



The Harlem Renaissance:

An Intellectual & Cultural Revival

What was it?

- Lasting roughly from 1910 to mid-1930s.
 - Considered the Golden Age in African American culture.
 - Literature
 - Music
 - Stage Performance
 - Art
- It was the development of the Harlem neighborhood in New York City as a Black cultural mecca in the early 20th Century.
 - Resulted in a social and artistic explosion.

The Great Migration

The background of the slide is a vibrant, stylized illustration of a crowded social gathering, likely a jazz club or dance hall. The scene is filled with people in 1920s-30s attire, including men in suits and hats, and women in flapper-style dresses and pearl necklaces. Some are dancing, while others are seated at tables or the bar, holding drinks. The lighting is warm and colorful, with a mix of purples, pinks, and blues, creating a lively and energetic atmosphere. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century graphic art or poster design.

- Harlem was meant to be an upper-class white neighborhood in the 1880s.
- In the early 20th Century, millions of African Americans migrated.
 - Rural South to Urban North.
 - Seeking economic opportunity.
 - Escaping racial prejudice, segregation, and violence.
- White families fought to keep African Americans out of the area but failed.

The Great Migration



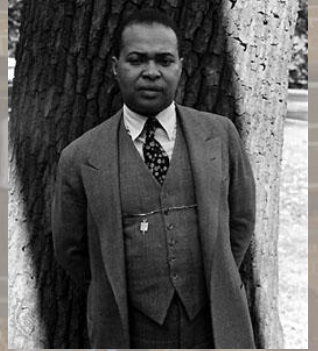
- 1910-1920: Large African American population moves from the South to the North.
 - This mass exodus soon to be known as the Great Migration.
- 1915-1916: Natural disasters in the South.
 - Black agricultural workers out of work.
- During and after WW1, immigration to United States drops.
 - Northern recruiters head south to recruit industrial workers.
 - By 1920, some 300,000 African Americans from the South began industrial work in urban areas in the North.

Establishing in Harlem - Renaissance Begins

- Many settled in New York City.
 - Harlem becomes epicenter of a cultural renaissance.
- Art, Theater, Dance, and Writing
 - Expressed pride in their heritage.
 - Created a new understanding for Black life and identity in the US.
 - Demolished racial stereotypes.

Countee Cullen (1903-1946)

- Born in Kentucky.
 - Adopted by a minister of a leading Methodist church in Harlem.
- Attended New York University.
 - Published poems in *The Crisis*, the literary Magazine of the NAACP.
 - *The Crisis* was co-founded by W.E.B. Du Bois.
- Awarded a scholarship to Harvard.
 - Earned widespread acclaim for debut poetry collection, *Colors (1925)*.
- Differed from Hughes in ideology.
 - Cullen was influenced by Romantic poets like John Keats.
 - Hughes believed poets should combat the “urge within the race toward whiteness.”
- Wrote “Any Human to Another”.



Claude McKay (1889-1948)

- Born in Jamaica.
 - Came to the US to attend college, settling in Harlem.
- Published *If We Must Die*, one of his best known poems.
 - His collection *Harlem Shadows* (1922) established him as a major voice.
- Traveled to Europe and lived in London in 1919.
 - Returned to the US in 1921.
- Published *Home to Harlem* (1928).
 - Was the first commercially successful novel by a Black writer.
- Author of "The Tropics in New York".



Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)

- Born in rural Alabama.
- Attended Howard University. (HBC)
 - Won a scholarship to Barnard College in 1925.
 - This brought her to the heart of Harlem culture.
- Trained anthropologist.
- Gained attention in 1930s for *Of Mules and Men* (1935).
 - A Collection of African American FolkTales.
- Author of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).
 - Celebrated as a literary classic.
 - Regards the tumultuous life of a Black woman in the rural South.



Jean Toomer (1894-1967)



- Born in Washington.
 - From a family with both white and Black heritage.
 - Grandson of the 1st Black governor in the United States during Reconstruction.
- Attended City College of New York.
 - Wrote poetry and prose.
- Moved to Georgia in 1921 to take a teaching job.
 - Returning to his family's Southern roots inspired his novel *Cane* (1923).
 - Dramatic dialogue and poetry; it is an important example of literary modernism.
- Wrote "Georgia Dusk" (1922).
- Embraced spiritual teachings of philosopher George Gurdjieff.
 - Taught workshops in Harlem and elsewhere.

Langston Hughes (1901-1967)



- Born in Joplin, Missouri.
- Grew up in Cleveland, Ohio.
- Wrote his first and most famous poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," soon after graduating high school.
- Studied at Columbia University in New York City.
 - Embraced Harlem culture (jazz and blues music specifically).
 - Often incorporated this style of music into his work.
- Most influential and widely celebrated voice of the Harlem Renaissance.
 - Wrote essays, novels, short stories and plays.

Harlem Renaissance Ends

- Began with the stock market crash of 1929 & The Great Depression.
 - Wavered until Prohibition ended in 1933.
 - Meant white patrons no longer sought out the illegal alcohol in uptown clubs.
- By 1935, many pivotal Harlem residents have moved to find work.
 - Replaced by the continuous flow of refugee from the South, many required public assistance.
- The Harlem Race Riot (1935).
 - Broke out following the arrest of a young shoplifter.
 - Resulted in three dead, hundreds injured, and millions of dollars in property damage.
- These riots were the final dagger for the Harlem Renaissance.

Impact of the Harlem Renaissance

A stylized illustration of a busy Harlem street scene. In the foreground, several people are seated at round tables with white tablecloths, engaged in conversation and dining. A man in a dark suit and a woman in a red dress are prominent. In the background, more people are walking, some wearing hats and coats, suggesting a lively urban environment. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century social realist art, with a warm, slightly muted color palette.

- The Harlem Renaissance was a golden age for African American artists, writers and musicians.
- Gave these artists pride in and control over how the Black experience was represented in American culture.
- Set the stage for the civil rights movement.
- Holds lasting impact still:
 - Popular Music
 - Current Novels & Authorship
 - Modern Art and Performance