

# Langston Hughes

- 1)  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils:@filreq\(@field\(NUMBER+@band\(cph+3d02205\)\)+@field\(COLLID+finepr\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/ils:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(cph+3d02205))+@field(COLLID+finepr)))



- 2)  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/van:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(van+5a51667\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/van:@field(NUMBER+@band(van+5a51667)))



- 3)  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gottlieb:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(gottlieb+03621\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/gottlieb:@field(NUMBER+@band(gottlieb+03621)))



- 4)  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart8b.html#0801>



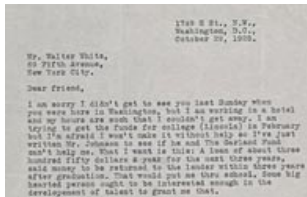
- 5)  
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mcc/024\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mcc:@field(DOCID+@lit(mcc/024)))



- 6)  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/horyd:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(thc+5a40168\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/horyd:@field(NUMBER+@band(thc+5a40168)))



- 7)  
<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri061.html>



- 8)  
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/fsaall:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(fsa+8d03175\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?pp/fsaall:@field(NUMBER+@band(fsa+8d03175)))







**#1**



**#2**



**#3**

# The Negro Speaks Of Rivers

3

Words by  
LANGSTON HUGHES

Music by  
MARGARET BONDS

Moderato con moto

Piano

*pp* muddy bass

*p*

*Sva bassi*.....

I've known riv-ers I've

*mp* *loco*

*mf*

known riv-ers An-cient as the world And

*mp* *Sva bassi*.....

old-er than the flow of hu-man blood in hu-man veins

*loco* *Sva bassi*..... *loco*

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BALLAD OF BOOKER T.

1st draft  
May 30, 1941

Old Booker T.  
Was a practical man.  
He said, Till the soil,  
*and* Learn from the land.

Let down your buckets  
Where you are:

In your own backyard.  
~~Could~~ There could  
Right be a star.

Train you ~~heart~~ *head,*  
Your ~~head,~~ *heart,* and your hand.

To help yourself

And your fellowman

Thus Booker T.  
Built a school,  
With Book-learning there  
And the workman's tool.  
He started out  
In a simple way--

For ~~to~~ smart <sup>ness</sup> alone  
Is ~~not~~ <sup>surely</sup> meet---  
If ~~you~~ <sup>you</sup> haven't ~~got~~ <sup>got</sup>  
/Something to eat.

For ~~(Yesterday~~  
Was ~~not~~ today.)  
Sometimes he had ~~com-~~  
Compromise in his talk--  
For a man must crawl  
Before he can walk,  
And in Alabama in '85  
A joker was lucky  
To ~~stay~~ <sup>be</sup> alive.

But ~~not~~ Booker T.  
Was nobody's fool:  
You may carve a dream  
From an humble tool---

And the tallest tower  
Can tumble down  
If ~~it~~ <sup>is</sup> not rooted  
In solid ground.

He said, Train your ~~heart,~~ *head,*  
Your head, and your head

~~Train your~~ <sup>heart</sup> ~~ne~~  
Your head, and your hand--  
For Booker T.  
Was a practical man.

[AC 7059]

#5





1749 S St., N.W.,  
Washington, D.C.,  
October 29, 1925.

Mr. Walter White,  
69 Fifth Avenue,  
New York City.

Dear friend,

I am sorry I didn't get to see you last Sunday when you were here in Washington, but I am working in a hotel and my hours are such that I couldn't get away. I am trying to get the funds for college (Lincoln) in February but I'm afraid I won't make it without help so I've just written Mr. Johnson to see if he and The Garland Fund can't help me. What I want is this: A loan of about three hundred fifty dollars a year for the next three years, said money to be returned to the lender within three years after graduation. That would put me thru school. Some big hearted person ought to be interested enough in the development of talent to grant me that.

My book of poems has gone to press. Now I'm working on my first book of prose which will perhaps be called *Scarlet Flowers: The Autobiography of a Young Negro Poet*. You think that's a good title? When will your new novel be published? People down here are waiting for it.

I haven't forgotten the very pleasant two hours spent with you, Mrs. White, and the little girl that Sunday morning in New York and I hope to see you again when I come up there. I Haven't ceased marvelling over the kid yet.

I hope we come out all right in Detroit. Getting Darrow is certainly fine. All good wishes to you,

Sincerely yours,

*Langston Hughes*

#7





# #1



Meet Amazing Americans



Jump Back in Time



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See, Hear and Sing

▶ Writers & Artists ▶ Langston Hughes

## Meet Amazing Americans



"Scottsboro Limited," a drawing by Prentiss Taylor, dedicated to Langston Hughes.

 [Click for enlargement and credits](#)

### A Renaissance Man

Langston Hughes influenced many other people with his art -- young writers and artists looked up to him. African Americans found in him a voice for their own experiences and culture -- a voice that hadn't been widely heard until then. He inspired many other artists of all races to write, draw, play, and sing. Some even dedicated their work to Hughes, as you can see in the drawing here.

How does art touch your life? Have you ever read, watched, or listened to something that reminded you of the way you live or of something that has happened to you?

[← BACK](#) page 3 of 3 [MORE STORIES →](#)



**TITLE:** Scottsboro Limited / Prentiss Taylor.

**CALL NUMBER:** FP - XX - Taylor (P.), no. 5 (A size) [P&P]

**REPRODUCTION NUMBER:** LC-USZC4-4717 (color film copy transparency)  
LC-USZ6-2205 (b&w film copy neg.)

May be restricted: Information on reproduction rights available in LC P&P Restrictions Notebook.

**MEDIUM:** 1 print : lithograph.

**CREATED/PUBLISHED:** 1931 Nov.

**CREATOR:** [Taylor, Prentiss, 1907-](#) artist.

**NOTES:**

Signed **and** dated in pencil, with dedication to Langston Hughes.

No. VII.

Published in: Eyes **of the** nation : a visual history **of the** United **States** / Vincent Virga **and** curators **of the** Library **of** Congress ; historical commentary by Alan Brinkley. New York : Knopf, 1997.

**SUBJECTS:**

[African Americans--Civil rights--United States--1930-1940.](#)

**FORMAT:** [Lithographs 1930-1940.](#)

**REPOSITORY:** Library **of** Congress Prints **and** Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

**DIGITAL ID:** (color film copy transparency) cph 3g04717 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3g04717>  
(b&w film copy neg.) cph 3d02205 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3d02205>

# #2



Meet Amazing Americans



Jump Back in Time



Explore the States



Join America at Play



See, Hear and Sing

▶ Writers & Artists ▶ Langston Hughes

## Meet Amazing Americans



Actors in Hughes' play, *Simply Heavenly*

### A Renaissance Man

Music and poetry worked together -- just like they do today in songs you listen to. But Langston Hughes spread his creative wings even further. He loved drama and plays, and founded theater companies in both New York and Los Angeles. Hughes wrote his first play, *Mule Bone*, with Zora Neale Hurston in 1930 and kept writing for the stage the rest of his life. In order to make his plays sound realistic, Hughes mixed the lyrical nature of his poetry with the sounds of people in conversation. In 1957 he wrote a play called *Simply Heavenly*, which played on Broadway (in New York City) and in London.

 [Click for enlargement and credits](#)

[← BACK](#) page 2 of 3 [NEXT →](#)



[Creative Americans: Portraits by Carl Van Vechten, 1932-1964](#)



[Portrait of Ethel Ayler and Melvin Stewart, as Zirata and Simple (respectively) in *Simply Heavenly* by Langston Hughes].

[Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964](#), photographer.

**CREATED/PUBLISHED:**1957 June 10.

**NOTES:** Title derived from information on verso of photographic print.

Forms part of: **Portrait** photographs of celebrities, a LOT which in turn forms part of the Carl Van Vechten photograph collection (Library of Congress).

**SUBJECTS**

[Ayler, Ethel,--1934?-](#)

[Stewart, Mel.](#)

[Portrait photographs.](#)

[Group portraits.](#)

**MEDIUM**

1 photographic print : gelatin silver.

**CALL NUMBER**

LOT 12735, no. 68

**SPECIAL TERMS OF USE**

For publication information see "Carl Van Vechten Photographs (Lots 12735 and 12736)"

**PART OF**

Van Vechten, Carl, 1880-1964. **Portrait** photographs of celebrities

**REPOSITORY**

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

**DIGITAL ID**

([intermediary roll film](#)) van 5a51667 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/van.5a51667>



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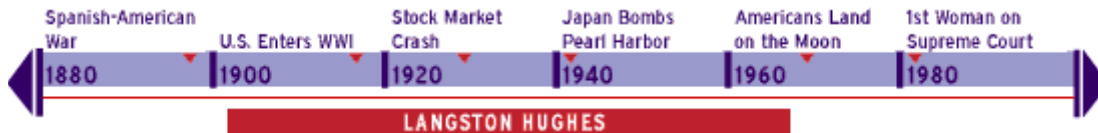
Join America at Play



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▶ Writers & Artists ▶ Langston Hughes

## Meet Amazing Americans



Henry "Red" Allen and his band played jazz to Langston Hughes's poetry.

 [Click for enlargement and credits](#)

### A Renaissance Man

Langston Hughes was an artist who used words to express himself, but other forms of art influenced him, and his work crossed over into other mediums. Hughes was considered a Renaissance man, someone who has wide interests and is talented in many areas. Jazz and blues were key elements of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, a time when African Americans in a section of New York City started a movement to celebrate their culture. Hughes said that jazz and blues expressed the wide range of black America's experience, from grief and sadness to hope and determination. The famous Henry "Red" Allen Band accompanied Hughes in a 1958 poetry recording. The rhythms of jazz also influenced his 1951 *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. This was a book-length poem in five sections depicting the African American urban experience using music, poetry, and history.

[William P. Gottlieb - Photographs from the Golden Age of Jazz](#)



[Portrait of Jay Higginbotham, Pete Johnson, Henry Allen, and Lester Young, National Press Club, Washington, D.C., ca. 1940].

[Gottlieb, William P. 1917-](#) photographer.

**NOTES**

[Gottlieb Collection Assignment No. 388](#)

Purchase William P. Gottlieb

**SUBJECTS**

[Higginbotham, Jay, 1906-1973](#)

[Johnson, Pete, 1904-](#)

[Allen, Henry, 1908-1967](#)

[Young, Lester, 1909-1959](#)

[Jazz musicians--1930-1950.](#)

[National Press Club](#)

[Portrait photographs--1930-1950.](#)

[Group portraits--1930-1950.](#)

[Film negatives--1930-1950.](#)

**MEDIUM**

1 negative : b&w ; 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 in.

**CALL NUMBER**

LC-GLB13- 0362 <P&P>

**REPRODUCTION NUMBER**

LC-GLB13-0362 DLC (b&w film neg.)

**PART OF**

William P. Gottlieb Collection

**REPOSITORY**

negative Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division **Washington D.C.** 20540 USA

reference print Library of Congress Music Division **Washington D.C.** 20540 USA

**DIGITAL ID**

([negative](#)) gottlieb 03621 urn:hdl:loc.music/gottlieb.03621 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/gottlieb.03621>

### Music and Music Publishing in the 1940s

Langston Hughes's first published poem, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," appeared in the June 1921 issue of the NAACP magazine, *The Crisis*. Since that time it has been set to music repeatedly by African American composers seeking a worthy poem for an extended art song. The best known of these settings is this one by Chicago composer Margaret Bonds, published in 1942 by the Handy Brothers Music Company. Run by W. C. Handy, that company used the money made by "The St. Louis Blues" and other early Handy blues songs to finance the publication of classical music by a generation of African American composers, including J. Rosamond Johnson, Eubie Blake, Noah Francis Ryder, and Harry Lawrence Freeman.



"The Negro Speaks of Rivers."  
Words by Langston Hughes and  
Margaret Bonds.  
New York: Handy Brothers Music  
Company, Inc., 1942.  
Sheet music.  
[Music Division](#). (8-1)  
*Courtesy of the Handy Brothers  
Music Company, Ed Sullivan  
Theater Building, 1697 Broadway  
New York, NY 10019*

## [African American Odyssey](#)



**“The Negro Speaks of Rivers.”**

[Words by Langston Hughes and Margaret Bonds.](#)

### **CREATED/PUBLISHED**

New York: Handy Brothers Music Company, Inc., 1942.

### **NOTES**

Sheet music.

### **PART OF**

African American Odyssey

### **REPOSITORY**

Library of Congress Music Division. Washington, D.C. 20540

### **DIGITAL ID**

[\(Music and Music Publishing in the 1940s\)](#) **aahtml 0801**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart8b.html#0801>



[Words and Deeds in American History: Selected Documents Celebrating the Manuscript](#)

[Division's First 100 Years](#)

#5

**Drafts of Langston Hughes's poem "Ballad of Booker T.," 30 May-1 June 1941.  
(Langston Hughes Collection)**

Langston Hughes (1902-1967), known for his lyric poetry, often wrote insightful commentaries about African-American culture and race relations in the United States. In this 1941 poem he makes a case for the vindication of educator Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), the former slave and founder of Tuskegee Institute (1881) and the National Negro Business League (1900) who was harshly criticized by many people for emphasizing vocational education as the prerequisite for the political empowerment of black people. In his poem, Hughes stresses the fact that Washington wanted to train the head, the heart, and the hand. He focuses on Washington's practicality and explains the educator's strategy with the statement,

"Sometimes he had  
compromise in his talk--  
for a man must crawl  
before he can walk  
and in Alabama in '85  
a joker was lucky  
to be alive.

Because the Library holds several dated drafts of the "Ballad of Booker T.," as well as the signed, finished version, researchers can learn how Hughes crafted his words so that the rhythm and the rhyme were syncopated, smooth, and flowing.

*Debra Newman Ham, Manuscript Division*

**For Additional Information**

For additional information on the Langston Hughes Collection, you can leave this site and read a summary [catalog record](#) for the collection.

**Reproduction Number:**

A57 (color slide; first and second drafts); A58 (color slide; final draft)

**Related Terms:**

[African Americans](#) | [Alabama](#) | [Education](#) | [Hughes, Langston \(1902-1967\)](#) | [Literature](#) | [Poems](#) | [Poets](#) | [Tuskegee Institute](#) | [Washington, Booker T. \(1856-1915\)](#)





#6

**TITLE:** Wardman Park Hotel. Cherry blossoms from the roof of Wardman Park Hotel showing the front and driveway

**CALL NUMBER:** LC-H814- 1739-002 <P&P>[P&P]

**REPRODUCTION NUMBER:** LC-H814-T01-1739-002 (b&w film dup. neg.)  
Publication may be restricted. For information see "Horydczak Collection"  
([http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/res/100\\_hory.html](http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/res/100_hory.html))

**MEDIUM:** 1 negative : safety ; 8 x 10 in.

**CREATED/PUBLISHED:** ca. 1920-ca. 1950.

**CREATOR:** [Horydczak, Theodor, ca. 1890-1971, photographer.](#)

**NOTES:** Use electronic surrogate.

**SUBJECTS:**

[Cherry trees.](#)

[Hotels & taverns.](#)

[Driveways.](#)

[United States--District of Columbia--Washington \(D.C.\)](#)

**FORMAT:** [Acetate negatives.](#)

**PART OF:** Horydczak, Theodor, ca. 1890-1971. Theodor Horydczak Collection (Library of Congress)

**REPOSITORY:** Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

**DIGITAL ID:** (intermediary roll film) **thc 5a40168** urn:hdl:loc.pnp/**thc.5a40168**  
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/thc.5a40168>

**VIDEO FRAME ID:** LCPP005A-40168 (from original)

**CARD #:** thc1995002811/PP



Meet Amazing Americans



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## Meet Amazing Americans



Hughes got a big break while working at this hotel

### Langston's Early Years

Hughes began writing poetry in high school. He gained some early recognition and support among important black intellectuals such as James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B DuBois (also an "Amazing American"). While working as a busboy at the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., Hughes gave three of his poems to Vachel Lindsay, a famous critic. Lindsay's enthusiastic praise won Hughes an even wider audience.

Have you ever written a poem? What was its subject?

This is a test.

 Click for enlargement and credits

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# AMERICAN TREASURES OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## Imagination

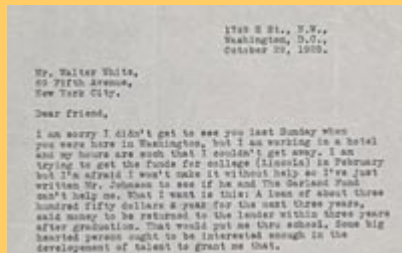
[Home](#) - [Overview](#) - [Treasure Talks](#) - [Object Checklist \(Current\)](#) - [Credits](#)  
**Exhibition Sections:** [Top Treasures](#) - [Memory](#) - [Reason](#) - [Imagination](#)

◀ PREVIOUS OBJECT

★ BACK TO EXHIBIT CASE

▶ NEXT OBJECT

## Langston Hughes Requests Loan for Tuition

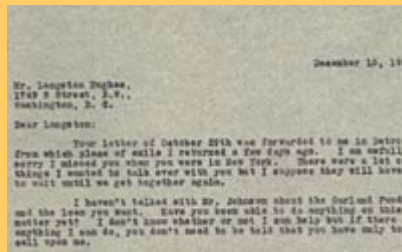


[Langston Hughes \(1902-1967\)  
to Walter White, October 29, 1925](#)

Typescript letter

[Manuscript Division](#)

Gift of the NAACP, 1964 (181D.3a)



[Walter White \(1893-1955\)  
to Langston Hughes, December 15, 1925](#)

Typescript letter

[Manuscript Division](#)

Gift of the NAACP, 1964 (181D.3b)

Walter White, the NAACP's Assistant Secretary and himself an aspiring novelist, worked tirelessly to promote the careers of Harlem Renaissance writers, artists, and performers. Poet Langston Hughes was employed as a busboy at the Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., when he wrote this letter to White requesting a loan from the NAACP to pay his college tuition. Hughes also reported on the progress of *The Weary Blues* and his new autobiography, *Scarlet Flowers...* In his reply letter White retorted that the latter "sounds like Louisa M. Alcott." Hughes agreed and eventually published his autobiography under the title *The Big Sea* (1940).

◀ PREVIOUS OBJECT

★ BACK TO EXHIBIT CASE

▶ NEXT OBJECT

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**Exhibition Sections:** [Top Treasures](#) - [Memory](#) - [Reason](#) - [Imagination](#)  
[Exhibitions Home Page](#) - [Library of Congress Home Page](#)



Library of Congress

[Contact Us](#) ( April 23, 2004 )



**#8**

**TITLE:** Chicago, Illinois. Good Sheperd Community Center. Mr. **Langston Hughes** at a rehearsal at of his new play

**CALL NUMBER:** LC-USW3- 000697-D [P&P]

**REPRODUCTION NUMBER:** LC-USW3-000697-D (b&w film neg.)

**MEDIUM:** 1 negative : safety ; 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches or smaller.

**CREATED/PUBLISHED:** 1942 Apr.

**CREATOR:**

[Delano, Jack, photographer.](#)

**NOTES:**

Title and other information from caption card.

LOT 0053 (Location of corresponding print.)

Transfer; United States. Office of War Information. Overseas Picture Division. Washington Division; 1944.

Film copy on SIS roll 1, frame 701.

**SUBJECTS:**

[United States--Illinois--Cook County--Chicago.](#)

**FORMAT:**

[Safety film negatives.](#)

**PART OF:** Farm Security Administration - Office of War Information Photograph Collection (Library of Congress)

**REPOSITORY:** Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540

List of Sources Used in this Activity  
Workshop 3 Life in a Box: Langston Hughes

- Delano, J. (1942). [Chicago, Illinois. Good Sheperd Community Center. Mr. Langston Hughes at a rehearsal at of his new play.](#) Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Miscellaneous Items in High Demand. fsa 8d03175.
- Gottlieb, W. P. (1917). [\[Portrait of Jay Higginbotham, Pete Johnson, Henry Allen, and Lester Young, National Press Club, Washington, D.C., ca. 1940\]](#). Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division, American Memory, William P. Gottlieb - Photographs from the Golden Age of Jazz. gottlieb 03621.
- Horydczak, T. (1920). [Wardman Park Hotel. Cherry blossoms from the roof of Wardman Park Hotel showing the front and driveway.](#) Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Horydczak Collection. thc 5a40168.
- Hughes, L. (1941). [Drafts of Langston Hughes's poem "Ballad of Booker T.," 30 May-1 June 1941.](#) Library of Congress Manuscript Division, American Memory, Words and Deeds in American History: Selected Documents Celebrating the Manuscript Division's First 100 Years. A57.
- Hughes, L. (1925). [Langston Hughes \(1902-1967\) to Walter White, October 29, 1925.](#) Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Exhibits, American Treasures, Imagination. at0181d.3as.
- Hughes, L. (1942). ["The Negro Speaks of Rivers."](#) Library of Congress Music Division, American Memory, African American Odyssey. aahtml 0801.
- Taylor, P. (1931). [Scottsboro Limited / Prentiss Taylor.](#) Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Fine Prints. cph 3g04717.
- Van Vechten, C. (1957). [\[Portrait of Ethel Ayler and Melvin Stewart, as Zirata and Simple \(respectively\) in Simply Heavenly by Langston Hughes\]](#). Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, American Memory, Portraits by Carl Van Vechten. van 5a51667.