

# Dehumanization of Women and the Life of the Enslaved Child

**"A Shining Thread of Hope: The History of Black Women In America", p. 70**

To enslaved Black Americans, community meant survival - emotional, psychological, and often physical survival. They were under constant assaults from the white world, which did everything it could to make them "good slaves".

**What is a good slave?**

- unhealthy
- insecure
- completely dependent

**Self-respect was a treasure to be cherished in the slave quarters...**

It was a quality that parents worked hard to instill in their children and that the slave community encouraged in all its members. Separated from that atmosphere, a child was vulnerable to all sorts of attacks on her sense of self-worth.

**Ibid., p. 71**

The development of a community is one of the most powerful of all survival skills, and it is a skill that Black women have mastered.

Another skill mastered by enslaved women was protection of the inner person. A black mother taught her daughter to develop two faces. She was to seem accommodating and tractable to the slaveholder, smiling and ready to please. At the same time, she was to have a secret place inside here full of self-respect. Janie might learn at the end of a whip to call a white baby "Marster Henry", but there was a part of her that could laugh at the silliness of it or be contemptuous or angry or whatever would keep her own sense of self intact.

As daughters got older, of course, there were other lessons to be taught. Even very young girls were subject to sexual abuse from white men. This was a reality black parents faced from the moment a girl baby was born. There was no real defense against it, but black mothers counseled their daughters in modesty and dignity, in the hope that those qualities might provide some protection. They also taught them lessons of guile and trickery. There was nothing dishonorable in deceiving the slaveholder. Indeed, the ability to overcome force by the use of wits was highly valued one in the slave community. Certainly, if a girl could protect her sexual integrity, anything was justified.

**Ibid., p. 71**

**FACT: At the beginning of the 18th century, whites had a license to kill blacks.**

- whites could legally kill black slaves who resisted their “correcting”
- “correcting” = **whipping with a cattle whip**
- In an 1905 accidental murder while “correcting” would **NOT** be counted a felony
- this law was put into affect as the rights of white servants was being strengthened

**FACT: In 1705, Intermarriage between Blacks and Whites was prohibited**

- Intermarriage was punishable by imprisoning
- Whites would go to jail for six months
- Usually the early birth of a “mulatto child” brought on the discovery of intermarriage
- It was not until a 1967 Supreme Court decision that intermarriage was deemed constitutional (*Loving V. Virginia, 1967*).

## What is the definition of “Mulatto?”

- the first-generation offspring of a black person and a white person
  - a person of mixed white and black ancestry
-

# THESE ARE AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN

Lena Horne



Dorothy Dandridge

# **CARTER G. WOODSON**



## **What is Black History Month? (African-American)**

- the successor to Negro History Week (initiated on February 12, 1926)
- started by Carter G. Woodson
- became Black History month in 1976

## **Who was Carter G. Woodson? What did he do?**

- a pre-eminent historian
- founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History
- made sure the contributions of Black Americans were NOT overlooked or misrepresented

## **Who are “African Americans?”**

(also referred to as **Black Americans** or **Afro-Americans**)

- American-born citizens
- direct descendants of the African slaves who survived the slavery era
- Some immigrants from or descendants of African, Caribbean, Central American or South American nations

[http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic\\_relig/blckhist.html](http://www3.kumc.edu/diversity/ethnic_relig/blckhist.html)

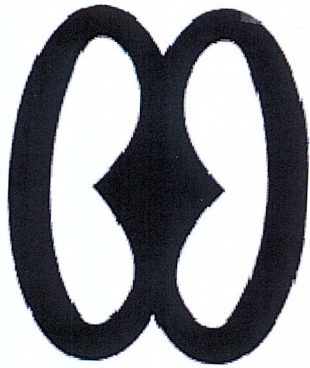
# What are Negro Spirituals?

Negro spirituals were:

- primarily expressions of religious faith
- stemmed from slaves belief in God
- originated among enslaved Africans in the United States

Negro spirituals were used for the following reasons:

- to sing “secret messages”.
- express personal feelings and worship
- Uplift one another  
(in the fields, at home and church).



**NYAME BIRIBI WO SORO**

**"God is in the heavens"**

**symbol of hope**

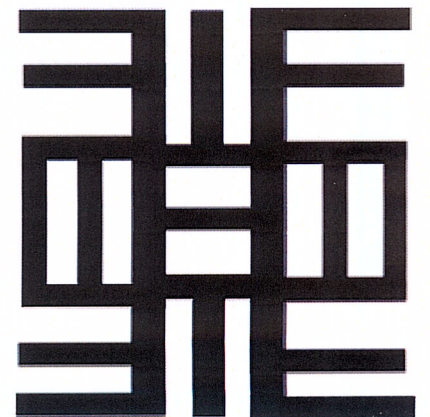
**A reminder that God's dwelling place is in the heaven, where he can listen to all**

**Adinkra Symbol**

Called: NEA ONNIM NO SUA  
A, OHU

*"He who does not know can know from learning"*

- symbol of knowledge
- life-long education
- the continued quest for knowledge

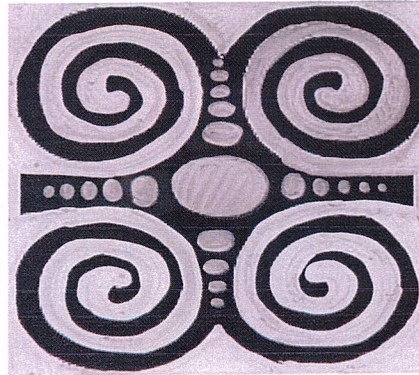




Adinkra Symbol

**DWENI NI MMEN**  
(Ram's horns)

Symbol of **STRENGTH**  
(of mind, body and soul)  
and **HUMILITY**.



Proverb:

*"Dwenini ye asisie a ode nakoma na ennye ne mmen"*  
(The ram may bully, not with its horns but with his heart.)

## What was the Harlem Renaissance?

The **Harlem Renaissance**, or the New Negro Movement, was named after the term used in the anthology *The New Negro*, edited by Alain Locke and published in 1925.

Centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, the movement impacted urban centers throughout the United States. Across the cultural spectrum (literature, drama, music, visual art, dance) and also in the realm of social thought (sociology, historiography, philosophy), **artists and intellectuals** found new ways to explore the historical experiences of Black America and the contemporary experiences of black life in the urban North.

Challenging white paternalism and racism, African-American artists and intellectuals rejected imitating the styles of Europeans and white Americans, and instead **celebrated black dignity and creativity**. Asserting their freedom to express themselves on their own terms, they **explored their identities** as Black Americans, celebrating the black culture that had emerged out of slavery, as well as cultural ties to Africa.

The Harlem Renaissance had a profound impact not only on African-American culture but also on the cultures of the African diaspora. Afro-Caribbean artists and intellectuals from the British West Indies, who had migrated to New York in number, were part of the movement. Moreover, many French-speaking black writers from African and Caribbean colonies who lived in Paris were also influenced by the Harlem Renaissance.

## How were Negro Spirituals used as “Secret Codes?”

The meaning of these songs:

- had instructions for fugitive slaves to avoid capture
- Told which routes to take to freedom.

Songs recommended leaving dry land and taking to the water as a strategy to throw pursuing bloodhounds off one's trail.

“The Gospel Train” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” contain veiled references to the Underground Railroad, and many sources assert that *Follow the Drinking Gourd* contained a coded map to the Underground Railroad.

Therefore, only Christian slaves understood them, and even when ordinary words were used, they reflected personal relationship between the slave singer and God. **The codes of the first negro spirituals are often related with an escape to a free country.**



## Shirley Anita St. Hill Chisholm

(November 30, 1924 –January 1, 2005)

was an American politician,  
educator, and author.

She was a Congresswoman,  
representing New York's 12th  
Congressional District for seven  
terms from 1969 to 1983.

- the first black woman elected to Congress
- the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination
- She was a Congresswoman, representing New York's 12th Congressional District for seven terms from 1969 to 1983.
- Chisholm earned her BA from Brooklyn College in 1946 and later earned her MA from Columbia University in elementary education in 1952. She was a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.



### Inventor of the Blood-Bank & Blood Plasma Bag

**Charles Richard Drew** (3 June 1904 – 1 April 1950) was an African American physician and medical researcher. He researched in the field of blood transfusions, developing improved techniques for blood storage, and applied his expert knowledge in developing large-scale blood banks early in World War II, saving thousands of lives of the Allied forces.

He protested against the practice of racial segregation in the donation of blood as it lacked scientific foundation, which got him fired. In 1943, Drew's distinction in his profession was recognized when he became the first black surgeon to serve as an examiner on the American Board of Surgery.



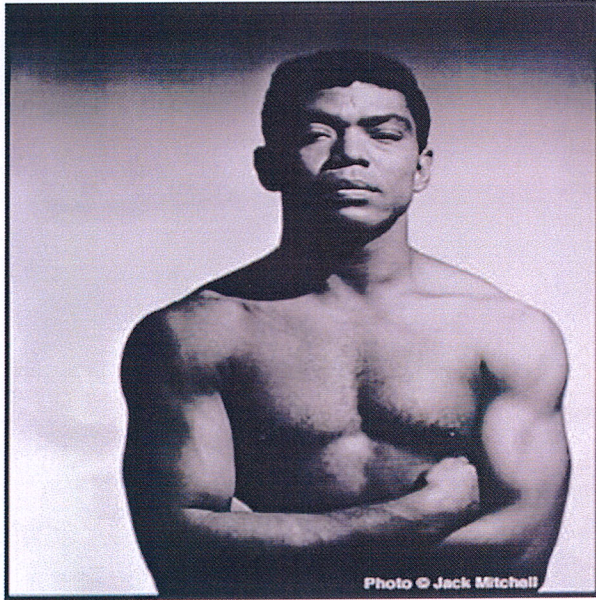
**Toni Morrison** (born **Chloe Ardelia Wofford** on February 18, 1931) is a **Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize-winning**, American author, editor, and professor at **Princeton University**. Considered one of the best contemporary novelists, she graduated from Howard University in 1953 and continued her education at Cornell University where she received a master of fine arts degree in 1955. After graduating from Cornell, she taught English at Texas Southern University and at Howard University.

Her novels are known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue, and richly detailed black characters.

Among her best known novels are

- *The Bluest Eye* (1987)
- *Song of Solomon* (1977)
- *Beloved* (1987)
- *Sula* (1973)





# Alvin Ailey

Born: January 5, 1931

Died: December 1, 1989

*African American dancer and choreographer*

- grew up in segregated Texas feeling like he didn't matter
- established his own dance company in 1959 (the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater)
- became an internationally renowned choreographer
- Ailey received multiple awards including:
  - *Dance* magazine award (1975)
  - the Springarn Medal, given to him by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1979
  - also the Capezio Award (1979)
  - and Kennedy Center Honors prize (1988)

“I am trying to show the world that we are all human beings and that **color is not important.** What is important is the quality of our work.”

-Alvin Ailey



# Andrew Young

born March 12, 1932

*American politician, diplomat and pastor  
from Georgia*

- Civil Rights Leader
- former Mayor of Atlanta

- has been a Congressman from the 5th district
- has served as US Ambassador to the United Nations
- has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom

.....

Andrew Young fought along the side of Martin Luther King, Jr. and continued the work after King's death.

Andrew Young's motto is "Don't get mad, Get Smart!"





# Dr. Mark Dean

Born March 2, 1957  
Jefferson City, Tennessee

Dr. Dean helped develop the **ISA systems bus** (internal part that connects modem and printer to computers)

Dr. Dean also holds:

- the title of “Director of advanced systems development” for the IBM Server Group
  - 3 of the original 9 patents on the computer that all PCs are based upon
  - a BS in Electrical Engineering
  - Ph.D. in EE from Stanford

Dr. Dean recalls growing up in segregated schools and not being taken seriously as a student

He has since been inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame (membership is at a mere 150 individuals)

## **PAST**



**Daniel Hale Williams**

1858-1931

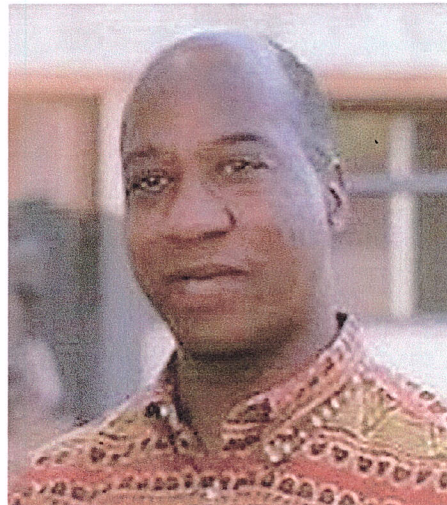
He was an African American doctor credited with having performed open heart surgery on July 9, 1893 before such surgeries were established. In 1913, he was the only African American member of the American College of Surgeons.

## **PRESENT**

**Donald R. Hopkins, M.D., M.P.H.**

1941 -

Donald R. Hopkins is an associate executive director of the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta.



- He is a former deputy and acting director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- A physician who participated in the World Health Organization's Smallpox Eradication Program.
- The first edition of this book was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1983.

# Richard Allen Starts the A.M.E Denomination of Christianity

Historically, African-American people have been known to be very spiritual. From the old negro spirituals sung during slavery, to using prayer as a catalyst for divine intervention during the civil rights movement, spirituality and spiritual practice have shaped the lives of many African Americans, from the troubled past to our hopeful present.



Richard Allen was a slave who became a Methodist convert and fiery preacher as a youth. The dedicated young man purchased he and his brother's freedom after an evangelist convinced their plantation owner that slavery was a sin. As a free man, along with Absalom Jones, Allen began to preach early morning services at a local church. The sermons became so popular that the church's vestry voted to build a separate space for the burgeoning numbers of blacks to worship in. Distressed by the forced segregation, Allen and Jones left to found a mutual aid society for free blacks and migrant workers.

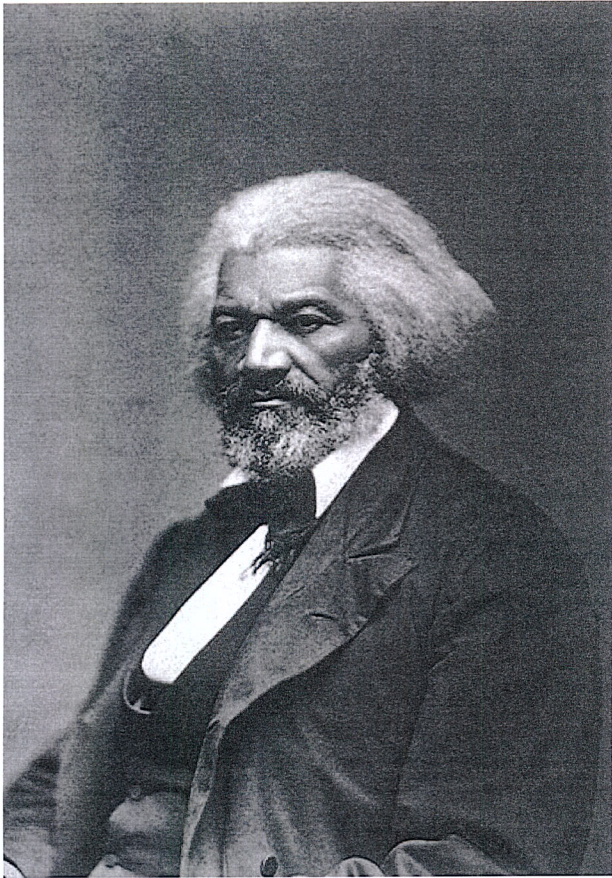
The pair parted ways when Jones was drawn to Anglicanism, and Richard Allen chose to remain a Methodist. In 1816 Allen became instrumental in founding Bethel Church in Philadelphia as well as the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), the oldest, independent black denomination.

## Characteristics of Black Spirituality

**Power of the Word.** Scripture holds an esteemed place in the spiritual life of people of African descent. It is that “praying, saving, staying power” in the Black community. It is the vehicle which helps people to “wake up and see God’s power.” It is the story of unending love. Many African Americans see their story in Scripture: a story of ‘overcoming, of liberation, of love.’ It takes on personal claim, thus becoming an individual’s record of spiritual journey as well as a community’s story. Scripture is an opportunity to “know who you are and whose you are.” “There you will look for the Lord, with all your heart and if you search for God with all your heart, you will find God.”

**Community Oriented.** An old African proverb says, “I am because we are.” Tribal living is successful in Africa because it is community-based. The community consists of families connected by blood and families connected by experience. All that is important in life is directed to the community. Thus, the spirituality of people of African descent is community based. We grow in our understanding of ourselves through the vast network of relationships within the community. We grow in our understanding of God through the community. “The community of believers were one in mind and heart. None of them said that any of their belonging were their own, but they shared with one another everything they had...and there was no one among them who was in need.” [Acts 4:32, 34]

**Holistic.** There is a prevailing philosophy in the African American community that all of life is connected. Everything is connected: intellect, emotions and sentiment. Dualism does not exist because we see God everywhere. “I have opened a door in front of you, which no one can close.” [Revelation 3: 8] Joyful, Emotional and the Virtue of Surrender. Emotional release is common because it is an opportunity to “let go and let God.” It is an opportunity to surrender to God. After all, God is omnipotent. “We are often troubled, but not crushed, sometimes in doubt, but never in despair; there are many enemies, but we are never without a friend; and though badly hurt at times, we are not destroyed.”



**Frederick Douglass (1818-95)**, an American abolitionist, women's suffragist, editor, orator, author, statesman and reformer. Called "The Sage of Anacostia" and "The Lion of Anacostia", Douglass is one of the most prominent figures in African American and United States history. . .

**...argued that the only way to permanently keep someone a slave was to keep him or her ignorant...**

- Most southern states considered it a crime to teach African Americans, enslaved or free, to read or write.
- Margaret Douglass, the wife of

Frederick Douglass conducted reading lessons in her home for free Black children.

- She was arrested and she was indicted by a grand jury and was fined one-dollar and spent one-month in jail for breaking the law

**\*\*\* Virginia law prohibited assembly of African Americans for religious worship unless the services were led by a white, the gathering of African Americans for instruction in reading or/writing, and any congregation of Blacks at nighttime for any purpose. Any white person assisting in these assemblies was to be fined and imprisoned\*\*\***

### ***The Power of Change***

#### **FACT:**

***In 1907, Amos Potter Scruggs became the first black student to receive a law degree from the University of Illinois. He argued 13 cases before the Illinois Supreme Court, including a reversal of a criminal conviction of a black man. Thereafter, he became a member of the State's Attorney staff.***

## Civil Rights Movement

The **African-American Civil Rights Movement** (1955–1968) refers to the reform movements in the United States aimed at outlawing racial discrimination against African Americans and restoring Suffrage in Southern states. By 1966, the emergence of the Black Power Movement, which lasted roughly from 1966 to 1975, enlarged the aims of the Civil Rights Movement to include racial dignity, economic and political self-sufficiency, and freedom from oppression by whites.

Many of those who were active in the Civil Rights Movement, with organizations such as NAACP, SNCC, CORE and SCLC, prefer the term "Southern Freedom Movement" because the struggle was about far more than just civil rights under law; it was also about fundamental issues of freedom, respect, dignity, and economic and social equality.

During the period 1955–1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Federal, state, and local

educational institutions, to respond immediately to highlighted the inequities Americans. Forms of disobedience included successful Montgomery in Alabama; "sit-ins" such Greensboro sit-in (1960) marches, such as the marches (1965) in of other nonviolent



governments, businesses, and communities often had crisis situations which faced by African protest and/or civil boycotts such as the Bus Boycott (1955–1956) as the influential in North Carolina; Selma to Montgomery Alabama; and a wide range activities.

Noted legislative

phase of the Civil Rights Movement were passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964, that banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that restored and protected voting rights; the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965, that dramatically opened entry to the U.S. to immigrants other than traditional European groups; and the Civil Rights Act of 1968, that banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. African Americans re-entered politics in the South, and across the country young people were inspired to action.



## **Louis Armstrong**

Coming to prominence in the 1920s as an innovative cornet and trumpet player, Armstrong was a foundational influence on jazz, shifting the music's focus from collective improvisation to solo performers. With his distinctive gravelly voice, Armstrong was also an influential singer, demonstrating great dexterity as an improviser, bending the lyrics and melody of a song for expressive purposes. He was also greatly skilled at scat singing, or wordless vocalizing.

Renowned for his charismatic stage presence and deep, instantly recognizable voice almost as much as for his trumpet-playing, Armstrong's influence extended well beyond jazz, and by the end of his career in the '60s, he was widely regarded as a profound influence on popular music in general: critic Steve Leggett describes Armstrong as "perhaps the most important American musician of the 20th century."

# Jessie Mae Pitman Branch

(July 22, 1919 - December 21, 2001)

*“Miss Jessie’s is a high end hair product company devoted to African-American women created by African American Women”.*



- Miss Jessie was the paternal grandmother of Miko and

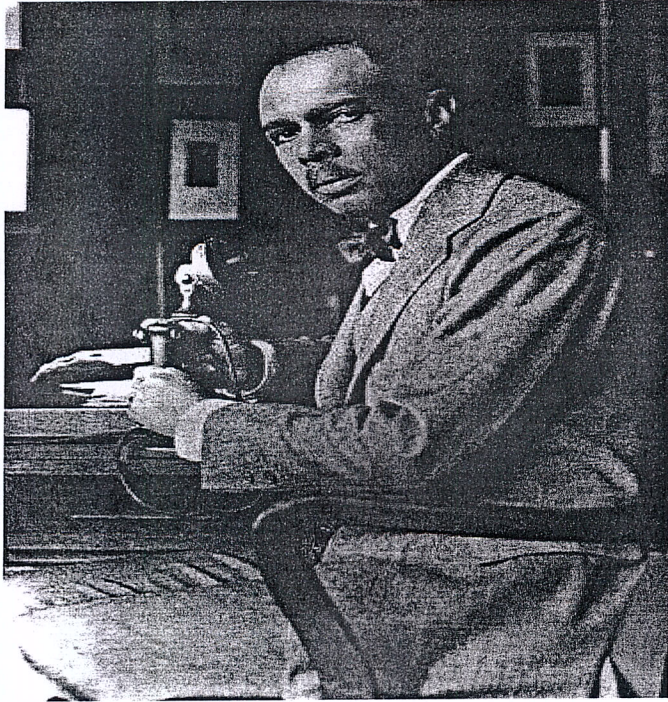
Titi Branch, founders of Miss Jessie’s Products and Salon.

- Miss Jessie use to whip up an egg and mayonnaise treatment when her granddaughters complained about their hair. Many of her preparations included remedies for hair and beauty which she shared with her whole family.
- In 2004 Titi and Miko Branch would create and name their salon and product line after their beloved grandmother Miss Jessie.



(Titi and Miko, granddaughters of Miss Jessie & the Company’s Founders)





## Who is James Weldon Johnson?

(June 17, 1871 - June 26, 1938)

- Writer of “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing”

**(The Black National Anthem).**

- An African American author  
journalist/poet/songwriter
- A politician/diplomat/early civil rights activist,
- A Critic, anthropologist, educator and lawyer
- One of the **first** African-American Professors at  
New York University.
- Later in life he was a Professor of creative  
literature and writing at Fisk University

## *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet,  
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?  
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the  
slaughtered;  
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
Thou Who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou Who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee.  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.



# James Mercer Langston Hughes

(February 1, 1902 - May 22, 1967)

was an African American poet, novelist, playwright, short story writer, and columnist.

- He was one of the earliest innovators of the new literary art form jazz poetry.
- Hughes is best-known for his work during the Harlem Renaissance.
- He is also best known for what he wrote about the Harlem Renaissance, "Harlem was in vogue".

I, Too

By: Langston Hughes

*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.*

## *Josephine Baker*

(Nicknames: "Bronze Venus" or the "Black Pearl", as well as the "Créole Goddess" in anglophone nations & "La Baker" in France )

*(June 3, 1906 - April 12, 1975)*

was an African American expatriate entertainer and actress. She became a French citizen in 1937. Most noted as a singer, Baker also was a celebrated dancer in her early career.



- Baker was the first African American female to star in a major motion picture, to integrate an American concert hall, and to become a world-famous entertainer.
- She is also noted for her contributions to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States , for assisting the French Resistance during the Second World War and
- Being the first American-born woman to receive the highest French military honor, the Croix de Guerre, and for being an inspiration to generations of African American female entertainers and others.



In 1872, Charlotte Ray, a Howard University Law school graduate, became the first black woman admitted to the bar in the District of Columbia, which had recently changed its laws to omit "male" from the requirements for the bar.

She opened her own law practice in Washington D.C., but both racial and gender prejudice worked against her. Despite her inability to work as a lawyer, Ray worked for women's suffrage and encouraged other Black women to study law

### Charlotte Ray Award Recipient,

Chief Judge Norma Holloway Johnson of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia was honored with the Charlotte E. Ray Award by the Greater Washington Area Chapter of the Women Lawyers Division of the National Bar Association and the GWAC Foundation, Inc. The award, presented to Johnson in a private ceremony on February 3, recognizes an outstanding African American woman from the local legal community in honor of Charlotte E. Ray, the first African American lawyer in the country and the first woman admitted to practice law in the District.

