

ART AND REVOLUTION

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLw_QwRnWmY



Key Concepts

- ▶ How is the notion of “revolution” promoted through visual art? or What role do artists play in furthering a revolution?
- ▶ How can art further solidarity within a community?
- ▶ How are images embedded into the everyday lives of people?
- ▶ How are art forms tied to the social and historical contexts of their times?

What was the Harlem Renaissance?

- ▶ Period of artistic and cultural activity among African Americans before WWI and the onset of the great depression and lead up to WWII- in the 1930s
- ▶ Considered golden age in African American culture (literature, music, theatre and visual art)
- ▶ Rising awareness of inequality and discrimination- many were experiencing freedom of expression through art for the first time
- ▶ Movement associated with notions of pride in black life and identity

“For the first time since the plantation days, artists began to touch new material, to understand new tools, and to accept eagerly the challenge of Black poetry, Black song and Black scholarship.” –Vernon Winslow

TIMELINE

1914-18

1916

1919

1925

1929-33

1939-45

World War I

The Great
Migration
begins

The Red
Summer

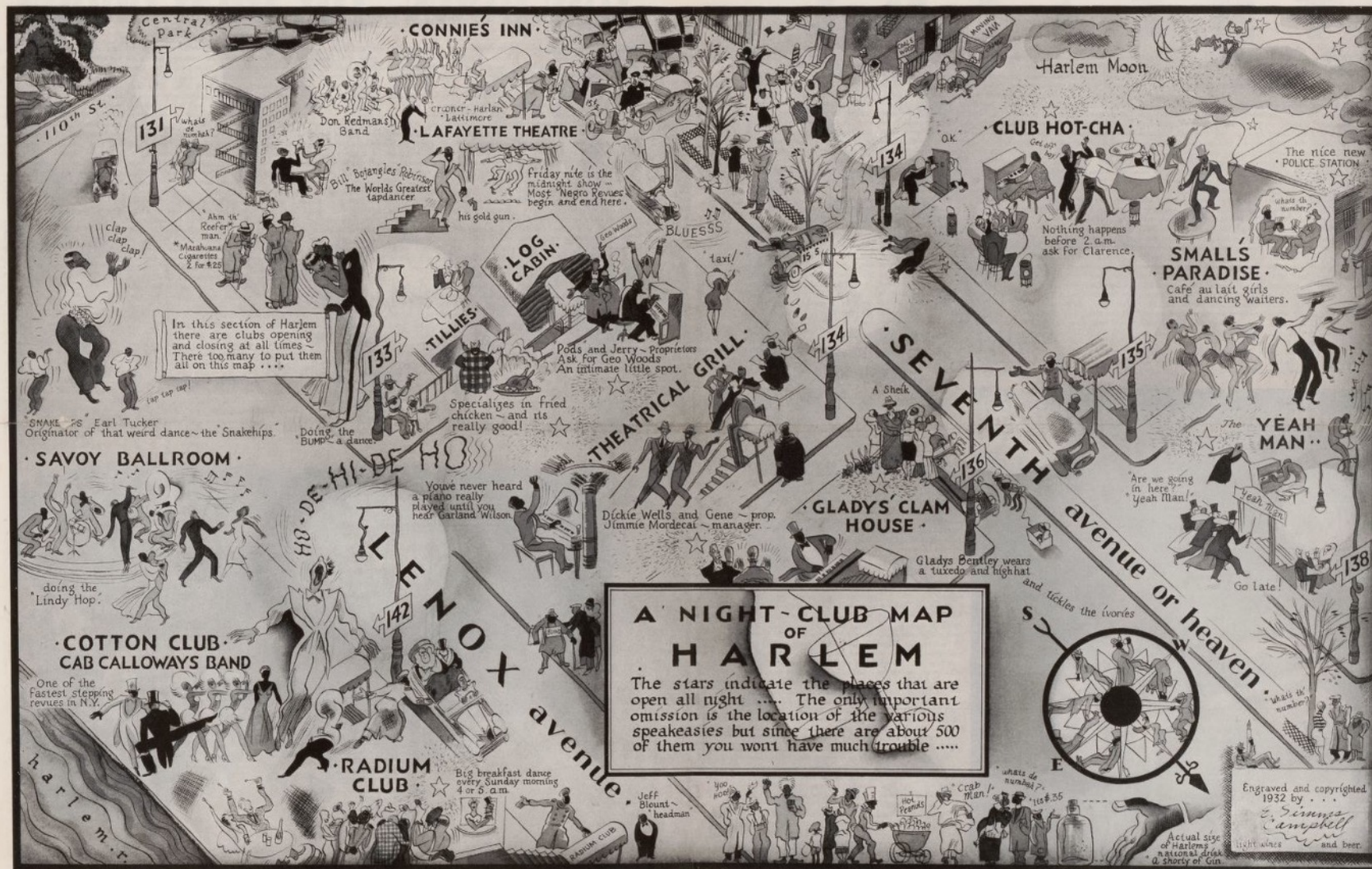
Alain Locke's
*The New
Negro* is
published

The Great
Depression

World War II

Harlem as a space...

"So here we have Harlem—not merely a colony or a community or a settlement ... It strikes the uninformed observer as a phenomenon, a miracle straight out of the skies." –James Weldon Johnson



Night-Club
Map of Harlem
1932

Historical Context



National Guardsmen question an African-American man in Chicago, after Mayor 'Big Bill' Thompson called in the National Guard on July 30, 1919, after three days of rioting

The Great Migration



Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration Series*, 1941 (installed at the Phillips Collection)

I tried to show the excitement, the crowds, the tension, through the use of color, through the use of shapes, forms. I tried to get a surge of movement in this particular work.” -Jacob Lawrence



Jacob Lawrence

The Migration Series, Panel no. 1: During World War I there was a great migration north by southern African Americans

1940-1941



Jacob Lawrence

The Migration Series, Panel no. 49: They also found discrimination in the North although it was much different from that which they had known in the South

1940-1941



Jacob Lawrence

The Migration Series, Panel no. 44: Living Conditions were better in the North

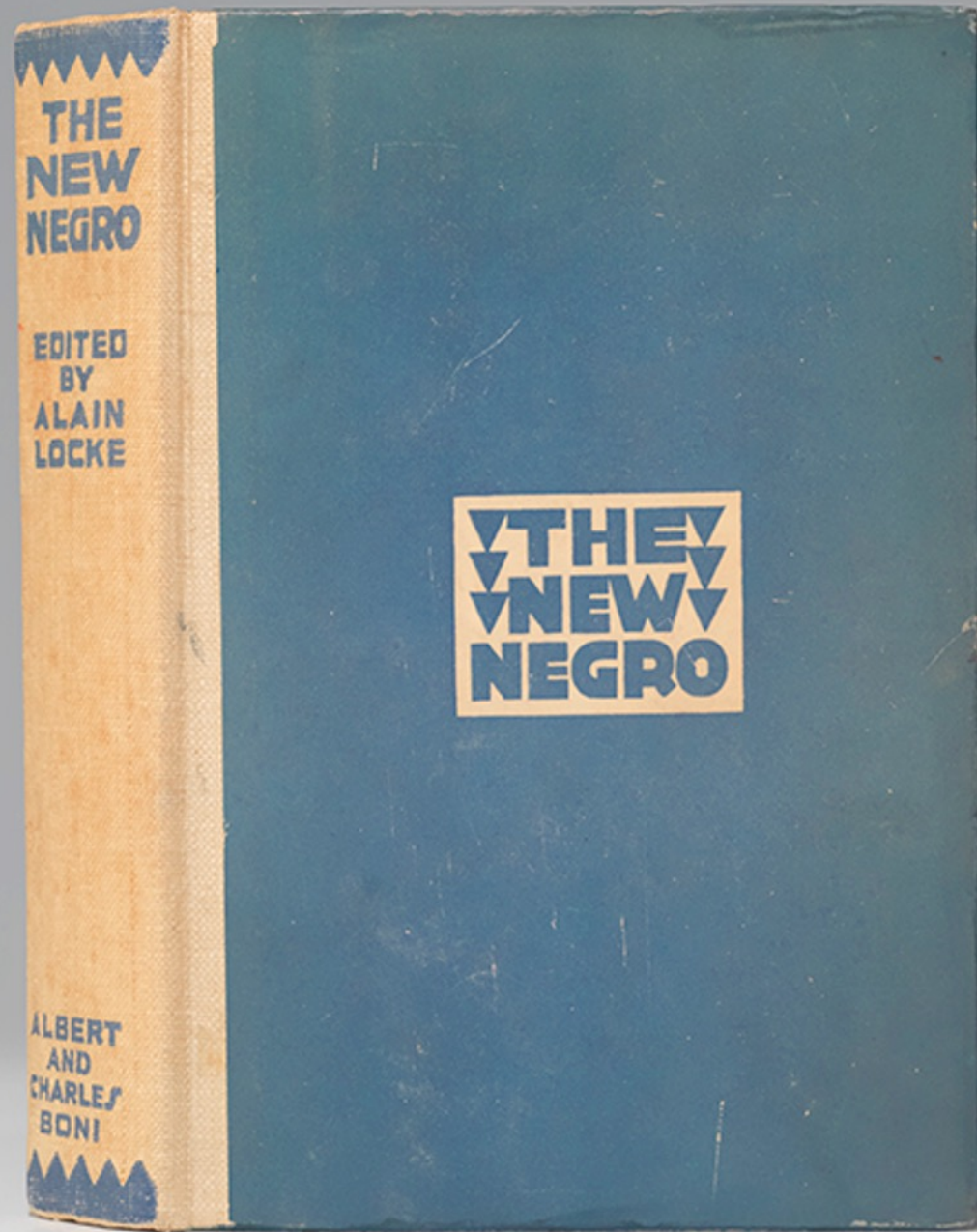
1940-1941

"To me, migration means movement. There was conflict and struggle. But out of the struggle came a kind of power and even beauty. 'And the migrants kept coming' is a refrain of triumph over adversity. if it rings true for you today, then it must still strike a chord in our American experience." -Jacob Lawrence

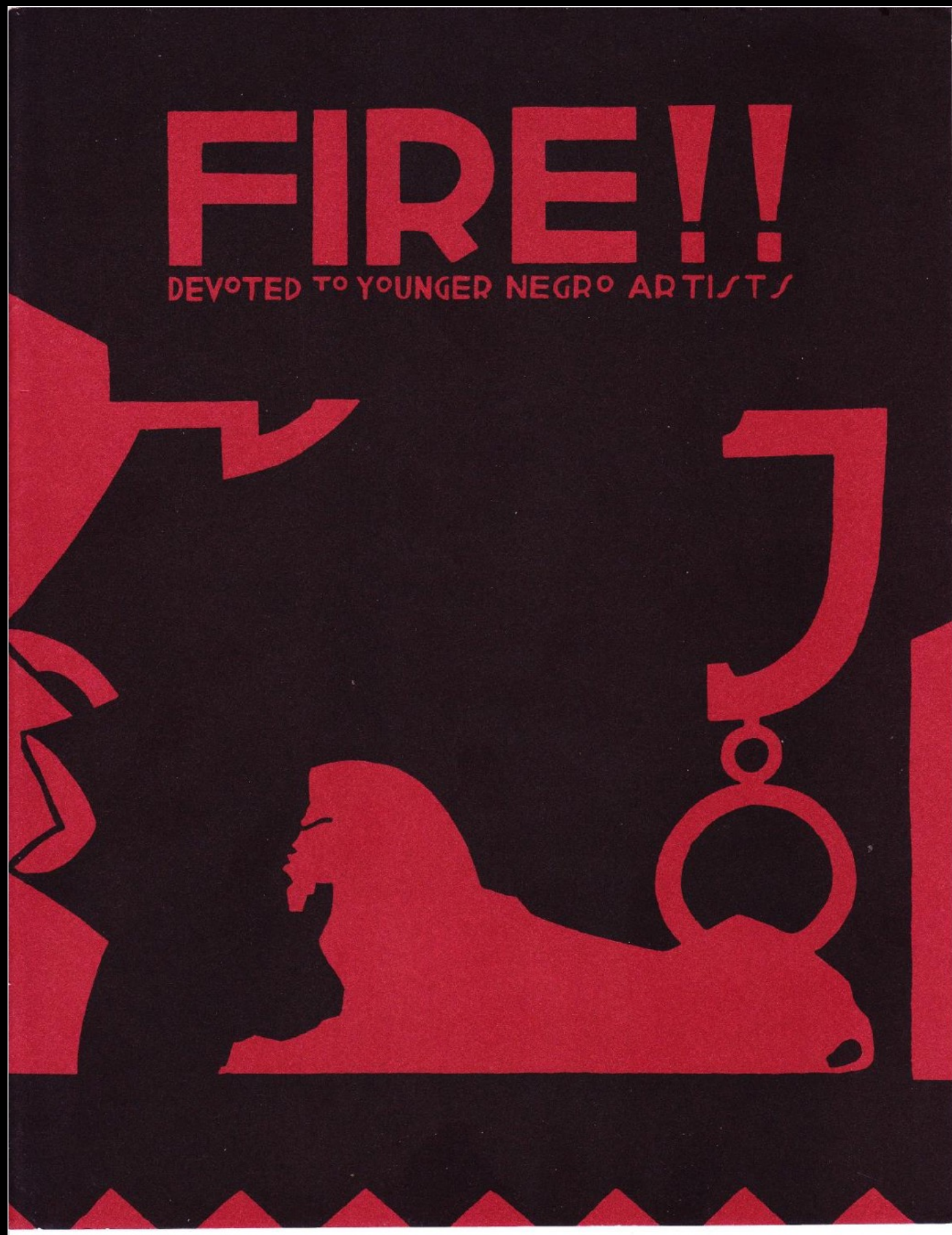


Jacob Lawrence, The Migration Series, Panel no. 60: *And the migrants kept coming*, 1940-1941

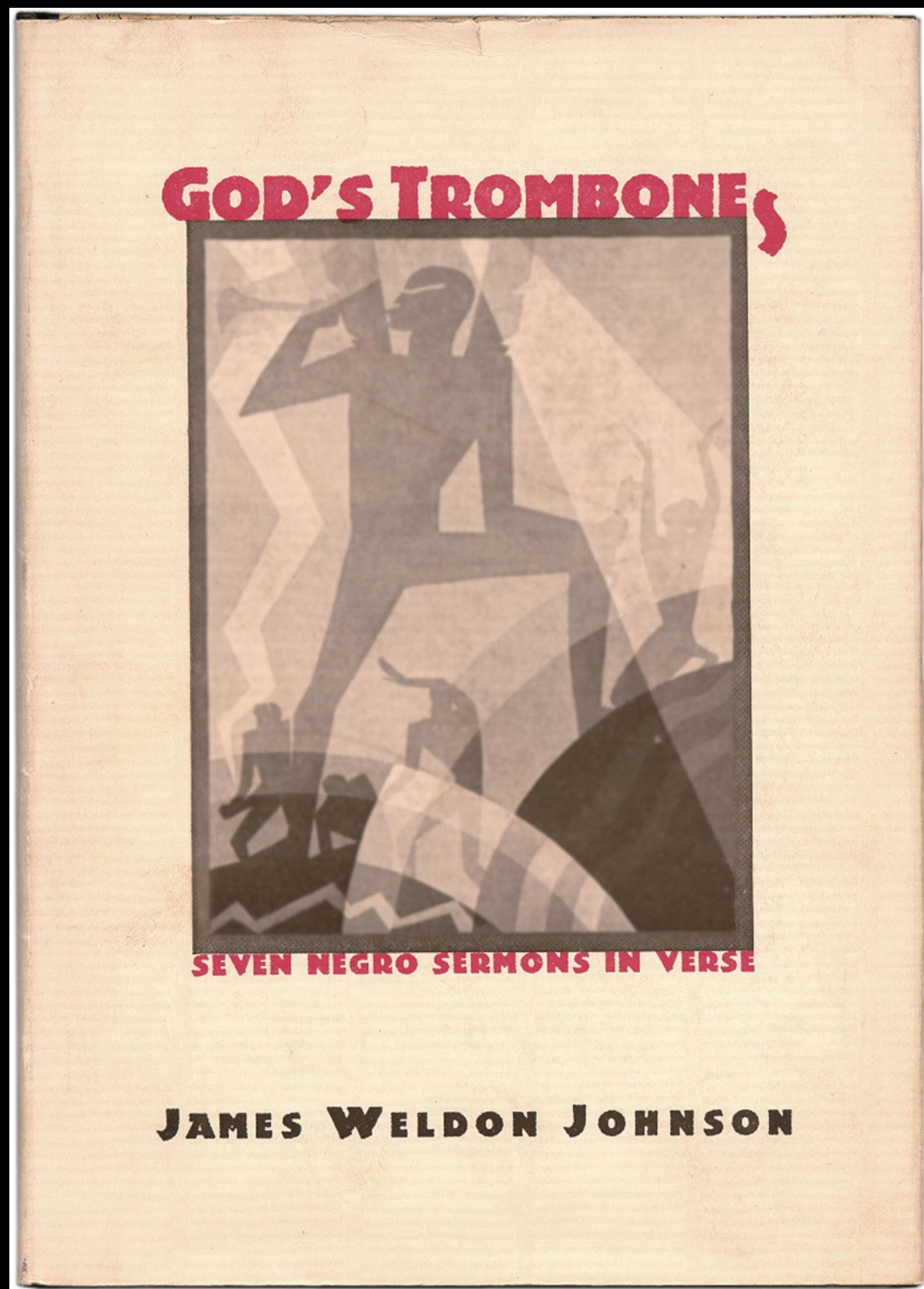
The Literature of the Harlem Renaissance



Alain LeRoy Locke
The New Negro
1925



Cover of the first (and only) issue of FIRE!!, November 1926.
Illustrator: Aaron Douglas



Aaron Douglas
 Illustration for *God's Trombones*
 1927



Aaron Douglas
The Judgment Day
 1939



Aaron Douglas
Aspiration
1936

PAINTING



Archibald Motley

Black Belt

1934

[The painting] allows for blackness to breathe, even in the density. From the outside in, the possibilities of what this blackness could be are so constrained. He keeps it messy and indeterminate so that it can be both. Polar opposite possibilities can coexist in the same tight frame, in the same person. -Davarian Baldwin

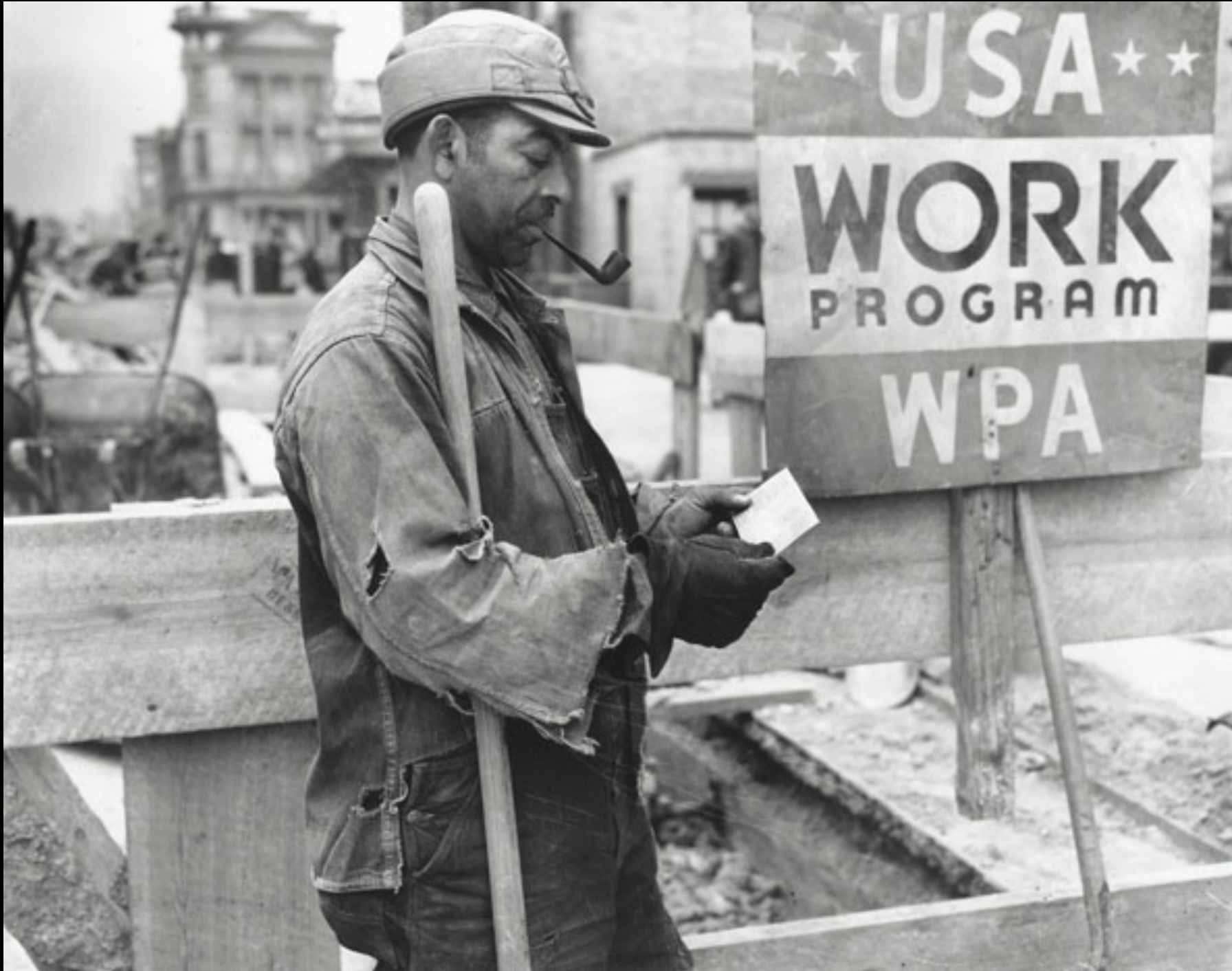


Archibald John Motley, Jr.

Gettin' Religion

1948

Artists, the Great Depression and the WPA



"I hear so many complaints to the effect that Negroes do not take advantage of the educational opportunities offered them. Well, one of the reasons why more of my race do not go in for higher education is that as soon as one of us gets his head above the crowd there are millions of feet ready to crush it back again to that dead level of commonplace thus creating a racial decline of culture in our Republic. For how am I to compete with other American artists if I am not to be given the same opportunity?" -Augusta Savage



Children at a free W.P.A.
Federal Art Project art
class, 1939

SCULPTURE



Augusta Savage with her sculpture
Realization, 1938.
Photo by Andrew Herman.



Augusta Savage
Gamin
1929

PHOTOGRAPHY





VIII 24/75

J. Van Der Zee

James Van Der Zee
Garveyite Family, Harlem
1924, printed 1974

The Legacy of the Harlem Renaissance

"Were it not for this movement, other art movements may not even have sprung up. The Harlem Renaissance gave women, gave impoverished people all over this country a hint of just what you can do if you want to put your art on the line, because all they really wanted was to show America that, if you give us a fair chance, we will produce greatness. From that movement they have stitched, the black American, forevermore, into the artistic fabric of this country." -Wil Haygood



Kerry James Marshall
*Better Homes, Better
Gardens*
1994

Opinion

THE STONE

Who First Showed Us That Black Lives Matter?

By Chris Lebron

Feb. 5, 2018



"Man in Forest Green," 2016 Derrick Adams/Tilton Gallery, New York

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/05/opinion/black-lives-matter-philosophy.html>