behalf of equal rights.

MATTHEW R. DAVIS

See also Barnett, Ida B. Wells; Johnson, James Weldon; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Talbert, Mary Burnett; White, Walter

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Apollo Theater

When the building that would become the famous Apollo Theater was erected in 1913, at 253 West 125th Street, it was an Irish music hall. By 1919 it became Hurtig and Seamon's Burlesque Theater, featuring white female performers, most notably Fanny Brice. Few African Americans were allowed to perform there, and the few black members of the audience had to sit in the balcony, which was poorly lit and often dirty. Another, much smaller burlesque theater, the Apollo, named for the Greek god of music and poetry, was also situated on 125th Street. Both theaters were shut in 1932 when Fiorello La Guardia, who was then a congressman, ordered all burlesque theaters to close. In 1934, Sidney Cohen bought the Hurtig building specifically to provide live entertainment by African Americans for African Americans in Harlem. He was the first to do anything like this on 125th Street, which was still catering to whites and still segregated. Cohen appropriated the name of the earlier small Apollo for the Hurtig building, naming his new venture the 125th Street Apollo Theater. It came to be known simply as the Apollo, and from 1934 to the present, it has been a center of African American entertainment.

Cohen's Apollo was newly decorated and had high-fidelity RCA sound equipment—an innovative system also used at Radio City Music Hall. The first show at the Apollo, *Jazz à la Carte*, opened in 1934 and was very successful. However, neither this show nor the regular appearance of talented performers such as Bessie Smith persuaded Harlem's residents to come to 125th Street, which remained segregated. In an effort to attract larger audiences, Ralph Cooper suggested that the Apollo host weekly amateur nights. Accordingly, in 1935, when the Apollo was on the verge of bankruptcy, the first amateur night took place, with Cooper as the master of ceremonies.

Ralph Cooper's Harlem Amateur Night, as it was called, was intended not only as entertainment but also to provide an opportunity for talented residents of Harlem. However, Cooper knew that he had to find some way to handle the less talented entrants. He enlisted the aid of Norman Miller, a comic stagehand, to appear in eccentric costumes and gently and humorously usher the losing contestants offstage. Cooper made it clear that Amateur Night was not meant to denigrate any of the contestants or to hurt their feelings. Miller's job, then, was to make sure that everyone, including the losers, had a good time. Amateur Night quickly became a Harlem institution, just as well-known for its rowdy, booing crowds and its dancing clown as it was for the talent that graced the stage. That talent was often impressive: Early winners of amateur nights included Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, and Pearl Bailey.

An interesting tradition of the amateur nights had to do with the Tree of Hope. Nearly since the beginning of these events, each amateur performer touched a special piece of wood before going onstage. This chunk of wood had been taken from the Tree of Hope, a legendary shade tree behind the Lafayette Theater and Connie's Inn. The tree had been an informal meeting place for people in show business, where Harlem's stars told anecdotes about themselves and their tours and aspiring performers listened and dreamed. When Seventh Avenue was expanded around 1935, the Tree of Hope was cut down; but Ralph Cooper took a piece of the tree as a souvenir, had a set designer at the Apollo shellac it and mount it on an Ionic column, and placed it onstage where the audience and performers could see it, as a symbol of show business in Harlem. Contestants in the amateur nights began touching it for good luck, creating a new custom at the Apollo.

The Apollo's earliest competitor was the Lafayette Theater, owned by Leo Brecher and managed by Frank Schiffman. Later it became the Harlem Opera House, still owned by Brecher and Schiffman. Although Lafayette had been opened, strategically, only half a block from the Apollo, a campaign by the Harlem Opera House to lure Harlem's audiences away from the Apollo failed. However, when Sid Cohen died of a heart attack in 1935, Morris Sussman, the general manager of the Apollo, sold it to Brecher and Schiffman. Schiffman then took over as general manager of the Apollo, and another era of its history began.

Apollo Theater, 1920s. (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.)

Under Schiffman's management, Amateur Night continued with Ralph Cooper as emcee. After his retirement in the 1960s, it still continued, as did performances by celebrities including Gladys Knight and the Pips, Patti LaBelle, the Jackson Five, and Parliament Funkadelic. By the 1970s, however, support for Schiffman's Apollo had waned; residents of the neighborhood were calling for more black-owned and black-operated businesses in Harlem. Nevertheless, Schiffman held on to the Apollo, although he sold many of his other theaters to religious organizations. When he died in 1974, the Apollo was the last of his holdings in Harlem still operating.

In 1977, the Schiffman family closed the Apollo. Its profits had been declining as the crime rate rose, and in 1975 there had been a shooting at the Apollo during a concert by Smokey Robinson. The family tried unsuccessfully to sell the Apollo to various church organizations; finally, it was bought by the Harlem Urban Development Corporation (HUDC).

In 1983, the Apollo, as Harlem's oldest theater, was registered as a National Historic Landmark. In 1984, it reopened as an auditorium, a television studio, and the home of a new weekly Amateur Night Contest. In 1992, *Showtime at the Apollo* premiered on television in national syndication, returning the theater to its former glory as a place of entertainment and opportunity.

CANDICE LOVE

See also Harlem: 3—Entertainment; Smith, Bessie; Tree of Hope

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Appearances

The events that led to the presentation of Garland Anderson's play *Appearances* (1925) on Broadway, and made Anderson the first African American playwright to have a full-length nonmusical drama produced there, are in themselves dramatic. Anderson, a bellhop in San Francisco, was inspired to write *Judge Not According to Appearances* (its original title) as an expression of his religious beliefs, based on the precepts of Christian Science, after attending a performance of Channing Pollock's religious melodrama *The Fool*. Anderson's protagonist is Carl, a black bellhop in a residential hotel to whom the white patrons turn for spiritual counsel. Wilson, an unscrupulous prosecuting attorney whose fiancée has faith in Carl, becomes envious and tries to frame Carl for the attempted rape of a white woman named Elsie. The second act takes place in a courtroom, where Carl refuses to mount a defense, simply trusting that his innocence will be revealed. The other black characters in the play—Carl's fiancée, Ella; and the hotel's porter, Rufus—try to give support. When Elsie is revealed as not white but mulatto, and as Wilson's mistress, Carl is exonerated. In the third act, all plotlines are resolved; the play has been a dream, but Carl's faith has made it come true.

On the advice of a friend, Anderson sent his script to the entertainer Al Jolson, who declined to produce the play but lent Anderson his press agent. Among other fund-raising efforts, the "bellhop playwright" presented a reading of the play by the actor Richard B. Harrison at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, met with Governor Al Smith of New York, and went to the White House, where he presented a script to President Calvin Coolidge. Anderson then returned to California and set forth across the country on a promotional tour.

On 13 October 1925, after successful out-of-town tryouts and bearing a shortened title, *Appearances* finally

Appearances, scene from the stage performance. (Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York City. ©The New York Public Library / Art Resource, N. Y. Keysheets Box 4, Image 26. Photographer White Studio, anonymous.)

opened at the Frolic Theatre on Broadway, where it ran for twenty-three performances. Carl was played by Lionel Monagas, a veteran of the Lafayette Players; Rufus by the vaudevillian Doe Doe Green; and Ella by a newcomer, Evelyn Mason. Although two white actors withdrew from the production rather than work in an integrated cast, there was no serious controversy (such as the one that had beset Eugene O'Neill's *All God's Chillun Got Wings* in 1924) over this issue.

The critical response to *Appearances* was mixed. W. E. B. Du Bois enthusiastically supported the play, partly because of its perceived antilynching message. Other African Americans, such as the historian J. A. Rogers, denounced Anderson as an opportunist. The character Rufus and Green's portrayal of him had overtones of minstrelsy and were particularly controversial. Alan Dale's review in the *New York World* probably summarized the response of most of the white critical establishment: "It would be absurd to waste much time in analysis of this play. . . . I admit that this little play is better than some of the offerings that have made Broadway wretched this season."

Anderson refused to let *Appearances* die. He raised enough money for a tour through the western United States in 1927 and a revival (running for twenty-four performances) at the Hudson Theater on Broadway in 1929. In November 1929, Anderson sailed to London, where the play was produced at the Royalty Theater; it ran there from mid-March through the end of May 1930.

Anderson claimed authorship of another play, *Extortion*, which was never produced; became a lecturer for a religious organization, Unity; and established Andy's Nu Snack, the first milk bar in England, in London in 1934. While he was in England, he became the first black person to be admitted to the prestigious literary organization PEN.

FREDA SCOTT GILES

See also Anderson, Garland; Lafayette Players

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From 1925 to 1928, Louis Daniel Armstrong (a.k.a. Dippermouth, Satchelmouth, Satchmo, Pops) made a series of more than sixty recordings with his small groups the Hot Five and the Hot Seven. Jazz writers of later years hailed these recordings for their role in helping to transform jazz from an ensemble entertainment to a solo art. But observers in the 1920s admired Armstrong less for his recordings per se than for his utter dominance in a highly visible professional field. The respect and even awe that Armstrong aroused among white and black musicians alike made him a shining example of the New Negro, even though he was not involved in the more rarefied artistic aspects of the Harlem Renaissance. From his destitute youth in New Orleans to his triumphant performances on Broadway in 1929, Armstrong struggled to better himself musically and socially while stopping just short, as he put it, of "putting on airs."

Armstrong was born out of wedlock in the poorest section of New Orleans, in a neighborhood so violent that it was known as the Battlefield. His father moved out when Armstrong was a child, and his mother

supported the family as a domestic worker and part-time prostitute. Louis helped by singing in the streets for pennies and scrounging for food in garbage bins. In 1912, he was arrested for firing a gun in the air on New Year's Eve and was sentenced to eighteen months in reform school. At the school Armstrong was subjected to military-style discipline and learned to play the cornet. Upon his release he began developing a reputation as a gifted cornetist. He sought out musical instruction from his idol Joe "King" Oliver, performed with parading brass bands, and played the blues in honky-tonks late at night. When Oliver moved to Chicago in 1918, Armstrong took his place in Kid Ory's band, the leading jazz band in New Orleans. From then on, Ory recalled, Armstrong "went up like a sunflower. His name went right through New Orleans." Yet some contractors still wouldn't hire him for certain events in polite society. One of them, Edmond Souchon, considered Armstrong "a rough, rough character" who blew "false" (he may have meant out of tune) and played too loudly. Most of Armstrong's role models were also rough characters. Early on he had developed an admiration for pimps, gamblers, and other figures of the New Orleans underworld, the most charismatic and influential males in his cultural milieu. The drummer Baby Dodds recalled that in 1920–1921, Armstrong dressed like "low-class hustlers" and gamblers, "because that's what he wanted to be in those days. . . . Back at that time he was always broke from gambling."

Armstrong's aspirations changed after he moved North in 1922. He began his career in the North playing with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band in Chicago and Fletcher Henderson's orchestra in New York. Armstrong seems to have been at least vaguely aware of artistic and cultural trends in Harlem. In his first autobiography (1936), he mentioned several black celebrities active in New York while he was there in 1924–1925, including James Weldon Johnson, Charles Gilpin, Paul Robeson, and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. Armstrong was especially impressed with Robinson, whom he had seen perform in Chicago. Above all, Armstrong admired the dignity and independence Robinson brought to his stage performance. "To me, he was the greatest comedian + dancer in my race—better than Bert Williams," he recalled. "He didn't need blackface to be funny." Robinson, unlike the performers in minstrel shows, did not wear rags or tell self-disparaging jokes; he dressed immaculately and exuded power and self-confidence. The example of prominent northerners like Robinson moved Armstrong to embark on a somewhat ambivalent quest for outward "respectability"—in manners, literacy, clothing style, and most significantly music.

A catalyst in this transformation was Oliver's pianist Lillian (Lil) Hardin, who became Armstrong's second wife. In 1918, in New Orleans, Armstrong had married a young prostitute named Daisy Parker. Their relationship was turbulent, involving brickbat fights in the streets and still more dangerous confrontations behind closed doors. After moving to Chicago, Armstrong divorced Daisy in order to marry Hardin, a woman from Memphis who had taken some classes at Fisk University. Hardin immediately began overhauling Armstrong's rough New Orleans persona, buying him new clothes, changing his hairstyle, and demanding a certain propriety in his behavior. When Daisy visited Chicago in an effort to reclaim him, Armstrong assured her that they were incompatible, especially since he had lately been trying to "cultivate" himself. Publicity photographs from the late 1920s show the results of Lil's handling: Wearing expensive clothing and jewelry, Armstrong invariably looks sophisticated. And yet despite his willingness to make changes in his appearance, Armstrong chafed under Lil's exacting standards in other realms. He ultimately rejected the highfalutin lifestyle that required, as he put it, "a certain spoon for this, and a certain fork for that." By around 1927 he had begun to live with Alpha Smith, a less pretentious working-class woman who would later become his third wife.

Armstrong may have resented Hardin's overbearing social direction, but he remained forever grateful that she had pushed him to expand his musical sensibility. From the moment he arrived in the North, Armstrong had electrified audiences with the boldness and originality of his playing. But the type of music he and other New Orleanians played—"hot jazz" and the blues—drew harsh criticism in the 1920s from moralists and social reformers. The critics denigrated such music, using epithets such as "lowdown" (or "low-class"), "gutbucket," and "barrelhouse," and worried that it inspired lewd dancing and generated business for nightclubs and speakeasies owned by mobsters. To insulate themselves from ill repute, many black musicians sought for "high-class," "dicty," or "society" credentials by working in vaudeville theaters, fashionable ballrooms, and dance orchestras that included elements of European art music in their programs. The ability to play within the European tradition demonstrated a literacy and refinement that raised the "class" quotient of any musician. The musicians who most self-consciously participated in the Harlem Renaissance—such as Robert Nathaniel Dett and

Roland Hayes—aspired to compose or perform works based on European classical practice. At Hardin's urging, Armstrong tried to acquire some classical training; he practiced concert pieces at home to Hardin's accompaniment on a grand piano, and he even studied briefly with a German trumpet teacher known in Chicago for advocating the "nonpressure" method of playing.

The bands and venues Armstrong played in after leaving Oliver show his concern for building a "high-class" musical reputation. In 1924, Fletcher Henderson's orchestra was the leading black society dance band in the country. When an opportunity came for Armstrong to join the band, Hardin encouraged him wholeheartedly, even though it meant that the two had to live separately for a year. Henderson's musicians, with their elegant deportment and thorough musical training, embodied the New Negro in popular music. In fact, Henderson, although impressed with Armstrong's solos, told him: "If you gonna be good someday, you'll take some [music] lessons." Armstrong apparently ignored this advice. But when he returned to Chicago in 1925, he bowed to Hardin's insistence that he join Erskine Tate's "Symphony Orchestra" at the Vendome Theater, an organization featuring violins and double-reed woodwinds as well as the more traditional jazz instruments. At the Vendome, Armstrong became more skilled at reading music and learned to play pieces from the classical repertoire. He even performed featured solos during transcriptions of Italian operas such as Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. Within a year or so Armstrong was playing at the Sunset Café, one of the most exclusive nightclubs in black Chicago. At the Sunset and later the Savoy Ballroom, Armstrong accompanied floor shows in a style that would have required considerable versatility and technical polish. A mere handful of recordings document Armstrong's work with these bands: Erskine Tate, "Stomp Off (Let's Go)" and "Static Strut" (both 1926); and Louis Armstrong and His Stompers (the Sunset band), "Chicago Breakdown" (1927).

During the same period that Armstrong was performing high-class music at the Vendome and the Sunset, he was also recording plenty of New Orleans–style blues and jazz, the kind that most appealed to working-class southern migrants. These records, known collectively as the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens, show the same gradual reconciliation of high and low that was occurring simultaneously in Armstrong's personal life. The early Hot Five records—including such celebrated performances as "Cornet Chop Suey" and "Big Butter and Egg Man" (both 1926)—feature only New Orleans musicians (except Hardin), emphasize traditionally raucous polyphonic textures, and often suggest a casual spontaneity with little advance preparation. Over time, however, Armstrong gradually introduced ritzy prearranged elements. In "You Made Me Love You" (1926), "The Last Time," and "Once in a While" (both 1927), the band plays introductions and accompanimental figures redolent of the music of floor shows. In the Hot Fives of 1928, Armstrong replaced his New Orleans sidemen with the northern musicians he employed nightly at the Savoy. This last series of records features classical and other "society" elements in instrumentation, repertoire, texture, harmony, and form. For example, the meticulously arranged "Beau Koo Jack" has a structural complexity nowhere evident in earlier Hot Five recordings; and the band accompaniment to Armstrong's solo in "Muggles" alternately rises and falls in volume, showing a classical concern for dynamics (patterns of loud and soft). And yet Armstrong did not cut himself off from his New Orleans roots. His most famous records of the period, such as "West End Blues" and "Weatherbird," are a convincing hybrid of northern and southern, "high-class" and "gutbucket" elements.

By the late 1920s Armstrong's musical innovations—particularly his virtuosity, power, coherence, rhythmic "swing," and eccentric vocal style—had established him as a rising force in American popular music. His achievements had won over much of the black community, including those who earlier had fretted that the unsavory social aspects of jazz would have negative effects on the black cause. Dave Peyton, the chief music critic for the Chicago *Defender*, began calling Armstrong the "Great King Menalick" after Menelik II, the Ethiopian emperor who overthrew Italian domination in the late nineteenth century. Nor was Armstrong's influence limited by race. At a banquet in 1929, a group of white musicians gave Armstrong a wristwatch engraved: "To Louis Armstrong, the World's Greatest Cornetist, from the Musicians of New York." Also in 1929, he created a sensation on Broadway singing "Ain't Misbehavin'" in the musical *Hot Chocolates*. In 1930, he made his first film appearance in *Ex-Flame* (now lost), an achievement he proudly emphasized in his passport application two years later, wherein he stated his occupation as "actor and musician." He needed the passport to undertake his first tour of Europe, where an already flourishing group of fans attested to his international popularity.

In the 1930s, European and American left-wing commentators lauded the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings as great works of art. Such praise might

Louis Armstrong. (Brown Brothers.)

have gratified musicians of the Harlem Renaissance who consciously sought to equal the achievements of western classical composers. Armstrong, however, had a different goal: to bring his music—which he viewed primarily as entertainment rather than art—to the widest possible audience. In the 1920s, that had entailed diversifying and refining his music and his demeanor; in the 1930s it involved singing and telling jokes as well as playing the trumpet. During this period Armstrong became a hero to the black community for his high profile in recordings, radio, and film. But after World War II, black America required a new New Negro, one not only culturally accomplished but also politically assertive. In this changed environment many accused Armstrong of Uncle Tomism because of his sincere desire to please an audience. For Armstrong, though, professional success and mass appeal represented the most significant advance a black musician could make. Such recognition may not have satisfied the generation of the civil rights movement, but it fulfilled some of the highest objectives of the Harlem Renaissance.

Biography

Louis Armstrong was born 4 August 1901, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He attended Fisk School for Boys until around age twelve and was confined in the Colored Waif's Home for Boys in 1913–1914. He joined Kid Ory's Brown-Skinned Babies in 1918, Fate Marable's band on the Streckfus Steamboat line in 1919, King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band in Chicago in 1922, and Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra in New York in 1924; performed in Chicago with the bands of Lil Hardin Armstrong, Erskine Tate, Carroll Dickerson, and Clarence Jones in 1925–1928; and accompanied many blues and vaudeville singers, including Bessie Smith and Alberta Hunter, in 1924–1930. He appeared in a Broadway show, *Hot Chocolates*, in 1929. He made his first European tours in 1932–1935; hired Joe Glaser to be his manager in 1935; hosted the Fleischmann's Yeast radio program on NBC in 1937; and appeared at Rockefeller Center in the musical *Swingin' the Dream* in 1939. Armstrong performed in the first Esquire All-American Jazz Concert at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1944. In 1947 he performed at Carnegie Hall and organized the septet Louis Armstrong's All-Stars. He performed at the first international jazz festival in Nice, France, in 1948, was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1949, and made international tours in 1949–1968 and television appearances in 1949–1971. His television work included appearances on the shows of Horace Heidt, Ed Sullivan, Danny Kaye, Steve Allen, Mike Douglas, Jackie Gleason, Dick Cavett, David Frost, Johnny Carson, and Flip Wilson, and on *What's My Line?* He was given a seventieth (actually sixty-ninth) birthday tribute at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1970. Armstrong died in Queens, New York, on 6 July 1971.

BRIAN HARKER

See also Dett, Robert Nathaniel; Hayes, Roland; Henderson, Fletcher; Jazz; Music; Musicians; New Negro; Oliver, Joseph "King"; Ory, Edward "Kid"; Robinson, Bill "Bojangles"; Savoy Ballroom

Selected Recordings

As a sideman: K. Oliver, "Chimes Blues"/"Froggie Moore" (1923, Gen. 5135), F. Henderson, "Copenhagen" (1924, Voc. 14926), Red Onion Jazz Babies, "Cake Walking Babies From Home" (1924, Gen. 5627), Bessie Smith, "St. Louis Blues" (1925, Col. 14064D). Hot Five/Hot Seven: "Muskrat Ramble"/"Heebie Jeebies" (1926, OK 8300), "Cornet Chop Suey" (1926, OK 8320), "Big Butter and Egg Man" (1926, OK 8423), "Potato Head Blues" (1927, OK 8503), "S.O.L. Blues" (1927, Col.

35661), "Struttin' with Some Barbecue" (1927, OK 8566), "Hotter than That"/"Savoy Blues" (1927, OK 8535), "West End Blues" (1928, OK 8597), "Muggles" (1928, OK 8703).

Duet with Earl Hines: "Weatherbird" (1928, OK 41454).

Big bands: "Sweethearts on Parade" (1930, Col. 2688D), "Star Dust" (1931, OK 41530), "I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues" (1933, Vic. 24233), "Jubilee" (1938, Decca 1635), "Struttin' with Some Barbecue" (1938, Decca 1661).

All-Stars: "Rockin' Chair"/"Save It Pretty Mama" (1947, Vic. 40–4004), "Basin Street Blues" (1954, Decca 29102), *Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy* (1954, Col. CL591), *Satch Plays Fats* (1955, Col. CL708), "Hello Dolly" (1963, Kapp 573), "It's a Wonderful World" (1967, ABC-Para. 45–10982).

Selected Films

Rhapsody in Black and Blue, 1932; *Pennies From Heaven*, 1936; *Artists and Models*, *Everyday's a Holiday*, 1937; *Going Places*, 1938; *Cabin in the Sky*, 1943; *Atlantic City*, 1944; *New Orleans*, 1947; *The Glenn Miller Story,* 1954; *High Society,* 1956; *Satchmo the Great*, 1957; *Jazz on a Summer's Day,* 1958; *The Beat Generation,* 1959; *Paris Blues,* 1961; *A Man Called Adam,* 1966; *Hello Dolly,* 1969.

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Art Criticism and the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance, with its emphasis on racial and ethnic distinctiveness, created an audience for visual art made by Americans of African descent. However, as an invention of the 1920s, the category "American Negro artist" would soon be suspended between the rhetoric of cultural nationalism and the reality of a segregated society as yet ill-equipped to fulfill its democratic promise. Within the African American community during these years, there were lively exchanges on the nature of "black creativity," typically in terms of a dynamic interaction between race and nationality. But critics writing for mainstream publications consistently emphasized that "Negro art" was separate from the overarching category "American art." As exposure to so-called Negro art grew, a set of critical constructs emerged, based on racial difference, that in effect isolated black art from the mainstream and contributed significantly to its subsequent historical neglect.

During the Harlem Renaissance and its aftermath, speculation on the relationship between race and creativity filled the pages of black periodicals and spilled over into the mainstream press. In these discussions, African Americans raised important questions about the responsibility of black artists to social (as opposed to aesthetic) issues, about the most desirable ways to represent members of the race, and about whether art should furnish cultural models or present actual individual experience. Articles highlighting the achievements of African American artists and articles about the current reappraisal of African art appeared regularly. The reader was frequently admonished to support black artists by buying their work, so that the artists would not be corrupted by too much white patronage.

But in this heady intellectual climate, black artists seeking a reputation in American art received complex and even conflicting messages. Although critics looked for growing technical facility in emerging black artists, their work was often considered interesting only to the extent that it differed from mainstream art. Critics were bored when the work of black artists appeared too derivative or too much like the work of artists who were not black. Yet critical standards were not altered to accommodate original or innovative expression when it did appear. To a certain extent, the perception of difference was encouraged by African American critics such as Alain Locke. Locke often referred to racially specific experience and culture; he urged black artists to express themselves in characteristically racial terms by drawing on the uniqueness of their experience and on their position as heirs to both an authentic American folk culture and the artistic traditions of ancestral Africa.

In considering art criticism and the Harlem Renaissance, genuine art criticism must be distinguished from what is more properly described as art journalism. These were very different modes of conveying information about African American art and artists, and most critical opinion on what is called the art of the Harlem Renaissance falls into the category of art journalism. Although critics and historians such as Locke and James Porter addressed complex issues of race, culture, identity, and nationalism, journalists writing for the popular press rarely went beyond basic questions such as what "Negro art" was and why anyone should be interested in it.

This situation reflected the state of American art criticism in general during the early twentieth century. With some notable exceptions, a good deal of the writing about art before World War II was a mixed bag of journalism and editorial commentary. Art criticism was not highly professionalized in the United States, and very few American critics applied a consistent, recognizable methodology. The writers of essays on art and culture in literary magazines and the popular press often had little background in the visual arts. Furthermore, in appraising African American visual art, these critics often relied on typologies from music and literarture, with which they were more familiar. Thus they tended to raise general issues rather than engage in complex critical analysis of specific works or artists.

Moreover, the aggressive public relations strategies of the Harmon Foundation, the institution most involved in promoting African American artists during the 1920s and 1930s, ensured its control over newspaper coverage of the Harmon awards for achievement in the visual arts and of its annual exhibitions of Negro art. In the period between the two world wars, a good deal of writing about African American art was simply the Harmon Foundation's publicity posing as art criticism; articles in the mainstream press often took the form of responses to, or paraphrases of, the foundation's promotional literature. Reviews and notices of the foundation's shows either focused on the evidence for and the merits of racial expression or dwelled on anecdote and biography. The black press stressed the professional accomplishments of successful artists; the mainstream press announced cash prizes awarded to artists who had emerged from extremely humble circumstances. In neither case was it common to find long analytical discussions of individual works of art.

Beginning in 1928, the annual exhibitions of the Harmon Foundation stimulated considerable discussion about the achievements and future direction of African American artists. Stemming from the larger debates about black creativity that were of central concern during the Harlem Renaissance, these discussions addressed many of the same issues that occupied critics in literary circles, where they were clearly articulated and hotly contested. Questions were raised about the relationship between contemporary black expression and black folk culture, about the meaning of Africa to modern American blacks, and about the transmission of racial characteristics across time and place. There was also intense concern about the proper representation of African Americans, especially in literary circles, as African American writers came to terms with a sudden fascination with black life in the 1920s. This interest in representation was coupled with an ongoing discussion about the nature of black creativity.

In this context, a set of issues emerged that provided mainstream art critics with a fairly consistent focus for considering the works of African American artists. The visual art of the Harlem Renaissance was typically evaluated according to a priori assumptions about amateurism, primitivism, Authenticity, and racial uniqueness. The fusion of these qualities created specific expectations: Authentic Negro art would be primitive because it was the product of amateurs or individuals predisposed to the primitive by virtue of their unique racial heritage; and such authenticity and uniqueness should be manifest in both the form and the content of Negro art. The ideology of racial primitivism, which often combined beliefs about authenticity,

amateurism, and atavism, resulted in a clear preference among mainstream critics for black artistic expression that manifested it. The fascination with tribal art would later, in the populist climate of the 1930s, be displaced by an idealization of folk art; but insofar as Africa and rural black culture were understood as authentic subject matter for African American artists, they were welcomed. The popularity in the late 1920s of the painters Archibald Motley and Malvin Gray Johnson can in part be explained by this fascination with the primitive.

Mainstream critics looking for racial primitivism in the work of African American artists were especially pleased when they discovered evidence of emotional sensibility based on southern black folk culture and religion. They were in fact seeking the visual equivalent of the Negro spiritual. This sentiment—nearly universal among critics who followed developments in African American art and literature—emanated from a widespread belief that cultural sophistication would be the ruination of the "real American Negro." For many white Americans, the so-called sorrow songs were the most familiar, and therefore most representative, form of black expression.

Of the black visual artists of the Harlem Renaissance, Richmond Barthé and Archibald Motley were among those most consistently and favorably reviewed by the art press. By the end of the 1930s, Barthé was regarded as one of America's most promising sculptors, a truly gifted artist who was also racially authentic. Art critics also often found value in the work of seemingly naive black artists such as William H. Johnson. Nineteenth-century American folk art was widely admired during these years as an example of authentic native expression from the past. Modern black folk art and the black folk spirit in professional art were thus often received with greater enthusiasm by art critics than the more obviously sophisticated productions of academically trained artists. Ultimately, these expectations would prompt critics to express displeasure when the work of African American artists presented itself as similar to, or derived from, mainstream artistic practices. Even though many African American artists followed the same general principles as their peers who were not black, racial difference was expected to override shared national cultural ideals or similar professional training.

Notices on the Harmon Foundation shows during the 1930s rehashed many of the same issues that had emerged in the early reviews. Reviewers continued to be disappointed by an evident lack of authentic racial expression and to regard increased technical skill and the mastery of existing conventions as symptomatic of black artists' regrettable eagerness to imitate mainstream traditions rather than creating their own. Critics of these later shows consistently remarked that work by black artists resembled the work of their white counterparts. Although William H. Johnson's work was frequently considered the best in the show, it also commonly prompted (along with the work of Hale Woodruff) the observation that the Harmon collection did not differ significantly from that of any other modern art exhibition coming out of New York. Mainstream critics, straining to find distinctive racial qualities, resorted to clichés about Negroes' rhythm, spontaneous emotion, and affinity for bright colors. But more often than not, writers concluded that, were it not for the ubiquity of black subjects, the work might "pass" for that of any group of contemporary artists.

The issue of aesthetic modernity and its relationship to traditional African art is also a recurrent theme in much writing about African American art after the Harlem Renaissance. In *The New Negro*, Locke emphasized that African tribal art had invigorated European painters and sculptors, helping to free them of academic practices, and he claimed that it could be an even more potent stimulant for modern African American artists. Although in some of Locke's writing in the 1930s the emphasis shifts from the tribal antecedents of African American expression to native black American folk culture, Locke never abandoned his belief that African art could be a powerful source for black expression. The conflation of these ideals caused considerable confusion as critics and artists struggled to assess the emerging black modernist aesthetic, prompting the African American artist Selma Day to observe, in 1930:

> A few of the artists are producing what is called modern art by some, Negro art by others, and still another group will name the same paintings primitive art. I imagine that one often wonders where one style ends and the other begins, and more often questions whether or not any such thing as modern art or Negro art or primitive art really exists.

The 1920s had forecast the coming of an invigorated American culture that would be expansive and replete with possibilities, and in this context, artists of the Harlem Renaissance made their claims as important contributors to American national culture. The critical writing of Locke and other African Americans

concerned with the progress of black artistic expression reflects a complex understanding of broad cultural discourse in America. Locke noted that although black artists have always sought cultural freedom through art, they have expressed themselves in artistic modes responsive to the American mainstream. Implicit in all of Locke's writing was an unswerving conviction that black Americans, by virtue of their distinctive racial heritage and singular experience, were destined to make a unique contribution to national culture at a critical moment in its development. However, mainstream art critics were more inclined to deal with the artist of African descent in the United States as an "American Negro" rather than a "Negro American," and so they typically did not acknowledge African American art as a vital manifestation of cultural nationalism. During the years between the wars, at a time when black expression, especially in music, was a powerful signifier of American culture in Europe, racism and segregation made it improbable that the visual art of African Americans would be so recognized at home.

Although visual representations of American blacks were considered authentic American subject matter, the discussions of democracy and culture that dominated the American art world, particularly during the Depression, rarely extended to the work of black artists. Instead, African American artists were constantly accused of sacrificing their birthright and were entreated to articulate their difference through archetypal images of suffering, naïveté, or racial primitivism. In an age that merged nationalistic and aesthetic issues, and in which critical discourse about art often lacked sophistication and focus, race seems to have remained the only relevant issue in considerations of African American art. The failure to fundamentally alter this fact has resulted in continued neglect and distortion of African American artists in both American art history and contemporary art; their work is rarely understood in terms that would affirm their participation in mainstream cultural ideals. In this respect, the Harlem Renaissance was a lost opportunity for American art critics, who failed to recognize the extent to which African American artists, both through their work and in their rhetoric, sought to participate in a collective project of national self-definition.

Mary Ann Calo

See also Barthé, Richmond; Harmon Foundation; Johnson, Malvin Gray; Johnson, William H.; Locke, Alain; Modernism; Motley, Archibald J. Jr; New Negro, The; Porter, James Amos; Primitivism; Woodruff, Hale

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Artists

During the Harlem Renaissance, the visual arts flowered with the same vigor as drama, dance, music, and literature. For a brief but resplendent moment in the

1920s and 1930s, Harlem was the center of a visual arts movement whose effects were felt across the United States and around the world, in places such as Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, San Francisco, Paris, Copenhagen, and Berlin. For the first time in history, there was a widespread interest in African American art among dealers, patrons, and curators. As early as 1919, an exhibit of the paintings of the African American expatriate Henry Ossawa Tanner (1859–1937), who was then living in Paris, was mounted at Knoedler Gallery in New York City. It was followed in 1921 by an exhibit of African American painting and sculpture at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library (later known as the Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture). This second show featured works by Tanner as well as other accomplished artists, such as Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller (1877–1968), William Edward Scott (1884–1969), and Laura Wheeler Waring (1887–1948). In 1926, the Harmon Foundation (a philanthropic agency that awarded prizes to African Americans for achievement in the visual arts) granted the first of many annual prizes to the painters Palmer Hayden (1890–1973) and Hale Woodruff (1900–1980); and in 1927, a pivotal exhibition, "The Negro in Art," was presented by the Chicago Women's Club.

Interdisciplinary collaboration also marked this period. For example, Aaron Douglas (1899–1979) designed covers for black periodicals such as *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and *Fire!!*; and artists illustrated books of scholarly writing, poetry, and fiction by literati of the Harlem Renaissance, including Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Charles S. Johnson, Alain Locke, and James Weldon Johnson.

The Harlem Renaissance was pervaded by the concept of the New Negro—someone with, in Locke's words, "renewed self-respect and self-dependence," who found a voice in the arts. Locke's sentiments were articulated in 1925, in an edition of *Survey Graphic* magazine dedicated to Harlem as the "mecca of the New Negro." The magazine, which contained drawings, poems, essays, fiction, and social commentary by young African American artists, writers, and intellectuals, sold more than 5,000 copies and helped launch the literary and artistic movement that came to be known as the Harlem Renaissance. This special issue of *Survey Graphic* became the manifesto of the era; in addition to writings, it included illustrations and portraits of notable figures of the renaissance, such as the singer and actor Paul Robeson, the tenor Roland Hayes (who appeared on the magazine's cover), and other distinguished African Americans.

The magazine's art director was the artist Winold Reiss (1886–1953), who had emigrated to the United States from Germany in 1913 and became known for his documentary-style portraits of Americans from widely varied racial and cultural backgrounds. Reiss's cover design for the Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic* featured a sensitive portrait of Hayes (as the New Negro) and a combination of African and art deco design elements. In fact, Reiss's cover, with its emphasis on African forms and abstract design motifs, embodied the modern international spirit of the Harlem Renaissance—a spirit clearly arising from both European and African culture. Many of the Harlem Renaissance artists studied abroad, particularly in Paris (where Negritude, a counterpart to the New Negro movement, was forming) and incorporated elements of German expressionism and cubism (itself inspired by African sculpture) into their own art. The Harlem Renaissance may be considered one of the first truly international art movements to take root on American soil.

An unprecedented number of African American visual artists were able to achieve some degree of success during this period, owing in no small measure to the Harmon Foundation. Aaron Douglas, Augusta Savage (1892–1962), and William H. Johnson (1901–1970), among others, gained a national and even an international reputation with the help of this foundation, whose art prizes were intended to bring African American creativity to the attention of a broad public and to lend financial support to participating artists. The winner of the foundation's Gold Medal Prize for art in 1926, and one of the first to benefit from the Harmon programs, was Palmer Hayden, who was then thirty-six. Hayden had earlier spent ten years in the armed services, during which time he enrolled in a correspondence course in drawing. After his discharge in 1920, he pursued further art study at Columbia University and at the Boothbay Commonwealth Art Colony in Maine. After winning the Harmon medal (and a $400 prize) for an impressionistic marine painting, Hayden traveled to Paris, where he lived, studied, and exhibited for five years, from 1927 to 1932.

While abroad, Hayden made the acquaintances of Tanner and of Locke (who was traveling in Europe at the time). Locke, the major interpreter of Harlem Renaissance aesthetics, had received his Ph.D. at Harvard and had the distinction of being the first African American Rhodes Scholar (at Oxford). He also headed the philosophy department at Howard University from 1912 to 1953. Locke, whose pivotal essay "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts" urged African American

artists to look to the art of their African ancestors for creative inspiration, argued that modern European art, particularly the works of Matisse, Picasso, Derain, and the German expressionists, had been substantially influenced by the abstract qualities of African sculpture. Locke believed that if African art was capable of arousing the aesthetic impulses of the European modernists, then surely it should inspire the same outpouring of creativity from the "culturally awakened" New Negro artist.

Locke's hope that black artists would take inspiration from Africa found representation in one of Hayden's best-known works, *Fétiche et Fleurs*, which won the Harmon painting prize in 1933. The painting comprised a still life of a vase of flowers, a Gabon Fang mask, and a Congo Bakuba cloth arranged in a Cézannesque design that tilted perspective and compressed the picture space. Hayden, who had by then returned to New York from Paris, continued to focus on ethnic subjects, but his style began to reveal a disturbing element of caricature that was evidently popular among the white clientele on whom most Harlem Renaissance artists depended for support. Hayden exaggerated the features of his subjects to the point, some people believed, of grotesqueness and, as a result, became a target of criticism, particularly from the respected art historian James A. Porter, the author of *Modern Negro Art* (1943). Porter objected to Hayden's new painting style as "ill-advised if not altogether tasteless" and reminiscent of billboards advertising blackface minstrel shows.

Hayden, however, maintained that his purpose was not to mock or to satirize but rather to paint, in his own "naive" style, the life and people that he knew. He compared his means to the writing style of Langston Hughes (who admired Hayden's work) and argued that the vernacular elements and characters found in Hughes's writings were similar to those that he painted. Locke praised Hayden's work and considered Porter's assessment too severe; notwithstanding these conflicts, Hayden flourished. He worked for the easel division of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Federal Arts Project, which provided continued support to many artists of the Harlem Renaissance after the Harmon Foundation's exhibits were discontinued in 1933. Hayden's paintings, particularly those that centered on black life, had broad appeal and exerted an incontrovertible influence on perceptions of Harlem Renaissance aesthetics.

The artist most closely associated with the Harlem Renaissance was Aaron Douglas, who was born in Kansas. Douglas espoused not only Locke's ideal of art embodying African motifs but also a similar mandate set forth by the scholar and social activist W. E. B. Du Bois (in 1915, in an issue of the NAACP's magazine *The Crisis*) that black artists should depict only the most ennobling self-imagery. Douglas studied fine arts as an undergraduate at the University of Nebraska and taught art briefly in Kansas City before coming to New York in 1924. There he met Winold Reiss, who encouraged him to incorporate African abstraction into his work.

Douglas quickly developed a unique method of painting, which combined accessible narrative imagery with a complex compositional substructure of geometric abstraction. His stylized representations of African American life and history greatly appealed to patrons and literati in Harlem. In 1925, Reiss included Douglas's illustrations in the Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic*. That same year, Douglas received commissions to illustrate *Opportunity* (the publication of the New York Urban League) and *The Crisis* (for which Du Bois was a contributing editor). In 1926, Douglas helped illustrate the first issues of *Fire!!*, a cutting-edge periodical that was devoted to the works of young African American artists and writers; and in 1927, he collaborated with one of the cofounders of the NAACP, James Weldon Johnson, in creating drawings to accompany Johnson's collection of poems *God's Trombones*. In 1928, Douglas designed the jacket for Claude McKay's highly successful book *Home to Harlem*.

Also in 1928, Douglas received an award from the Barnes Foundation that enabled him to study the Barnes collection in Merion, Pennsylvania. This experience and a one-year stay in Paris from 1931 to 1932 exposed Douglas to a variety of African art objects as well as to European modernism. The influences of both are revealed in Douglas's mature style, which by the 1930s was a synthesis of African and European elements. By this time, Douglas was creating large-scale murals such as *Jungle and Jazz* for Harlem's Club Ebony, and other murals for businesses and institutions beyond the borders of Harlem, including Fisk University in Nashville (where he would later be the chairman of the art department) and the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. Douglas's most famous mural sequence was produced under the auspices of the WPA for the Schomburg Center in Harlem in 1934 and was called *Aspects of Negro Life*.

The large-scale oil compositions of *Aspects of Negro Life* comprise a chronological record of four critical

moments in African American history. The first panel, *The Negro in an African Setting*, portrays African dancers, musicians, and ritual objects during an elysian time before the African slave trade began. The second, *From Slavery through Reconstruction*, shows a scene of enslaved workers behind a screen of cotton plants, men breaking their chains, and a figure holding up a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation in the shadow of the Capitol building. *An Idyll of the Deep South* depicts a time just after Reconstruction, during the period of Jim Crow, when legal segregation and widespread lynchings marred African American life. Portrayed in this complex narrative is a group of farmworkers and banjo players amid stylized flora. The figures in this group are overshadowed by the specter of a victim of lynching—the dangling feet of a body hanging from a tree. In *Song of the Towers*, the fourth mural in the series, Douglas portrays a saxophone player (a symbol of the black creative spirit) and a businessman in a towering industrial setting. The composition—a requiem for the proletariat—is crisscrossed with sinister, shadowy forms that haunt the figures, who appear to be overcome by intense emotional anguish.

Douglas's inimitable fusion of disparate elements—abstraction and figuration, Africanism and modernism, social and historical narrative—within his signature lyrical, translucent, nearly monochromatic palette appealed to both the neophyte and the connoisseur. Unlike most social realist and regionalist artists of his time, Douglas was able to embrace geometric abstraction in a way that allowed his paintings to remain accessible to the broader public. The comprehensibility of his images, and their dignified black subject matter, made Douglas one of the most popular artists of the period. In fact, one year after the completion of *Aspects of Negro Life*, Douglas was elected president of the Harlem Artists' Guild (the Harlem affiliate of the Artists Union), through which he fought for better opportunities for black artists.

Douglas's contemporary William H. Johnson was equally prolific and talented. Johnson came to New York from South Carolina in 1918, studying art and supporting himself at a variety of odd jobs until 1926, when he moved to Europe. During his years in New York, Johnson studied the visual arts, taking classes at the National Academy of Design beginning in 1921 and winning several art prizes and scholarships. He also spent summers at the Cape Cod School of Art in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where his works were included in a group exhibition at the local art association. After studying briefly with George B. Luks, the renowned American "ashcan school" artist, Johnson went to the Montparnasse section of Paris with funds given to him by the director of the Cape Cod School of Art, Charles W. Hawthorne.

Johnson was an exceptional draftsman. His early still lifes and figure studies show a keen understanding of form and color and evoke the loose brushwork and spatial analyses of the impressionists and postimpressionists. His portraits and landscapes during his first years abroad demonstrate his own painterly expressiveness and also reveal the influence of the French artist Chaim Soutine and the Norwegian symbolist painter Edvard Munch. Johnson experimented in a variety of two-dimensional media while he was in Europe, and his works, like those of Douglas, show evidence of a broad understanding of European modernism, particularly German expressionism.

While he was abroad, Johnson met and married the Danish artist Holcha Krake; they returned to the United States in 1929. One year later, encouraged by Luks, Johnson entered his work in the Harmon Foundation's annual exhibit and was awarded a gold medal for painting. Throughout the 1930s, Johnson continued to exhibit at the Harmon Foundation and at numerous galleries at home and abroad. In 1937, he took a position with the WPA as an instructor at the Harlem Community Art Center. At about this time, his work began to undergo stylistic changes. Under pressure from the Harmon Foundation (which disapproved of his single-minded espousal of a European aesthetic), and in response to the expectations of the broader public regarding African American artists in general, Johnson turned to more deliberately ethnic themes and to a less apparently erudite formal technique. He moved away from European modernism toward a pseudo-naive *art brut* style that evoked vernacular art and African sculpture. He also began to focus on African American religious subjects and on genre scenes of couples in Harlem, street musicians, and farmworkers. In shifting toward an approach like that of folk art, Johnson was similar to Hayden, but, despite the guise of naïveté, Johnson's later works continued to show a keen sense of composition, an understanding of color and form, and an undeniable gift for complex design.

After his wife's death from breast cancer in 1944, Johnson's mental health began to deteriorate. While traveling in Norway, he was hospitalized for paresis (a disease of the central nervous system characterized by mental and emotional instability and paralytic

attacks). The U.S. State Department arranged for his return home, and he was admitted to Central Islip State Hospital in New York. Johnson would never paint again; he remained confined at the state hospital until his death. However, the more than 1,000 works he had produced during the Harlem Renaissance were rescued from a warehouse in Manhattan by the Harmon Foundation, which purchased his estate and donated his paintings and prints to the Smithsonian Institution, where they remain today. The immense body of work produced by Johnson during the Harlem Renaissance reflects his complex personality and his response to life between two world wars and on two continents.

In 1927, the Newark Museum of Art mounted an exhibition, "Paintings and Watercolors by Living American Artists." A delicately rendered portrait of an elderly woman, seated at her sewing beside a lace-covered table, was voted the most popular work in the show. The painter was an alumnus of the Chicago Art Institute, Archibald Motley Jr. (1891–1981); and the painting was *Mending Socks*—a carefully constructed composition portraying Motley's grandmother in near profile within a compressed space. *Mending Socks* represented Motley's unquestionable talent, but as an early work depicting a conventional domestic subject in a naturalistic manner, it was far from indicative of the stylized forms and edgy, urban themes (influenced by his onetime mentor, the American artist George Bellows) for which Motley would become known.

Motley's penchant for realism quickly gave way to a more modernist vision, developed during a year of study in Paris at the end of the 1920s. In his new paintings, Motley generalized figures and faces, simplified forms, and subordinated details in favor of mood or ambience. He was able to capture his emotional impressions as well as his visual impressions of each scene he chose, bringing to life crowded Harlem nightclubs or cobblestoned Parisian streets teeming with French *flâneurs*. He achieved this feat through the use of vibrant colors, diffuse lighting, overlapping forms, and unique angles of vision and handling of space. The results were often visually dazzling.

Motley preferred metropolitan themes: pool halls, dance halls, and street scenes. He was also one of the first American artists to treat the black female nude as a subject worthy of "high" art, rather than as an object of ridicule or pornography. His psychologically intense *Brown Girl after the Bath* (1931) reconstitutes a seventeenth-century Dutch motif with a realism and quiet authority that conveys not only a sexualized body but also a contemplative woman whose melancholy, enigmatic gaze holds that of the viewer. Motley, who was supported throughout the Depression by the WPA, made a definitive and lasting creative contribution to the Harlem Renaissance—a contribution which, although largely ignored after the 1930s, has been recognized in recent years as integral to our understanding of the period.

Women artists, too, thrived during the Harlem Renaissance. One was the sculptor Nancy Elizabeth Prophet (1890–1960), who graduated in 1918 from the Rhode Island School of Design, and then moved to New York, attracted by the art scene there. She developed a signficant alliance with Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, a member of New York's cultural elite and founder of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Whitney was responsible for some of the museum's first acquisitions of African American art: several works by the sculptor Richmond Barthé (1901–1989).

Whitney and Prophet were not only fellow artists but also close friends, and they shared a studio and exhibited together. In fact, in 1922 Whitney financed Prophet's first trip to Europe; Prophet would remain in Europe for ten years, studying and exhibiting throughout the 1920s and early 1930s—and becoming acquainted with W. E. B. Du Bois, Countee Cullen, and Augusta Savage, who were all sojourning in France. Toward the end of her stay in Paris, Prophet began to cultivate her reputation in the United States by sending two of her works to the Harmon exhibition of 1930 and winning a $250 prize for one of them.

Returning to the United States in 1934, at the invitation of John Hope, the president of Atlanta University, Prophet joined the art faculty at Spelman College—one of the southern magnets for talented figures in the Harlem Renaissance (Hale Woodruff had recently founded the art department there). For a time, Prophet's career flourished. Her elegant portraits in wood, marble, and other three-dimensional media appeared in major American exhibitions, including the Whitney Biennials of 1935 and 1937, and in renowned collections such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1944, Prophet left her position at Spelman College; as a northerner, she had found the southern rural environment uninspiring. She returned to Rhode Island and made several attempts to further her professional goals; however, she found it impossible to repeat her earlier successes. To support herself, Prophet was forced to work as a housekeeper and as a live-in domestic servant. Occasionally, she made portrait busts for a ceramics factory to earn extra money, but her final years were spent in poverty and obscurity.

Another woman artist, Lois Mailou Jones (1905–1998), is a shining example of the creativity and productivity of the Harlem Renaissance. Unlike Prophet, Jones had nearly half a century of artistic success. Jones began her career in 1919 as a student at the High School of Practical Arts in Boston; her decision to pursue the arts as a profession was inspired, in part, by a meeting in the early 1920s with an older artist, Meta Warrick Fuller (whose sculpture *Ethiopia Awakening* of 1921 is considered one of the first to articulate the pan-Africanist philosophy of black enfranchisement that was integral to the New Negro and Negritude movements). Jones started by designing costumes and textiles, but she was also a prolific draftsman and painter. She held her first one-person show in 1923, when she was only seventeen. She spent her college years at the Boston Museum School on a four-year scholarship, majoring in design and winning numerous awards.

When she graduated, Jones relocated briefly to North Carolina and founded the art department at Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia. Her success there brought her to the attention of James V. Herring, then chairman of the art department at Howard University in Washington, D.C. (where Alain Locke headed the philosophy department). Herring invited Jones to join the faculty at Howard, and she would go on to teach design there for nearly fifty years. During her abundantly creative and productive life, Jones had more than sixty solo exhibitions, and she participated in literally hundreds of group shows, including the Harmon Foundation exhibits. Like Douglas, Jones also worked as a graphic designer, producing illustrations for a book by the African American historiographer Carter G. Woodson, *African Heroes and Heroines*, and designing covers for his *Negro History Bulletin*. Jones was a pioneer American abstractionist who combined a flair for decorative and geometric patterning with a keen understanding of human anatomy and a gift for portraiture. Responding to the inspiration of Locke and the Harmon Foundation, she focused consistently on African and African American subject matter, alternating these interests with a love of impressionist-style landscape.

The sculptor Augusta Savage—a contemporary of both Jones and Prophet—came to New York in the 1920s, like so many others, as part of the "great migration." Savage was one of the most influential artists of the Harlem Renaissance, making her greatest impact as an educator and an activist for the arts. After a period of study at New York's Cooper Union and a stay in Europe in the late 1920s, Savage returned to New York in 1932 to establish her own Studio of Arts and Crafts. With aid from the WPA, this studio eventually evolved into the Harlem Community Arts Center, which provided art instruction to some 1,500 constituents and was a model WPA facility, visited by Eleanor Roosevelt and Albert Einstein. Savage's students included Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000), Norman Lewis (1909–1979), and William Artis (1914–1977), who were then novices but would go on to become renowned artists.

In 1939, Savage was offered a professional commission by the organizers of the New York World's Fair to create her sculpture *The Harp (Lift Every Voice and Sing)*. This monumental sixteen-foot plaster work featured a human harp consisting of singing African American figures. It also paid homage, through its subtitle, to James Weldon Johnson's song "Lift Every Voice and Sing," often known as the "black national anthem." After the World's Fair closed, Savage did not have the funds to cast or store this sculpture, and it was bulldozed when the fairgrounds were demolished. Savage also discovered that because she had been privately employed (even if only temporarily), she no longer qualified for her WPA position, and her employment with the Harlem Community Arts Center was terminated.

That year marked the last major showing of Savage's work, and her further attempts to advance her career were unsuccessful. In fact, her later career paralleled that of Prophet. The fact that neither woman could make professional progress after the 1930s was largely because of the demise, in 1943, of the WPA Federal Arts Project, which—because of its mandates against racial and sexual discrimination—had provided a short season of opportunity to women and minority artists. The unprecedented opportunities afforded to women and minorities during this period ended as congressional budgets were cut or discontinued, as abstract expressionism began to replace social realism and other narrative art, and as socialist sentiments gave way to more conservative values. Like Prophet, Savage rarely exhibited or produced art after the early 1940s; eventually, she became an embittered recluse on an old farm in upstate New York, shunning the art community altogether. Despite this unfortunate conclusion to her own artistic life, Savage's genius survived in the art of one of her most important students, Jacob Lawrence.

Lawrence's art is epitomized in images of Harlem and of African American heroes and heroism, configured in meticulously structured spaces. Lawrence was only a boy during the Harlem Renaissance, but his

experiences in Harlem and in Savage's studio helped make him one of the most renowned African American artists of the twentieth century. His earliest painting cycles—*Frederick Douglas*s (1938–1939), *Toussaint L'Ouverture* (1939), *Harriet Tubman* (1939–1940), *Migration* (1940–1941), *John Brown* (1941), and *Harlem* (1942–1943)—reflect his affinity with the Harlem Renaissance. Like Douglas, Lawrence was inspired by the formal principles of contemporaneous art movements such as cubism and art deco, and he produced a body of work that is visually, emotionally, and intellectually provocative.

Lawrence was born in Atlantic City and moved to Harlem when he was thirteen years old, at a time when the glittering nightlife and the social milieu of Harlem were being displaced by the harsh realities of the Depression. His series *Harlem* compassionately portrays and interprets his experiences of life in New York. The scenes, thirty in all, range from pulsating city views to intimate interiors and use an often explicit narrative vernacular that reveals the depth, breadth, and complexity of African American existence. Lawrence, who remained active into his eighties, spent a lifetime enchanting and enlightening audiences, and informing them about the African American experience; through his work, he carried the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance into the next millennium.

Romare Bearden (1912–1988), like Lawrence, was a youth in Harlem at the end of the renaissance. Bearden attended college in New York in the early 1930s and exhibited at the Harlem YMCA and at the Harlem Art Workshop (also headed by Savage). By 1940, Bearden had rented studio space on 125th Street in a building also occupied by Jacob Lawrence and Claude McKay. Bearden is seldom identified directly with the Harlem Renaissance, but his art, like the work of Lawrence, recontextualizes his experiences of Harlem. Although Bearden had left Harlem by the mid-twentieth century, remembrances of the old neighborhood would continue to appear in his art for decades.

In the true spirit of the Harlem Renaissance, Bearden took inspiration from African as well as various other sources, including medieval stylization, Chinese calligraphy, the work of the European masters, and biblical and literary themes. His later collages reflect his affinity with cubist structure and the painting of the American precisionist Stuart Davis (who was active in New York during the Harlem Renaissance), as well as his studies at the Art Students League in the 1930s with the political satirist George Grosz. Bearden was also a disciple of jazz, which he deftly translated into visual form. In his compositions, he configured complex overlays of negative and positive space with the same intuitive rectitude as a jazz musician might conceive the compound relationships between sounds and silence. Bearden also applied the methods of the dada artists of the 1920s and 1930s, combining elements of montage, collage, and photography. His images are unique visions of tenement houses, conjure women, jazz sessions, and life in Harlem. Bearden was a man of many talents and deep emotional and intellectual commitments. In addition to his career as a visual artist, he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, spent two decades as a social worker, published poetry, and pursued a brief career as a songwriter. Bearden is recognized today as one of the great American modernists of the twentieth century and a quintessential "renaissance" man.

The artists discussed here are only a few of those whose lives and ambitions were interconnected during the years of the Harlem Renaissance. There are many others, such as the photographer James Van Der Zee (1886–1983), who recorded in pictures a crucial time in our history—creating, for example, valuable visual documents of the activities of Marcus Garvey's pan-Africanist organization, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Van Der Zee's photographic portraits of families and individuals in Harlem provide a breathtaking record of the age. Arriving in Harlem from Massachusetts in 1906, Van Der Zee was hired by the Gertz department store as a darkroom technician, and by 1917, he had opened his own portrait studio on 135th Street (by the early 1930s, he moved to a larger space on Lenox Avenue). Soon, Van Der Zee's talent for creative settings, elaborate props, and ennobling photographs of Harlem's citizens made him a celebrated artist in the community; ultimately, he achieved a reputation as one of the most important photographers in modern American history.

Other artists include the sculptor Richmond Barthé, who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago almost simultaneously with Motley; by the early 1930s, three of Barthé's elegant, lyrical bronze sculptures were purchased by the Whitney Museum. The painter and sculptor Charles Alston was one of the first African Americans to be given a supervisory position by the WPA. Under its auspices, Alston created murals for Harlem Hospital and opened a studio space at 306 West 141st Street. Alston's atelier, known affectionately as "306," became a hub for African American artists and intellectuals, who gathered there to discuss important issues of the day.

William Johnson, *Street Life, Harlem*, c. 1939–1940. (Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Art Resource, New York.)

Miguel Covarrubias, *Rhapsody in Blue*, 1929. (Art Resource, New York. By permission of Fundación Covarrubias.)

Malvin Gray Johnson (1896–1934) studied at the National Academy of Design and exhibited with the Harmon Foundation. His Cézannesque portraits of African American subjects received some adverse criticism for their emphatic modernism, but they attracted the attention of commercial galleries and were given enthusiastic reviews. Sargent Claude Johnson (1887–1967), who was based in San Francisco, created African-inspired sculptural portraits that paid homage to the physical beauty of the black race; Johnson participated in Harmon shows throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Hale Woodruff, who was born in Illinois,

Aaron Douglas, *Song of the Towers*, 1934, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. (Schomburg Center, New York Public Library; Art Resource, New York.)

Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration of the Negro*, 1940–1941, Panel 12: "The railroad stations were at times so crowded that special guards had to be called in to keep order." Tempera on gesso on composition board, 12 by 18 inches; text and title revised by the artist, 1993. (© ARS, New York; © Digital Image; © The Museum of Modern Art, New York, gift of Mrs. David M. Levy, 28. 1942. 6. Licensed by Scala / Art Resource, N. Y.)

was inspired by Mexican muralists; he received one of the first Harmon Foundation awards in 1926, and went on to paint social realist murals on African American history for the libraries of both Atlanta University (where he was chairman of the art department) and Talladega College in Alabama.

Although important research has been done on many visual artists of the Harlem Renaissance, numerous others remain unsung. Many of these men and women have faded into obscurity, but their legacy has not. The painters and sculptors of the Harlem Renaissance constitute a remarkably talented group, who made possible the successes of subsequent generations of African American artists, represented by Bearden, Lawrence, and others. Serious racial, economic, and sociopolitical impediments faced the artists of the Harlem Renaissance in the pursuit of their chosen vocation. Yet the particular circumstances of the period, which allowed a momentary flowering of genius, caused Americans to sit up and take notice of African American creativity for the first time in the history of the United States.

LISA E. FARRINGTON

See also Art Criticism and the Harlem Renaissance; Crisis, The; Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 4—Paris; Federal Programs; Fire!!; Harmon Foundation; Locke, Alain; Modernism; Negritude; New Negro; 135th Street Library; Opportunity; Porter, James Amos; Survey Graphic; Visual Arts; Woodson, Carter G.; *specific artists*

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Associated Negro Press

The Associated Negro Press was not the first black news service. In 1884, Colonel William Murrell, general manager of the Washington, D.C. *Bee*, announced at a meeting of the National Colored Associated Press (NCAP) that Western Union had installed wires in its office to transmit news to other black newspapers around the country. Charles C. Stewart of the Baltimore *Vindicator* chose at least one black newspaper in each state to become a member of NCAP. In 1890, the Associated Correspondents of Race Newspapers (ACRN) was established. It consisted of at least forty reporters from ten newspapers around the country who were based in Washington, D.C., and sent news from Washington to newspapers other than their own ten. Matthew M. Lewey, owner and founder of the Gainesville *Sentinel* and president of the National Negro Press Association, realized that a more efficient system of exchanging articles was necessary to improve coverage by the black press. This topic was explored at the association's convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1911; later that year, Lewey arranged a meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, where a newspaper service for member weeklies was established. The service would gather news from all of the weeklies through Wednesday of each week for publication on Friday or Saturday.

In 1918, Claude Barnett, as part of a public relations campaign for the Chicago *Defender*, visited several black newspapers and learned that many of them had local coverage but lacked national and international news. He then approached Robert S. Abbott, owner and publisher of the *Defender*, and suggested starting a news service to provide stories to back newspapers. Barnett received no support, but in 1919 he launched the Associated Negro Press (ANP) in Chicago.

Barnett called ANP a news service, but its critics said that it was actually a clipping service because Barnett and his staff clipped articles from newspapers nationwide and included them in what ANP sent to its clients, along with articles rewritten from papers such as the Chicago *Defender* and only a handful of original articles from freelancers in Chicago and elsewhere. Abbott complained to a friend that Barnett was "stealing

my news and selling it to other papers for a profit" (Waters 1987, 419); and in general, historians—although they believe that ANP was more than a clipping service—agree with Abbott's accusation. Barnett was short-staffed at the outset and found that the most economical means of providing his service was to rewrite material from the *Defender*, which was then the leading black newspaper in terms of circulation and coverage. In this way, his small staff produced an impressive amount of copy. However, as ANP gained more clients, Barnett was able to attract news sources and thus decrease his dependence on the *Defender*.

Barnett's criteria included accuracy, human interest, coverage of racial concerns, and appeal to a wide audience. As ANP grew, it also attracted reporters from other newspapers: Nahum Brazier (Nahum Daniel Brascher) and Percival Prattis from the *Defender*, and Frank Marshal Davis from Atlanta. They broadened the product by enlisting well-known scholarly writers and personalities as columnists, who commented on a wide variety of topics including civil rights, sports, and science. Barnett paid his writers only a meager salary, on the assumption that they would become celebrated by having their articles and columns published in numerous newspapers. This appeal to fame rather than money helped keep ANP solvent.

ANP served newspapers, schools, organizations, businesses, and individuals; newspaper clients could pay for the service by providing ANP with their local news. ANP's news was mimeographed and delivered twice a week by first-class mail and special delivery. A delivery might consist of two or three packages of fifty to seventy-five legal-size sheets of single-spaced copy, depending on the circulation of the client newspaper. This represented more than enough articles to fill all the sections of the paper except for local stories. ANP's feature stories focused on black history, entertainment, women's fashions, and other subjects. Late-breaking stories and special events were sent over the wires. ANP had its own part-time correspondents in large cities and correspondents abroad in Paris, Moscow, London, Tokyo, and elswhere.

ANP did not collaborate with its white counterpart, the Associated Press (AP); in fact, some of ANP's editors considered AP the enemy. Oswald Garrison Villard, for one, believed AP's coverage of Negroes was biased and tended to polarize whites and Negroes:

> The Associated Press (white) . . . always in its first paragraph . . . attributes the source of trouble to our people "molesting white women." That, the Associated Press knows, is always fuel for the fire of the fury. . . . It arouses certain elements of whites to indignation by the thoughts of the ever "burly black brutes," and it stirs the people of our group to a state of fighting made by the folly of it. (Pride 1974, 51)

But ANP was like AP in at least one respect: Both helped sustain newspapers. According to Waters, "Half, maybe three-fourths, of the papers could not have existed without the copy provided by ANP, just as most white papers would have folded had it not been for AP and UPI" (420). Historians credit ANP with building the Negro press by providing reliable content. Moreover, ANP did much to orchestrate the civil rights movement by reporting on racial discrimination.

ANP reached its height after the period of the Harlem Renaissance, during World War II, when it had 225 domestic subscribers. By 1958, it had only thirty-seven domestic clients. In August 1964, Barnett retired and sold ANP to Alfred Duckett, a public relations specialist in New York City. At that time, ANP had recovered somewhat; it had seventy-five domestic subscribers and two hundred international subscribers (mostly African newspapers). But even a reasonable number of subscribers could not sustain it: With the advent of television and the increased coverage of black issues in white dailies, black newspapers and eventually ANP lost importance. In the early 1960s, though, Barnett started an extension of ANP in Africa, called World News Service (WNS). In 1967, after a series of strokes, Barnett died in Chicago. Duckett distributed feature stories through ANP until 1969.

During the years when ANP operated, 1919 through 1969, nearly fifty African American news services cropped up. However, none of these was nearly as successful as ANP; and after 1969 the black press had no news service until April 1972, when the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA, based in Washington, D.C.) began to provide the National Black News Service.

Geri Alumit

See also Abbott, Robert Sengstacke; Black Press; Chicago Defender; Villard, Oswald Garrison

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Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and Journal of Negro History

Scholars tend to focus on the artistic and literary manifestations of the Harlem Renaissance, neglecting its historical component. In fact, though, the black history movement led by Carter G. Woodson, the second African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University, experienced growth and expansion during the time of the renaissance.

From its humble beginning in 1915, Woodson envisioned the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) as a scientific and scholarly organization dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of useful information about various aspects of black history. Central to this project was the publication of a scientific historical journal, the *Journal of Negro History* (*JNH*), founded in 1916. In format, *JNH* resembled the *American Historical Review*, edited by the prominent scholar J. Franklin Jameson, which was the official organ of the American Historical Association (AHA). Both ASNLH and *JNH* represented a century-long effort to establish black history, first in black academia—historically black colleges and universities—and later in American society in general. The Harlem Renaissance was not only the backdrop but also a significant impetus for this institutionalization. Several factors made a serious study of black history possible: They included (1) white patronage, from individual donors and philanthropic organizations; (2) Woodson's single-minded leadership and his ability to attract prominent white historians and black civic leaders; and (3) the shifting demographics of black America, caused by the "great migration." These same factors also allowed the construction of an intellectual apparatus through which studies of black history could be disseminated to both African Americans and whites.

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, and up to the founding of ASNLH, black history was pursued in the narrow, parochial confines of specialized and localized black intellectual and historical associations. Among African Americans, interest in history and organization for its study were characterized by groups such as the American Negro Academy, founded by Alexander Crummell in 1897; and the Negro Society for Historical Research, founded in the early twentieth century by two black bibliophiles, John ("Grit") Bruce and Arthur Alonso Schomburg. Because their origins were in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the American Negro Academy and the Negro Society for Historical Research relied heavily on nineteenth-century notions of gentlemanly deportment and on elitist ideas about scholarship. Their members, drawn mostly from the black elite, saw their role as disseminating information to educated audiences in the form of addresses, lectures, and treatises. The American Negro Academy published occasional papers, and W. E. B. Du Bois, one of its most distinguished leaders, considered its membership representative of the best men of the race. Although the Negro Society for Historical Research was less exclusive, it, too, had only a moderate impact on the larger community. It consisted primarily of serious collectors and bibliophiles who focused on the black experience, and it proved too insular to survive in a changing intellectual environment.

ASNLH represented a significant departure from these earlier societies. By the 1920s, it emerged from its shadowy position as a small, localized historical organization and became a recognized scholarly association for the promotion of black history. Much of this change was a result of Woodson's pioneering work. Woodson was a native of Kentucky and a graduate of Berea College and Harvard University. As a professionally trained historian, he strongly believed that history and historical understanding involved not only the collection and preservation of materials but also a rigorous application of scientific objectivity to historical data. He understood, furthermore, that to be respected as a legitimate scholarly enterprise and to sustain itself financially, his organization would need the endorsement of white historians, philanthropists, and prominent African American scholars and donors. One source of such support was the presence of leading figures in the white and black communities on the executive council of ASNLH. Throughout the 1920s,

prominent individuals from all walks of life served in this capacity. Historians were represented on the council by Carl Russell Fish of the University of Wisconsin and Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University. Philanthropists included Julius Rosenwald, chairman of Sears Roebuck and Company; and the financier George Peabody, a trustee at Hampton University. The council also included well-known white activists and black intellectuals. For example, two council members were Moorfield Storey, who served as executive director of the NAACP in the early twentieth century; and Monroe Nathan Work, a prominent black sociologist who was the editor of *Negro Yearbook*, an annual compilation of statistics regarding blacks in the United States. Perhaps the most prominent black college president to serve on the council was Robert Russa Moton, Booker T. Washington's successor at Tuskegee Institute; Moton had close ties to the Republican Party throughout the 1920s.

ASNLH also received $25,000 from the Carnegie Institute, with the help of J. Franklin Jameson, the director of the foundation; and a $25,000 grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund. These grants were used to collect data and fund several projects on free black families in the early republic (1789–1830) and in the antebellum period (1830–1860). The grants also supported a series of investigations by Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, a graduate of the University of Michigan and Harvard University who was ASNLH's first associate investigator. Taylor collected information about African Americans during the Reconstruction period (1865–1877) and wrote two monographs: *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* (1924) and *The Negro in the Reconstruction of South Carolina* (1926). In addition, the grants facilitated the hiring of Lorenzo Greene as a part-time associate and field investigator for ASNLH. Between 1928 and 1930, Greene made important contributions to several of Woodson's book-length studies, including *African Myths*, *The Negro in Our History*, and *The Negro Wage Earner*.

ASNLH hired several African American women as research assistants. Irene Wright was hired in 1923 to conduct research in archives at Seville, in Spain. Wright investigated the struggle between the British and Spanish empires for territorial control of the Americas during the colonial period; she also examined material related to the position of blacks in Spanish colonial society. Ruth Anna Fisher, a graduate of Oberlin College who was a research assistant to J. Franklin Jameson, conducted research in the British Museum and the Public Record Office and found important letters as well as the diaries of captains of slaving vessels. Woodson's goal in having Fisher conduct research was to develop a documentary history and an anthropological portrait of Native Africans before the advent of the slave trade.

Another important component of the black history movement was the annual conventions held by ASNLH. Consistent with the overall goals of the organization and the fact that it sought to establish itself in large urban centers, meetings were held in cities with large black populations and established black communities: Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; Nashville, Tennessee; and elsewhere. These conventions often showcased the varied achievements of ASNLH and brought together distinguished individuals from many sectors of the population of the host city. The meetings of 1920 and 1924 can serve to illustrate the goals of ASNLH. The convention of 1920, held in Louisville, Kentucky, was devoted to the theme "Social and Economic Development of the Negro." Speakers focused on the early history of African Americans, the teaching of black history, and the specific contributions of enslaved Africans to civilization. The convention of 1924, in Baltimore, Maryland, examined (among other subjects) folklore among African Americans. Also, N. F. Mossell, author of *The Work of the Afro-American Women*, presented a paper, "History from the Point of View of a Child," in which he stressed the importance of elementary reading material in helping young students acquire a knowledge of their history.

These conferences not only highlighted black history but also addressed other concerns of ASNLH. Woodson felt that the role of the organization encompassed more than history as an academic discipline: It also extended to solving the problems of society. He hoped that ASNLH could help strengthen training in the social sciences in black schools and stimulate research and teaching about the social sciences and the economic problems of African Americans. Most important, he thought that ultimately his work could and would lead to an improvement in race relations.

One of the most enduring legacies of ASNLH was the establishment of Negro History Week in 1926. This event—celebrated in February, the month in which Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln were born—highlighted the work of ASNLH and drew attention to the importance of teaching black history in primary and secondary schools and at institutions of higher learning. Woodson never wanted Negro History Week to be observed only by the black community, so he

took great pains to disseminate information about it to members of the white community.

Like ASNLH, the *Journal of Negro History (JNH)* played a crucial role in the creation of a viable black historical tradition. The journal—edited by Woodson from 1916 until his death in 1950—was the organization's premier scientific publication. It was founded to meet the need for an accurate record of black people's past and, equally, to provide a forum where black scholars could publish studies challenging conventional wisdom about that past. As many scholars have noted, the major historical associations, such as the American Historical Association, rarely published scholarship by African Americans. The *American Historical Review* did not invite W. E. B. Du Bois to publish a paper until 1910; the Mississippi Valley Historical Association and the Southern Historical Association did not invite black historians to present papers until the 1940s.

JNH was also important because of its multifaceted presentation of African Americans' past. The journal featured articles, communications, informative letters from individuals, notices, and reports from the annual and spring conferences of ASNLH. Many books were first printed, in their entirety, in *JNH*. At the center of the journal's philosophy were "five ways to help the cause"—reminders about how subscribers could help promote the study of black history. They were as follows: "subscribe to the journal, become a member of the Association, contribute to the research fund, collect and send us the historical materials bearing on the Negroes of your community, and urge every Negro to write us all he knows about his family history."

JNH published a wide range of scholarship. It concentrated on revisionist history; for example, it challenged the southern historian Ulrich Bonnell Philips, whose *American Negro Slavery* depicted slavery as fairly benign; and it also offered significant revisions of the concept of Reconstruction (1865–1876) as a "tragic era." The earlier, legendary account had taken a dim view of blacks' participation in Reconstruction; blacks, who were portrayed as docile, lazy, and incompetent, were said to have been manipulated by two invidious factions: northern carpetbaggers (northerners who packed all of their belongings in a carpetbag and came South to profit from Reconstruction) and southern scalawags (native southerners who profited from the corruption of the Reconstruction era at the expense of their fellow southerners). This older view was countered in articles by John Lynch, a participant in Reconstruction in Virginia; by Alrutheus Ambush Taylor's pioneering work on Reconstruction; and by Woodson's own *Negro in Our History*, a scholarly textbook published in several editions throughout the 1920s. Moreover, Lynch, Taylor, and Woodson offered alternative portraits of black politicians and their activities in southern legislatures during Reconstruction, and thus did significant groundwork for the contemporary view of Reconstruction.

JNH also focused on the diaspora and its implications for African American life. The journal often included articles on the African past as well as the black experience in Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere. The article "Three Elements of African Culture," by Gordon Blaine Hancock, a well-known African American educator at Virginia Union, appeared in *JNH* in 1923. Also in 1923, in a nod to European history, *JNH* published Albert Perry's article on Abram Hannibal, an African who served at the court of the Russian czar Peter the Great. Perhaps the most interesting work of this kind was produced by Zora Neale Hurston. Hurston, who was a folklorist and ethnographer, spent considerable time in the 1920s documenting the folkways of rural African Americans throughout the South. Her contributions include "Cudjo's Own Story of the Last African Slavery" and a set of her own letters on the Mose Settlement, one of the oldest black colonies in Florida. Hurston's work complemented that of Elsie Clews Parsons, who worked intensely to stimulate interest in the collection of black folklore. ASNLH offered a prize of $200 for the best material collected.

JNH also included other subject matter of importance to African Americans. Particular issues presented material on black people's feelings about World War I; letters from participatants in the "great migration," the movement of blacks from the rural South to the urban North between 1915 and 1930; reviews of the work of prominent authors, such as W. E. B. Du Bois's *Darkwater* (1920); and advertisements for black colleges and universities such as Howard, Tuskegee, Fisk, and Morris Brown.

Some issues of *JNH* were devoted to a specific topic. The issue of July 1922, for instance, was devoted to the black church; articles by Woodson, John Cromwell, and Walter Brooks focused on denominations such as the Baptists and examined churches in specific geographic locales such as the District of Columbia. An issue in 1924 was devoted exclusively to civil rights groups in the black community. Mary White Ovington, a protégé of Du Bois, wrote an article about the NAACP; L. Hollingsworth Wood, who was an active member of the executive council of ASNLH and a longtime supporter of African American causes, wrote

an article on the Urban League; and the bibliophile and collector Jesse Moorland, a trustee of Howard University, wrote about the influence of the YMCA on African Americans. On important topics like Reconstruction, whole books were printed. For example, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor's *The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia* and *The Negro in the Reconstruction of South Carolina* were first printed in *JNH*, in 1924 and 1926.

ASNLH and *JNH* represent the culmination of a century-long effort to make black history a professional discipline. Like the Harlem Renaissance, the black history movement represented an assertive effort to reconstruct the past through viable organizations. This goal was supported by several trends in the African American community and the wider American community. Urbanization and professionalization—which facilitated the growth of institutions such as the black press, black businesses, black academic associations, and graduate training for black historians—were directly responsible for the development of the black history movement. Thus this movement, not unlike the literature of the Harlem Renaissance, created a legacy for black and white Americans.

STEPHEN G. HALL

See also Bruce, John Edward; Greene, Lorenzo; Hurston, Zora Neale; Moton, Robert Russa; National Urban League; Ovington, Mary White: Schomburg, Arthur A.; Woodson, Carter G.; Work, Monroe Nathan

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Atlanta University Studies

The Atlanta University Studies series lies outside the historical context of the Harlem Renaissance. Nevertheless, under the editorship of the protean W. E. B. Du Bois (1897–1914), the series provided an intellectual foundation for many of the significant themes in the ideology of the New Negro. To be more precise, the studies provided an intellectual justification for attempts by social scientists, writers of fiction and cultural and social criticism, and graphic artists to unearth African elements retained in the black population not only in North America but also in the Caribbean and South America. Furthermore, with regard to the development of black businesses, the series provided a philosophical rationale that resonated in the rhetoric of many black political leaders, such as Marcus Garvey. Finally, the studies provided factual evidence of significant enterprise among blacks (both male and female) nationwide. Thus despite the unevenness of the publications

and the consequent acerbic criticism of Du Bois's efforts from white commentators who reviewed some of the studies, these works were an integral part of the philosophical rationalization of the New Negro movement.

The Atlanta University Studies series originated in 1896, at the annual Atlanta University Conference on Negro Problems. The annual conferences—the brainchild of the university's white president, Horace Bumstead; and one of its white trustees, a New Englander—were modeled after the Farmers Conferences of the Tuskegee Institute. Like Tuskegee's conferences, those at Atlanta were, in the words of the historian Leroy Davis, "laudable early attempts at meshing the needs of the community with the resources of the academy."

The studies conceived between 1897 and 1914 were edited primarily by Du Bois. His grandiose vision of the project called for a repetition of each topic every ten years. The proceedings of the studies ranged widely and (as noted above) varied in quality. Although Du Bois's plans did not reach fruition (and he did not participate in the project after 1914), his volumes in the series had a perceptible impact on the thought of people as varied as Alain Locke, Charles S. Johnson, and other patrons of the Harlem Renaissance; E. Franklin Frazier and other social and cultural critics; and sculptors and painters such as Richmond Barthé and Aaron Douglas.

As editor of and contributor to the series, Du Bois often vacillated between stereotypes of his African ancestors and genuine, lucid insights into their lives. For example, in *Efforts for Social Betterment Among Negro Americans* (1898), he referred to African religions as the "mystery and rites of . . . fetishism." As late as 1914, in *Morals and Manners Among Negro Americans*, Du Bois seemed to invent traditions, writing, "Africa is distinctly the land of the Mother." Nevertheless, Du Bois's thoughts on Africa and Africans were significant. Influenced by the immigrant German-Jewish anthropologist Franz Boas, who delivered the commencement address at Atlanta University in 1906, Du Bois again and again celebrated the contribution of blacks to world civilization, demonstrating that black Americans were descendants of peoples who had made and were perfectly capable of making essential contributions to the progress of humankind in the present and future. Furthermore, Du Bois anticipated the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits and the works of the "father of Negro history," Carter G. Woodson, during the 1920s and early 1930s, that revealed African "retentions" in the black population in the United States. Africanism in the African American peoples was a vital theme, promulgated time and again by major writers and artists during the Harlem Renaissance. Du Bois also overtly linked pertinent African retentions to the issue of black people's capability in business enterprises when he asserted, in 1897, that many Africans "are born men and traffickers." In 1899, in *The Negro in Business*, a work in the Atlanta series, he once again asserted that "the African Negro is born a trader." Accordingly, although one of the most renowned social critics of the Harlem Renaissance, E. Franklin Frazier, rejected the notion of Africanism as the source of some blacks' success in business, he nevertheless saw business enterprises as essential for any program of black liberation.

In sum, the Atlanta University Studies evidently provided a strong foundation for the rising New Negro ideologies of economic and cultural nationalism. That the artists and theoreticians of the Harlem Renaissance were unable to impose cultural nationalism perhaps had more to do with their economic dependence on white patronage than with any unwillingness on their part to seize the historical moment of the 1920s for black liberation.

VERNON J. WILLIAMS

See also Barthé, Richmond; Boas, Franz; Douglas, Aaron; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Frazier, E. Franklin; Herskovits, Melville; Johnson, Charles Spurgeon; Locke, Alain; New Negro; New Negro Movement; Woodson, Carter G.

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Attaway, William

William Alexander Attaway (1911–1986) was a novelist, songwriter, playwright, screenwriter, labor organizer, and actor. He was the son of a physician and a teacher in Greenville, Mississippi, and was born into a life of privilege, but he did not want to follow in his parents' professional footsteps. As a teenager he chose to attend

a vocational school and learn automotive mechanics; and although he soon yielded to family pressure and went to a regular high school, he continued to rebel against upper-class respectability. When a high school teacher introduced him to the poetry of Langston Hughes, he immediately decided to become a writer. He attended the University of Illinois at Urbana until his father's death, whereupon he dropped out to travel around the country as a hobo for the next two years. He returned to college and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1936.

Attaway published his first short story, "Tale of the Blackamoor," in *Challenge* in June 1935. At about the same time he joined the touring company of *You Can't Take It With You*, helped by his sister, Ruth Attaway, who had begun her acting career as Rheba in the original production. While on the road, he learned that his novel *Let Me Breathe Thunder* had been accepted for publication, immediately quit the tour, and returned home to write.

The publication date of *Let Me Breathe Thunder*—1939—puts Attaway at the end of the Harlem Renaissance and the beginning of a period of realism. He established himself as a writer with this novel, a critically acclaimed story of two white hoboes and their Mexican charge. However, neither *Let Me Breathe Thunder* nor his next novel, *Blood on the Forge*, which was also well received by the critics, sold well (the latter, though, was reprinted in 1993). The reason may be that the landmark work *Native Son* by his friend Richard Wright, the icon of realism, was published in 1940, and Attaway's novels suffered in comparison. The three tragic Moss brothers in *Blood on the Forge*, like the white characters in *Let Me Breathe Thunder*, seem tame next to Wright's Bigger Thomas. (Attaway and Richard Wright had become friends in November 1935, when both were working on the Federal Writers' Project guide to Illinois.)

Attaway later turned to more lucrative forms of writing. He composed and arranged songs for Harry Belafonte, among others, and was involved in *Calypso Song Book* (1957, a collection of songs) and *I Hear America Singing* (1967, a children's book about the history of popular music). He also wrote scripts for radio, television, and motion pictures. One of his most important scripts was *One Hundred Years of Laughter* (1966), for a television special on black humor. After its completion he took his family to Barbados for what was to have been a week's vacation; they stayed eleven years. Attaway spent the last years of his life in Berkeley and then in Los Angeles, California. In 1985, while working on a script for *The Atlanta Child Murders*, he suffered a heart attack from which he never fully recovered. He died in 1986.

Biography

William Attaway was born on 19 November 1911 in Greenville, Mississippi. His mother, Florence Parray Attaway, was a teacher; his father, William Alexander Attaway, was a physician and businessman who cofounded the National Negro Insurance Association. Dr. Attaway moved the family to Chicago when young William was about ten years old, to escape the segregated South; this migration northward became a central theme in Attaway's novel *Blood on the Forge* (1941). Attaway left college for two years and became a hobo—this experience was a theme in his novel *Let Me Breathe Thunder* (1939)—but eventually received his B.A. in 1936. He married Frances Settele on 28 December 1962, at the home of his friend Harry Belafonte. The Attaways had a son and a daughter. Attaway died on 17 June 1986, in Los Angeles.

CARMALETTA M. WILLIAMS

See also Federal Writers' Project; Wright, Richard

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Authors: 1—Overview

The authors of the Harlem Renaissance shared the goal of developing new forms of artistic representation of the African American experience. At the same time,

they manifested a wide range of aesthetic principles and radically diverse concepts of blackness. The Harlem Renaissance meant different things to different people. The novelists, poets, dramatists, and essayists whose activity was centered in Harlem, although aware of the unique value of African American culture and art, interpreted and represented this uniqueness in many, sometimes conflicting, ways, embodying the tensions and contradictions of their American context.

In their quest to move beyond the dominant white aesthetics, black writers and intellectuals, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, and James Weldon Johnson, were convinced that the Negro Renaissance was an auspicious movement in American cultural life. Johnson, among others, believed that if it succeeded it would undermine prejudice, win respect for the intellectual and artistic achievements of blacks, and consequently promote equal rights.

The new sensibility of this period, first anticipated by Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903, affirmed the dignity and cultural potential of African Americans. Centuries of slavery and racial prejudice had imposed on them a "double-consciousness," to use Du Bois's term, and they were now challenged to acknowledge their own intrinsic power (such power is always closely connected to knowledge of one's own value) and to explore broader personal and artistic territories. Du Bois promoted many talented young African Americans, and as one of the organizers of the Pan-African conference in Paris in 1919, he urged black artists to create works from their own experiences and to celebrate their African and African American cultural heritage.

Du Bois was a charismatic figure who had an unquestionable influence on the New Negro, but his elitist notion of the "talented tenth" was criticized by several artists of the period (Wallace Thurman, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, and Langston Hughes in particular) as a Victorian cliché. Also, Du Bois's moral outlook contrasted with Locke's broader celebration of the New Negro. Locke saw the New Negro movement as a spiritual coming-of-age and "the finding of one another" as the greatest experience for those who gathered in Harlem. He saw Harlem as an experiment in racial welding that would enhance race consciousness. In his anthology *The New Negro* (1925), illustrated by Aaron Douglas, Winold Reiss, and Miguel Covarrubias, Locke not only showed the world the impressive impact of modern black culture but also acknowledged an emerging "common consciousness."

Many writers of the Harlem Renaissance were convinced that drama was the crucial form for the future of blacks' artistic development. As early as 1908 the first organization of African American theater professionals, the Frogs, was founded by George Walker and ten other members. Their purpose was to develop an archive of social, historical, and literary materials for a theatrical library. Around 1910 Egbert Austin ("Bert") Williams, then America's top comedian, was elected president of the Frogs.

Du Bois's idea of theater was that it should be essentially political, so that drama would teach colored people the meaning of their history and also reveal African Americans to the white world. This concept was counterbalanced by that of Locke, who had a propensity for drama concerned not so much with protest or propaganda as with a revival of folklore. In Locke's opinion, poetry and drama should reflect the soul of a people different in temperament from the "smug, unimaginative industrialist and the self-righteous Puritan." The problem facing the black playwright was how to reconcile the vitality of folklore, an oral tradition, with the written language. Zora Neale Hurston (who won second prize for both fiction and drama in *Opportunity*'s literary contest of 1925) and Langston Hughes (who won first prize for poetry) did achieve a balance between these elements and conceived works based on black folk culture. In 1926, Locke, in "The Negro and the American Stage," stressed the importance of folklore for the "complete development of the Negro dramatist"; that same year Hurston's play *Color Struck* appeared in *Fire!!*—a magazine produced by the collaborative efforts of Wallace Thurman, Aaron Douglas, Bruce Nugent, John P. Davis, Gwendolyn Bennett, Hurston, and her friend Langston Hughes. *Color Struck* was the first of Hurston's many achievements in drama, which she considered "inherent to Negro life." In her plays as well as her prose, ethnography was applied to performance as a mode of scientific investigation and artistic representation. In 1930, Hurston and Hughes—who both received the patronage, and were subject to the psychological impositions, of Charlotte Mason—wrote *Mule Bone*, intending it to be "the first real Negro folk comedy." Through a skillful use of black vernacular and black tradition, the play introduced a dramatic form that contrasted strongly with the stereotypical or ambivalent black characters in popular drama of the time, and also marked a clear departure from white American modernism.

Because of a disagreement between the authors over the copyright, *Mule Bone* could not be performed until several decades later (1991). Other African American

plays, however, did have a significant impact at the time. In 1929, *Harlem*, by Wallace Thurman and William Rapp, opened at the Apollo Theater and became the most successful work written by African Americans but produced for Broadway's white audience. In 1935, Hughes's play *Mulatto* opened on Broadway; it had the longest run of any play by an African American until Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, in 1959.

The aesthetic characteristics of the dramas of the Harlem Renaissance can also be found in its poetry and fiction. The first New Negro poets to attain recognition were Claude McKay and Countee Cullen. McKay, whose genius encompassed many contradictions, moved to Harlem from his native Jamaica in 1915; he immediately became a voice of unconventional wisdom and later was praised by Thurman as one of the few relevant artists "who had some concrete idea of style." McKay's *Harlem Shadows* (which included the famous sonnet "If We Must Die") was published in 1921, introducing him as the most fiery, radical, and powerful poet in Harlem's artistic world.

Countee Cullen was the boy wonder of the Harlem Renaissance and Du Bois's son-in-law. (He was married to Yolande, Du Bois's only daughter, in a memorable ceremony, and soon therafter escaped to Europe with a male friend, Harold Jackman.) Cullen is a striking example of the controversial aspects of the vogue for Harlem. He tried to embody the spirit that made the New Negro respectable and worthy to white audiences. Fearing the dangers inherent in yielding to the contemporary fashion for exoticism and in exposing things that should remain secret, Cullen was among those who strongly objected to Carl Van Vechten's novel *Nigger Heaven* (1926). Cullen's own poetry, although it dealt with African and African American themes, conformed to traditional middle-class taste. Thurman gave an ironic picture of Cullen in his "creative hours, eyes on a page of Keats, fingers on typewriter, mind frantically conjuring African scenes."

James Weldon Johnson, a transitional figure who later became an inspiration for the Harlem Renaissance and a renowned poet, composed many songs for Broadway musicals, together with his brother Rosamond and Bob Cole. They also wrote several popular songs, including "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which became the unofficial black national anthem. Johnson is also important for his groundbreaking preface to *The Book of American Negro Poetry* in 1922; in this preface he stressed the literary potential of the black vernacular, as well as the power, emotional endowment, and artistic originality of African American writers. At about the same time, Hughes was incorporating blues rhythms and vernacular idioms into his poetry; and his radical poems of the 1930s included realistic portrayals of black characters—the lives of plain black men and women and their struggles against injustice.

Writers of fiction often focused on a fascination with Harlem, on the complexities of interracial relations and relations among blacks, and on the black protagonist represented with all his or her uncertainties. In *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (published anonymously in 1912 but reprinted in 1927), James Weldon Johnson prefigured what would become a pattern of other works of the Harlem Renaissance: an often unreliable narrator who tells about his moving from the rural South to the metropolitan North, experiencing the excitement of groundbreaking intellectual and artistic activity, and becoming intrigued by African American tradition and folklore—stereotypes still prevalent in white culture.

Jean Toomer's novel *Cane* (1923), a montage of prose and poetry, was the most refined modernist attempt thus far to render the black experience, individual perceptions of that experience, and the ambiguities that persisted in cultural dialogues between the South and the North. *Cane* introduced many of the themes and concerns of later Harlem Renaissance fiction, including differences of geographical origin, class, and gender within the black community. McKay's *Home to Harlem* (1928) was an immediate success, but it was harshly criticized by Du Bois for its lack of social decorum and still remains largely unappreciated despite its modern style. McKay combines the narratives of two migrants to show how a working-class African American and an intellectual Haitian immigrant overcome their class and national prejudice to develop an increasing, albeit unlikely, sense of familiarity and comradeship. The following works all appeared in 1928, an important year for the black novel: Jessie Redmon Fauset's *Plum Bun*, focusing on middle-class urban blacks in the North; Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*, which took up complex themes and issues such as female identity, class, color, and gender; Rudolph Fisher's *The Walls of Jericho* (Hughes described Fisher as the wittiest writer of the Harlem Renaissance, "whose tongue was flavored with the saltiest humor"); and Du Bois's *Dark Princess*. In 1932, Wallace Thurman's *Infants of the Spring* caused an uproar because of its uninhibited depiction of nightlife in Harlem and because Thurman sharply criticized many representative figures of the

renaissance—his sarcastic bent made him disclaim the polite literature promoted by black leaders. (This inclination toward sarcasm was shared by several other authors, such as Claude McKay; Zora Neale Hurston, who dubbed Du Bois "Mr. Dubious"; Rudolph Fisher; and George S. Schuyler, who, as Hughes recalled, wrote "verbal brickbats that said sometimes one thing sometimes another but always vigorously.") McKay was not only an able critic but also an exceptionally voracious reader; as a result, the publisher Macaulay hired him as a reader—the only African American reader to be employed by any of the larger white publishing firms. Interestingly, in *The Blacker the Berry* (1929), Thurman used a dark-skinned female protagonist; he was one of very few male writers who did this (Du Bois, in *Dark Princess*, was another).

Gender remained an issue in the Harlem Renaissance. The success of Nella Larsen's cryptic, modernist fiction, such as *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929), did not prevent her from falling into oblivion right after the crash of the stock market in 1929. The career of Jessie Redmon Fauset came to the same sad conclusion—as did the career of Zora Neale Hurston, although Hurston was one of the two literary giants of the Harlem Renaissance (the other was Toomer). The female poets Georgia Douglas Johnson, Anne Spencer, and Helene Johnson (whose "American Color Point of View" can be read as a feminine counterpart of Hughes's "The Negro Speaks of Rivers") went almost unacknowledged.

The New Negro movement seemed to decline with the crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression, which led many artists and intellectuals to either an outright commitment to Marxism or an identification with American progressivism in general. Still, despite the shock caused by the Depression, the works published in the middle and late 1930s—Hurston's novels, including her masterpiece *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), and her collection of tales *Mules and Men* (1935); Hughes's autobiography *The Big Sea* (1940); McKay's *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (1940); and many others—confirmed the lasting legacy of this generous movement, which would leave its imprint on generations of writers to come. The vocabulary of color and sounds that James Baldwin borrowed from the Harlem Renaissance painter Beauford Delaney, the modernist surrealistic mode of Ellison's *Invisible Man*, the epic of the black struggle shown in the panels of Jacobs Lawrence and recounted in the novels of Toni Morrison—these are just a few examples of the inheritance left to today's black artists.

PAOLA BOI

See also Covarrubias, Miguel; Cullen–Du Bois Wedding; Delaney, Beauford; Douglas, Aaron; Lawrence, Jacob; Literature: 1—Overview; Mason, Charlotte Osgood; Modernism; New Negro; New Negro Movement; Opportunity Literary Contests; Pan-African Congresses; Reiss, Winold; Talented Tenth; Theater; Williams, Egbert Austin "Bert"; *specific writers and works*

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Authors: 2—Fiction

African American writers of fiction during the Harlem Renaissance continued a tradition that had begun in the mid-nineteenth century. In their novels and short stories, these writers developed themes of race, gender, class, justice, violence, history, migration, and cultural memory—themes that were similar to those found in the earlier fiction of, among others, William Wells Brown (*Clotel*, 1853), Harriet Wilson (*Our Nig*, 1859), Frances Harper (*Iola Leroy*, 1892), Pauline Hopkins (*Contending Forces*, 1900), Charles Chesnutt (*House Behind the Cedars*, 1900; *The Marrow of Tradition*, 1901), and James Weldon Johnson (*The Autobiography

of an Ex-Colored Man, 1912). However, the fiction writers of the Harlem Renaissance broke away from the earlier tradition in that they "gave African American culture a more urban, assertive, and cosmopolitan voice" (Andrews et al. 1997). One significant factor in this transformation of the fictional voice was the migration of African Americans from the rural South to northern urban industrial centers as well as to urban areas of the South; another factor was African Americans' travels in Europe during World War I and as part of the expatriate generation. At the same time, it is important to note that writers such as Zora Neale Hurston (in "Spunk," 1925; "Sweat," 1926; and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937) and Jean Toomer (in *Cane*, 1923) paid homage to Africans' and African Americans' southern ancestral past.

The transformed voice permeating the fiction of the Harlem Renaissance expresses strong pride in blackness, and in some instances calls directly for resistance to both subtle and overt racial oppression. In calling for social and political equality for black Americans and encouraging African Americans not to acquiesce, fiction writers—along with poets and writers of prose—contributed to the racial uplift movement.

Many fiction writers of the Harlem Renaissance disagreed about whether the purpose of art should be aesthetic or propagandistic. Much of the fiction produced during this period served a political or propagandistic purpose whether or not an author intended a work to be used in that way. The fiction of the Harlem Renaissance emphasizes the richness and diversity within African American culture. Consequently, novelists such as Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset provide a glimpse into middle-class black America, primarily in the North; Zora Neale Hurston provides an overview of class within African American communities in the South. The fiction of the Harlem Renaissance offers a panoramic view of African American life at various levels from the black bourgeoisie to folk culture. By exploring the diversity within African American culture, these writers point out differences in the experience of African Americans based on educational background and class, despite common experiences based on racial background.

Johnson: *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

James Weldon Johnson's novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912) can set the stage for the fiction of this period, because Johnson developed common themes such as the construction of identity, "passing," violence, and intraracial conflict. This novel was reissued in 1927, at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, perhaps because of those themes. Johnson examines the social construction of race through a mixed-race protagonist. Similar to several other fiction writers—such as Nella Larsen in *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929), Jessie Fauset in *Plum Bun* (1929), and Wallace Thurman in *The Blacker the Berry* (1929)—Johnson explores the psychological consequences of blackness as a racial marker in a society that prefers biological and visible whiteness.

Johnson was a precursor of other writers of the Harlem Renaissance who examined race relations, violence, and interracial as well as intraracial conflict. For instance, Larsen, Fauset, and Toomer, like Johnson, explore interracial relationships at several levels: intimate, political, and social. Furthermore, Toomer in *Cane* (1923), Walter White in *The Fire in the Flint* (1924), and Langston Hughes in *The Ways of White Folks* (1933) examine the causes and effects of racial violence directed against African Americans.

During the Harlem Renaissance, fiction writers continued another tradition in African American literature: examining the effects of migration on black individuals and communities. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans migrated from the South to the North and within the South. Johnson's protagonist in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* migrates from the North to the South, to Europe, and then back to the United States. Similarly, in their fiction, Jean Toomer, Nella Larsen, Wallace Thurman, and Langston Hughes focus on the movement of blacks from one cultural space to another; Larsen and Toomer shed light on how the return to the South affected African Americans.

Toomer: *Cane*

Jean Toomer's *Cane* was published in 1923. It received positive reviews for its modernist style and its examination of black migration and the connection between African Americans and their ancestral past in the South and in Africa. Many scholars associate the publication of *Cane* with the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance as a literary movement. *Cane* is certainly important in relation to other fiction of this period, given the common themes found in Toomer's text and in subsequent works. However, it is difficult to place *Cane* within any one genre, because throughout this

work Toomer used elements of the short story, poetry, and the novel. *Cane* is divided into three sections, to chronicle black migration from South to North and back to the South.

Toomer explores the causes and effects of the psychic or spiritual death many African Americans underwent during this period. This theme of spiritual death is explored in both northern and southern settings. Toomer emphasizes the theme of migration to illustrate the cultural displacement and social isolation of blacks who went from the South to the urban North. The rural South depicted in *Cane* symbolizes African Americans' spirituality and strong communal bonds; the North symbolizes isolation, materialism, and individual success.

Other themes developed in *Cane* include sexual exploitation, miscegenation, generational shifts, work, violence, and resistance. Toomer develops these themes and the theme of spiritual death through individual narratives centered on archetypal characters representing a broad range of individuals. For instance, the text opens with "Karintha," in which the title character is a girl stifled by a sexually oppressive and exploitative environment; and in this part of the book, Toomer contrasts Karintha's beauty, and the beauty of certain aspects of nature, with the ugliness of the girl's poverty-stricken environment, the men who exploit Karintha, and the devastating psychological effects of sexual exploitation.

"Becky," the second vignette in *Cane*, explores the theme of interracial relationships and miscegenation. Becky is a white woman who gives birth to two African American boys. This is the first story in *Cane* to explore the tangled racial skeins in the South, but it revises the traditional narrative of miscegenation by focusing on the community's reaction to the forbidden sexual relationship between Becky and her black lover. In mainstream narratives that alluded to intimate relationships between black men and white women, the black man was more often than not described as a brute threatening the sanctity of white womanhood. Toomer challenges the stereotype of the black brute: He depicts Becky as willingly becoming involved with a black man. We know that Becky has entered this relationship willingly because in order to protect her lover from retaliatory violence by white "protectors" of womanhood, she never reveals his identity. Furthermore, the fact that she has two black sons indicates a long-term relationship with her lover.

Toomer addresses race as a social construction in "Becky," and also in "Bona and Paul." Becky's sons are described as Negro rather than biracial even though their mother is white. This accords with a practice of the time during which the story is set: the "one drop" rule, whereby people of mixed race were considered to belong to the socially subordinate race. Other fiction writers of the Harlem Renaissance—including Nella Larsen in *Quicksand* and *Passing*, Jessie Fauset in *Plum Bun*, and Langston Hughes in the short stories "Passing" and "Father and Son" from *The Ways of White Folks*—also take up the theme of race as a social construction, describing the plight of mixed-race individuals and people involved in interracial relationships in a racist society.

"Becky" also considers the hypocrisy of southerners who attempt to hide behind religion while engaging in unchristian behavior. Toomer writes: "She's dead; they've gone away. The pines whisper to Jesus. The bible flaps its leaves with an aimless rustle on her mound." The reference to the pines suggests that the crimes committed by presumably Christian yet racist southerners—in this case the death of Becky and the disruption of her sons' lives—will be revealed to a higher being. In the story, both whites and blacks isolate Becky and render her powerless. They assuage their guilt by leaving food for her and by building her a house, but the house is built on such shaky ground that it collapses, crushing her.

Each story in *Cane* builds on other stories in the text. For instance, "Fern" further develops the themes of isolation, sexual exploitation, and miscegenation found in "Karintha" and "Becky." Toomer also develops the theme of interracial relationships and sexuality and connects it to the theme of violence in "Blood Burning Moon." In "Blood Burning Moon," Toomer asks who has the right to the black woman, and he shows how this question is inextricably linked to the history of the socially condoned sexual exploitation of the black female body during the era of slavery. Although this story is set after that era, the narrator alludes to past differences in power—differences determined by race—and shows the connections between race relations during slavery and afterward.

Toomer addresses the causes and effects of racially based violence for the first time in *Cane* in "Blood Burning Moon." This story opens with a poem describing a woman's braid, which looks like a lyncher's rope. As in other stories in the text, the epigraph at the beginning foreshadows the prevalent theme. Writers

such as Toomer, Hughes, White, and Larsen present lynching as a theme because this was a very real threat to African Americans of the time.

The second part of *Cane* takes place in the urban North: in Washington, D.C., and Chicago. Here Toomer contrasts the earthy southern landscape with northern coldness. Toomer associates the cold with the isolation of blacks living in this new environment and with the concrete buildings characteristic of industrialization. Toomer demonstrates in Part Two how African Americans who deny Africa and the American South as a vital part of their heritage become consumed by an emphasis on money, "machines, nightclubs, newspapers, and anything else which represents modern society" (Bontemps 1972). The acceptance of materialistic, individualistic values has a devastating impact on the African American community because the emphasis on individual success can lead to estrangement from the black community and their ancestral past. Toomer's critique of the northern urban environment suggests the disillusionment felt by many blacks who had migrated to the promised land and found that they still encountered racism and limited employment opportunities and were still subjected to violence.

Part Three of *Cane* takes the reader and Kabnis, the central character of this section, back to the South. Toomer depicts Kabnis as a man in search of his identity, and this is especially important because Kabnis rejects and hates the South upon first arriving there. In this section, Toomer chronicles Kabnis's journey toward connecting with his black ancestral past.

Cane is a seminal work of fiction. Toomer addresses themes associated with the Harlem Renaissance; he also addresses concerns of modernist writers during this era, linking the literature of the Harlem Renaissance to the American modernist movement.

White: *The Fire in the Flint*

In *The Fire in the Flint* (1924), Walter White expands on Johnson's and Toomer's use of violence as a theme. During his tenure with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), White—who was able to pass as a white man—infiltrated and investigated white supremacist groups. As an eyewitness of the activities of white lynch mobs, he was able to give lawyers and others in the antilynching movement valuable firsthand information. In *The Fire in the Flint*, he not only exposes American racism and lynching but also offers insights into the black labor movement and demolishes the myth of the African American brute.

Women Writers

African American women wrote some of the most important fiction of the Harlem Renaissance. Jessie Redmon Fauset, a prolific writer, wrote four novels—*There Is Confusion* (1924), *The Chinaberry Tree* (1931), *Plum Bun*, and *Comedy American Style* (1933)—as well as literary reviews, poems, and short stories. Nella Larsen wrote *Quicksand* and *Passing*. Zora Neale Hurston wrote short stories, plays, and novels including "Sweat," "Spunk," *Colorstruck* (1925), and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The playwright Georgia Douglas Johnson wrote antilynching works and dramas focused on class, miscegenation, and the sexual exploitation of black women, such as *A Sunday Morning in the South* (1925), *Blue Blood* (1926), *Safe* (1929), and *Blue-Eyed Black Boy* (1930s). Mary Burrill, another playwright of the Harlem Renaissance, addressed themes similar to those of black female novelists and playwrights. Burrill's *They That Sit in Darkness* (1919) focuses on motherhood and birth control; her *Aftermath* (1928) focuses on resistance to racial oppression and the position of black soldiers returning to the United States after fighting for American democracy.

Women authors such as Fauset, Larsen, Hurston, and Georgia Douglas Johnson provide a critique of both the "new woman" and the "New Negro" in their fiction. Fauset and Larsen illustrate the precarious position of African American women within both movements. In general, these women writers describe intersections of race, class, and gender. They create multidimensional female characters who overtly and covertly resist victimization based on their gender as well as their race.

Fauset, Larsen, and Hurston also offer a profound critique of marriage by examining the unequal power of men and women and the economic basis of marriage as an institution. As DuCille (1993) notes, writers such as Fauset, Larsen, and Hurston "use coupling as a metaphor through which to examine and critique the color consciousness, class stratification, social conventions, and gender relations of the burgeoning black middle class and working class communities." Furthermore, these writers examine how African American women react to being considered sex objects. Hurston and Larsen illustrate how African American women develop a sense of sexual agency despite living in a

racist, sexist society. For instance, Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is a coming-of-age story describing the social and sexual development of the heroine, Janie Crawford.

Female authors also provide a critique of the educational and employment opportunities available to women. For instance, Larsen, in her depiction of Naxos in *Quicksand*, criticizes the southern black school for attempting to train pupils to imitate whiteness. Larsen's heroine has difficulty finding employment once she leaves Naxos, because of her race and gender. Fauset demonstrates how women are constrained by societal notions of acceptable employment for unmarried black women, such as domestic service, teaching, and office work. Hurston illustrates that women of higher socioeconomic status are judged harshly by society when they pursue nontraditional work; Hurston's character Janie Crawford ends up doing migrant farm work, side by side with her husband.

McKay: Examining Black Intellectuals and Expatriates

Claude McKay—and some other writers of the Harlem Renaissance, including Larsen, Toomer, Langston Hughes, Walter White, and James Weldon Johnson—looked at the role of the black intellectual and the black expatriate in their fiction. McKay, like some of his contemporaries, experimented with writing in a variety of literary genres, and he produced poetry as well as fiction. Critics often associate McKay's fiction with cultural primitivism because of his emphasis on black, especially Jamaican, folk culture. McKay's fiction includes *Home to Harlem* (1928), *Banjo* (1929), and *Banana Bottom* (1933). In these books McKay addresses the plight of the black intellectual and the relationship between black intellectuals and the mass of black people.

McKay felt that progress and true racial uplift depended on all segments of the black community, not just the educated black elite. According to McKay, educated African Americans during the 1920s espoused the need for a racial renaissance without considering the role of the common folk in this new cultural movement. McKay writes in his novel *Banjo*: "It's the common people, you know, who furnish the bone and sinew and salt of any race or nation. . . . If this renaissance is going to be more than a sporadic scabby thing, we'll have to get down to our racial roots to create it."

Home to Harlem provides one view of life in the black urban ghetto. McKay associates Harlem—where this novel is set—with a vibrant black culture, but he also explores alienation, economic uncertainty, and negative aspects of American materialism. He contrasts two characters, Jake and Ray, to emphasize the division between common black folk and the so-called black intellectual. McKay's depiction of Jake, which is similar to Toomer's depiction of Rhobert in *Cane* and Larsen's depiction of Helga Crane in *Quicksand*, draws attention to the conflict between modern society and the vitality and passion associated with African cultural images and black life in Harlem. Ray represents the black intellectual who exchanges his humanity for a mainstream education (Bontemps 1972)—who separates the intellect from the emotions. Ray's inability to reconcile his intellectual and emotional development leads him to become an expatriate, and this decision suggests the alienation of the black intellectual and artist within the United States, largely because of American racism. Expatriation was in fact a realistic theme: Many black artists, as well as whites, were actually leaving the United States and moving to Europe to pursue their personal development.

McKay also examines the black expatriate movement and the plight of the black intellectual in *Banjo*. Ray, the character from *Home to Harlem*, reappears in *Banjo*; and McKay once again explores the causes and effects of the alienation of black intellectuals from the masses of black people and whites. The narrator notes that despite educational accomplishments and socioeconomic status, color and race shape the experiences of individuals in American society. African Americans do not particpate as equals in the American dream; rather, regardless of their intellectual acumen, they are judged first and foremost as blacks and are consequently looked down on. McKay writes in *Banjo*: "The thinking colored man could not function normally like his white brother, responsive and reacting spontaneously to the emotions of pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, kindness or hardness, charity, anger, and forgiveness." McKay illustrates how American mainstream society views African Americans as a monolithic group, whereas whites are judged on their merits as individuals.

In *Banjo*, McKay further explores the relationship between the artist and the folk in African American culture. Ray represents the black intellectual; Banjo represents the artist. Banjo describes his instrument as a reflection of his soul and himself, and McKay's emphasis on the banjo as an important instrument elevates African American folk art. (Similarly, Zora Neale Hurston elevates African American folk culture through her use of folklore and black dialect as art forms; and Langston Hughes elevates the black artist

and the spiritual tie between artists and their art through his depiction of Roy in "Home" and Oceola in "The Blues I'm Playing," in his short-story collection *The Ways of White Folks*.) McKay likens the banjo to African Americans' culture by noting that this instrument was preeminent in their creation of music. He also describes the banjo as affirming the existence of African Americans in a world where they were rendered invisible by the dominant culture. In *Banjo*, McKay celebrates African American folk culture and shows how black artists and their art help to empower African Americans in the face of attempts to displace them and despite the chaos associated with black life in the early twentieth century.

Thurman: *The Blacker the Berry and Infants of the Spring*

Wallace Thurman's novels *The Blacker the Berry* (1929) and *Infants of the Spring* (1932) develop the themes of racial consciousness, the role of the black artist, and racism. *The Blacker the Berry* is unique because Thurman focuses on the effects of internalized racism and intraracial prejudice. *Infants of the Spring* provides a first-hand critical evaluation of the Harlem Renaissance.

Thurman—like Langston Hughes in *The Ways of White Folks* (1934), Rudolph Fisher in *The Walls of Jericho* (1929), and George Schuyler in *Black No More* (1931)—was a master of both satire and irony. *The Blacker the Berry* is a scathing critique of color and class prejudice within the African American community. This novel explores the development of Emma Lou, a dark-skinned African American, as she confronts not only the prejudice to which her family and her associates are subjected because of her darkness but also her own negative self-image, a result of internalized racism. Thurman took his title from a common saying among African Americans: "The blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice." That folk saying, as well as Thurman's novel, celebrates blackness.

Emma Lou desperately tries to transform herself by straightening her hair and using creams to lighten her skin. Although these attempts are in part a consequence of the psychological abuse she has suffered because of color prejudice within the black community, Thurman suggests that her own self-hatred has played an even larger role in causing her discontent. According to the narrator, Emma Lou eventually learns that she must "accept her black skin as being real and unchangeable . . . and with this in mind begin life anew, always fighting, not so much for acceptance by other people but for acceptance of herself by herself."

Thurman's novel *Infants of the Spring* provides a critique of African American artists, specifically those associated with the Harlem Renaissance. It exposes the foibles of and conflicts between some of the major figures in the Harlem Renaissance, including Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Countee Cullen, Rudolph Fischer, and Thurman.

Fisher: *The Walls of Jericho*

Rudolph Fisher uses satire in *The Walls of Jericho* (1928) to develop a critique of social class and racial conflict during the 1920s. Like Thurman, he exposes the dangerous elitism among the African American bourgeoisie. He also satirizes the relationship between African Americans and white liberals through one of his characters, the white socialite Agatha Camp (his model for this character was Charlotte Osgood Mason, a white patron of black artists). Essentially, Fisher demonstrates how relationships between African Americans and whites can develop only so far if whites take a paternalistic attitude.

Hughes: *Not Without Laughter and The Ways of White Folks*

Langston Hughes, one of the most prolific writers of the Harlem Renaissance, produced poetry, fiction, and nonfiction during this period and afterward. *Not Without Laughter* (1933) and *The Ways of White Folks* (1934) are two of his most intriguing works. *Not Without Laughter* is a coming-of-age story about a black boy in the Midwest. *The Ways of White Folks* focuses on relationships—intimate and superficial—between blacks and whites. Hughes uses satire to expose white racism; to criticize liberal (or presumably liberal) white Americans' growing fascination with black culture, especially when this fascination stems from and perpetuates stereotypes of African Americans; and to criticize the patronage system that affected many artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

The writers discussed in this essay are among the best-known figures associated with the Harlem Renaissance. Their fiction reflects a new era in African American history: This period was characterized by the Jazz Age, the image of the New Negro, a renewed sense of radicalism among some African Americans, and a sense of pride in being black. Although the Great Depression of the 1930s marked the end of the Harlem Renaissance, the influence of the writers associated with this movement can be seen in much later works

by African Americans: the "black arts movement" of the 1960s and 1970s, the renaissance of African American women's literature in the 1980s, and the fiction and poetry of African Americans today.

DEIRDRE J. RAYNOR

See also Literature: 4—Fiction; Mason, Charlotte Osgood; Modernism; Primitivism; *specific writers and works*

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Authors: 3—Nonfiction

African American and Jewish-American historians, anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists who came of age between 1877 and 1919—an era that scholars of African American history often describe as "the nadir"—laid the intellectual foundations for the nonfiction authors of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 1930s. African American historians in particular reacted against such blatant forms of racism as Jim Crow laws, disenfranchisement, extralegal violence, and the removal of blacks from positions involving skilled labor.

These nonfiction authors, figures such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, used their writings not only in an attempt to bolster black racial pride and instill self-esteem in their people, but also to educate whites in what was a seething and sometimes explosive national atmosphere of racial conflict—despite Booker T. Washington's public policy of racial accommodation. Du Bois and Woodson were the leading historians who wrote works extolling the achievements and capabilities of their people, not only in the United States but also in Africa, the Caribbean, and South America.

Du Bois was born into a poor, female-run household in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He received degrees from Fisk and Harvard universities, as well as graduate training in the social sciences at some of the most prestigious German universities; but in his own ideology, he vacillated between color-blind universalism and cultural pluralism. He often spoke and wrote as if there were what David Levering Lewis called "distinct racial attributes." Thus Du Bois argued—in his Atlanta University Studies and his seminal volume of African history, *The Negro* (1915), which drew on the pioneering work on Africa by Franz Boas, the great anthropologist of German-Jewish descent—that African peoples had made, and were perfectly capable of making in the present and future, achievements essential to human progress. In so doing, Du Bois discredited the claim of white supremacists that "color is a mark of inferiority." At the same time, though, he argued that black peoples were distinct from whites "to some extent in spiritual gift."

Carter G. Woodson, the son of former Virginian slaves, had lifted himself up from abject poverty to reasonable comfort through sheer pluck, hard work, and perseverance. Like Du Bois, he attended Harvard, where he received his doctorate despite being embroiled in disputes with his major professor. Woodson founded the *Journal of Negro History* in 1915. During the 1920s and 1930s he published several historical and sociological works, including five textbooks (one of which, *The Negro in Our History*, went through several editions during the years between its initial publication in 1922 and 1947). His work (as noted above) was

consciously aimed at enhancing black racial pride and, as a consequence, instilling self-esteem in his black readers.

Arthur Schomburg, a Puerto Rican immigrant who lived in New York City, is known primarily as a bibliophile (he sold part of his library to the Carnegie Corporation, which in turn donated the collection to the New York Public Library). However, Schomburg also made a vital contribution to Alain Locke's monumental anthology *The New Negro* (1925). In that collection, Schomburg wrote what has become a credo for present-day autodidacts: "The American Negro must remake his past in order to make his future." Like both Du Bois and Woodson, Schomburg sought—as the recent historian Winston James has pointed out—to construct a black "vindicationist" history.

For sociologists such as Charles S. Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier, the "social problems" of blacks during the 1920s and 1930s required environmental explanations rather than the racial explanation that pervaded most of the writings of most European-American social scientists at the time. Johnson, a native of Virginia, was trained at the University of Chicago and became an educator, author, and editor (he edited *Opportunity*, the organ of the National Urban League). He believed that a revitalization of African American folk culture was necessary in order to restore the values and behavior of the mass of black people who had migrated from the South to the urban industrial North. Johnson left New York City in 1926 to become a professor and later the first African American president of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee; and in 1934, he published a classical sociological work, *Shadow of the Plantation*. This book documented the harsh, even brutal, conditions under which African American farmers lived in Macon County, Alabama; it was a crushing indictment of the sharecropping system—which, however, was changing because of the increasing number of literate young blacks in the country.

E. Franklin Frazier was a native of Maryland and a graduate of Howard University, Clark University, and the University of Chicago. Frazier, like Johnson, was alarmed by the anomie that characterized the northern urban industrial areas where the mass of transplanted southern immigrants lived. In *The Negro Family in Chicago* (1932) and his classic work *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), Frazier publicized the plight of most African American migrants. Frazier, who had published essays in *Opportunity* between 1924 and 1930, intended to subvert the traditional orthodoxies regarding race and culture. Accordingly, he launched assaults against both strictly racial and strictly cultural explanations for the normlessness of black ghettos.

Anthropologists were especially fascinated by issues of race and culture with reference to blacks. Melville J. Herskovits, a Jewish-American anthropologist, believed that the discussion of race in the American social sciences had direct implications for the issue of the assimilation of blacks. At the beginning of his career, Herskovits, who was a student of the methodological puritan Franz Boas, was involved in arguments about the relative merits of the methodology of racist intelligence testers. As early as the 1900s his mentor, Boas, had attacked their empirical methodology and had concluded that there was no compelling evidence of "racial" mental differences among blacks. As a consequence, Boas argued that assimilation through miscegenation was the true solution to the problems centered on relations between blacks and whites.

In Herskovits's essay "The Negro's Americanism," published in Alain Locke's *The New Negro*, the tension between assimilation and racial essentialism was apparent. Nevertheless, the New Negro sought—with infectious enthusiasm—an essential cultural identity with bases in African and African American folk culture. As a result, Herskovits's embrace of the ideology of the intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance led him to his own search for African "retentions" in the Western Hemisphere, a search that had begun three decades earlier in the nonfiction writings of W. E. B. Du Bois.

Finally, African American and Jewish-American psychologists such as Howard Hale Long, Horace Mann Bond, Herman Canady, Martin D. Jenkins, Joseph St. Clair Price, Doxey Wilkerson, and Otto Klineberg published articles in *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and the *Journal of Negro Education* that raised issues related to the sources of racial differences between the scores of whites and blacks on intelligence tests. These authors were critical of the cultural biases in the tests.

In sum, the nonfiction authors of the Harlem Renaissance contributed narratives that countered the pervasive racism of the majority group in the United States. Seeking to revitalize African American culture, nonfiction authors challenged the dominant racial and ethnocentric discourse that attempted to use history, anthropology, sociology, and

psychology as the "social scientific" bases for white supremacy.

VERNON J. WILLIAMS JR.

See also Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and Journal of Negro History; Atlanta University Studies; Boas, Franz; Crisis, The; Literature: 6—Nonfiction; Opportunity; *specific authors and works*

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Authors: 4—Playwrights

Feeling overwhelmed by the numerous fictitious stories and plays published and produced during the early 1900s that perpetuated negative racial stereotypes, W. E. B. Du Bois made a public statement in an editorial in the February 1926 issue of *The Crisis* (the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP), raising questions about the liability and social responsibility of artists and authors. The acclaimed Negro actress Hattie McDaniel, who was criticized by certain members of the Negro community for portraying negative racial images (she is credited with creating the quintessential film representation of the "mammy" caricature), once remarked that it was better to play a maid than to be a maid and certainly more profitable. However, her critics—such as Jessie Redmon Fauset, the literary editor of *The Crisis*—argued that the long-term damage done by artists like McDaniel would preclude any hope of racial equality.

In his editorial in *The Crisis*—"The Negro in Art: How Shall He Be Portrayed?"—Du Bois asked artists and writers to consider seven questions: (1) What is the actor's personal responsibility in portraying black characters? (2) Can an author be criticized for depicting positive or negative characteristics of a racial group? (3) Should publishers be criticized for refusing to publish books with nonstereotypical representations of Negroes? (4) How can Negroes refute negative stereotypes that most Americans accept as cultural truths? (5) Should educated black characters receive the same sympathetic treatment from artists and audiences as Porgy received in the popular American opera *Porgy and Bess*? (6) How will white and Negro artists find the courage to create multiple representations of black characters when the world has seen only negative representations and believes that Negroes are incapable of behaving differently? (7) Who will tell the truth about the actual character of the Negro people if their young writers are tempted to follow popular trends?

Du Bois was not the only activist during the Harlem Renaissance to be concerned about the popular tendency, on most American stages, to portray Negro characters as minstrel-type clowns. Several writers, artists, philosophers, politicians, ministers, and housewives posed the same or similar questions and sometimes even tried to answer them. Those whose attempts to answer Du Bois's questions were the most successful or caused the most controversy were probably the playwrights.

The playwrights of the Harlem Renaissance were unified in their determination to solve the problem of "race" through their work for the theater but were divided with regard to strategy. Some of them advocated "folk dramas"; others advocated history or pageant plays; still others thought that propaganda plays, such as plays about lynching, were the most effective. The merits of the various forms of Negro theater were often debated not only in Harlem and elsewhere in New York state but also in Washington, D.C., at the Saturday Nighters Club. The host for these passionate discussions in Washington was the well-known playwright and poet Georgia Douglas Johnson (1880–1966),

who wrote twenty-eight or more plays at her home on S Street in several genres, such as folk plays, antilynching plays, and history plays.

W. E. B. Du Bois

W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), a widely respected Negro leader, philosopher, and playwright, greatly influenced Georgia Douglas Johnson's career and the discussions about the plight of Negro theater that were held at her house. As the editor of *The Crisis*, Du Bois sponsored playwriting contests and helped several playwrights produce their work professionally. However, when the debate over the portrayal of the Negro onstage and in film intensified, and when both the Negro masses and Du Bois's "talented tenth" became hopeless about racial oppression, he decided that further action was needed. In "Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre: The Story of a Little Theatre Movement," an essay that also appeared in *The Crisis* in June 1926, he argued that the

> plays of a real Negro theatre must be: 1. *About us*. That is, they must have plots which reveal Negro life as it is. 2. *By us*. That is, they must be written by Negro authors who understand from birth and continual association just what it means to be a Negro today. 3. *For us*. That is, the theatre must cater primarily to Negro audiences and be supported and sustained by their entertainment and approval. 4. *Near us*. The theatre must be in a Negro neighborhood near the mass of ordinary Negro people.

On 3 May 1926, Du Bois had made his dream a reality by opening a Negro "little theater"—the Krigwa Players—in the basement of the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. The company staged three one-act plays: *Compromise* and *The Broken Banjo* (two tragedies by Willis Richardson), and *The Church Fight* (a comedy by Ruth Ann Gaines-Shelton). Du Bois hailed the event as an unquestionable success and said that enthusiastic audiences left the theater wanting more. His goal was to organize Krigwa Players Little Negro Theaters (KPLNTs) throughout the United States to stage works written by himself and others presenting his views about the future of Negro theater and the talented tenth. Several playwrights were influenced by Du Bois's little theater movement, including Marieta Bonner, Owen Dodson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglas Johnson, May Miller, Willis Richardson, and Eulalie Spence.

Willis Richardson

Interestingly, Willis Richardson (1889–1977), whose plays were staged by Du Bois's KPLNT, had somewhat different views about the goals and future of Negro theater. Richardson, as noted above, was influenced by Du Bois, who was his mentor, but he was also inspired by a controversial antilynching play called *Rachel* (1916) by Angelina Weld Grimké (his former high school teacher) and by the Irish National Theater. In 1919, Richardson had addressed concerns similar to those of Fauset, in an essay in *The Crisis* titled "The Hope of a Negro Drama." Richardson believed that the Negro had a natural predisposition for poetry, that all playwrights are poets, and that therefore all Negro poets should write Negro drama "that shows the soul of a people; and the soul of this people is truly worth showing." He considered the Irish National Theater an excellent model for Negro playwrights because of its small size and its international reputation. He wanted his vision of Negro theater to reach the entire world; and even though he strongly encouraged Negro poets to write plays, he praised the work of playwrights who were not Negroes but nevertheless wrote about the "souls" of Negro people in a suitable fashion—playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill and Ridgley Torrence. Richardson did not agree with Du Bois that Negro plays had to be written by Negro playwrights, produced near Negro communities, or aimed at exclusively Negro audiences; he felt, rather, that Negro plays should be written for theatergoers worldwide. Despite their philosophical differences, Du Bois advanced Richardson's career by staging several of Richardson's plays and by advising him to share his work with Raymond O'Neil's Ethiopian Art Players in Chicago.

Richardson wrote at least forty-eight plays, including children's plays, historical plays, and family and marital plays; a few examples are *The Flight of the Natives*; *The Black Horseman*; *The House of Sham*; *Attucks, the Martyr*; *Near Calvary*; *Antonio Maceo*; *The King's Dilemma*; *The Dragon's Tooth*; and *The Gypsy's Finger Ring*. His one-act drama *The Chip Woman's Fortune*—a realistic work emphasizing cohesive relationships in a family despite generational gaps—was the first nonmusical play by a Negro to be produced on Broadway; it opened on 15 May 1923 at the Frazee Theater. Richardon also edited two anthologies of drama: *Plays*

and Pageants from the Life of the Negro (1930) and *Negro History in Thirteen Plays* (1935).

Richardson's distinguished career was shaped by many other mentors besides du Bois. Richardson met some of these mentors through his attendance at Georgia Johnson's Saturday Nighters Club. He was greatly influenced by the work of Alain Locke (1886–1954), a philosopher who was teaching at Howard University and was a cofounder of the Howard University Players. Richardson had originally submitted his plays to Locke, hoping that they would be produced at Howard University; but Locke's request to stage one of them was turned down by the president of the university, and Richardson then sought Du Bois's help.

Alain Locke

Locke was a mentor to numerous other playwrights of the Harlem Renaissance besides Richardson and was a judge in the playwriting contests sponsored by *Opportunity*, a publication of the Urban League. Locke published several essays on the New Negroes and their place in theater. He developed and published an extensive manifesto outlining his views on Negro folk drama and edited several anthologies that included plays representing his vision of this genre. Locke encouraged Negro artists to abandon commercial theater, in which stereotypes and caricatures of the Negro had dominated American and some European stages since the late 1800s. He believed that Negro theater should be housed at universities instead of community centers in major cities. In 1922, in an essay published in *The Crisis*, he wrote:

> We believe a university foundation will assure a greater continuity of effort and insure accordingly a greater permanence of result. We believe further that the development of the newer forms of drama has proved most successful where laboratory and experimental conditions have obtained and that the development of race drama is by those very circumstances the opportunity and responsibility of our educational centers.

Ideally, these educational centers would replicate European theatrical training schools, such as the Moscow Art Theater, where novice actors could work with a master director.

Locke and his colleague Montgomery Gregory, the cofounder of the Howard Players, produced works by professional playwrights (such as Ridgley Torrence) with professional actors (such as Charles Gilpin); they also produced plays written by students under the auspices of Howard University's theater department. Locke and Montgomery invited theater professionals, regardless of race, to help them train the Howard University Players. As time went on, Locke realized the importance not only of training actors but also of developing scripts. He began to publish a series of articles about the importance of folk drama and the stage voice of the "New Negro."

Locke argued that a problem with Negro theater was its desire to imitate western European theater. In his essay "The Negro and the American Stage," he asserted that "one can scarcely think of a complete development of dramatic art by the Negro without some significant artistic reexpression of African life and the traditions associated with it." Negroes had not been encouraged to explore cultural memory, retrieve artistic traditions from the past, or bring these traditions into their own work for the stage. Locke was interested in plays with African elements: themes, scenes, music, storytelling, ritual, and nonlinear plots. He believed that once Negro playwrights found the truth about their past, a new sense of cultural and artistic freedom would emerge and would naturally connect with American theatrical sensibilities, thereby creating a true or realistic form of Negro theater that illustrated the New Negro. Playwrights who were influenced by Locke's folk drama included Marieta Bonner, Owen Dodson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Willis Richardson, and Eulalie Spence.

Zora Neale Hurston

Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960) was especially intrigued by the possibilities of Locke's vision for the theater of the New Negro, and she experimented with its form throughout her life. Hurston studied with Locke and Montgomery Gregory at Howard University in the 1920s. She was greatly influenced by Locke, who encouraged her to write about Negro folklore and "Africanisms." At Columbia University, as a student at Barnard College interested in anthropology, and as a budding writer, Hurston—like Locke—refused to believe that people of African ancestry were innately inferior to whites. A popular study at this time was craniology, the size of the human head relative to the size of the brain; accordingly, she stood on various

street corners in Harlem and asked passersby if she could measure their heads. This use of science to prove that African Americans were not inferior to whites may have inspired Hurston, in her plays and novels, to depict the struggles of Negroes as they attempted to "love" themselves. For instance, in 1925, while she was a student at Barnard, she wrote what may have been her first play, *Color Struck*. It focuses on the inability of one woman to love herself because of racial shame: This woman does not have light skin, and she believes in a doctrine, espoused by racist scientists of the time, that darker-skinned Negroes were inferior to whites or mulattoes. She destroys her own life and causes the death of her mulatto daughter; still, she is an object of pity, not a villain. This controversial folk drama, written in Negro dialect appropriate for that period, forces audiences to confront issues of miscegenation and racial pride. Hurston submitted *Color Struck* to *Opportunity* magazine and won an award for it. The following year, she submitted her next play, *Spears*, to *Opportunity* and received an honorable mention. In 1927, she wrote the play *The First One*, which was published in *Ebony* and *Topaz* magazines.

All together, between 1920 and 1950, this extraordinarily prolific woman wrote nearly forty plays and musical reviews, four novels, two books of folklore, an autobiography, and more than fifty short stories and essays. She received a Rosenwald fellowship and two Guggenheim fellowships and was widely recognized as a successful writer. Still, she often found herself in poverty; and although she tried to break away from the confines of patronage, she has been criticized by some historians and biographers for accepting the support of a wealthy white woman, Charlotte Osgood Mason of Park Avenue. Mason, who enjoyed Negro literature, supported not only Hurston but also Langston Hughes during most of their literary careers. Alain Locke often met with Mason, and he encouraged her to support young Negro folk dramatists. But in return for her patronage she insisted that the playwrights refer to her as their "godmother," and she also liked to be described as the "little mother of the primitive world" (Hurston 1979, 12).

In addition to experimenting with Locke's form of folk drama, Hurston was interested in Du Bois's theories of theater. She became a member of the "cabinet" for Du Bois's Krigwa Players and participated in the company's first season at the 135th Street Library. At this time she found herself under the tutelage of Locke and Du Bois and hoped that her plays would be produced by the Krigwa Players and at Howard University. While working with Du Bois, she continued to write plays and attempted to produce Negro musical revues. She was selected to be one of nine writers for *Fast and Furious*, a Broadway musical revue in two acts and thirty-seven scenes. The famous figures involved in this production included Tim Moore and Jackie "Moms" Mabley, but when the revue opened in New York in September 1931, it was received unfavorably by several white theater critics. Hurston's next theatrical venture, *Jungle Scandals*, was also unsuccessful; this was followed by *The Great Day*, which was praised by the critics but was not a financial success. *The Great Day*, which centered on "a day in the life of a railroad work camp," incorporated themes from Negro folklore and included "Bahamian dances, conjure ceremonies, club scenes, work songs, and children's games" (Perkins 1989, 78).

Hoping to forward her career in theater, Hurston applied for faculty positions in the theater departments of two historically black schools—Bethune-Cookman College and Fisk University—but was rejected by both. She then returned (after a six-year hiatus) to writing novels and short stories, that is, to the world of Negro fiction in which she had first achieved success. However, her theatrical career seemed to be rekindled in 1935 when the New York Negro unit of the Federal Theater Project (FTP) hired her as a drama coach, a position in which she worked directly with John Houseman. While working with FTP, she submitted several plays for production, most notably *The Fiery Chariot*. She did not succeed in this regard, although she was encouraged by Houseman, who seemed enthusiastic about the possibility that FTP might produce one of her plays in the future. In his autobiography, *Run-Through*, Houseman writes:

> For a few days I thought I had found a solution in a new play by Zorah [sic] Hurston, our most talented writer on the project, who had come up with a Negro *Lysistrata* updated and located in a Florida fishing community, where the men's wives refused them intercourse until they won their fight with the canning company for a living wage. It scandalized both the Left and Right by its saltiness. (quoted in Perkins, 78)

After the short-lived FTP came to a close, Hurston was hired from 1939 to 1940 to organize a drama

program at North Carolina College for Negroes in Durham. There, she developed a professional relationship with the playwright Paul Green, who was the winner of a Pulitzer Prize and worked with the drama department at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Hurston and Green discussed collaborating on a play to be called *John de Conqueror* (Perkins, 78), but this plan ended when Hurston left North Carolina College to work for a year at Paramount Studios as a story consultant. At Paramount, Hurston tried hard to persuade various producers to use one of her novels or plays as a film script, but again she did not succeed. Her last attempt to achieve success in the theater was in 1944, when she and a white theater artist, Dorothy Varing, produced a musical comedy, *Polk County*, that was supposed to appear on Broadway in the fall of that year. However, the play lost its financial backing and never opened. Disgruntled and disappointed, Hurston returned to Florida (where she had grown up) and lived there until her death on 29 October 1960.

Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes (1898–1967), like Hurston, is often thought of as a poet but was also a prolific playwright: He wrote almost one hundred theatrical pieces, ranging from short scenes to full-length plays. In fact, he and Hurston collaborated on writing a play called *Mule Bone*, although because of personal differences they were unable to finish it. One of Hughes's full-length plays, *Mulatto*, opened on Broadway on 24 October 1935. *Mulatto* is about a mulatto son, Bert, who murders his father—the father having refused to acknowledge Bert as anything more than a slave plantation worker. Hughes was disappointed with the Broadway production because the white producer, Martin Jones, altered the script after buying the rights to the text. Nevertheless, *Mulatto* was the longest-running Negro play on Broadway until Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, which opened in 1959. Although *Mulatto* is a tragedy, Hughes primarily wrote comedies and musicals. His theater works include *The Barrier* (an opera); *Emperor of Haiti*; *Little Ham*; *Don't You Want to Be Free?*; *Limitations of Life?*; *Scarlett Sister Barry*; *The Em-Fuehrer Jones*; *Little Eva*; *Run, Ghost, Run—*; *Joy to My Soul*; *Simply Heavenly*; *The Sun Do Move*; *Tambourines to Glory*; *The Gold Piece*; *Soul Gone Home*; and *Black Nativity*.

After his experiences with having *Mulatto* presented commercially and trying to have his other plays produced professionally, Hughes wrote several essays outlining his hopes for the future of Negro theater. Hughes advocated a Negro theater similar in structure to what Du Bois envisioned. He believed that Broadway and Hollywood were too commercial, averse to experimentation, and interested only in minstrel-like caricatures of Negro life. (Hughes expressed these ideas in, for example, "The Need for an Afro-American Theatre" in *Anthology of the American Negro in Theatre*.) He also wanted Negro theater artists to be able to work in professional spaces; accordingly, he urged the formation of a national black theater. He considered it important for young playwrights to see revivals of the work of older playwrights; he also thought there should be a place like a national theater that could serve as a workshop for the next generation of artists. Hughes believed that without some sort of national African American theater, the world would have no opportunity to hear what he called "authentic" Negro voices, that is, diverse voices in the Negro community that also spanned lines of skin color and class; he also strongly believed that these voices would be heard by all Americans, regardless of color, if such a theater existed. In his own work—his poetry, his short stories, and especially his theatrical characters—he emphasized these authentic voices.

Georgia Douglas Johnson

Hughes enjoyed discussing his ideas with other Negro playwrights and artists of the Harlem Renaissance. He, Hurston, Locke, Richardson, and Du Bois all attended Georgia Douglas Johnson's Saturday Nighters Club—the salon on S Street in Washington, D.C., where the future of Negro art was debated. Johnson, who happily proclaimed herself the maternal hostess of the Harlem Renaissance outside New York City, once remarked, "I'm halfway between everybody and everything and I bring them together" (Hull 1987, 186–187). Johnson had a reputation for taking in stray animals and artists; Hurston, during her periods of financial difficulty, was a frequent and welcome guest at Johnson's house.

Johnson was a playwright as well as a hostess. She wrote dramas that reflected the political and social doctrines of Locke and Du Bois and attempted to address the questions raised by Du Bois. She was well

known in the African American and white American theater communities; thus it is not surprising that she worked, although indirectly, with the Federal Theater Project (FTP) from 1935 to 1939. She submitted six plays to FTP for production: four antilynching plays (*A Sunday Morning in the South*, versions 1 and 2; *Safe*; and *Blue-Eyed Black Boy*) and two historical dramas about slaves escaping from bondage to achieve freedom, or what should have been freedom (*Frederick Douglass* and *William and Ellen Craft*). FTP decided not to produce any of these plays, but that did not discourage Johnson; she continued to write not only plays but also poetry and dozens of musical compositions. She also wrote articles and essays for various black journals and newspapers; in these essays, she discussed the plight of Negro women and the political and social struggles of the Negro community. She was a contributing editor for the magazine *Negro Women's World* and an associate editor with *The Women's Voice*, periodicals located in the area around Washington.

Georgia Douglas Johnson wrote approximately thirty plays, but only five were published, and only a few of her scripts are still extant (her family has most of the unpublished plays). The five plays that were published were *A Sunday Morning in the South* (1925), *Blue Blood* (1926), *Plumes* (1927), *Frederick Douglass* (1935), and *William and Ellen Craft* (1935). Of these, only *Plumes*, *Blue Blood*, and *Frederick Douglass* have a record of theatrical production. The one-act play *Blue Blood* was first staged in New York City, starring Frank Horne and May Miller, who was also a playwright and poet of the Harlem Renaissance; it was later performed at Howard University as part of a program featuring three one-act works. *Blue Blood* attracted attention and was critically acclaimed after it won the playwriting contest sponsored by *Opportunity* in 1926; *Plumes* took first prize in that contest in 1927. *Blue Blood* is significant because it examines black women's struggle to redefine their lives: The female characters boldly confront issues of rape, miscegenation, the Negro elite, racism and classism within the African American community, and the concept of women as objects. Johnson's commitment to the development of Negro theater is demonstrated not only in her own theatrical work but also in her influence over many playwrights and artists of the Harlem Renaissance, including Du Bois, Locke, Richardson, Hurston, and Hughes.

It is worth noting here that Johnson's activism went beyond the theater; she was also a part of the antilynching campaigns in African American communities during the 1920s.

Summary

In sum, the playwrights of the Harlem Renaissance—along with its artists and scholars—attempted to answer the questions posed by Du Bois. They were committed to demolishing the dehumanizing stereotypes of people of African descent, but they understood that changing dominant attitudes takes time. Most writers of the Harlem Renaissance were not interested in chastising an artist like Hattie McDaniel, who perpetuated the popular nineteenth-century image of the Negro as a clown from a minstrel show, because they understood the dilemma of such an artist, and they also often felt caught between the politics of the burgeoning Negro community and the white community's stereotypical perceptions of Negroes. They were more intrigued with finding a theatrical formula that would ensure "authentic" representations of Negro identity on the American stage. Du Bois argued that Negro artists who were writing about Negroes, for Negroes, in Negro communities could produce authentic Negro characters for the theater. Numerous theater artists—Marieta Bonner, Mary Burrill, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Angelina Weld Grimké, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Georgia Douglas Johnson, May Miller, Willis Richardson, Eulalie Spence, and others—were influenced by Du Bois's theories of theater. However, Alain Locke, although he admired Du Bois's historical pageants, had a different theory about the future of Negro theater. Locke believed that Negro theater should be produced at universities and that folk drama was the essence of cultural and artistic expression for the New Negro. He encouraged playwrights such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Georgia Douglas Johnson, May Miller, and Willis Richardson to abandon western European theatrical standards for "Africanisms" or cultural memory. Hughes, Hurston, Johnson, and Richardson are just four of the playwrights of the Harlem Renaissance who transformed popular Negro theatrical characters from their predecessors in minstrelsy to diverse, realistic dramatic figures. These four playwrights experimented with Du Bois's and Locke's theories of drama but also remembered Willis Richardson's assertion that the most important goal was to create a "play that shows the soul of

a people; and the soul of this people is truly worth showing."

JASMIN L. LAMBERT

See also Blacks in Theater; Crisis, The; Crisis: The Negro in Art—How Shall He Be Portrayed? A Symposium; Du Bois, W. E. B.; Ethiopian Art Players: Fauset, Jessie Redmon; Krigwa Players; Literature: 3—Drama; Mason, Charlotte Osgood; Minstrelsy; 135th Street Library; Opportunity; Porgy and Bess; Talented Tenth; Theater; *specific writers and works*

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Authors: 5—Poets

Judged by its quality and popularity, poetry produced by African American writers in the 1920s constitutes a bright period in American literature. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906) enjoyed international popularity, primarily for his humorous poems in dialect. From Dunbar's death to the early 1920s, no African American poet received a great deal of attention; but during the 1920s, with the advent of the New Negro movement, that situation changed dramatically. The high profile of poets during the Harlem Renaissance was influenced by changes in the American publishing scene as well as by the development of a more militant race consciousness in the black community.

Background

In the early decades of the twentieth century, many newspapers, including the black press, published poems on their editorial pages or in special literary columns. These poems were usually patriotic, sentimental, pleasantly philosophical, or humorous and were contributed by local readers as well as by more accomplished writers from all over the country. However, they were often regarded as filler by both editors and readers and did not get much serious attention. The critical consensus of the period was that most late nineteenth-century American poetry was undistinguished at best. There were other periodicals, though, in which poetry was taken more seriously, and by the beginning of the 1920s, such journals had created a resurgence of interest in poetry among the general public. Poets were gregarious or controversially argumentative, and poetry became fashionable for a season. That mood helped direct attention to African American poets as well.

For their part, African American readers seemed to be eager to read literature that expressed both their social and political aspirations as well as their resentment of the racial segregation laws and discriminatory customs that frustrated them. The phrase "New Negro" had been popularized around the turn of the twentieth century to indicate a new sense of self-awareness and militancy in the African American community. The young intellectuals who became the poets of the Harlem Renaissance proudly adopted that phrase, and Alain Locke (1885–1954), a professor of philosophy at Howard University, used it as the title of a groundbreaking anthology of sociological essays and literary works that he edited in 1925.

The poets who emerged in the 1920s were an incarnation of a people's hopes. The first generation of the twentieth century, children of the African American middle class, were often college-educated and were able to aspire to much greater ambitions than their elders had ever imagined. They were proud of their

heritage and intent on celebrating African American culture, but they were also aware of the necessity of proving the value of that culture to the rest of the world. The work they produced illustrates two methods of accomplishing these goals: (1) some poets attempted to demonstrate their mastery of time-honored classical and traditional literary forms; (2) others, however, emphasized adapting colloquial language or folk-based motifs and investing them with artistic legitimacy.

An important aspect of the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance is the fact that it was primarily aimed at an African American readership. Although many of the works voiced a protest against the status quo, the poets attempted to avoid an attitude of supplication and what the critic John Henrik Clark has called the "literature of petition." The journals that published their poetry facilitated this polemical position.

The Crisis, published by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the National Urban League's *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* were among the primary venues for the new poetry. The literary pages of the newspaper *Negro World*, published by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), also promoted poets, as did political journals such as *The Messenger*, edited by the labor organizers Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph. Mainstream journals such as *Vanity Fair* and H. L. Mencken's *American Mercury* were also supportive of African American poets. Across the country, local chapters of the NAACP and UNIA, women's organizations, and churches encouraged book clubs, discussion groups, and elocution societies. Beginning in 1925, annual contests sponsored by *Opportunity* brought many talented young writers widespread attention, and celebrated judges such as Carl Van Vechten and Fannie Hurst were able to help these writers secure generous patrons or publishing contracts.

Poetry with a Purpose

The poetry of the Harlem Renaissance does not adhere to any one style, although most of it does appear to serve a particular purpose. Young poets such as Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes vociferously declared their artistic freedom to write in any way they pleased. Cullen went so far as to say that while he hoped his work would be appreciated, he didn't particularly want to be identified primarily as a Negro poet. Even so, much of the poetry produced by Cullen, Hughes, and their peers focused on issues and experiences specific to black Americans. Other writers articulated the movement's goals in political terms. Both James Weldon Johnson and Alain Locke pointed out that literature might be a force in improving the way mainstream American society viewed African American people. In Johnson's view, no race or nationality could be considered inferior if it produced great art. As early as 1918, Johnson had written, "The world does not know a race is great until that race has produced great literature." Locke, in *The New Negro*, suggested that talented artists might emphasize African Americans' contributions to society and culture and, by reversing the negative images of African people encouraged by slavery, help eliminate the "great discrepancy between the American social creed and the American social practice."

Although it produced no uniform style of writing and followed no specific aesthetic guidelines, the New Negro poetic movement was not exactly a spontaneous or undirected development. The historian David Levering Lewis used the phrase "civil rights by copyright" to describe the strategy of improving the African Americans' status by demonstrating intellectual and artistic excellence. The literary campaign was envisioned and carefully nurtured by W. E. B. Du Bois and Jessie Redmon Fauset at *The Crisis*, by Charles S. Johnson at the National Urban League, by the NAACP's James Weldon Johnson, and by the scholars Alain Locke and Carter G. Woodson. These leaders in turn drew on the goodwill and significant connections of a network of white editors, sociologists, and charitable institutions.

The ideas that undergirded the creative activity were most clearly articulated by Alain Locke. Democracy could not succeed, Locke stated, "except through the fullest sharing of American culture and institutions." *The New Negro* announced that the talented young people in the black community were ready to make their contribution. Locke hoped that this rising generation would be able to advance "from the arid fields of controversy and debate to the productive fields of creative expression." Locke—like Du Bois and the white cofounder of the NAACP, Joel A. Spingarn—believed that the progress of an ethnic group or a nation-state depended on the leadership of cultured individuals. These leaders also firmly believed that the arts have the power to change society.

In his article "Criteria of Negro Art," published in *The Crisis* in October 1926, W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) bluntly stated what Alain Locke and James Weldon Johnson had often implied. All art, Du Bois declared,

should be propaganda. Literary works should support an ethical or political point of view, be persuasive, and—in the case of the art of black Americans—promote the social advancement of the group. In fact, although younger writers might have resented the constraints implied by Du Bois, they attempted to produce poetry that would examine the characteristics of black life in the United States and inspire black readers with a sense of both individual and collective self-worth. They wrote poems clearly intended to redeem African American people in their own eyes by countering racist stereotypes, and in so doing, to inspire and promote political action for achieving the rights and privileges of citizenship.

The Early Poets

The forerunners of the Harlem Renaissance poets include two writers who achieved significant national attention following Dunbar's death. William Stanley Braithwaite (1878–1962) wrote elegant, sentimental, and somewhat mystical verse. His collection *The House of Falling Leaves* (1908) was warmly received. Braithwaite's true influence, however, came later, as he established himself as a major literary editor and critic. Fenton Johnson (1888–1958) published three collections of poems between 1912 and 1916. Although his earliest work was in the dialect mode popularized by Dunbar, he experimented with poems based on Negro spirituals and later became known for poems marked by an ironic tone and written in the avant-garde style that emerged in Chicago at the time of World War I. By 1922, however, perhaps because of his controversial political militancy, Johnson had stopped publishing poetry.

Two other poets named Johnson (unrelated to each other and to Fenton Johnson) achieved recognition as well. James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) first achieved fame and wealth as a lyricist for Broadway musicals at the turn of the century; he wrote the words for "Lift Every Voice and Sing" (1900), a song cherished by millions of people as the "Negro national anthem." He also aspired to a literary career and, modeling himself on Dunbar, published *Fifty Years and Other Poems* (1917), a book divided between dialect verses and poems in standard English. The popular and prolific poet Georgia Douglas Johnson (1877–1966) received recognition and critical praise for her finely crafted verses in *The Heart of a Woman* (1918). Georgia Johnson, who was educated at Atlanta University, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and the Cleveland College of Music, married and settled in Washington, D.C., in 1909. Throughout the 1920s, she wrote a syndicated newspaper column and held a weekly literary salon at her home. On Saturday evenings, Alain Locke, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Jean Toomer, Anne Spencer, and others who might be visiting the city met to read their works and discuss artistic issues. After her husband's death in 1925, Georgia Johnson worked for various agencies of the federal government and raised two sons while continuing her literary activities. Her published works of poetry also include *Bronze* (1922) and *An Autumn Love Cycle* (1928).

Joseph Seamon Cotter Jr. (1895–1919), a journalist in Louisville, Kentucky, published an impressive collection titled *The Band of Gideon and Other Lyrics* (1918), but he succumbed to tuberculosis soon afterward. His poetry demonstrates his skilled approach to standard rules of versification, but some of the poems reflect the "imagist" approach of the modernists and some reflect his interest in colloquial African American idioms—an interest he shared with Fenton Johnson and James Weldon Johnson.

The multitalented W. E. B. Du Bois also published poems in the first two decades of the century. Several idiosyncratic, biblically cadenced verses were included in his book *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil* (1920). Focusing on events such as the mob violence that shook Atlanta in 1906, these are starkly angry, bitter poems.

Because of its stylistic innovation and racially focused subject matter, *Cane* (1923)—a book by Jean Toomer (1894–1967) that includes fictional vignettes, poems, and a play—is often considered the inaugural expression of the Harlem Renaissance. Poems such as "Song of the Son" and "Georgia Dusk" represent Toomer's lyrical attempt to capture what he felt was the beauty, as well as the memories of pain and hardship, of a southern rural way of life that was passing with the old century. Like Fenton Johnson before him, Toomer in "Song of the Son" elegantly captures the tone and flow of spirituals without resorting to dialect.

Claude McKay

The first major poetic voice of the Harlem Renaissance, however, was Claude McKay (1889–1948). McKay was born in Jamaica, West Indies, and had worked there as a policeman and published two volumes of

dialect verse based on his experiences before coming to the United States to attend college in 1912. He quickly became involved in radical politics and served on the editorial board of socialist magazines such as *Liberator* and *The Masses*. His bold antilynching poem "If We Must Die," first published in *Liberator,* was a militant response to the "red summer" of racial violence in 1919. The poem's powerful effect is derived from the seeming contrast of its immediacy of subject matter, its militant content, and McKay's sonorous but meticulous Elizabethan sonnet form.

McKay could render beautiful images of nature and vibrant urban scenes, but he is primarily a poet of social engagement. He was a dedicated political activist, and in 1919 he was briefly associated with the International Workers of the World (IWW) and with socialists in Harlem such as Hubert H. Harrison and Richard B. Moore. Between 1920 and 1934 McKay lived and traveled widely in England, Europe, the Soviet Union, and Africa, writing and publishing prolifically. Although he was not actually in the United States, his work remained central to the "New Negro" movement.

McKay's poetry, as in "If We Must Die," is uncompromising in its analysis of racial bigotry and his assertion of the will to overcome it. Poems such as "America" specifically address social conflict, and "Baptism" uses the metaphor of a trial by fire. "Into this furnace let me go alone," writes McKay. This sonnet ends with the affirmation "I will come out, back to your world of tears, A stronger soul within a fine frame." Trials, in McKay's vision, strengthen the spirit of a race or an individual. In later years, McKay would seek a similar affirmation in religion.

Although he would go on to publish additional volumes of poetry, novels, journalism, and political commentary, McKay's collection *Harlem Shadows* (1922) established a high standard for other poets—a standard that would be met by major poets such as Countee Cullen (1903–1946), Langston Hughes (1902–1967), and Sterling Brown (1901–1989).

Countee Cullen

Countee Cullen, who was the adopted child of Carolyn Mitchell Cullen and the pastor of the Salem Methodist Episcopal Church, Dr. Frederick Asbury Cullen, epitomized Harlem's educated and polished upper middle class. A brilliant student and precocious writer, he received several academic and literary prizes, including the John Reed Memorial Prize from *Poetry* magazine. His first collection of poems, *Color* (1925), published by the venerable firm Harper Brothers, was a bestseller. This book appeared just as Cullen graduated Phi Beta Kappa from New York University and went on to Harvard to earn a master's degree.

At the beginning of his career, Cullen was easily the most acclaimed and prolific poet of the Harlem Renaissance. His work appeared in a wide range of African American and mainstream journals, and he published three books in 1927: *Copper Sun*, *The Ballad of the Brown Girl: An Old Ballad Retold*, and *Caroling Dusk: An Anthology of Verse by Negro Poets.* Two years later, his own book *The Black Christ and Other Poems* provoked some controversy. From 1926 to 1928 Cullen also wrote a literary column, "The Dark Tower," for *Opportunity*.

Cullen insisted that while his subject matter might focus on African American life, his poetry was nevertheless part of a long English-language literary tradition. He argued that African American writers had more to gain from a study of that literature than from "any nebulous atavistic yearnings toward an African influence." He definitely opposed the tendency of some poets to indulge in sensationalized "primitive" imagery. Other literary critics also expressed weariness with poets who seemed to exploit tawdry urban scenes.

In the anthology he edited, Cullen applauded the stylistic diversity of his contemporaries. He praised Anne Spencer's "cool precision," delighted in Lewis Alexander's experiments with haiku, and admired McKay's rebelliousness even though he feared that it sometimes "clouds his lyricism." Above all, though, Cullen desired to "maintain the higher traditions of English verse."

He was aware of the ambivalence in his own position. In his magnificent poem "Heritage" (1925), identifying himself as "one three centuries removed," Cullen wonders, "What is Africa to me?" Self-doubt, social ostracism because of race, and skepticism about religious faith become powerfully conflicting forces. As with Du Bois's famous formulation of "double consciousness" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Cullen shows how the discrepancy between America's democratic rhetoric and the realities of race threaten to unhinge black citizens.

Langston Hughes

Beginning with "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," published in *The Crisis* when he was nineteen years old, Langston Hughes made a tremendous impact on the

literary world; eventually, he achieved international fame that rivaled Dunbar's. Since his death in 1967, Hughes has been increasingly viewed by critics as a major American poet.

Hughes was born in Joplin, Missouri, and raised by his grandmother and mother in Kansas and Ohio. He was a voracious reader as a child, and while he was still in high school, he determined that he wanted to be a writer.

Influenced early on by the modernist poetics of Carl Sandburg and other practitioners of free verse, Hughes developed a terse, freely rhymed (almost syncopated) style in short lyrics and dramatic monologues that captured aspects of everyday life. Hughes found support for his early writing from luminaries such as Du Bois and the popular poet Vachel Lindsay, who helped him make contacts that led to the publication of his first book in 1926. *The Weary Blues* sounded a new note in African American poetry. Hughes celebrated the common man; chose to write about situations that many thought unpoetic; and, without apology, used the folk blues stanza as if it were as acceptable as the sonnet. When *The Weary Blues* was reviewed in the *Times* of London, Hughes was slightingly called a "poet of the cabaret" and unfavorably compared with Countee Cullen.

Such reviews might have angered him, but Hughes did not flinch before criticism. In 1928, in a letter to the editor published in *The Crisis,* he forcefully declared that he did not care if critics found the poems included in *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927) "low-down, jazzy . . . and utterly uncouth." He would be satisfied if his poems depicted the details and rhythms of urban African American life with lyrical realism. Hughes was concerned to show his readers—as he put it in his essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926)—that "we are beautiful. And ugly too."

Despite his capacity for generating controversy, Hughes found favor with a middle-class audience and, particularly through the appearance of his poems in newspapers, an enthusiastic working-class readership as well. A nationwide tour in 1931–1932 boosted his popularity; he traveled across the country giving readings of his work at colleges, churches, and community auditoriums. Poems such as "I, Too, Sing America" captured the community's mood of pride, determination, and impatience with second-class citizenship. The beautiful monologue "Mother to Son," more than likely drawing on Hughes's own personal childhood experiences, spoke directly to both elders and the rising generation, reinforcing the need for perseverance in the face of adversity and racism.

At the same time, Hughes's blues poems expressed the reality of hard times and bad luck. In "Po' Boy Blues," he states that "this world is weary/An' de road is long an' hard." But the blues poems also demonstrate how to use humor to survive the worst. Hughes was also capable of biting political satire. His "Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria" was a withering critique of the American economic system and the structural inequalities that were made apparent by the stock market crash of 1929. The poem brought him praise from the left wing but also cost him the support of Charlotte Osgood Mason, his wealthy patron. Regardless of his approach, in diction that seems both eloquent and effortless, Hughes produced a consistent stream of poems that people read with excitement and—as they had done with Dunbar's verses—memorized for their own entertainment.

Sterling Brown

Sterling Brown (1901–1989) was born in Washington, D.C., and literally grew up on the campus of Howard University, where his father was a faculty member. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Williams College, earned his master's degree at Harvard in 1923, and eventually became a beloved professor at Howard, serving for half a century. Under the mentorship of his colleague Alain Locke, Brown became both a formidable scholar and a public intellectual. He wrote a literary column for *Opportunity* and was an active folklore researcher. He pursued doctoral studies at Harvard and, in 1937, published two important critical surveys—*The Negro in American Fiction* and *Negro Poetry and Drama*.

Brown's folklore studies helped him develop into a marvelous storyteller, and in some ways he embodied the traits of the trickster Slim Greer, a figure he featured in a series of hilarious poetic monologues. Brown found beauty and grandeur in ordinary people, but he could evoke their sorrows, too. "Maumee Ruth," written in ballad meter, prematurely mourns the death of a rural matriarch. The reader is told, "Might as well drop her / Deep in the ground" because Maumee Ruth's children have been lost to the vices of urban life and have turned their backs on her. The use of colloquial idiom—without the usual mechanics of dialect verse—underscores the poem's ironic tone and emphasizes the tragic toll caused by prodigal sons and daughters.

Brown used dialect skillfully in poems such as "Odyssey of Big Boy" and "Long Gone." In "Southern Road," he incorporated the work song rhythms of a chain gang; and in "Ma Rainey," he alternated dialect and standard English stanzas to explore the powerful attraction of the blues.

Minor Poets

Many excellent writers, not all of whom published their work in book form, made the Harlem Renaissance truly remarkable in terms of poetic activity. Although most of the best-known writers were located in New York, the creative flowering was actually a national artistic movement, and many fine poets could be found in all parts of the United States. There were vibrant literary scenes in cities such as Chicago and Washington, D.C. Black colleges and universities also supported artistic communities and employed professors with literary interests.

Among the noteworthy but lesser-known poets of the era are Helene Johnson, Walter Everette Hawkins, Gwendolyn Bennett, Anne Spencer, Waring Cuney, Frank Horne, Arna Bontemps, Esther Popel, and Lewis Alexander. While Helene Johnson and Bennett (like McKay and Cullen) cultivated the sonnet tradition, poets such as Cuney, Horne, and Alexander explored *vers libre* and other experimental forms. Hawkins, a regular contributor to *The Messenger*, exemplifies a boldly militant voice, continuing the tradition established by Fenton Johnson, Du Bois, McKay, and others.

Anne Spencer (1882–1975), a librarian and community leader in Lynchburg, Virginia, said, "I proudly love being a Negro woman." Her poetry, however, was primarily focused on the beauties of nature and the elevating life of the mind. When she chose to write about social problems, it was often to focus attention on the quirks of human nature. In "Neighbors," for example, considering people "who ask too much," Spencer cleverly noted the dangers of friendliness: "Offered a hand, a finger-tip, / You must have a soul to clutch."

Esther Popel (1896–1958), a poet who was concerned much more with politics, was a participant in Georgia Douglas Johnson's literary salon and a frequent contributor to *Negro World*, *Opportunity*, and other journals. Popel graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Dickinson College and became a high school teacher in Washington, D.C. Her often bitterly ironic poems are as searingly effective as Claude McKay's. Her "Blasphemy—American Style" (1934), for example, is a prayer of thanks raised by a lynch mob. Popel did not, however, publish a book-length collection of her work.

Like Popel, Walter Everette Hawkins (b. 1883)—a postal clerk in Washington, D.C.—was among the more militant voices of the era. Hawkins published two collections of poems: *Chords and Discords* (1920) and *Petals From the Poppies* (1936). He was also featured in Nancy Cunard's *Negro Anthology* (1934).

Frank Horne (1899–1974) had been trained as an ophthalmologist but eventually enjoyed a distinguished career as a college and government administrator. His grimly titled "Letters Found Near a Suicide" won a prize from, *The Crisis* in 1925 and launched a series of spare but witty modernist poems that celebrate the vigor and camaraderie of youth while also attacking Victorian middle-class complacency.

Lewis Alexander (b. 1900), who had been educated at Howard University and the University of Pennsylvania, was an actor and theatrical director. As a poet, he preferred to write in traditional stanza forms but also experimented with free verse and Japanese forms such as haiku and tanka. At his best, Alexander could produce strikingly evocative images such as "The earth trembles tonight / Like the quiver of a Negro woman's eye-lids cupping tears."

Clarissa Scott Delany (1901–1927), the daughter of Booker T. Washington's secretary Emmett J. Scott, was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wellesley College. In her tragically short life she wrote excellent lyric poems and was capable of brilliant and memorable lines such as "Joy shakes me like the wind that lifts a sail."

The equally talented Gwendolyn Bennett (1902–1981), a visual artist as well as a writer, graduated from Pratt Institute and studied in Paris at the Académie Julian and the École de Panthéon. Many of her poems exalted femininity and, in some cases, natural African beauty. In her poem "Heritage"—perhaps in response to Cullen—she offers romanticized images of dancers "around a heathen fire" and, in terms reminiscent of Dunbar, testifies to her desire to "feel the surging / Of my sad people's soul / Hidden by a minstrel-smile." During the 1920s, Bennett wrote a regular column for *Opportunity* and taught in the art department at Howard University.

Arna Bontemps (1902–1973) was for many years a librarian at Fisk University and collaborated with Langston Hughes on many projects, including their major anthology *Poetry of the Negro: 1746–1964*. During the 1920s, Bontemps published poems in *Opportunity, The Crisis*, and other journals. His powerful "Nocturne

at Bethesda" received the poetry prize from *The Crisis* in 1927 and has been frequently anthologized. Perhaps drawing on a technique used in spirituals and African American sermonic traditions, poems such as this one and "Golgotha Is a Mountain" (1926) use biblical stories but carefully relocate them in a contemporary historical setting.

Helene Johnson (1906–1995) was among the youngest and most talented of the Harlem Renaissance poets. She was raised in Boston, won an honorable mention in the first *Opportunity* literary contest, and settled in New York in 1927. Her poems appeared in *Vanity Fair, The Messenger, Fire!!,* and other journals, as well as in several anthologies. Some of her poems reflect a primitivistic theme by celebrating an imagined African state of nature.

Waring Cuney (1906–1976), a member of a prominent African American family, was a classically trained musician who graduated from Lincoln University and studied at the New England Conservatory of Music and in Rome. Cuney's "No Images" (1926) is a small modernist masterpiece that is often reprinted. An attempt to encourage personal and racial pride by contrasting a vibrantly mythical Africa and the anesthetic working-class city, "No Images" is the quintessential Harlem Renaissance poem.

Conclusion

These young writers were a remarkable cohort of brilliant, creative people who exemplified the "talented tenth" that Du Bois saw as the hope of the nation's future. Their ambitious and accomplished example demonstrated that only a seriously shortsighted society would deny their contribution or reject their promise.

While the poets of the Harlem Renaissance took pride in the "newness" of their work and their role as representatives of a newly awakened generation, they were also part of a literary tradition. In their attempt to distance themselves from the anxious alternation of dialect and standard English poetry practiced by Dunbar, the younger poets adopted a kind of division of labor: McKay and Cullen demonstrated their skill in expressing African American ideas in traditional stanzas, whereas Hughes and others enjoyed creating rhythmic literary experiments in colloquial black English. The movement launched the careers of several major writers and made a lasting impact on American literature. The poets of the Harlem Renaissance won favorable attention in Europe as their work was translated into other languages, and they served as an inspiration to African and Caribbean writers, including the founders of the *nègritude* movement. Since the 1990s, excellent annotated collections of several poets, major and minor, have appeared, and literary critics continue to publish studies and interpretations of the Harlem Renaissance group.

LORENZO THOMAS

See also American Mercury; Crisis, The; Fire!!; Harper Brothers; Literature: 7—Poetry; Mason, Charlotte Osgood; Messenger, The; Modernism; Negritude; Negro World; Opportunity; Opportunity Literary Contests; Primitivism; Riots: 2—Red Summer of 1919; Spingarn, Joel; Talented Tenth; Vanity Fair; *specific poets, writers, and works*

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Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man, The

James Weldon Johnson's novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912; sometimes spelled . . . *of an Ex-Coloured Man*) unsettles distinctions of genre just as its light-skinned narrator, who has lived on both sides of the "color line," unsettles racial distinctions. The work was originally published anonymously as an actual autobiography (the publisher was Sherman,

French of Boston) but was reissued as fiction (by Knopf) in 1927.

Johnson's text interweaves personal experience, sociological observation, and social protest. The narrator begins his life's story in the South, of which his vague memories include occasional visits from a white man he later learns is his father. When this man announces his imminent marriage to a white woman, the narrator and his mother move North, to a small town in Connecticut, where he grows up immersed in books and music. Inspired by his mother's singing of old southern melodies, he distinguishes himself by becoming a remarkable classical pianist with a distinct, "singing" style. Although his musicality seems tied to his mother's race, the narrator remains unconscious of his blackness until his teacher distinguishes him from the white students in the classroom, thus initiating a crisis of identity reminiscent of W. E. B. Du Bois's "double consciousness." His new sense of racial identity leads him back to the black South, where he plans to attend Atlanta University but instead ends up working at a cigar factory alongside black Cuban immigrants and teaching piano to middle-class black children. When the factory closes, he moves North again, to the emerging "black belt" of New York City, where he narrowly escapes the pull of gambling and other vices by discovering ragtime. After hearing a "natural" black musician play ragtime by ear, he brings his classical training to bear on this new music to develop his own ragtime style—"ragging the classics"—and quickly gains a reputation as the city's best ragtime pianist.

The narrator's playing attracts white audiences in particular, and one of his admirers, a young, disaffected millionaire, hires him as a companion and personal pianist on a trip to Europe. Although the narrator enjoys relative freedom from prejudice in London and Paris, he nonetheless leaves his employer after being inspired by a German pianist to consider a new way of combining his two musical—and racial—traditions. Instead of ragging the classics, the narrator decides to devote himself to incorporating black music into classical forms, and thereby make a name as an important black composer. This ambition takes him back to the American South, where, in search of "raw material" for his work, he finds himself moved beyond expectation by the music he hears. Before his project materializes, however, he witnesses the brutal lynching of a black man and, repulsed and "shamed" by the idea of belonging to a race that could be so demeaned, he returns to New York to live as a white man. By the end of the narrative, at the moment when he begins to write his life story, the "ex-colored man" has made his fortune in real estate, married a beautiful "lily white" woman, and fathered two light-skinned children; but none of this outweighs his growing sense of regret that he has "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage."

Johnson began writing *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* at the end of a brief stint as a lyricist in musical theater; he published it six years later, while serving as an American consul in Latin America. Although some southerners who reviewed the edition of 1912 doubted its authenticity, most accepted the narrative as genuine autobiography and praised it as a "dispassionate" revelation of modern blacks' experiences and of race relations. When the text was reissued as fiction in 1927—at the height of the "Harlem Renaissance"—it carried the author's name and had a cover designed by Aaron Douglas and an introduction by Carl Van Vechten. Echoing earlier reviews, Van Vechten praised its "calm dispassionate tone" and its continuing relevance as "a composite autobiography of the Negro race."

Not until Robert Bone's *The Negro Novel in America* (1965) did critics begin to consider Johnson's narrator as a fictional character, rather than simply a mouthpiece for the author's opinions or a "dispassionate" conveyor of truths. Bone's characterization of the "ex-colored man" as a coward, and the novel as a "tragedy," opened the door to a range of new approaches to the literary qualities of the work and to the narrator's point of view. In the 1970s, critics attempting to articulate a black literary tradition considered the novel a link between nineteenth- and twentieth-century African American narratives. Both Houston Baker (1973) and Robert Stepto (1979) hailed it as an important revision of the slave narrative and a forerunner of black protest fiction.

Much early critical discussion concerns whether and to what extent the text uses irony to undermine the narrator's point of view. This criticism tends to fall into two camps: Some scholars, such as Robert E. Fleming (1971), read the narrator as wholly unreliable and maintain that his perceptions are colored by guilt over abandoning his race; and others, such as Eugene Levy (1973), insist that the narrator embodies, without irony, Johnson's own ambivalence and biases. Joseph T. Skerrett Jr. (1980) offers a compromise between these positions, arguing that Johnson used both irony and tragedy in constructing his narrator. Invoking biographical material, Skerrett suggests that Johnson "symbolically restructured" his own vexed relationship

to a college friend "D," about whose decision to pass as white he felt both envy and disapproval.

More recent critics have revisited the ambiguities of Johnson's novel with a new set of questions, interested less in defining Johnson's intentions than in exploring the text's challenges to notions of authenticity. Invoking Lacanian theory, Samira Kawash (1997) underscores the text's treatment of race as "specular image" and its rejection of any notion of racial authenticity. Donald Goellnicht (1996) draws a parallel between the fictional text's "passing" as autobiography and the narrator's passing as white, and argues that the text is a "subversion" of conventional literary and racial boundaries.

As this critical history demonstrates, Johnson's only novel has continued to inspire interest and debate since its original publication, providing evidence of the changing concerns of literary criticism and the heterogeneous resonance of this richly ambiguous text.

CRISTINA L. RUOTOLO

See also Douglas, Aaron; Johnson, James Weldon; Van Vechten, Carl

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B

Baker, George

See Father Divine

Baker, Josephine

Josephine Baker's performances and writings of the years 1925–1936 form an archive of the transatlantic dimensions and expressions of the Harlem Renaissance. Like many African American performers of the era, Baker found her audience in Europe, where the phenomenal popularity of black Americans came to be known as *le tumulte noir*, or "black rage." She made her debut in *La Revue Nègre* (1925), and its promotional posters, designed by Paul Colin, remain the most controversial and important images of Josephine Baker. After her *danse sauvage* with Joe Alex in *La Revue Nègre*, Baker was both hailed as a primitivist icon and denounced as an indecent savage by Parisian critics. Today, "Although many people celebrate Baker's career, many could argue that her initial success was achieved at the expense of her integrity and the principles of African Americans" (Barnwell 1997, 86). According to Sharpley-Whiting (1999), Baker doubtless "realized that her popularity . . . depended on her exploitation of French exoticist impulses . . . [and] the Black Venus narrative" (107). Baker achieved greater financial success and artistic freedom in France than she might have had in the United States, but she did not escape the problem of realizing her artistic ambitions within the limitations of stereotypical black roles. Still, like many artists of the Harlem Renaissance, Baker sought to use entertainment to improve race relations, and she consistently praised the relatively liberal racial policies of the French, as an oblique critique of American racism.

Before she became a star in Paris, Baker had learned the ways of the entertainment world through black vaudeville. She toured with the Dixie Steppers on the Theater Owners' Booking Association circuit (TOBA, widely known as "Tough on Black Asses"), for a salary of $9 per week. As a dresser for the blues singer Clara Smith, she tended to Smith's costumes and was probably influenced by Smith's preference for tight pink dresses, red wigs, and feather boas—in later years, Baker would be admired for the bravado of her own fashions. When the Dixie Steppers disbanded, Baker, who was then fifteen years old, made for New York, where she was hired to perform in the touring company of Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake's *Shuffle Along*. For $30 a week, she played the chorus line's "Funny Girl," that is, the chorine on the end who doesn't quite get the routine. To the consternation of the other performers, Baker's funny faces, out-of-time kicking, comparatively dark skin, and skinny, rubbery body drew crowds and earned her admiring reviews.

Baker was then recruited by Caroline Dudley to perform in France, as a comic dancer in *La Revue Nègre* at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris. Dudley assembled a troupe of twenty-five dancers and musicians, including the clarinetist Sidney Bechet, and they set sail 15 September 1925 aboard the *Berengaria*, arriving at Le Havre several days later. André Daven and Rolf de Maré had the company in rehearsals almost immediately, and in consultation with the music

Josephine Baker performing "The Conga" in the Ziegfeld Follies at the Winter Garden, New York, 11 February 1936. (AP / Wide World Photos.)

hall choreographer Jacques Charles, the directors transformed the Harlem-style tap show with the aesthetics of French colonialist fantasy. The most signficant revision of La Revue Nègre was Charles's creation of a pas de deux for Josephine Baker and Joe Alex called *La danse sauvage*. Baker and Alex danced topless in costumes consisting of feathers about the head, pelvis, and ankles that caused the show to be remembered long after its brief run (from 2 October until 19 November 1925) was finished.

In Paris, Baker added fantastic colonialist costumes of bananas, feathers, and grass to her repertoire of grimaces and dances, which included the eagle rock, turkey trot, kangaroo dip, itch, break a leg, pimp walk, through the trenches, shimmy, snake hips, black bottom, and mess around (Wood 2000, 24). She typically performed a series of dances with unexpected changes at a high speed, "violating white conventions of movement" (Rose 1989, 29). One interviewer praised her as a "black Venus, who turned our concept of rhythm and movement on its head" ("Femmes d'aujourd'hui," 3). Baker's performance style of the 1920s departed from the liquid prewar style of Vernon and Irene Castle and prefigured the scholarly choreography of Katherine Dunham, which was based on the African diaspora.

Baker's famous banana skirt was her costume for *la danse des bananes*, a scene in the film *La folie du jour* (1926). Archival footage shows Baker entering the scene on the high branch of a tree and descending to the stage laughing and shaking her bananas. Baker danced without a partner in *la danse des bananes*, but she is surrounded by black male drummers, and a lounging white explorer looks on. Baker later abandoned the bananas, except for her unfortunate performance in 1936 in the Ziegfeld Follies, in which she wore a more aggressive version of this comically sexy costume (Documents des Archives, Cinémathèque de la Danse).

After her world tour of twenty-five countries in 1928–1929, Baker would transform herself during the 1930s from a black novelty to an exotic singer of love ballads and a leading actress in colonial films, under the orchestration of Pepito Abatino, her manager and partner. Abatino engaged tutors in French, voice, and dance, and he himself gave his *vedette* (star) lessons in table manners and polite conversation. He negotiated Baker's contract to appear in a silent film, *Sirène des tropiques*, in 1927. His friend Arys Nisotti, a Tunisian casino owner, produced the films *ZouZou* (1934) and *Princesse Tam Tam* (1935). Abatino wrote the script and is credited as the artistic director for *Princesse Tam Tam*. Both films included narratives of transformation and unrequited assimilation and were meant as vehicles for the new "Parisianized" Josephine Baker. Of her movies, Baker said, "It all seems so real, so true, that I sometimes think it's my own life being played out on the sets" (Rose 1989, 163).

Baker's hope for roles in Hollywood movies did not materialize, but she did star successfully in an adaptation of Offenbach's operetta *La Créole*, realizing her goal of performing serious music in French with French actors. Thus, in the 1930s Baker struggled against the *sauvage* persona she had created in the 1920s. As a jazz empress during the 1930s she wore glamorous Poiret gowns, sang, and chatted with the audience in French; and when she danced, her movements tended to conform to the fluidity and the stationary upper body of ballet. The American vernacular dance called the Charleston would remain in her repertoire, however, and this dance and the song "J'ai deux amours" became her signature. The square near the Bobino Theater in Paris where this complex and brilliant star

gave her last performance has been named in her honor.

Biography

Josephine Freda McDonald Baker was born 3 June 1906 in St. Louis, Missouri. Her parents were Carrie McDonald and Eddie Carson; her stepfather was Arthur Martin; her siblings were Richard, Margaret, and Willie Mae. Her primary education was at public schools in St. Louis; she received private instruction in French, acting, voice, and dance at Beau-Chêne, France, in 1930–1931. Baker married Willie Wells in 1919. In 1920–1921, she was a dresser for Clara Smith and a featured blues singer and substitute in the chorus line with the Dixie Steppers (a vaudeville troupe) at the Booker T. Washington Theater in St. Louis, the Gibson Theater in Philadelphia, and elsewhere, earning $9 a week. She married Willie Baker in September 1921. In 1922–1923, she was with the touring company of Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake's *Shuffle Along* as the "Funny Girl" in the chorus line, earning $30 per week. In 1924–1925, she was the "Comedic Principal" in Sissle and Blake's *Bamville/Chocolate Dandies* on Broadway and on tour, at $125 per week. Also in 1925, for several months, she was a dancer at the Plantation Theater Restaurant.

Baker emigrated to France in 1925, sailing on 22 September on the *Berengaria*. In France, she was a dancer with *La Revue Nègre*, featured in a *danse sauvage* with Joe Alex, at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées (opening 2 October 1925, closing 19 November 1925; directed by André Daven, produced by Caroline Dudley, choreographed by Jacques Charles) at $200 per week. In 1926, she was a principal in *La folie du jour* at the Folies Bergère, featured in *la danse des bananes* (the composers were Irving Berlin, Spencer Williams, and Vincent Scotto). Baker opened Chez Joséphine on Rue Fontaine, in the Montmartre district of Paris, on 14 December 1926.

Baker's films of the 1920s include *La folie du jour*, directed by Mario Nalpas (silent, 1926); *Un vent de folie*, which opened in April 1927; and *An Excursion to Paris*. There is also a film of her performance in *La Revue des revues* (1927, directed by Mario Nalpas). She appeared in the short silent film *Le pompier des Folies Bergères/Les hallucinations d'un pompier* (c. 1927, possibly with Pierre Brasseur). She starred in *Siren of the Tropics* (silent, 1927; directed by Henri Etiévent and Mario Nalpas). In 1927, Baker published the first of five collaborative autobiographies: *Les mémoires de Joséphine Baker, recuillis et adaptés par Marcel Sauvage*, which had drawings by Paul Colin. She also endorsed a hair-straightening pomade, Bakerfix, patented by an Argentinean chemist. In 1928–1929, she undertook a tour of twenty-five countries.

During the 1930s, Baker published a novel, *Mon sang dans tes veines* (1930); was a principal in *Paris qui remue* at the Casino de Paris (1930–1931 season); recorded her signature song "J'ai deux amours" (July 12, 1930); starred in the film *ZouZou* (1934, a backstage musical with Jean Gabin, directed by Marc Allégret); starred in a remake of Offenbach's operetta *La Créole*, which opened 15 December 1934 in Marseilles; and starred in the musical comedy film *Princesse Tam Tam* (1935, directed by Edmond Gréville). Baker was the first black woman to appear in the Ziegfeld Follies (1936). On 30 November 1937, she acquired French citizenship by her marriage to Jean Lion. In September 1939, she performed in the revue *Paris-Londres* with Maurice Chevalier.

In 1940, during World War II, Baker joined the French resistance; she served as a sublieutenant in southern Europe and North Africa in 1940–1942. In 1942–1944, she organized the equivalent of the American United Services Overseas for the Free French. In 1943, *The Josephine Baker Show*, a benefit concert for the French Red Cross, was presented in Casablanca, Morocco. In 1945, Baker starred in *Un soir d'alerte/Fausse alerte*, directed by Jacques de Baroncelli. She was awarded the Croix de Lorraine by General Charles de Gaulle, in appreciation of her wartime efforts, and the Medaille de la Résistance, on 6 October 1946.

Baker toured the United States in 1951. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) declared Sunday, 20 May 1951, Josephine Baker Day in recognition of her civil rights activism. She renovated her chateau in France, Les Milandes, as a tourist attraction and home, and she adopted the twelve children of her "Rainbow Tribe" in 1954–1962. In 1945, she established the Josephine Baker Foundation, hoping to use it to support the College of Brotherhood. In 1961, she was awarded the Légion d'Honneur by General de Gaulle. In 1963, she addressed the March on Washington, D.C., and starred in concerts at Carnegie Hall to benefit the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the NAACP, and the College of Brotherhood. She sold Les Milandes on 3 May 1968 to reimburse her creditors. In 1973, she starred in concerts at the Palace Theater; in 1974, she starred in *Joséphine's Story*, a benefit for the Red Cross presented at Monte Carlo. Her last

show was *Joséphine*, in 1974–1975. Baker died in Paris 12 April 1975.

TERRI FRANCIS

See also Bechet, Sidney; Chocolate Dandies; Dance; Primitivism; Shuffle Along; Smith, Clara

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Selected Films

Les hallucinations d'un pompier/Le pompier des Folies-Bergère, c. 1927 (credits unknown)

Princesse Tam Tam, 1935 (color; dir. Edmond Gréville)

Sirène des tropiques, 1927 (black-and-white, silent; dir. Maurice Dekobra)

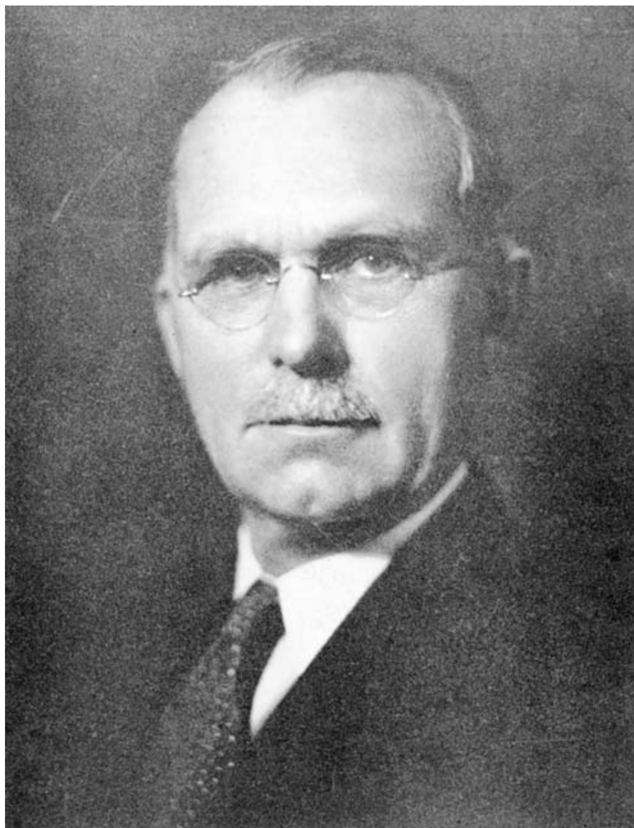
ZouZou, 1934 (black-and-white, with Jean Gabin; dir. Marc Allégret)

Baker, Ray Stannard

Ray Stannard Baker, one of the significant journalists of the muckraking period, joined the staff of the revolutionary *McClure's Magazine* in 1892. Working alongside Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell, Baker produced a variety of investigative articles that molded his political beliefs. Initially, he wrote with little sympathy for the worker, feeling that protesters and strikers failed to understand the problems of a growing nation. Soon, however, his perspective changed, as he investigated lawlessness, monopolies, and corruption. Although he was not pro-labor, he began to distrust corporations, and a series of articles that he wrote about railroads pushed him further toward progressivism. When Steffens, Tarbell, and John S. Philips resigned from *McClure's* to buy *American Magazine*, Baker joined them. A study of the nation's racial divide would be his first investigative series for this new reformist publication.

At the time of the race riots of 1906 in Atlanta, Baker traveled South to investigate America's "color line." He had previously written about racial issues in two articles for *McClure's*; for those articles, he had traveled to the sites of four widely publicized lynchings and studied the lawlessness that characterized racial problems in the United States. In his new series, however, he planned to examine the "Negro problem" in depth. His research included interviews with southern leaders, both black and white, as well as clergymen, farmers, scholars, and other citizens. At one of these meetings, Baker sat down with W. E. B. Du Bois, then a professor of economics at Atlanta University, along with the white Episcopal clergyman Cary Breckenridge Wilmer. As Du Bois and Wilmer debated racial issues, both acknowledged they had never before done so face to face with someone of the opposing race (Tuttle 1974, 242).

In April 1907, the *American* published the first article in Baker's series, which concentrated on the race riot and the situation of blacks in Atlanta. After four more pieces, which covered topics such as Jim Crow laws and black life in the city, Baker broadened his



Ray Stannard Baker, c. 1930–1946. (Library of Congress.)

study, examining the color line in the North. The completed series, while presenting few solutions, pointed to various trends in American racial politics. Baker considered the impact of the "great migration," divisions within the African American community, and the many societal factors that made racism a regional and national issue.

Despite their thorough—and rare—analysis of the subject, however, Baker's articles fell short of radicalism. In a conversation with Baker, his colleague John Philips had reminded him to "keep the interests and friendliness of southern readers. . . . They are the people whom we wish to reach and enlighten." Also, many scholars have noted that Baker was never particularly extreme, or even immoderate, on the issue of race. Ideologically, he was allied with the progressive philanthropists and with Booker T. Washington; as a result, his articles received compliments from white liberals and moderate black leaders, and only slight criticism from more radical leaders like Du Bois.

In 1908, Baker published the series in a book, *Following the Color Line*. During the following years, he continued to write about race relations and also published a succession of idealistic books about country life under the pseudonym David Grayson. In 1918–1919, Baker served as director of the press bureau for the American peace commission at Versailles, where his close relationship with President Woodrow Wilson enabled him to define the role of press secretary. After the war, Baker continued to write; he produced an autobiography and fifteen volumes on Wilson.

Biography

Ray Stannard Baker was born 17 April 1870 in East Lansing, Michigan. He attended public schools in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin; received a bachelor of science degree from Michigan Agricultural College (later Michigan State) in East Lansing, Michigan, in 1889; and studied at the University of Michigan Law School in 1891 (he did not graduate). Baker was a reporter for the Chicago *News-Record* (1892–1896); an associate editor at *McClure's Magazine* (1897–1906); a part owner and editor of the *American Magazine* (1906–1915); a freelancer for *Century*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Outlook*, *World's Work*, and other publications; and director of the press bureau of the American peace commission (1918–1919). He received the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1940. Baker died in Amherst, Massachusetts, 12 July 1946.

JOSHUA A. KOBRIN

See also Great Migration; Lynching

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Baltimore Afro-American

The outburst of literary creativity known as the Harlem Renaissance might have been little noticed or remembered were it not for black newspapers. Black newspapers publicized and provided media outlets for black novelists, poets, and essayists. Although black and white magazines of the 1920s such as *Opportunity*, *The Crisis*, and *American Mercury* did publish Harlem Renaissance artists and writers, the black newspapers exposed them to a much wider audience. One black newspaper, the Baltimore *Afro-American*, provided an invaluable if little known outlet for the Harlem Renaissance.

The Baltimore *Afro-American* was and is one of the most important black newspapers. During the 1920s, it was the most widely read black newspaper on the East Coast. It was founded in Baltimore in 1892 by a group of black entrepreneurs and ministers led by Rev. William Alexander. John H. Murphy, its printer, acquired the newspaper in 1897, and his descendants have owned and operated it down to the present. In 1918, his son Carl Murphy, who was a graduate of Howard and Harvard universities, became the editor of the *Afro-American*. When John H. Murphy died in 1922, the family chose Carl Murphy to run the newspaper. Under his leadership, which lasted until 1967, the *Afro-American* became one of the top three black newspapers in the United States, matching its competitors the Chicago *Defender* and the Pittsburgh *Courier* in circulation and influence.

During the 1920s, the *Afro-American* reported news about the black community and crusaded for racial justice locally and nationally. It also extensively publicized black artists and entertainers. This last function was its greatest contribution to the Harlem Renaissance.

The *Afro-American* endlessly publicized jazz, blues, and the concert singers and musicians of the Harlem Renaissance—figures such as Marian Anderson, Louis Armstrong, Josephine Baker, Eubie Blake, Duke Ellington, Roland Hayes, Florence Mills, and Bessie Smith. It also gave prominent coverage to the singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson. It regularly reviewed Broadway plays with black themes, such as *The Emperor Jones*, and occasionally published excerpts from these plays. It also published excerpts from the works of black novelists of the era such as Jean Toomer; and it frequently published the poems and essays of such Harlem Renaissance figures as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Claude McKay, and Zora Neale Hurston. Countee Cullen became a columnist for the newspaper, and Langston Hughes, later on in the 1930s, covered the Spanish Civil War for it. The *Afro-American* encouraged young black writers by publishing serials and short stories in its magazine section; eventually these stories were published in an anthology edited by Nick Aaron Ford, *Best Short Stories by Afro-American Writers*. In addition, the *Afro-American* publicized black playwrights and advertised local presentations of their plays. It publicized and published, as well, such intellectual and political leaders as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, James Weldon Johnson, and Kelly Miller. Its homegrown columnist Ralph Matthews became nationally known

as the "black H. L. Mencken." In all these ways, the *Afro-American* supported the Harlem Renaissance.

HAYWARD "WOODY" FARRAR

See also American Mercury; Black Press; Chicago Defender; Crisis, The; Cullen, Countee; Emperor Jones, The; Garvey, Marcus; Hughes, Langston; Matthews, Ralph; Mencken, H. L.; Miller, Kelly; Murphy, Carl J.; Opportunity; Pittsburgh Courier; Revue Nègre, La; *specific entertainers, musicians, and writers*

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Barnes, Albert C.

Albert C. Barnes established the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania, in 1922, having amassed the largest private collection of modern and African art in the world. Most important, Barnes appreciated African sculpture as art, not simply as artifacts that were best placed in museums of ethnography and natural history. He also understood the profound impact of African sculpture on the formal and aesthetic innovations of the European avant-garde—artists such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Henri Matisse. In addition, Barnes was a tireless and aggressive champion of the cultural importance of African art for African Americans: "Negro art is so big, so loaded with possibilities for a transfer of its value to other spheres where Negro life must be raised to higher levels, that it should be handled with the utmost care. . . . It involves intellectual, ethical, social, psychological, [and] aesthetic values of inseparable interactions." As a consequence, Barnes soon caught the eye of Alain Locke, the editor of *The New Negro*, who may be considered the philosophical "midwife" of the Harlem Renaissance and who was himself seeking to make the art of Africans and African Americans the locus of a new aesthetics and a new racial consciousness. Thus began a complex friendship that would also involve Barnes's relationship with other prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance, in particular the novelist Walter White and the editor of *Opportunity*, Charles S. Johnson.

Barnes met Locke in Paris in December 1923 and the next month sought Locke's assistance with an article, "Contribution to the Study of Negro Art in America," that was to be published in both *Ex Libris* and *Les Arts à Paris*. Three months later, at Barnes's suggestion, Johnson devoted a special issue of *Opportunity* (March 1924) to African art; this issue included Barnes's own article, "The Temple," together with Locke's "A Note on African Art" and Paul Guillaume's "African Art at the Barnes Foundation." One year later, Locke included Barnes's "Contributions to the Study of Negro Art" (retitled "Negro Art and America") in a special issue of *Survey Graphic*, "Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro" (March 1925); soon afterward, he included this same article in *The New Negro*.

Barnes was an important cultural resource—a person to consult regarding African art. George Hutchinson has claimed that Locke and *Opportunity* relied on Barnes as their "house expert" on African aesthetics and its relation to European modernism. One must be careful, however, not to overstate this influence. Locke was not entirely satisfied with Barnes's "Negro Art and America," which offered little help in Locke's own effort to provide a cultural context for African art. Partly for this reason, Locke offered "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts" to supplement Barnes's effort. For the remainder of the decade and into the next, Locke continued to champion African art. He now argued, however, that to see African art through the eyes of modernists such as Barnes, who so strongly emphasized form, was to see it "through a glass darkly."

Biography

Albert C. Barnes was born 2 January 1872 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He studied at public schools in Philadelphia; at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, 1892; and at Heidelberg in Germany, 1900. He established the Barnes Foundation in December 1922. Barnes transferred 710 paintings from his personal collection (works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Renoir, Cézanne, and Matisse) to the foundation and first purchased African sculpture in 1922. He was named an Officier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur by the French government on 27 July 1936 and was made an honorary doctor of science by Lincoln University on 5 June 1951. Barnes died 24 July 1951. (His provisions for the Barnes Foundation have since given rise to continuing controversy.)

MARK HELBLING

See also Johnson, Charles S.; Locke, Alain; Modernism; New Negro, The; Opportunity; Survey Graphic; White, Walter

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Barnett, Ida B. Wells

Ida Bell Wells Barnett was born a slave in Holly Springs, Mississippi, in 1862. She began her work as a teacher in the rural schools of Mississippi but then went to Memphis, a move that radicalized her and gave her an opportunity for a new career and for leadership. In the late nineteenth century she was one of the best-known African American women in the United States and internationally.

In Memphis, Barnett became part of a politically and intellectually active community. She joined a lyceum, composed primarily of other public school teachers, whose members enjoyed music, reading together, debating issues of the day, giving recitations, and writing and presenting essays. She contributed

Ida B. Wells Barnett in a photo published in 1891.
(Library of Congress.)

essays to a periodical associated with the lyceum, the *Evening Star*, then served as its editor; she was also a columnist for another local paper, *Living Way*. An incident that informed her editorials and articles at this time took place when she was forcibly removed from a train for taking a seat in the ladies' coach (rather than in the smoking car, as Jim Crow regulations required) and led to a lawsuit against the railroad, the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern. She won the suit, and although the decision was overturned by the supreme court of Tennessee, the episode began Barnett's lifetime of outspoken activism and advocacy. Barnett also wrote articles about the poor conditions in schools in the African American community (these writings got her fired from the teaching pool), and she encouraged African Americans, including members of her own family, to leave Memphis and seek justice and political and economic opportunities in the West.

During this period, Barnett was a full-time investigative journalist; a co-owner and editor of her own newspaper, *Free Speech and Headlight* (1889), with Rev. Taylor Nightingale and J. L. Fleming; an astute businesswoman and professional woman who made her paper a successful enterprise; an active member and then secretary of the predominantly male National Press Association; a columnist syndicated in African American periodicals throughout the country; and an outspoken crusader for justice. In 1892, she wrote an editorial about the lynching of three of her friends, Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Lee Stewart, who had been co-owners and operators of the People's Grocery, in competition with a store owned and operated by whites. Barnett was a sharp-tongued political observer, and in her editorial—which, like all of her writing, was short, simple, and direct—she argued, provocatively, that these and other lynchings were not what the white establishment claimed them to be. The white power structure in Memphis reacted with threats and the actual burning of her newspaper offices, but she herself was in New York at the time and prudently remained there. In fact, she did not return to the South until January 1922, when she went to Little Rock, Arkansas, as an advocate against injustice and terrorism during a riotous period in which many African Americans were incarcerated or murdered.

Barnett's exile from the South gave her another arena for political action. Though she remained an active journalist for the rest of her life, she also began a career as a public speaker and a lifelong commitment to community development and political organization. From 1892 on, she traveled and spoke frequently as a political activist.

Barnett had a reputation as a "difficult" woman who was often involved in public disagreements if not out-and-out feuds with a broad range of adversaries. Some of these were with highly respected white reformers: for example, in 1893, Barnett disputed with Frances Willard (of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union) and the evangelist Dwight Moody, because she considered their response to lynching inappropriate. Another adversary was a white journalist, John W. Jacks, president of the Missouri Press Association; in 1895, Jacks wrote a scathing attack on the morals of African Americans generally, and Barnett in particular. There was also tension between Barnett and some women who were part of the African American elite, such as Mary Church Terrell and Fannie Barrier Williams, who both vied with Barnett, for several decades, for leadership and power in various organizations. Some of Barnett's disagreements were with African American men, most notably Booker T. Washington during the time when he dominated the black leadership: Barnett found his political position intolerable. She also disagreed with political organizations; for instance, although she herself was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in 1910, she considered it too conservative and overly controlled by white rather than African American viewpoints.

However, not all of Barnett's activity was so contentious. She was always an active member of the African American church, most consistently in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, but in many others as well. She joined many professional, social, and community organizations whose goals were self-improvement and securing justice, equality, and empowerment for all. Before the turn of the twentieth century, she organized one of the most successful antilynching campaigns: documenting cases; developing careful, thorough arguments; and offering proposals to end this type of terrorism. After the turn of the century, she continued the antilynching crusade but also became active in the woman's suffrage movement and the settlement house movement. With regard to settlement houses and community development, one of her striking achievements was the founding, in 1913, of the Negro Fellowship League in Chicago; she kept this organization alive and functioning for ten years before competing organizations and a lack of resources compromised her ability to continue. By the 1920s and 1930s, Barnett was also involved in political campaigns,

and she herself ran for the state senate in Illinois in 1930, although she was defeated.

Barnett died in 1931, never having lost her passion for justice, never having wavered in her commitment to people who were disenfranchised politically or economically, and leaving as her legacy a remarkable record of achievements. She was a successful and significant investigative journalist, an insightful political observer and analyst, and a creative community organizer who was able to put together a network of services in support of specific needs. She was also an intellectual with a genuine vision of possibilities for African Americans. Perhaps most important, she was a leader who helped to identify strategies for social and political action that would constitute a framework for positive change for generations to come.

Biography

Ida Bell Wells Barnett (or Wells-Barnett) was born 16 July 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. Her parents, James and Elizabeth Warrenton Wells, were politically active after the Civil War; they and one of her brothers died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1878, and she was left to care for her surviving siblings. Barnett attended elementary and high school at Shaw University, later renamed Rust College. She taught in the public schools of rural Mississippi and Shelby County, Tennessee. She was a contributor to and later editor (1886) of the *Evening Star* and a columnist for *Living Way*, both periodicals in Memphis, Tennessee; was a co-owner and editor of *Free Speech and Headlight* (with Rev. Taylor Nightingale and J. L. Fleming), 1889; and was elected secretary of the National Press Association, 1889. In 1892, she wrote an editorial that made her famous as a leader of the antilynching movement and in effect exiled her from the South for the next three decades. In 1893 and 1894, she made two speaking tours of England, Scotland, and Wales. Barnett was active in several political organizations—including the National Afro-American League, Afro-American Council, National Association of Colored Women, National Equal Rights League, Ida B. Wells Woman's Club, and National American Woman's Suffrage Association—and in the Niagara movement, the woman's suffrage movement, and the international peace movement. She was a cofounder of the NAACP (1910) and a founder of the Negro Fellowship League (1910) and the Alpha Suffrage Club (1913). She ran unsuccessfully for the Illinois state senate in 1930. Barnett died in Chicago (of uremic poisoning) 25 March 1931.

JACQUELINE ROYSTER

See also Antilynching Crusade; Lynching; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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Barthé, Richmond

James Richmond Barthé (1901–1989), a formally trained academic sculptor, was one of the most widely collected and publicized artists of the Harlem Renaissance. His work was characterized by racial pride, naturalistic representation, movement, sensuality, and spirituality; it appealed to a clientele extending beyond the black American community and attracted patronage from the white American mainstream; and it helped form the image of the "New Negro."

In the 1920s, when Harlem was coming into vogue and the young Barthé was experimenting in art, he received funding from a pastor to attend the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There, he acquired a traditional academic education strongly influenced by European art in the classical and Renaissance styles. At first, he studied painting under Charles Schroeder; later, however, an exercise in molding clay, intended to enhance his appreciation of three-dimensional forms, thrust him into the spotlight.

In 1927, the Chicago Women's Club, a progressive group interested in the fine arts as a social commentary on race, sponsored an unprecedented exhibition of art, music, and literature by black Americans and needed some three-dimensional works to be placed alongside African sculpture. Two sculptured busts that Barthé had made for an art course were included in this exhibition, which was part of the *Negro in Art Week* programs. It introduced him to the world of professional artists and led, in 1928, to his first commissions for sculptures: portrait heads of Henry O. Tanner and Toussaint-Louverture. Throughout Barthé's long career, his principal source of income would be such figurative bronze sculpture, particularly commissions for single portrait busts of Africans, African Americans, Caribbean-Americans, and European-Americans, although he also produced realistic freestanding full-length nude and clothed statues, some groups of figures (often with African themes), and some religious sculpture.

Barthé met Alain Locke during the *Negro in Art Week* programs; they developed a lifelong friendship, and Locke became a loyal supporter of Barthé's work. During this time Barthé also met Frank Breckinridge and Julius Rosenwald, two prominent and influential businessmen in Chicago. This acquaintance led to a one-year travel grant to New York City in 1929, enabling Barthé to create works for an individual exhibition at the Chicago Women's Club in 1930. A year earlier, he had exhibited four sculptures in New York in a show sponsored by the Harmon Foundation—*The Jubilee Singer* (1927), *Toussaint L'Overture* (1928), *Head of a Tortured Negro* (1929), and *Tortured Negro* (1929)—and they received an honorable mention. *The Jubilee Singer* appeared on the cover of *Opportunity* in 1928. Barthé continued to exhibit regularly with the Harmon Foundation until 1933 and received tremendous publicity and recognition through its promotion of black American artists.

Barthé became a permanent resident of New York City in 1931, attracted by its artistic culture and especially its progressive black arts community. He met artists, writers, and intellectuals such as Aaron Douglas, Langston Hughes, Wallace Thurman, and Carl Van Vechten and attended the salon of A'Lelia Walker. Through this salon he secured work such as a sculptured portrait of Walker herself.

Barthé lived not in Harlem but on Fourteenth Street in Chelsea, where he also opened a studio. He may have found the "New Negro" arts movement too restrictive because it focused on Afrocentric imagery, and he may have wanted more exposure in mainstream artistic circles. He seems to have concluded that his primary customers and patrons would be whites rather than blacks, and that by living and working downtown he could make himself more accessible to whites. If this was his strategy, it succeeded; he received numerous commissions and exhibitions and was praised by white and black critics in the 1930s and 1940s. Still, Barthé was a figure in Harlem, enjoying its nightlife, interacting with the literati of the Harlem Renaissance, and attending dance, music, and theater performances, although he maintained some measure of anonymity.

During the time of the Harlem Renaissance, mainstream institutions in culture, entertainment, and publishing were extraordinarily open to black Americans, and Barthé evidently took advantage of this openness. His work was displayed in exhibitions at the Whitney Museum (which acquired some for its collection), the New Jersey State Museum, the Corcoran Galleries, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Carnegie Institute, among others. His acquaintance

with businesspeople led to public commissions, notably a frieze for the Harlem River Housing Project, *Green Pastures: The Walls of Jericho* (1938); and the Arthur Brisbane Memorial (1939), a monument to the newspaper editor and columnist. Barthé was also acquainted with people in theater, and he created many portrait sculptures for stars such as Phillips Holmes, John Gielgud, and Katharine Cornell.

Some of Barthé's sculpture—such as *African Dancer* (1933), *Wetta* (c. 1934), *Feral Benga* (1935), and *African Boy Dancing* (1937)—had African themes that appealed to the popular culture of the day: the Afrocentric self-awareness of blacks, and the expectation of whites that black artists would infuse their work with African "primitivism." Dance was a central motif in much of Barthé's art; Barthé had enrolled in classes in modern dance to enhance his understanding of the human figure in motion. His mastery of human anatomy, acquired during his years of academic training, combined with this appreciation of dance allowed him to capture emotion, movement, and sensuality, especially in his more stylized, elongated pieces.

Recent scholars have pointed out homoerotic aspects of Barthé's sculpture and have suggested that his use of the black male nude was a way of working out of his own sexual conflicts. His sensual sculptures of nude black males, such as *Feral Benga*, *The Boxer* (1940), and the robust *Stevedore* (1937), may well have appealed to white homosexuals who saw eroticism in their interpretation of images of African male "primitivism." The suggestion that Barthé had a double life during the Harlem Renaissance—participating in an intricate network of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals—may explain his wide appeal and patronage, especially among New York's homosexual and artistic circles; it may also explain his apparent need to obtain privacy by living downtown rather than in Harlem.

Barthé did cross racial, gender, and class lines in his career. Yet he may have made his greatest contribution to the Harlem Renaissance as a role model for other black American artists, demonstrating through his life and work the heights that artistic creativity could achieve in an integrated society.

Biography

James Richmond Barthé was born 28 January 1901 in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. He studied at Saint Rose de Lima (a parochial school) and Valena C. James High School; at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1924–1928; with Charles Schroeder and Albin Polasek, privately; and at the Art Students League, New York, 1931. Barthé traveled and worked in Italy and Iolaus, Jamaica. His awards included the Eames McVeagh Prize, Chicago Art League, 1928; a Rosenwald Foundation fellowship, 1928–1929; an honorary mention from the Harmon Exhibition, for *Tortured Negro*, 1929; an honorary master of arts degree from Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1934; a Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship, 1940–1941; the Edward B. Alford Award; an award from the National Sculpture Society, 1945; the James J. Hoey Award for Interracial Justice, 1945; the Audubon Artists Gold Medal of Honor, 1945; an honorary doctorate in fine arts from Saint Francis College in Brooklyn, New York, 1947; and election to the National Academy of Arts and Letters, 1949. He died in Pasadena, California, 6 March 1989.

CLAUDIA HILL

See also Art Criticism and the Harlem Renaissance; Artists; Douglas, Aaron; Harmon Foundation; Harmon Traveling Exhibition; Locke, Alain; Primitivism; Salons; Tanner, Henry Ossawa; Van Vechten, Carl; Walker, A'Lelia

Selected Individual Exhibitions

1930: Chicago Women's Club, Chicago
1931: University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
1931: Caz-Delbo Galleries, New York
1931: Rankin Art Galleries, Washington, D.C.
1933: Caz-Delbo Galleries, New York
1939: Arden Galleries, New York
1941: De Porres Interracial Center, New York
1942: South Side Art Center, Chicago
1945: International Print Society, New York
1947: Margaret Brown Galleries, Boston
1947: Duncan Phillips Memorial Galleries, Washington, D.C.
1947: Grand Central Galleries, New York
1948: Saint Peter College, Jersey City, New Jersey

Selected Group Exhibitions

1927: Chicago Women's Club, Chicago
1928: Chicago Art League, Chicago
1929: Fisk University, Nashville
1929: Harmon Foundation, New York
1930: Regal Theater, Chicago

1931: Harmon Foundation, New York
1933: Harmon Foundation, New York
1933: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1933–1934: Century of Progress Show, Chicago
1934: Salons of America, New York
1934: Howard University, Washington, D.C.
1934: New School of Social Research, New York
1934: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1935: New Jersey State Museum, New Jersey
1935: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1936: Corcoran Galleries, Washington, D.C.
1936: Texas Centennial Exposition, Texas
1938: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
1939: Baltimore Museum, Maryland
1939: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
1939: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
1939: World's Fair, New York
1939: Harlem Art Galleries, New York
1939: Sculptors' Guild Outdoor Exhibition, New York
1940: American Negro Exposition, Chicago
1940: Pennsylvania Museum Sculpture Show
1941: Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
1941: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia
1943: Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois
1947: World's Fair, New York

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Batouala

René Maran's novel *Batouala* (1921) is set in the French colony of Ubangui-Shari and takes the reader into the cultural practices and emotions of the people whom Maran came to know as an administrator in the French colonial empire. Sexually explicit and dramatically exotic, *Batouala* was an immediate sensation and caused a furor in France. Although it won the Prix Goncourt, the most prestigious award France has to offer a young writer, the book was banned for many years, and Maran was forced to resign his post. The most incendiary part of *Batouala* was the preface, in which Maran, who was from Martinique, attacked the French in Africa and equated colonialism with deceit and genocide: "You build your kingdom on corpses. . . . You aren't a torch, but an inferno. Everything you touch, you consume." Not only had this "brother of France" declared that assimilation was a myth but he had also used his position of authority to question the raison d'être of the French presence in Africa. After he returned to France, Maran became involved in various pan-African movements, joining the Ligue Universelle de la Défense de la Race Noire (as a member of the editorial staff of its journal, *Les continents*) and the Comité Universel de l'Institut Nègre de Paris (its literary journal was *La revue du monde noir*).

Many people consider *Batouala* the founding text of African nationalist literature. For writers and

intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance, the novel and its author evoked strong feelings of racial pride and testified to the artistic potential of Africa. In Marcus Garvey's *Negro World*, for example, *Batouala* became a cause célèbre. As a consequence, Maran's salon in Paris soon became a meeting place for African and West Indian intellectuals (most notably Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, and Léopold Senghor), as well as African American intellectuals. In 1924, Alain Locke met Maran in Paris; this meeting was the beginning of a long friendship. Maran introduced members of the Harlem Renaissance to the French public in such articles as "Le mouvement negro-littéraire aux États-Unis"; he was also instrumental in having Walter White's *Fire in the Flint* translated into French. At the same time as Maran began to appear in *Opportunity*, the *Revue de monde noir* began to publish the writings of Locke, Jean Toomer, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and James Weldon Johnson.

African Americans have long considered France the "garden spot of Europe." *Batouala* served both to complicate that understanding and to bring intellectuals of the Harlem Renaissance into the larger political and cultural universe of the African diaspora.

MARK HELBLING

See also Césaire, Aimé; Damas, Léon; Europe and the Harlem Renaissance: 4—Paris; Fire in the Flint, The; Francophone Africa and the Harlem Renaissance; Francophone Caribbean and the Harlem Renaissance; Locke, Alain; Maran, René; Negro World; Opportunity; Pan-Africanism; Senghor, Léopold

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Bearden, Romare

Among African American artists, Romare Bearden is one of the most inventive, distinctive, and famous and has received more critical acclaim and scholarly analysis than nearly anyone else. His art evolved considerably during his career: Early on, he was committed to social realism and political illustration; after World War II, he was one of the few African American painters who embraced abstract expressionism; at the beginning of the 1960s, his art became more representational but remained highly modernist in style and materials. When the civil rights movement erupted during the 1960s, he began to explore the social, economic, cultural, and political issues of African American life, through his many collages, which were made with found images from newspapers, magazines, and photographs. Although collage was hardly new at that time, Bearden was radical in his use of brutally factual photographic images to visualize the African American

Romare Bearden, photographed by Carl Van Vechten. (Library of Congress.)

experience from his personal perspective. It is for these works that he is still best known.

Bearden was born around 1912 in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was raised there and in Pittsburgh and Harlem. He came to Harlem as a child and often visited his grandmother in Pittsburgh, where he eventually lived for a few years during his childhood. In Pittsburgh he had a friend named Eugene whom he later credited with inspiring his desire to draw and therefore his career as an artist. As a youth, Bearden came into contact with many artists and writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance, because his mother worked for the New York office of the *Chicago Defender*, an African American newspaper.

After college, Bearden studied at the Art Students League with George Grosz, who was then one of the great political satirists in graphic media. Bearden himself worked as a political cartoonist in the mid-1930s, first publishing cartoons in *Medley*, a humor journal published by New York University, then having illustrations and cartoons published in *Collier's*, *Fortune*, the Baltimore *Afro-American*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Thus, early in his artistic career he was creating images weighted with social commentary and observation, undoubtedly having learned this skill from Grosz. At about this time he became associated with the 306 Group of African American artists based in Harlem; this group included Charles Alston, Aaron Douglas, Jacob Lawrence, and Augusta Savage and was named for a salon that developed at 306 141st Street.

By the mid-1940s—after the period of the Harlem Renaissance—Bearden began to receive recognition for his social realist paintings. His work was exhibited in 1945 in the Whitney Museum Annual, and in the next three years he had exhibits at the Kootz Gallery. Ironically, though, his social realist works from these years are little known today, especially compared with his later collages; and social realism was not a long phase in his development as an artist. It seems that he felt some displeasure with how African American artists were publicly received at the time and with his own identity, and this discontent led him to take new stylistic directions. Still, social realist paintings such as *Two Women in a Landscape* (1941) reveal his keen observation of the problems of ordinary people, particularly poor African Americans, during the Great Depression; and his painting *Factory Workers* (1942) was used to illustrate "Negro's War," an article in *Fortune* magazine.

In his paintings of the mid-1940s, many of biblical subjects, his style was becoming much more abstract. In the late 1940s, Bearden was deeply involved in studying the paintings and drawings of the old masters, European artists of the Renaissance and later. He did not care to sketch in public at museums; instead, he made photocopies of masterworks and hung them in his studio so that he could study them conveniently and carefully. However, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, he was not very productive as a visual artist.

Bearden, who had served in the army during World War II, was able to go to Paris in 1950 to study philosophy at the Sorbonne, thanks to the GI Bill. He was very active in Parisian artistic and intellectual circles and got to know many older artists who had been part of the rise of modern art early in the century, as well as younger expatriate American writers and artists.

From the mid-1950s to the early 1960s, he continued to paint abstractly. Abstract expressionism was then at the height of its popularity, and Bearden's works have the painterly, agitated brushwork and diverse tonal colors that were typical of this style. A characteristic technique of his own was to pull painted pieces of paper off canvases, creating rough, uneven, gritty paint surfaces. But although the abstract expressionists' philosophical introspection and self-discovery might have appealed to Bearden, he and other African American artists of this period felt alienated from the New York school, which was all-white. At the same time, they seemed to feel that representational, socially conscious painting was no longer meaningful or effective.

In the early 1960s, as the civil rights movement was advancing, Bearden's own art—and his idea of what African American art should be—changed dramatically. In 1963, he and several other African American artists in New York City, including Norman Lewis, Hale Woodruff, and Charles Alston, formed the group Spiral to help promote distinctly African American aesthetics and find a way to use art for the benefit of the civil rights movement. This group, which at its largest numbered sixteen artists, met frequently in Bearden's studio in SoHo to discuss various philosophical and political views concerning the social turmoil of the day and the members' own place as visual artists in the struggle for equality. After the march on Washington, D.C., in 1963, they organized an exhibit of their recent work; this was held in Manhattan and was called "Black and White" because all the works were done using only black and white. The exhibit was interpreted as fiercely political despite the artists' attempt to minimize polemical responses to their work.

Also in 1963, Bearden began to create his socially conscious collages about African American life and culture. He concentrated on several rather broad themes, such as the inner city, the rural South, music, and musicians. Hoping that the artists with whom he was associated would collaborate with him on these collages or follow his lead, he collected a huge number of fragmentary cutout images and brought them to the meetings of Spiral, and two members—Richard Mayhew and Reginald Gammon—did start to work with him, but they soon lost interest and stopped.

Bearden created his collages by first assembling the fragmentary images, then painting over them in scattered places, then using a brayer to work a resin emulsion adhesive over the whole. The collages were then photocopied and enlarged. It was in this enlarged format that they were first exhibited, in 1964, under the collective title "Projections." They have been described as projections (a term referring to the method of enlargement) but also as "photomontages." These works were well received by most critics, whose response encouraged Bearden to abandon painting and devote himself to collage. It should be noted, though, that the critics were reacting at least partly to the newsworthy content of the works, and this is how they have usually been interpreted by scholars. Bearden himself did not approve of that approach, however, because the collages were not meant to illustrate or be parallel to the civil rights movement.

Bearden's collages feature disparate, abruptly juxtaposed found images. Bearden cut them out of various popular magazines of the time, such as *Life*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Ebony*, and *Look*. Abrupt shifts in depth and scale create intense, provocative scenes of ordinary people and their activities. His composites of cutout images can create extremely realistic or very distorted figures and settings. Photographic images that were originally without color or had been stripped of their color during the photocopying are sharply contrasted with colored photographs and periodical illustrations and brightly painted areas. (Color derived from found images or created with paint is seen in the later collages, but the breakthrough works of the mid-1960s are without color.) Bearden evolved his own fully realized, tonally charged aesthetics, and his collages seem to reverberate with the rhythms of jazz and the blues and the movement and speed of urban life. They were often inspired by the artist's recollections of his youth and his perceptions of the life of rural and urban African Americans. Themes of travel and motion, usually with some reference to trains, appear frequently. Because Bearden had produced illustrations and cartoons thirty years earlier, he knew the expressive power of images in the mass media; but when he began his collages he resisted the literal, direct approach of illustration. Photographs, with their striking immediacy, were a provocative, enticing means of visualizing the reality of life for a part of America that had been historically poor and alienated from the dominant mainstream culture.

Dove (1964) shows urban dwellers on a tense, noisy, crowded street. Its title refers to a bird, in the upper center, that suggests peace, tranquillity, and spiritual release and is in sharp contrast to all else that is depicted. The faces are brutally real; scale and depth are not. *The Prevalence of Ritual—Baptist* (also 1964) includes some of the most important themes in Bearden's collages: Christian references, the concept of inclusion or exclusion, the rituals of black culture, and the ritualistic quality of making art. *Pittsburgh Memories* features two large faces of black men; these faces suggest African masks, are made up of fragments of photographs (in a way influenced by cubism), and are surrounded by assembled photographs of city buildings. As with many of Bearden's collages, the inspiration for this image was the artist's recollection of his youth. *Watching the Good Trains Go By* and *Train Whistle Blues Numbers 1* and *2* show one of Bearden's most persistent themes: the train. Bearden said that for him the train represents how white society encroached on African American society. It may well also be his personal reflection on the migration of many African Americans from the South to the North in the early decades of the twentieth century, a theme that Jacob Lawrence immortalized in his series of paintings *The Migration of the Negro*. *The Conjur Woman* depicts an African American folk mystic who could supposedly work magic and cast spells. *Summertime* (1967) contrasts the sentimental wholesomeness of a girl eating an ice cream cone with the impoverishment of people behind tenement windows, who seem to be caged in.

After the 1960s, Bearden returned to painting. He depicted socially conscious themes and scenes of African American life in vivid colors, sometimes with scratchy, agitated brushwork. Some of these works are pleasantly abstract scenes with large, bold areas of color, whereas others are violent and disturbing.

Late in life, Bearden was a mentor to younger black artists and an advocate of African American art. He received widespread recognition and acclaim for his work, becoming one of America's most famous black artists. In 1967, he was a cocurator of "The Evolution of Afro-American Artists, 1800–1950" at City College

in New York City, an exhibit that was one of the first to explore the history of African American art. Bearden wrote "Rectangular Structure in My Montage Paintings," an important treatise on his own collages, in 1968. In 1969, he and the abstract artist Carl Holty wrote *The Painter's Mind: A Study of the Relations of Structure and Space in Painting*. Bearden's years of research became the foundation for *A History of African American Artists: From 1792 to the Present*, of which he and Harry Henderson were coauthors; this was one of the first major surveys of the topic. Bearden died of cancer in 1988.

Biography

Romare Bearden was probably born 2 September 1912 in Charlotte, North Carolina. (There is some disagreement among sources as to the year of his birth, with dates ranging from 1911 to 1914. According to the Register of Deeds in Charlotte, he was born in 1912.) He was brought as a child to New York, where his father was an inspector for the Department of Sanitation. Bearden studied at Boston University while playing for one of the Negro baseball leagues; he eventually received a B.S. in mathematics from New York University in 1935. He also studied at the University of Pittsburgh, the American Artists School, and the Art Students League, New York City. In the late 1930s and then again from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s, he was a social worker in New York City. Bearden served in the army from 1942 to 1945, traveled to Paris in 1950, and married Nanette Rohan in 1954. His awards include the National Medal of the Arts and numerous honorary doctorates. He was a member of Spiral, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Bearden was involved in music as well as art: he wrote music for well-known performers such as Billie Holiday; started his own business, the Bluebird music company; and had twenty of his songs recorded. Bearden died 12 March 1988 of complications from cancer.

HERBERT R. HARTEL JR.

See also Alston, Charles; Artists; Baltimore Afro-American; Chicago Defender; Douglas, Aaron; Lawrence, Jacob; Savage, Augusta; Woodruff, Hale

Individual Exhibitions

1940: "Romare Bearden: Oils, Gouaches, Watercolors, and Drawings, 1937–1940," Addison Bates Studio, New York
1944 and 1945: G Place Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1945: Duvuloy Gallery, Paris
1945: Caresse Crosby, Washington, D.C.
1945, 1946, 1947: Samuel Kootz Gallery, New York City
1948: Niveau Gallery, New York City
1955: Barone Gallery, New York City
1960: Michael Warren Gallery, New York City
1961: Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery, New York City
1964: "Projections," Ekstrom's Gallery, New York City
1965: "Projections," Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1966: Dundy Art Gallery, Wattsfield, Vt.
1967: Michael Warren Gallery, New York City
1967: J. L. Hudson Gallery, Detroit
1968: "Romare Bearden: Paintings and Projections," Art Gallery, State University of New York at Albany
1969: Iowa State University, Iowa City
1970: Michael Warren Gallery, New York City
1971: "Romare Bearden: The Prevalence of Ritual," Museum of Modern Art, New York City
1972: Studio Museum in Harlem
1975: Gallerie Albert Loeb, Paris
1975: Madison Art Museum, Madison, Wis.
1980: "Romare Bearden: 1970–1980," Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C.
1986: "Romare Bearden: Origins and Progressions," Detroit Institute of Arts
1991: "Memory and Metaphor: The Art of Romare Bearden, 1940–1987," Studio Museum of Harlem, New York City
1992: "A Graphic Odyssey: Romare Bearden as Printer," Cleveland Museum of Art
1997: "Romare Bearden in Black and White: Photomontage Projections, 1964," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City
1997: "The Painted Sounds of Romare Bearden," Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery, Halifax, Nova Scotia
2003: "The Art of Romare Bearden," National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Group Exhibitions

1945 and 1946: Whitney Museum Annual
1946: Durand-Ruel Gallery, New York City
1948: Six American Painters, Galerie Maeght, Paris
1948: Art Institute of Chicago
1948: Barnett-Aden Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1950: "American Painting Today: A National Competitive Exhibition," Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

1955: Clearwater Art Museum, Clearwater, Fla.
1960: "Recent Acquisitions," Museum of Modern Art, New York City
1961: Carnegie International, Pittsburgh
1964: Farleigh-Dickinson University, Madison, N.J.
1964: "Black and White," Christopher Street Gallery, New York City
1966: New School of Social Research, New York City
1966: UCLA Art Gallery, Los Angeles
1967: City College, City University of New York
1967: Forum Gallery, New York City
1968: "International Exhibition of Posters," Sofia, Bulgaria
1968: Minneapolis Museum
1969: "New American Painting and Sculpture," Museum of Modern Art, New York City
1969: Detroit Museum
1969: Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.
1971: "Seventeen Black Artists," Newark, N.J.
1975: "Art Students League Anniversary Exhibition—100 Artists," Kennedy Galleries, New York City
2003: "Challenge of the Modern: African-American Artists, 1925–1945," Studio Museum in Harlem
2003: "African-American Artists, 1929–1945: Prints, Drawings, and Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art"

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Beavers, Louise

The actress Louise Beavers, like the better-known Hattie McDaniel, was a favorite "mammy" figure in American film—a wise if sometimes naive servant, cheerful and loyal, who provided her white employers, and a predominantly white audience, with sage advice, commentary, humor, and a reaffirmation of the status quo.

Beavers began her career as a member of the Lady Minstrels but soon started to get small parts in silent films. She made her feature debut in *Gold Diggers* (1923) and also appeared in the 1927 version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. During this period Beavers was being trained to fit into the "mammy" and "Aunt Jemima" mold; in fact, she was asked to gain weight so that her image on the screen would conform to the imagined ideal. With the advent of talkies, her career took off, and between 1929 and 1960 she appeared in more than one hundred films. The characters Beavers played generally brought comic relief or served as a counterpart of the Greek chorus, commenting on the foibles of the leading characters. She was described as conveying sincerity, authenticity, and warmth, and as seeming tamer and less cantankerous than McDaniel.

The highlight of Beavers's career was a dramatic role: she played Delilah Johnson opposite Claudette Colbert in the tearjerker *Imitation of Life* (1934). In this film Beavers and Colbert portray single mothers juggling the demands of jobs and parenthood. Beavers's character still functions as a loyal servant who makes sacrifices for her white employer. However, her conflict with her daughter (played by Fredi Washington), who tries to pass for white, suggests the influence of racism in American society. Beavers received critical praise for her role in *Imitation of Life*, but in her remaining films she once again played the stereotypical servant.

The Harlem Renaissance partly coincided with the arrival of sound films in Hollywood; and both the renaissance and the talkies opened new doors not

only for African American performers who had been active in New York's theaters and nightclubs but also for those who were establishing their careers elsewhere in the United States. More work was available, and there were new avenues for artistic expression. However, Hollywood was affected by the racism and discrimination that also characterized American society as a whole; as a result, only minor roles—as servants, entertainers, or comic characters—were generally available to black actors. Moreover, these roles were stereotypical. This kind of casting drastically limited the parts that African Americans, such as Beavers, could play. Nevertheless, during the 1920s and 1930s, a performer like Beavers could still manage to create a unique screen persona within these confines.

Beavers, who had died in 1962, was posthumously inducted into the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1976.

Biography

Louise Beavers was born 8 March 1902 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and moved to Los Angeles as a teenager. She made her feature film debut in 1923 and appeared in some one hundred films between 1929 and 1960. Later, she brought her screen persona to television in the situation comedies *Beulah* and *The Danny Thomas Show*. She died of a heart attack 26 October 1962 in Hollywood, California.

DWANDALYN R. REECE

See also Film: Actors; Film: Blacks as Portrayed by White Filmmakers; Washington, Fredi

Selected Films

Gold Diggers. 1923.
Uncle Tom's Cabin. 1927.
Coquette. 1929.
Girls About Town. 1931.
What Price Hollywood? 1932.
She Done Him Wrong. 1933.
A Shriek in the Night. 1933.
Bombshell. 1933.
Imitation of Life. 1934.
Palooka. 1934.
It Happened in New Orleans. 1936.
Made for Each Other. 1939.

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Bechet, Sidney

Sidney Bechet, who has been called the "wizard of jazz," was perhaps the most prominent virtuoso to emerge from the early jazz community in New Orleans and was certainly the hottest reed man of this era. He was born a Creole in New Orleans—the city often associated with the birth of jazz—and was considered a child prodigy, having taught himself the clarinet on his brother Leonard's instrument. By age eight Bechet was performing with neighborhood bands; at age fourteen he had played with the greats in New Orleans: Bunk Johnson, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Freddie Keppard. Bechet left New Orleans around 1916 and after several detours reached Chicago in 1918. There he encountered musicians from New Orleans: Keppard, Oliver, Armstrong, and Jelly Roll Morton. Bechet, who was always adventurous, set out for Europe in 1919 with Will Marion Cook's orchestra and traveled to England, France, and eventually Russia. The hotheaded Bechet was deported at one time or another from both England and France, and in 1928, he spent almost a year in jail in France for having been involved in a shooting scrape. On other trips to England and France, though, he gave command performances for royalty.

After a brief downturn in his popularity, Bechet became a significant figure in the jazz renaissance of the 1940s; he would maintain this role in the rebirth of jazz for the rest of his life. In 1951, when he took up permanent residence in France, he became an idol to the French people and played and recorded with several French jazz orchestras. A street—rue Sidney Bechet—was named in his honor.

Bechet's first love was the clarinet, but during his first trip to Europe he bought a soprano saxophone, the instrument on which he later excelled. Until John Coltrane took up this instrument in the 1960s, Bechet