

The United States in the 1920s

**The New Negro Movement
and the Harlem Renaissance**

Learning Objectives

Describe the impact of WWI on the movement of Black Americans from southern states to northern states

Explain what is meant by the term “Harlem Renaissance”

Describe the “Jazz Age”

Name and identify the purpose of the NAACP

Explain the goals of Marcus Garvey and the black separatist movement

Experience Objectives

Listen to the music of the Jazz Age, including:

Duke Ellington

Louis Armstrong

Read samples of literature from the Harlem Renaissance, including the authors:

Zora Hurston

Countee Cullen

Langston Hughes

W. E. B. Du Bois

Migration

The Great Migration

“The Great Migration, or the relocation of more than 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from 1916 to 1970, had a huge impact on urban life in the United States.

Driven from their homes by unsatisfactory economic opportunities and harsh segregationist laws, many blacks headed north, where they took advantage of the need for industrial workers that first arose during the First World War.

As Chicago, New York and other cities saw their black populations expand exponentially, migrants were forced to deal with poor working conditions and competition for living space, as well as widespread racism and prejudice. During the Great Migration, African Americans began to build a new place for themselves in public life, actively confronting economic, political and social challenges and creating a new black urban culture that would exert enormous influence in the decades to come.”

Source: <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/great-migration>



The 1919 Chicago Race Riots

NAACP



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Founded Feb. 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization.

The NAACP was formed partly in response to the continuing horrific practice of lynching and the 1908 race riot in Springfield, the capital of Illinois.

The NAACP's stated goal was to secure for all people the rights guaranteed in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution, which promised an end to slavery, the equal protection of the law and universal adult male suffrage, respectively.

The NAACP's principal objective is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of minority group citizens of United States and eliminate race prejudice.

Source: <http://www.naacp.org/oldest-and-boldest/>

Harlem Renaissance

A Thriving African American Community

“Spanning the 1920s to the mid-1930s, the Harlem Renaissance was a literary, artistic, and intellectual movement that kindled a new black cultural identity. Its essence was summed up by critic and teacher Alain Locke in 1926 when he declared that through art, “Negro life is seizing its first chances for group expression and self determination.”

Harlem became the center of a “spiritual coming of age” in which Locke’s “New Negro” transformed “social disillusionment to race pride.” Chiefly literary, the Renaissance included the visual arts but excluded jazz, despite its parallel emergence as a black art form.”



Sources: Summary from <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/harlem-renaissance>
Video from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3ozfYC9CZE>



The Jazz Age



What was the Jazz Age?

“If freedom was the mindset of the Roaring Twenties, then jazz was the soundtrack.

The Jazz Age was a cultural period and movement that took place in America during the 1920s from which both new styles of music and dance emerged.

Largely credited to African Americans employing new musical techniques along with traditional African traditions, jazz soon expanded to America's white middle class.”

“Following World War I, large numbers of jazz musicians migrated from New Orleans to major northern cities such as Chicago and New York, leading to a wider dispersal of jazz as different styles developed in different cities.

Although the Jazz Age ended as the Great Depression struck and victimized America throughout the 1930s, jazz has lived on in American popular culture and remains a vibrant musical genre to this day.”

Source: Boundless. “The Jazz Age.” Boundless U.S. History Boundless, 05 Dec. 2016. Retrieved 09 Jan. 2017
<https://www.boundless.com/u-s-history/textbooks/boundless-u-s-history-textbook/the-roaring-twenties-1920-1929-24/a-culture-of-change-187/the-jazz-age-1031-1995/>

Duke Ellington

Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (April 29, 1899 – May 24, 1974) was an American composer, pianist, and bandleader of a jazz orchestra, which he led from 1923 until his death in a career spanning over fifty years.

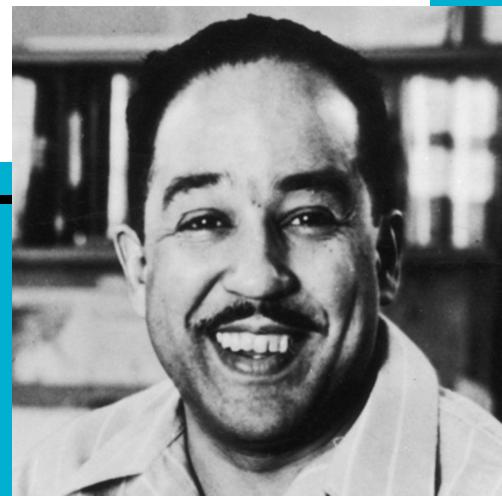
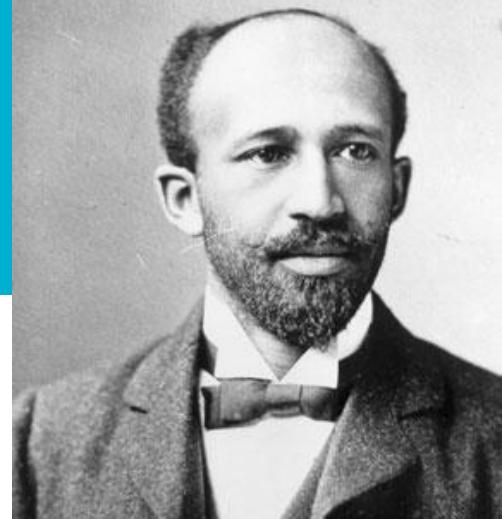


Louis Armstrong

Louis Armstrong. Louis Armstrong (August 4, 1901 – July 6, 1971), nicknamed Satchmo or Pops, was an American trumpeter, composer, singer and occasional actor who was one of the most influential figures in jazz. His career spanned five decades, from the 1920s to the 1960s, and different eras in jazz.



Writers



W. E. B. Du Bois

"William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868-1963) was an American civil rights activist, leader, Pan-Africanist, sociologist, educator, historian, writer, editor, poet, and scholar.

Du Bois's life and work were an inseparable mixture of scholarship, protest activity, and polemics. All of his efforts were geared toward gaining equal treatment for black people in a world dominated by whites and toward marshaling and presenting evidence to refute the myths of racial inferiority."

"W. E. B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is a seminal work in African American literature and an American classic.

In this work Du Bois proposes that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line." His concepts of life behind the veil of race and the resulting "double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others," have become touchstones for thinking about race in America.

In addition to these enduring concepts, *Souls* offers an assessment of the progress of the race, the obstacles to that progress, and the possibilities for future progress as the nation entered the twentieth century."

Sources: Bio Summary from <https://donate.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history-w.e.b.-dubois>

Regarding *Souls of Black Folk*, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/duboissouls/summary.html>

Zora Hurston

“Zora Neale Hurston is considered one of the pre-eminent writers of twentieth-century African-American literature. Hurston was closely associated with the Harlem Renaissance and has influenced many writers.

Of Hurston's four novels and more than 50 published short stories, plays, and essays, she is best known for her 1937 novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.”

“In her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, the epic tale of Janie Crawford, whose quest for identity takes her on a journey during which she learns what love is, experiences life's joys and sorrows, and come home to herself in peace.

When first published in 1937, this novel about a proud, independent black woman was generally dismissed by male reviewers.

Out of print for almost thirty years, but since its reissue in paperback edition by the University of Illinois Press in 1978, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has become the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature.”

Countee Cullen

“Countee Cullen is one of the most representative voices of the Harlem Renaissance. His life story is essentially a tale of youthful exuberance and talent of a star that flashed across the African American firmament and then sank toward the horizon.

A celebrated young man about Harlem, he had in print by 1929 several books of his own poems and a collection of poetry he edited, *Caroling Dusk*, written by other African Americans.

Because of Cullen’s success in both black and white cultures, and because of his romantic temperament, he formulated an aesthetic that embraced both cultures. He came to believe that art transcended race and that it could be used as a vehicle to minimize the distance between black and white peoples.

Sources: Bio Summary from

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/countee-cullen>

THEN

TWO THOUGHTS OF DEATH

I

When I am dead, it will not be
Much matter of concern to me
Who folds my hands, or combs my hair,
Or, pitying their sightless stare,
Draws down the blinds across my eyes;
I shall not have the least surmise
Which of the many loves I had
Weeps most the passing of her lad.
Not what these give, nor what they keep,
Shall gladden or disturb my sleep,
If only one who never guessed
How every tremor of her breast
Reverberated in my own,
In that last hour come and bend down
To kiss my long-expectant mouth,
Still curved, in death, to meet her mouth.

II

I am content to play the martyr,
To wear the dunce-cap here at school;
For every tear I shed I'll barter
To Death; I'll be no more a fool

“Then” by Countee Cullen

Langston Hughes

“Langston Hughes was first recognized as an important literary figure during the 1920s, a period known as the "Harlem Renaissance" because of the number of emerging black writers.

Hughes differed from most of his predecessors among black poets, and (until recently) from those who followed him as well, in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people. During the twenties when most American poets were turning inward, writing obscure and esoteric poetry to an ever decreasing audience of readers, Hughes was turning outward, using language and themes, attitudes and ideas familiar to anyone who had the ability simply to read.”

“...much of Hughes's early work was roundly criticized by many black intellectuals for portraying what they thought to be an unattractive view of black life. In his autobiographical *The Big Sea*, Hughes commented: "*Fine Clothes to the Jew* was well received by the literary magazines and the white press, but the Negro critics did not like it at all. The Pittsburgh *Courier* ran a big headline across the top of the page, *LANGSTON HUGHES' BOOK OF POEMS TRASH*. The headline in the New York *Amsterdam News* was *LANGSTON HUGHES—THE SEWER DWELLER*. The Chicago *Whip* characterized me as 'the poet low-rate of Harlem.' Others called the book a disgrace to the race, a return to the dialect tradition, and a parading of all our racial defects before the public. . . . The Negro critics and many of the intellectuals were very sensitive about their race in books. (And still are.) In anything that white people were likely to read, they wanted to put their best foot forward, their politely polished and cultural foot—and only that foot."

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

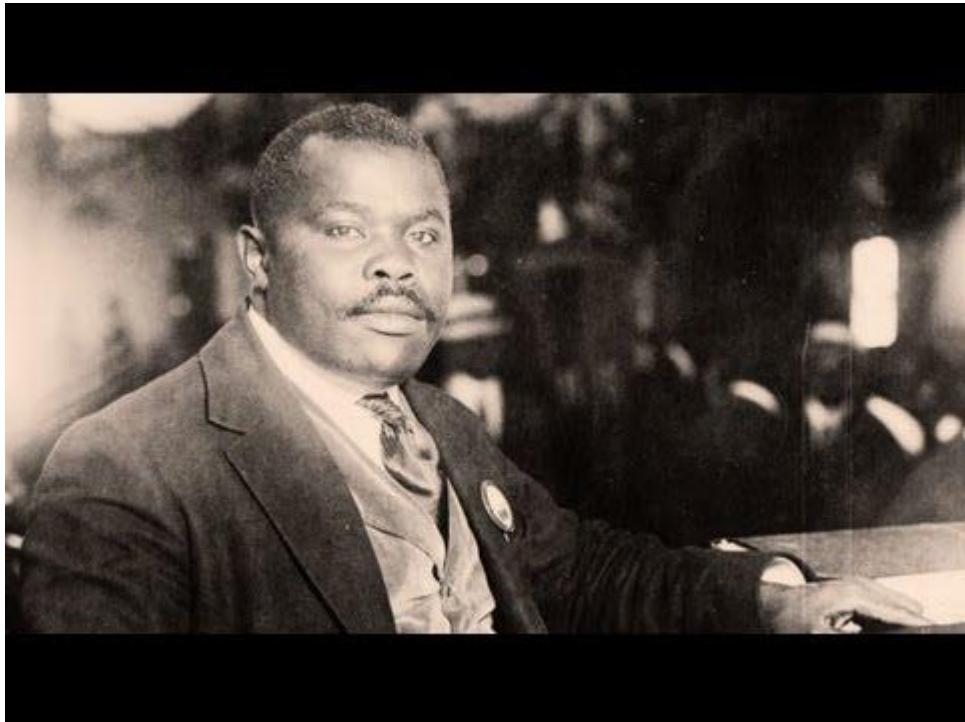
“I, Too” by Langston hughes

Marcus Garvey and the Black Separatist Movement

A Civil Rights Activist

“Marcus Garvey was a proponent of the Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism movements, inspiring the Nation of Islam and the Rastafarian movement.

Inspired by his experiences, Marcus Garvey returned to Jamaica in 1912 and founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) with the goal of uniting all of African diaspora to "establish a country and absolute government of their own."



Source: <http://www.biography.com/people/marcus-garvey-9307319#charges-and-loss-of-authority>

Review

How did WWI cause the movement of Black Americans from southern states to northern states?

What is meant by the term “Harlem Renaissance”?

What was the “Jazz Age”?

What is the NAACP?

What were the goals of Marcus Garvey and the black separatist movement?