THE

HARLEM RENAISSANCE

A Unit of Study for Grades 9–12

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PREVIEW COPY
INCLUDING THE COMPLETE FIRST LESSON

Prepared for:
America’s History in the Making
Oregon Public Broadcasting

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National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles
INTRODUCTION

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The Harlem Renaissance is one of over 60 National Center for History in the Schools teaching units that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. The units represent specific dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

By studying a crucial episode in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history in an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow’s history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, private correspondence, literature, contemporary photographs, and paintings from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian’s craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: Teaching Background Materials, including Unit Overview, Unit Context, Correlation to the National Standards for History Unit, Objectives, Introduction to The Harlem Renaissance, A Dramatic Moment; and Lesson Plans with Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for use by secondary students, they can be adapted for other grade levels.
I. Unit Overview

In *The Crisis* in 1920, W.E.B Du Bois called for “a renaissance of American Negro literature . . . [for] the strange, heart-rending race tangle is rich beyond dream and only we can tell the tale and sing the song from the heart.” [April, 298–99]. By 1925, the New York *Herald Tribune* proclaimed that a “Negro renaissance” was well under-way [May 7]. Now known best as the Harlem Renaissance, it was an era of vigorous cultural growth that coalesced around a group of creative young writers, artists, musicians, and powerful social thinkers such as Du Bois and Alain Locke in Manhattan’s Harlem around 1920. Critics and historians have struggled to understand the movement and its impact over the years: What were its historical roots? How great is its art? How widespread and enduring is its legacy? Studying the Harlem Renaissance and its role in defining African American cultural identity in the rapidly changing world of the early twentieth century not only helps students grasp that era’s complexity, but also helps them develop insights into attitudes that exist in our society today.

Using a variety of documents, plus cooperative and individual instructional activities that emphasize critical thinking, students will examine the attitudes and strategies of a people battling to take their rightful place in American society. Art, literature, music, and film are also used to illustrate key points.

II. Unit Context

The Harlem Renaissance is part of the post-World War I cultural upheaval that found all of American society trying to come to terms with the shift from a rural way of life to an urban and industrialized one. This unit can be taught after studying World War I, as a case study of the kinds of culture clashes that dominated the 1920s, or as a transition to the era of the Great Depression and the New Deal after covering the ’20s. In preparation for teaching “The Harlem Renaissance,” background on Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the agricultural slowdown in the South, Jim Crow laws, the resurgence of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK), and the 1919 race riots would be worthwhile. See the Annotated Bibliography for source suggestions.

III. Correlation with the National Standards for United States History

*The Harlem Renaissance* provides teaching materials that address National Standards for United States History, Basic Edition (Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, 1996) Era 7 “The Emergence of Modern America (1890–1930).” Lessons in the unit specifically address Standard 3C “Examine the contributions of artists and writers of the Harlem Renaissance and assess their popularity.”
Lessons within this unit likewise address the Historical Thinking Standards by providing primary source materials which challenge students to analyze cause-and-effect relationships, to marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances, to consider multiple perspectives, and to draw upon visual data, literary, and musical sources. Students are also expected to draw evidence from historical maps.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

♦ To identify social, economic, and political events that affected African Americans in the first decades of the twentieth century

♦ To describe and analyze the artistic and cultural development of African Americans during the Harlem Renaissance

♦ To discuss the historical impact of the Harlem Renaissance

V. LESSON PLANS

1. Evolution of Harlem (1 day)

2. Art of the Harlem Renaissance (2–3 days)

3. Historical Impact of the Harlem Renaissance (1–2 days)

VI. AN INTRODUCTION TO “THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE”

The historical roots of the Harlem Renaissance are complex. In part, they lay in the vast migration of African Americans to northern industrial centers that began early in the century and increased rapidly as World War I production needs and labor shortages boosted job opportunities. The target for the move north for African American artists and intellectuals was often New York City, where powerful voices for racial pride such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and James Weldon Johnson were concentrated. By the 1910s, Harlem had become a spirited community that provided continuity and support for a diverse population pouring in from the South and the Caribbean.

The Harlem Renaissance is also rooted in the disappointment that African Americans felt with the limited opportunities open to them as the United States struggled to transform itself from a rural to an urban society. Increased contact between African Americans and white Americans in the workplace and on city streets forced a new awareness of the disparity between the promise of U.S. democracy and its reality. African American soldiers who served in World War I were angered by the prejudice they often encountered back at home, compared to the greater acceptance they had found in Europe. A larger, better-educated urban population fully comprehended the limitations that white-dominated society had placed on them. As African Americans became increasingly disillusioned about achieving the justice that war-time rhetoric had seemed to promise, many determined to pursue their goals of equality and success more aggressively than ever before.
Organized political and economic movements also helped to motivate the Harlem Renaissance by creating a new sense of empowerment in African Americans. The NAACP boasted nearly 44,000 members by the end of 1918. In the early 1920s Marcus Garvey’s message of racial pride drew hundreds of thousands of ordinary men and women to his United Negro Improvement Association and its Back-to-Africa movement. Other African Americans, including many intellectuals, turned to socialism or communism. By 1920, large numbers of African Americans of all political and economic points of view were plainly unwilling to settle for the old ways any longer. One unexpected development had an impact on the form their demand for change would take: urbane whites suddenly “took up” New York’s African American community, bestowing patronage on young artists, opening up publishing opportunities, and pumping cash into Harlem’s “exotic” nightlife in a complex relationship that scholars continue to probe. Fueled by all of these historical forces, an unprecedented outpouring of writing, music and visual arts began among African American artists.

The artistic output of the Harlem Renaissance was dominated by two ideologies, both driven by racial consciousness and pride. The first is represented by W. E. B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson of the NAACP, Howard University philosophy professor Alain Locke, sociologist Charles Spurgeon, and others, who extolled the arts as an area where talented and culturally privileged African Americans could lead their race’s fight for equality. They believed that works of fine art inspired by the artists’ racial heritage and experience would prove the beauty of their race and its crucial contribution to American culture. Artistic successes, they believed, could be counted on to foster pride among all African Americans and prove their educated class to be the equal of the white educated class. Du Bois hailed the “Talented Tenth” and Locke the “New Negro” as thinking persons whose race had survived war, migration, and prejudice, and had the strength and vision to lead the way to social justice.

Opposition to this art-as-propaganda view came from the very same elite vanguard of artists that the older generation was counting on to promote the cause: artists such as Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Aaron Douglas. They took a stand voiced in Wallace Thurman’s short-lived journal, Fire!!, claiming the need to present the ordinary African American person objectively as an individual simply living in the flesh-and-blood world. They argued against painting and characterizing only “cultured” and “high-class” African Americans who mirrored the standards of white society. In doing so, they spoke for young artists who chose to pursue their art for its own sake. If there was not a bitter feud between these two ideological camps, it was in no small part due to the fact that the young artists still inevitably spoke from their unique experience as African American men and women.
As a discrete historical moment in American history, the Harlem Renaissance came to an end sometime in the 1930s (most authorities place it in the early thirties). The Great Depression sapped the money and energy of white patrons and party-goers as well as that of Harlemites, including the substantial support of journals such as the National Urban League’s *Opportunity* and the NAACP’s *The Crisis*. Harlem artists drifted to other opportunities, in Washington or Paris or Fisk University in Nashville, with a sense of leaving behind not a defined movement as much as a social phenomenon.

How, then, should we evaluate the Harlem Renaissance? From an aesthetic point of view, one of the main reproaches has been that little significant artistic criticism was written during the Renaissance. There is a sense among many critics and historians today that having art created by African Americans *taken seriously* seemed like such a momentous step forward that it seemed to suffice, and only with hindsight do we see how this may have forestalled synthesis of a Harlem Renaissance movement as such. Some critics argue that much of the work produced during the Renaissance was not of outstanding quality and that the period inevitably has been idealized, but others stress that the real point is the breakthroughs made in two areas: technical mastery and ideological content. Another criticism—that the Harlem Renaissance was an elitist intellectual movement that barely touched the masses—should be put into perspective. According to authority Nathan Huggins:

> [The idea that d]espite a history that had divided them, art and culture would reform the brotherhood in a common humanity . . . was an attitude of cultural elitism. But it is wrong to assume that these black intellectuals, because of it, were not related to the black common man in Harlem. I think . . . most Negroes were apt to agree that [the artistic output] was a good thing. . . . And such an achievement, because it was elite in character, was a source of race pride and an argument against continued discrimination. [*Harlem Renaissance*, 5–6]

Other authorities point to progress in relations between African and white Americans. During the Harlem Renaissance it was acceptable for the first time for Americans of both races—as equals—to make and exploit social contact. Also, the movement articulated some priorities for the achievement of racial equality that have been played out in the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Historical evidence certainly does not show unbroken progress in African American artistic (or political or economic) development since the period of the Harlem Renaissance. But history does support the view that the Renaissance was a liberating step in the search by African Americans for artistic and cultural identity on their own terms. Victor A. Kramer, in his 1987 collection of essays on the subject, makes an important point about the need for continuing historical and social evaluation of the Harlem Renaissance: “At this stage, questions about such a complicated movement may be even more valuable than answers.” [*The Harlem Renaissance Re-Examined*, p. 2]
I, Too
Langston Hughes
1926

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 sit 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.
LESSON ONE
EVOLUTION OF HARLEM

A. STUDENT OBJECTIVES

♦ To describe the “Great Migration” of the 1910s and 1920s

♦ To locate Harlem on a map of New York City and trace the migration of blacks through Manhattan to Harlem

♦ To analyze the unrest felt by a growing number of urban blacks after World War I and the early years of the “Great Migration”

♦ To identify several political and economic movements that had an impact on African Americans in the 1910s–1920s

♦ To identify and categorize events presented in the historical data that culminate in the Harlem Renaissance

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Engage students’ interest in the Harlem Renaissance by reading Document 1–A, the letter to The Crisis from “A Southern Colored Woman,” describing her mixed feelings about a 1919 riot motivated by racial problems. To connect this historical event to students and their own difficult times, before reading the signature or explaining the circumstances of the letter ask them who they think the writer could be, what sort of riot she is probably discussing, and when it might have taken place.

2. Give students a copy of the map “Percentage of African Americans in Total Population of the United States, 1890” [Document 1–B]. Ask them to determine which part of the country nearly all African Americans lived in at that time (the South), then to use their own background knowledge to speculate about whether African Americans would be accustomed to an urban or a rural environment, what kind of jobs most of them would have, and what social conditions would be like for them. This is a good place to discuss Jim Crow laws if students have not already studied them. With this foundation, students are ready to study the “Great Migration” that began around the time of World War I.

3. Let students work in small groups to draw conclusions about the reasons that several million African Americans migrated to Northern cities by examining Documents 1–C to 1–L. In order to interpret documents such as newspaper articles, photographs and posters students should examine all objects or images included in the document, then ask themselves questions such as: Who created the document? Who is its intended audience? What is its historical context? What kind of effects would it be likely to have? With the documents included here, they should recognize such points as:
Basic civil rights were denied African Americans in the South and their lives were often in danger.

Wages in the South were low and working conditions poor.

Education possibilities in the South were limited for African Americans.

Opportunities for African Americans to achieve prominence were greater in the North (Mr. Abbott, the owner of the Chicago Defender, was an African American, as was Oscar DePriest whose election to alderman) is announced in the Defender headline).

Jobs were growing rapidly in Northern factories because of war production.

4. Give students “The Trek Northward” [Document 1–M], a map of Manhattan and most of New York City, then ask them to determine where and when African Americans lived there. They should be able to determine that their introduction was into lower Manhattan in the mid-nineteenth century, and that there was a slow migration northward to Greenwich Village, midtown, and the San Juan Hill area southwest of Central Park by the turn of the century, and finally that there was a jump over the park to Harlem (first in 1905) in substantial numbers by 1910. Continue to relate the lesson to today’s world by asking students what they know about Harlem now and why they think African Americans developed this largely homogeneous community. Point out the advantages that such a cultural support system has while people get accustomed to a new way of life, and that the tight cultural community in Harlem was vital to the growth of the Harlem Renaissance.

5. Ask a student to read aloud “Save,” a 1918 editorial in The Crisis [Document 1–N]. Explain that The Crisis was published by the NAACP, then discuss such questions as:

- What action does the NAACP advise African Americans to take?
- What reason does it give that is directly related to World War One?
- What reason is directly related to conditions for African Americans?
- How would you expect people to feel if they had sacrificed to fight in World War One, but were not treated with respect afterward?

Tell students they can find out the answer to whether the NAACP strategy worked by examining documents from the period after the war [Documents 1–O and 1–P]. Point out two factors that might have influenced the way African Americans felt about their situation in the United States at this time:

1) Soldiers and nurses who had gone abroad during World War I returned home angry and frustrated that white strangers in Europe treated them with greater equality than did white Americans.
2) Increasing numbers of young African Americans had become better educated and better informed since migrating to the North.

One thing that students might conclude is that more and more African Americans would probably be demanding changes by the 1920s and be willing to work to achieve them. Note the numbers of African Americans who supported Marcus Garvey, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the Back-to-Africa movement, and the flourishing of the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the Socialist Party. Then explain that the Harlem Renaissance, with its unprecedented outpouring of poetry, stories, novels, paintings, sculpture, music, and dance was such a dramatic change fueled by ideas and innovations that had been suppressed or impossible in African American culture until now.

6. In class or for homework, ask students to identify and list the economic, political, or social events or conditions that eventually made possible the Harlem Renaissance. Then have them categorize the events or conditions according to whether they are reactions to life in the South, outcomes of exposure to life outside the South, or direct actions taken by African Americans to improve their lives. Let students know that this assignment, as well as the culminating exercise for the activities of the next three days, will be directly applicable to the final project for the unit, an essay. Their work should look something like this:

**Reactions to Conditions in the South**
- lynchings and burnings in the South
- better education opportunities in the North
- better pay and working conditions in the North
- more jobs in the North

**Outcomes of Exposure to Life Outside the South**
- growth of organizations and movements that promoted interests of African Americans
- increased number of educated and informed African Americans
- awareness of whites in the South treating African Americans worse than did many whites elsewhere

**Actions Taken by African Americans to Improve their Lives**
- Coalescence to demand for change among large number of African Americans

**C. Lesson Evaluation**

1. Assess group participation, making sure students understand how to analyze documents on many interrelated levels by considering: who created them, who their intended audience is, and what the historical context is, and what effect they would be likely to have, as well as the factual content of the documents.

2. Evaluate written lists and categorizations.
LETTER TO *The Crisis*

November 1919, XIX, 339

The Washington riot gave me a thrill that comes once in a life time. I was alone when I read between the lines of the morning paper that at last our men had stood like men, struck back, were no longer dumb, driven cattle. When I could no longer read for my streaming tears, I stood up, alone in my room, held both hands high over my head and exclaimed aloud: “Oh, I thank God, thank God!” . . .

We know how many insults we have borne silently, for we have hidden many of them from our men because we did not want them to die needlessly in our defense; we know the sorrow of seeing our boys and girls grow up, the swift stab of the heart at night at the sound of a strange footstep. . . .

God grant that our men everywhere refrain from strife, provoke no quarrel, but that they protect their women and homes at any cost.

—*A Southern Colored Woman*

I’m sure the editor will understand why I cannot sign my name.
PERCENTAGE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN
TOTAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1890
LYNCHING IN THE SOUTH

A Protest Against the Burning and Lynching of Negros

Within the last fortnight three members of my race have been burned at the stake; of these one was a woman. Not one of the three was charged with any crime even remotely connected with the abuse of a white woman. In every case murder was the sole accusation. All of these burnings took place in broad daylight and two of them occurred on Sunday afternoon in sight of a Christian church.

In the midst of the nation’s busy and prosperous life few, I fear take time to consider where these brutal and inhuman crimes are leading us. The custom of burning human beings has become so common as scarcely to excite interest or attract unusual attention.

I have always been among those who condemned in the strongest terms crimes of whatever character committed by members of my race, and I condemn them now with equal severity; but I maintain that the only protection of our civilization is a fair and calm trial of all people charged with crime and in their legal punishment if proved guilty.

There is no shadow of excuse for departure from legal methods in the cases of individuals accused of murder. The laws are as a rule made by the white people and their execution is in the hands of the white people; so that there is little probability of any guilty colored man escaping.

These burnings without a trial are in the deepest sense unjust to my race; but it is not this injustice alone which stirs my heart. These barbarous scenes followed, as they are, by publication of the shocking details are more disgraceful and degrading to the people who inflict the punishment than those who receive it.

If the law is disregarded when a Negro is concerned, it will soon be disregarded when a white man is concerned; and, besides, the rule of the mob destroys the friendly relations which should exist between the races and interferes with the material prosperity of the communities concerned.

Worst of all these outrages take place in communities where there are Christian churches; in the midst of people who have their Sunday schools, their Christian Endeavor Societies and Young Men’s Christian Associations, where collections are taken up for sending missionaries to Africa and China and the rest of the so-called heathen world.

Is it not possible for pulpit and press to speak out against these burnings in a manner that shall arouse a public sentiment that will compel the mob to cease insulting our courts, our Governors and legal authority; cease bringing shame and ridicule upon our Christian civilization.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON.
Tuskegee, Ala., February 22, 1904.

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aap/aaphome.html
According to THE CRISIS records, 77 Negroes were lynched during the year 1919, of whom 1 was a colored woman and 11 were soldiers; 4 white persons and 3 Mexicans also were lynched, —a total of 84 lynchings.

During the year 1918, 64 Negroes were lynched, 5 of whom were colored women; 4 white men were lynched.

Georgia still leads, with an increase of 2 lynchings; Mississippi takes second place, instead of Texas, with 5 more lynchings; Alabama, by an increase of 5 lynchings, ties with Louisiana.

In methods of torture, burnings have increased from 2 in 1918 to 14 in 1919.

January 18, Shreveport, La., Henry Thomas; murder.
January 20, Hillsboro, Tex., Bragg Williams, burned; murder
January 29, Monroe, La., Sampson Smith; murder.
February 6, Newburn, N. C., John Daniels; murder
February 14, Bossier, La., Will Fortner; murder.
March 2, Belzonic, Miss., Eugene Green; assault on man.
March 12, Greenville, Fla., Joe Walker; shooting.
March 13, Tuscaloosa, Ala., Cicero Cage, cut to pieces; pulling woman from horse.
March 14, Pensacola, Fla., Bud Johnson, soldier, burned; attempt to rape.
April — Blakely, Ga., Wilbur Little, soldier, beaten; wearing U. S. A. uniform too long. . . .

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### By Sex

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### Methods of Torture

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### Negroes Lynched By Years, 1885–1919

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**Total:** 3,052
FIELD WORK IN THE SOUTH

These pictures were part of the exhibit, “Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940,” at the National Museum of American History.
EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

The education in southern schools was extremely poor. The rooms were overcrowded, they had few resources, and the buildings were very dilapidated. As Hughes Child said, "When I was a boy, the state didn't even give you but three months to go to school. That's all. Three months . . . you could barely learn the alphabet in three months."

Source: http://otal.umd.edu/~vg/msf95/ms20/education1.html

Smithsonian Institution

This picture was part of the exhibit, “Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940,” at the National Museum of American History.
**JIM CROW LAWS**

Colored Waiting Room at the train station, n.d.
Presented by Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site
http://www.nps.gov/malu/documents/jim_crow_laws.htm

Segregated drinking fountains and a colored only waiting room, examples of the segregated facilities in the South that persisted into the 1960s.
LETTERS TO THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

Mobile, Ala., 4-26-17

Dear Sir Bro:

... I am writing to you for advice about comeing north. I am a brickmason an I can do cement work an stone work... if there nothing there for me to make a support for my self and family. My wife is seamstress. We want to get away the 15 or 20 of May so please give this matter your earnest consid- eration an let me her from you by return mail as my bro. in law want to get away to. He is a carpenter by trade. so please help us as we are in need of your help as we wanted to go to Detroit but if you says no we go where ever you says. There is nothing here for the colored man but a hard time which these southern crackers gives us. We has not had any work to do in 4 wks. and every thing is high to the colored man so please let me hear from you by return mail. Please do this for your brother.


Macon, Ga. April 2, 1918

To the Bethenlem Baptist Association reaching in the Chicago De-fender of your help securing positions
I want to know if it is any way you can oblige me by helping me to get out there as I am anxious to leave here & everything so hard here I hope you will oblige me in helping me to leave here ans[wer] at once to 309 Middle St.
Mrs. J. H. Adams.

Letter from Mrs. J. H Adams, Ma- con, Georgia, to the Bethlehem Baptist Association in Chicago, Illinois, 1918 Holograph, Carter G. Woodson Papers, Manuscript Division, Li-brary of Congress.
LETTER TO THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

Granville Mississippi, May 16, 1917

Dear Sir: This letter is a letter of information of which you will find stamp envelop for reply. I want to come north some time soon but I do not want to leve here looking for a job where I would be in dorse all winter. Now the work I am doing here is running a guage edger in a saw mill. I know all about the grading of lumber. I have been working in lumber about 25 or 27 years. My wedges here is $3.00 a day 11 hours a day. I want to come North where I can educate my 3 little children also my wife. Now if you cannot fix me up at what I am doing down here I can learn anything any one else can. also there is a great deal of good women cooks here would leave any time all they want is to know where to go and some way to go please write me, at once just how I can get my people where they can get something for their work. There are women here cookeing for $1.50 and $2.00 a week. I would like to live in Chicago or Ohio or Philadelphia. Tell Mr. Abbott that our pepel are tole that they can not get anything to do up there and they are being snatched off the trains here in Greenville and a rested but in spite of all this, they are leaving every day and every night 100 or more is expecting to leave this week. Let me here from you at once.


[The “Mr. Abbott” referred to is the African American owner of the Chicago Defender who encouraged the migration.]
FACTORY WORK IN THE NORTH

Ads for Laborers


Northern Factories

These pictures were part of the exhibit at the National Museum of American History, entitled “Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915–1940.” They were used to illustrate factory life in the north.
The Crisis

“The Crisis is the official monthly publication of the NAACP. It began in 1910 with William Edward Burghardt DuBois as editor, and became a leading periodical for African Americans. It was known for its radical position against lynching and racial prejudice and reflected the ideology of Dr. DuBois. Until 1919 it sold for 10 cents a copy and boasted a monthly circulation of 80,000 copies. In the 1920s, literary contributions to the magazine increased in keeping with the cultural explosion known as the Harlem Renaissance.”

Source: http://www.si.umich.edu/CHICO/Harlem/text/NAACP.html

The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races

W. E. B. DuBois was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University (1896). He founded The Crisis.

Advertisement for The Crisis which appeared in Survey Graphic Harlem Number (March 1925) Vol. VI, No. 6.

This historic issue is presented digitally by the University of Virginia Library’s Electronic Text Center:
http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/harlem/index.html
THE CHICAGO DEFENDER

African-American journalist Robert Sengstacke Abbott (1868-1940) founded the Chicago Defender on May 6, 1905, with a capital totalling twenty-five cents. His editorial creed was to fight against "segregation, discrimination, disenfranchisement . . . ." The Defender reached national prominence during the mass migration of blacks from the South during World War I, when the paper's banner headline for January 6, 1917, read "Millions to Leave South." The Defender became the bible of many seeking "The Promised Land." Abbott advertised Chicago so effectively that even migrants heading for other northern cities sought information and assistance from the pages of the 'World's Greatest Weekly.'


This headline announces the election of Oscar DePriest to alderman. Later, on November 6, 1928, Oscar DePriest became the first African American to win a seat in the United States House of Representatives in the twentieth century.

THE TREK NORTHWARD

The dots drawn here are labelled “The Trek Northward.”

1 Fort Amsterdam—1627
2 The Negro Lots—1644
3 Catherine St. Market
4 Greenwich Village Settlement—1800
5 San Juan Hill—1900
6 99th St.—1903
7 Harlem—1910
8 122 St. Settlement

EDITORIAL IN THE CRISIS

THE CRISIS
Vol. 16—No. 1 MAY, 1918 Whole No. 91

Editorial

SAVE BELIEVE that this is Our War and not President Wilson’s War and that no matter how many blunders the administration makes, or how many obstacles it puts in our way we must work the harder to win the war.

I want to urge the importance of advertising in every way you can the campaign for War Savings—savings of money, of food, of labor. In doing so you kill three birds with one stone:
1. Promote the success of the war.
2. Increase the individual wealth of your constituency.
3. Put them on a common footing with other patriotic American citizens and promote those common bonds that gradually break down prejudice.

If the colored citizens of the country seize this opportunity to emphasize their American citizenship by effective war activities, they will score tremendously. When men fight together and work together and save together, this foolishness of race prejudice disappears.

GEORGE G. BRADFORD.

THE NEGRO AND THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

It seems to be necessary to insist upon justice toward the Negro from the War Department. We are well aware that much of this injustice is incidental and not intentional. As Negroes, we propose to fight for the right, no matter what our treatment may be; but we submit to the public that intentional injustice toward colored soldiers is the poorest investment that this nation can make just now.

First, let us recall the position of Colonel Young: he is still imprisoned in Ohio on full pay with nothing to do. The Examining Board recommended that Colonel Young be “retained in active service.” The Secretary of War approved this recommendation and directed that “Colonel Young be placed on active duty.” The Adjutant General, knowing the difference between “active service” and “active duty” immediately retired Colonel Young from active service and placed him on active duty with nothing to do.

Twelve million Negroes demand that Colonel Young be restored to “active service!”

Again, the Ninety-second Division of Negro troops was established by the Secretary of War and approved by President Wilson over the protest of the General Staff; but no effort was made to secure for this division certain necessary persons of technical training. The colored officers at Fort Des Moines were given no artillery training. Farmers from the South, largely illiterate and without mechanical skill or education, were assigned to the artillery in the first draft. This, however, could easily have been remedied by transferring from other regiments in this division and from other divisions, educated and technically trained colored men.

The permission to make such trans-
PROTESTS 1917–1925

At its headquarters, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York City, the NAACP flew a flag to report lynchings, until, in 1938, the threat of losing its lease forced the association to discontinue the practice.
Protests 1917–1924

UNIA parade organized in Harlem, 1924
The sign reads: “The New Negro Has No Fear.”

The Silent Protest parade organized by Harlem religious and civic leaders and the NAACP, 1917.
ANTI-LYNCHING BILL

A terrible blot on American civilization. 3424 lynchings in 33 years... 
Prepared by the Committee on Public Affairs, the Inter-fraternal council. Issued by District of Columbia anti-lynching committee, Northeastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. [1922]
This pamphlet was one of many publications by anti-lynching crusaders.

The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill
The Dyer Anti-Lynch Bill passed the House of Representatives but was killed in the Senate.
To purchase the complete unit, see the
National Center for History in the Schools catalog:
http://nchs.ucla.edu/catalog.html

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