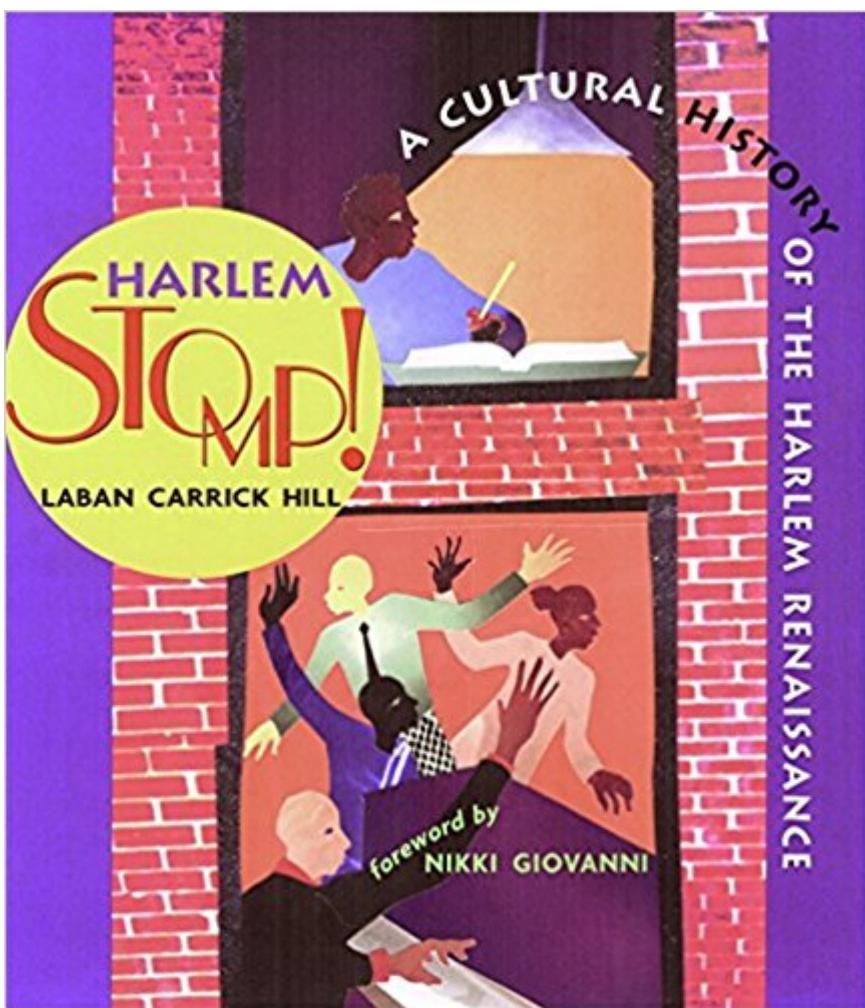


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# Harlem Stomp!: A Cultural History Of The Harlem Renaissance



## **Synopsis**

When it was released in 2004, *>>* was the first trade book to bring the Harlem Renaissance alive for young adults! Meticulously researched and lavishly illustrated, the book is a veritable time capsule packed with poetry, prose, photographs, full-color paintings, and reproductions of historical documents. Now, after more than three years in hardcover, three starred reviews and a National Book Award nomination, *>>* is being released in paperback.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 1270 (What's this?)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (January 1, 2009)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 9.5 x 0.5 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #72,929 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #11 in Books > Teens > Art, Music & Photography > Art #20 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > 20th Century #75 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 7 Up-Hill explains the violence, frustration, and dreams of economic opportunity that led to the African-American migration to the North at the beginning of the 20th century. He describes the sense of pride, responsibility, and rights engendered by participation in World War I and the white resentment that resulted in such violence that James Weldon Johnson "dubbed the summer of 1919 the 'Red Summer'" in response to the bloodshed. The author discusses why blacks settled in Harlem and how it became the "Mecca of the New Negro," attracting the likes of Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, and Claude McKay. Also highlighted are publications such as the National Urban League's Opportunity: A Journal of Negro Life, which not only supplied forums for these writers but also attempted to generate income for them and provide a sense of racial identity. Music, theater,

and the visual arts are also covered. The book contains aspects of everyday culture, too, such as the role of churches, funeral processions, and rent parties. Numerous quotes from speeches, poems, articles, and other works are included. The volume is a visual feast, packed with contemporary photographs, reproductions, magazine covers, and posters, and enhanced by an interesting graphic design. Together, the words and images bring this extraordinary period to life. Pair it with James Haskins's *The Harlem Renaissance* (Millbrook, 1996), which remains the more in-depth textual overview. Joanne K. Cecere, Monroe-Woodbury High School, Central Valley, NY  
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**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 7-12. "In the 1920s, Harlem was hot!" With a beautiful open design, this illustrated history combines the politics of the black metropolis in the roaring 1920s with long, detailed chapters on the "blazing creativity" of performers, writers, visual artists, and intellectuals. Many readers will dip into pages that interest them. Others will appreciate the big picture, including the facts about the great migration from the South, the continuing racism, the debate concerning how blacks should win equal rights, and the call to get beyond sentimentality and propaganda. "We know we are beautiful. And ugly, too," Langston Hughes wrote in his groundbreaking essay "The Weary Blues," which is printed here in full, along with many other great selections from literature and journalism. The spacious pages are wonderful for browsing, with colored screens and reproductions of beautiful portraits, paintings, and neighborhood photos, many of them full page. Occasionally the text is dull. The biographies of Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston, for example, are little more than dutiful chronologies; far livelier are discussions of their works, which show how the writers changed the view of blacks--and changed America. The lengthy bibliography is excellent, but, unfortunately, there is no documentation of particular quotes. Hazel Rochman  
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Far from a simple survey of a period, this 150+ page text captures the vitality and vivacity of a time when African Americans made some of the greatest strides toward self-definition and self-determination. Moreover, *Harlem Stomp!* is especially useful because it does not pave over the tensions and troubles of the period. While the stories, biographies, and images reflect the glitter and glamour of the age, so too do the photographs, content, and tone shed light on the glaring racial inequalities of the time. Setting the tone for the ways in which the text engages the time period,

Chapter 1: The Smoldering Black Consciousness, 1900-1910, latches on to the intellectual back and forth between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois--in the very first major section of the chapter! My students used the opening pages of the initial chapter as part of an exercise to determine points of comparison and contrast between Washington and Du Bois's ideas about the best course of African American efforts to achieve equality. Artwork by Aaron Douglas that often graced the covers of *The Crisis* provides an aesthetic anchor from the very beginning. The first chapter alone demonstrates the rising African American confidence and acts of self-assertion at the turn of the century. Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, Bessie Smith, Cab Calloway, Augusta Savage, Alain Locke, Ella Fitzgerald, Chick Webb, and countless others all provide stories of passion and pride on each page. What makes this book such a gem is that it does not parade individuals along with little connection to context. Instead, each actor is part of the larger narrative that unfolds. Individual stories in this book provide a starting point for students to create biographies of major figures. (The book was so successful that when I assigned biographies to the class and allowed students to choose the figures they would study, I could invariably hand the book over to any student who expressed initial disinterest in beginning the project. "I don't want to do this, Mr. Smith." Within a few turns of the pages, the initially obstinate student would look up, with figure in mind, inspired by the stories told in the book. Each student was hooked.) As I read *Harlem Stomp!* this past spring, I was stunned while reading about real estate and residential struggles that eventually gave way to Harlem as it was in the 1920s and 1930s. A massive power struggle between residents and real estate owners played out on the book's pages. Indeed, I was reminded just how prominently conflicts over property influence politics of race and class. Similar topics, like the segregated nature of the Cotton Club, are presented faithfully and honestly on the book's pages. In class, we were able to compare and contrast the exclusivity (based on race) of the Cotton Club with the more integrated Savoy Ballroom. What spoke to me, and my students, so clearly was just how much the period of the Harlem Renaissance was characterized by black hope and pride. In 2010, students and teachers alike could use a strong dose of this same hope and pride.

1. "Harlem Stomp" is a beautiful publication with wonderful art, numerous photos, and creative page layouts.
2. It is well researched and tastefully deals with topics generally considered "hands off" in such publications.
3. Mr. Hill's writing is fluent, imitative, and clear.
4. "Harlem Stomp" deserves a place in any library and would be a wonderful gift for any teen or young adult.

Although the book is more for grades 4-7, it works well when differentiating texts in the secondary class. Low-level 10th graders may find this more useful than a text-heavy book, as this one blends photos and texts more. The information is presented well, and is easy to read. The book is great for front-loading when teaching the Harlem Renaissance to Am Lit students, or a novel like Plum Bun.

Vocabulary, poems, art work, newspaper quotes, people quotes, timelines, and great photos! There is sooooooo much info here and it is put together so well. I am leaning heavily on this book as I create a concert with my students about the Harlem Renaissance.

Great for me; I was hoping I could use it with 5th graders, but don't think so.

Good read

Lived up to my expectations

This book captures every element that can be used and applied to teach the Harlem Renaissance. I have had to clip parts here and there, but this book is THEE 1 source for understanding every angle of this time period.

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