Dear Colleagues:

It is with great pleasure that I write to inform you about our National Endowment for the Humanities summer institute for school teachers that will take place from Monday, July 12 to Friday, July 30, 2010 at Washington University in St. Louis. It is entitled “The New Negro Renaissance in America, 1919-1941” and it will offer participants an exciting opportunity to learn about one of the most extraordinary cultural periods in American history. This institute will teach you about the complex urban world that black Americans made between World War I and World War II, during the years of the Great Migration out of the south.

**The New Negro Renaissance Is More than Just the World of Black Entertainment**

Many of you, of course, may be aware of some aspects of the New Negro Renaissance, particularly the more vividly sensationalized or celebrated aspects of it related to rent parties, jazz nightclubs, Broadway shows, and literary salons. Some names associated with the Renaissance, such as poet/playwright Langston Hughes and singer/dancer Josephine Baker are familiar to people even if they have only a casual acquaintance with the era or African American history as a whole. Hughes, indeed, wrote one of the seminal books about the era, *The Big Sea*, the first of his autobiographies, published in 1940, a book that defined the era for many. Yet, as wonderfully written as *The Big Sea* is and as valuable as it is as a record of the Renaissance produced by one of its major writers, it is still a limited, often intentionally guileless, view of a complicated, multi-faceted time.

It can be argued that the era was not one big party, as is the impression that some readers have taken away from Hughes’s book; that, in fact, an intense seriousness of purpose and aspiration marked the time, from Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association to the churches of Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. and Frederick Cullen to the collecting of Arthur Schomburg to the attempts at constructing a useable black historiography by such people as, on the one hand, Carter G. Woodson, and on the other, J. A. Rogers.

It can also be argued that the era did not end precisely with the collapse of Wall Street and the arrival of the Depression, effectively ending white patronage of black arts, in the early 1930s. It must be remembered that one of the biggest entrepreneurial schemes of the 20th century black American history—the re-establishment of the professional Negro National League—occurred in 1933, during the heart of the
Depression. Indeed, the second emergence of Negro Baseball Leagues in the 1930s also reminds us how crucial the black migration to northern and Midwestern cities were to the cultural and business development of African American life. It also reminds us of how persistent the New Negro philosophy—the first Negro League was launched by Rube Foster in 1920, at, what is generally conceded to be, the beginning of the Renaissance—was: that blacks wanted to be independent of white philanthropy.

Hughes captured very well the aspect of the Renaissance that dealt with white patronage, that tried to establish links between black elites and white money, but it would be a mistake to see the Renaissance strictly in this way. As with all complex historical periods with a number of moving parts, the Renaissance was just as much about its opposite, freeing creative and entrepreneurial blacks from white patronage. On the whole, it might be said that this movement was about not only blacks redefining themselves for themselves but also attempting to redefine their confined and compromised relationship of being the wards of well-meaning and often paternalistic whites. When Marcus Garvey launched his Black Star Line investment scheme in 1919, its appeal was largely that it was offering the beginning of economic independence for the race as a whole. The great success of black women entrepreneurs like Madame C. J. Walker and Annie Malone was celebrated for the reason that both demonstrated race independence.

The New Negro Renaissance Was an Art Movement

The New Negro Renaissance was an artistic movement, to be sure, producing fiction, poetry, fine art, music, and dance, including novels by Jean Toomer (Cane 1923), Wallace Thurman (Infants of the Spring 1932, The Blacker the Berry 1929), Countee Cullen (One Way to Heaven 1932), Claude McKay (Home to Harlem 1928, Banjo 1929), George Schuyler (Black No More 1931), Walter White (The Fire in the Flint 1924, Flight 1926), Langston Hughes (Not Without Laughter 1930), Nella Larsen (Passing 1928 and Quicksand 1929), and Jessie Fauset (There is Confusion 1924, Plum Bun 1929), as well as poetry by Cullen (Color 1925, Copper Sun 1927, Ballad of the Brown Girl 1927), Hughes (The Weary Blues 1926, Fine Clothes to the Jew 1927), James Weldon Johnson (God's Trombones 1927), Georgia Douglas Johnson (The Heart of a Woman 1918, Bronze: A Book of Verse 1922, An Autumn Love Cycle 1928), and Sterling Brown (Southern Road 1932).
You will have the opportunity to read and discuss some of this literature with leading scholars during this institute.

There were paintings by Aaron Douglas and sculpture by Augusta Savage and the support program for black artists started by the Harmon Foundation. The Renaissance saw the rise of jazz with some of the most important bands and soloists in the history of that music including Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Coleman Hawkins, Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, King Oliver, Sidney Bechet, and Earl Hines, as well as musical theater by Eubie Blake, Andy Razaf, Noble Sissle, and James P. Johnson (“Shuffle Along” 1921, “Runnin’ Wild” 1923, “Keep Shuffling,” 1927, “Hot Chocolates,” 1929), and the great women singers Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, and Ethel Waters. There were experiments in black theater such as Du Bois’s Krigwa Players (1926-1928) and the Lafayette Players (1914-1932). Actor/singer Paul Robeson emerged as the big African American dramatic star (All God’s Chillun Got Wings 1924, Emperor Jones 1925, Porgy 1928). And this is only a short list of some of the period’s luminaries.

You will have the opportunity to hear the music of the era in recording and also in live performances as a participant of this institute.

**The New Negro Renaissance Was a Political Movement**

The New Negro Renaissance was a fairly ambitious attempt by African Americans and blacks in the Caribbean to refashion, both within America and globally, the position and image of African-descended people in the world. The project of racial uplift collided with modernism in art, the intensification of ethnic European nationalism, and the new political realities of communism (in Russia) and fascism (in Germany, Italy, and Spain). The Renaissance had a wide cast of participants: artists, writers, musicians, businessmen and women, political visionaries and functionaries, public intellectuals, African American presidents of black colleges, black newspapers, religious figures in both mainstream and non-traditional denominations, athletes, and actors. It created the modern and modernist black elites, that is, professional cadres of trained black people in artistic, bureaucratic, commercial, and academic circles. As black people became more modern, they became more professionalized and re-established elites that moved away from color (being light-skinned,
the aristocracy of slavery, although color continued to matter) as a mark of privilege to merit, possessing credentials and having institutional connections, (the Talented Tenth) as a mark of distinction. In short, it was an attempt to establish a national republic of letters and culture, of institutions and political action. The New Negro Movement, as well, created modern black mass movements, religious and secular. Black Nationalism reached a new level of maturation as a political and cultural ideology with international dimensions under Garvey and thinkers like Hubert H. Harrison, and Du Bois.

- As a participant in the institute, you will learn about Pan Africanism, Garvey, Du Bois, and the Talented Tenth.

**How The Institute Will Begin And End**

This institute will begin in 1919, immediately after the First World War, a watershed event in the life of African Americans that sharply defined the New Negro idea and gave rise to a coherent and self-conscious movement. The institute will conclude with two events: the enlistment of Joe Louis in the Army in 1942 after the United States has entered World War II, bringing us full circle as the institute opened with the end of World War I. The second is the 1930s career of Billie Holiday, culminating with the 1938 protest song, “Strange Fruit.” Both events signal the two crowning achievements of the New Negro Renaissance’s complex history: male heroism and artistic protest, both as forms of racial crossover and racial triumph. In short, the institute will define the New Negro Movement as encompassing the interwar years of Black American life, with the Renaissance constituting a specific phase that ended when white patronage was no longer interested in supporting black artistic endeavor. We believe this approach will make the study of this era richer, fuller, and bring out deeper thematic connections between what was happening in the 1920s and what happened in the 1930s. There will be significant figures and events covered here that do not normally get covered in a consideration of the New Negro Renaissance: Father Divine’s Peace Mission Movement, the Negro Baseball Leagues, boxer Joe Louis, fascism and black Americans, the songwriting talents of Fats Waller, Andy Razaf, and Duke Ellington, and the children’s books of Countee Cullen and Arna Bontemps.

**The Five Themes of the Institute**

**First Theme: African Americans and the Formation of Modern Racial Politics**
Session One: Blacks and the End of the First World War

Monday, July 12 morning: World War I made a huge impact on many African Americans, not just those who served in the military but on African American leadership particularly (who hoped that participating in the war would improve the status of blacks at home) and the African American masses, who migrated north because of economic opportunities generated by the war. Here, the institute will examine closely how African Americans at the time assessed their World War I experience, the impact of the military on African American males, and how the war changed expectations. **Instructor: Gerald Early**  
**Required reading:** Two chapters from *Harlem's Hell Fighters: The African-American 369th Infantry in World War I* by Stephen L. Harris and one chapter from *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military* by Bernard C. Nalty

Session Two: The Making of Black Historiography

Monday, July 12 afternoon: An examination of the career of historian Carter G. Woodson, his organizing of the National Association of Negro Life and History in 1915, his creation of Negro History Week in 1926, and a look at his most famous book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, published in 1933. **Instructor: Sowanda Maisha Mustakee**  
**Required reading:** chapters from *Carter G. Woodson: A Life in Black History* by Jacqueline Anne Goggin

Session Three: Domestic War

Tuesday, July 13, morning: Major race riots, usually instigated by whites against blacks, and sometimes taking on the aspects of a pogrom, coupled with lynchings, made life particularly difficult blacks. As blacks moved to northern cities during the war, racial riots became ever more violent, caused by economic rivalry, clashes over living space, and racism. The three riots to be studied in this institute were perhaps among the most significant of their type in American history and clearly affected African American thinking during the Renaissance: the East St. Louis riot of 1917, the Chicago riot of 1919, and the Tulsa riot of 1921. **Instructor: Harper Barnes**  
**Required reading:** chapters from *Never Been a Time: The 1917 Race Riot That Sparked the Civil Rights Movement* by Harper Barnes

Tuesday, July 13, afternoon: Teachers curriculum meeting

Session Four: The Rise of Radicalism
Wednesday, July 14 morning, Thursday, July 15 morning: The coming of communism in Russia, along with the increasing interest in socialism, trade unionism, and Pan Africanism more dramatically changed the character of black leadership during the years of the Renaissance than at any other time in American history. We will study here Garvey and the spread of his ideas in the black Diaspora, the A. Philip Randolph and socialism, and Du Bois and his Pan African conferences.

Wednesday, July 14 afternoon: Continuation of morning session. **Instructors: Sowanda Maisha Mustakee and Gerald Early** Required reading: chapters from *Seeing Red: Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919-1925* by Theodore Kornweibel

**Theme Two: Literature and Culture**

**Session One: The New Negro and Children’s Literature**

Thursday, July 15 afternoon: A consideration of the development of an African American children’s literature during the 1920s and 1930s with a particular emphasis on the NAACP’s children’s magazine The Brownies’ Book (1920-1921) and the children’s books of Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, and Langston Hughes.

**Instructor: Katharine Capshaw Smith** Required reading: chapters from *Children’s Literature of the Harlem Renaissance* by Katharine Capshaw Smith

**Session Two: The Creation of a Race Literature**

Monday, July 19 morning, Tuesday, July 20 morning, Wednesday, July 21 morning: We will examine three major writers of the period who connected both the 1920s and 1930s Nella Larsen, Wallace Thurman, and George Schuyler. **Instructors: Joseph Thompson, Amina Gautier, and Gerald Early** Required reading: *Passing* and *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen, *The Blacker the Berry* by Wallace Thurman, and *Black No More* by George Schuyler

Monday, July 19 afternoon: Teachers curriculum meeting

Tuesday, July 20 afternoon: continuation of morning session

Wednesday, July 21 afternoon: continuation of morning session

**Theme Three: The Age of Black Music**

**Session One: High Culture Meets Black Folklore**
Thursday, July 22 morning: We will look at the 1935 premiere of the Gershwin/DuBose Heyward opera “Porgy and Bess,” and the problems of the creative relationship between blacks and Jews as well as the attempts to transform African American expressive culture to so-called high art. **Instructor: Patrick Burke**

**Required reading:** chapters from *The Life and Times of Porgy and Bess: The Story of an American Classic* by Hollis Alpert

**Session Two: The Black Songwriter**

Thursday, July 22 afternoon: An examination of the popular songs written by such black composers as Duke Ellington, Fats Waller and Andy Razaf, and Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake.

**Instructor: Gerald Early**

**Required reading:** chapters from *Black and Blue: The Life and Lyrics of Andy Razaf* by Barry Singer

**Theme Four: The New Religion**

**Session One: Peace and the Short, Brown God**

Friday, July 23 morning: The morning session will look at Father Divine’s Peace Mission Movement which focused on interracialism, cooperative economics, and celibacy.

**Instructor: Gerald Early**

**Required reading:** *God, Harlem, USA: The Father Divine Story* by Jill Watts

**Theme Five: African Americans and Popular Culture**

**Session One: Black Baseball**

Monday, July 26 morning: We will look at the formation of the Negro baseball leagues in the 1920s and the 1930s

Monday, July 26 afternoon: An exploration of the beauty empires of Madame C. J. Walker and Annie Malone. The latter will be of particular importance as her headquarters, for a significant time, was in St. Louis and remnants of it remain for the participants to inspect.

**Instructors: Donald Spivey**

**Required reading:** chapters from *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madame C. J. Walker* by A’Leilia Bundles and *Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball* by Lawrence Hogan

**Session Two: The Brown Bomber**
Tuesday, July 27 morning and afternoon: The institute will offer two sessions on the involvement of black Americans in the Spanish Civil War, their responses to the invasion of Ethiopia by fascist Italy, Jesse Owens and the Nazi Olympics of 1936, and the Joe Louis-Max Schmeling fight of 1938. Also, there will be an in-depth at the career of Joe Louis ending in 1942, when he enlisted in the Army for the war.

Instructors: Gerald Early
Required reading: chapters from *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War 1935-1941* by William R. Scott and *Beyond Glory: Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling and a World on the Brink* by David Margolick

**Session Three: Paul Robeson, Movie Star**

Wednesday, July 28 morning: A consideration of the career of the great singer, actor, college athlete, and activist including clips from his 1930s films.

Wednesday, July 28 afternoon: Teachers Curriculum Meeting

Instructor: Gerald Early
Required reading: chapters from *Paul Robeson: The Years of Promise and Achievement* by Sheila Tully Boyle and Andrew Buni

**Session Four: Billie Holiday’s Strange Fruit**

Thursday, July 29: An overview of the early career of Billie Holiday, including her relationship with Lester Young, a consideration of her musical influences, and, most importantly, the development of her repertoire including the 1938 protest song, “Strange Fruit.”

Instructor: Robert G. O’Meally
Required reading: chapters from *Strange Fruit: The Biography of a Song* by David Margolick

The New Negro Through Live Music Performance

Friday afternoons and evenings, July 10, July 17: The institute will offer two sessions of live performances of the best known songs of African American composers or songs most associated with important African American performers during the 1920s and 1930s, particularly Duke Ellington, Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday, Fats Waller, Fletcher Henderson, Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Clarence Williams, and others.

Instructors: Gene Dobbs Bradford and various live performers
Friday, July 30: Wrap-Up and Evaluation

Project Faculty and Staff (Selected)

Gerald Early is the Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters in the English Department at Washington University where he serves as director of the Center for the Humanities. He has written extensively on jazz, sports, and the Harlem Renaissance, including editing the 1989 volume, “My Soul's High Song” The Collected Works of Countee Cullen, Voice of the Harlem Renaissance. He has served twice before as a co-project director for a Harlem Renaissance summer institute for schoolteachers, in 1993 and 1995, in collaboration with the Metropolitan St. Louis Alliance of Black School Educators and the National Alliance of Black School Educators. Both were funded by the NEH.

Linda Riekes has years of experience in the St. Louis public schools in a variety of jobs. She is a highly respected and energetic administrator. She has organized NEH summer institutes in the past, including one on the Harlem Renaissance with the National Alliance of Black School Educators. She has assisted Gerald Early in the summer institute on African Americans in the Middle West.

Stephen Missey is St. Louis High School English teacher. He has served as Master Teacher for NEH summer Institute, 2007 and Faculty Humanities Workshop, 2008 at Washington University in St. Louis.

Sowande’ M. Mustakeem is Andrew Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow of History at Washington University in St. Louis. Her dissertation title is “‘Make Haste & Let Me See You with a Cargo of Negroes’: Gender, Health, and Violence in the Eighteenth Century Middle Passage.”

Harper Barnes is the author of Never Been a Time: the 1917 Race Riot that Sparked the Civil Rights Movement.” It is a book of remembering East St. Louis riot in the summer of 1917.

Katharine Capshaw Smith is Associate Professor of English at University of Connecticut. She is the author of Children’s Literature of the Harlem Renaissance, winner of 2006 Children’s Literature Association Book Award.
Joseph Thompson is Assistant Professor of English and African American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis. He is working on a book about Harlem Renaissance writer Arna Bontemps. He teaches courses on the Harlem Renaissance.


Patrick Burke is Assistant Professor of Music at Washington University in St. Louis. He is the author of Come In and Hear the Truth: Jazz and Race on 52nd Street, 2008.

Donald Spivey is Professor of History at the University of Miami. He is the author of Fire From the Soul: A History of the African-American Struggle, 2003. He is currently completing work on the first scholarly biography of Negro League great, Leroy “Satchel” Paige.


Gene Dobbs Bradford is the executive director of Jazz at the Bistro, a St. Louis-based non-for-profit jazz program that includes the operation of a jazz night club that books nationally known jazz acts. From 1999 to the present, he is credited with building the organization’s contributed and earned income from $375,000 to $650,000. An accomplished musician himself, Mr. Bradford holds a degree in Double Bass performance for the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY.

Location

The 2010 NEH Summer Institute, The New Negro Renaissance, 1919-1941, will take place at Washington University in Saint Louis from July 12 to July 30, 2010. Washington University, a prestigious research institution, is located in an unincorporated suburb just outside the city of Saint Louis. Washington University, ranked among the top dozen universities in America by US News and World Report, offers a full range of research facilities for participants including several campus libraries (including a music library),
internet access, a large campus bookstore, up-to-date, air conditioned classrooms with the latest technological equipment, and several large parking lots. There is a fee for purchasing a campus parking permit. NEH Summer Institute participants will be granted privileges to use the Washington University’s libraries and computer facilities.

Participants will be housed in dormitories located on the campus of Washington University. The dorm cost $31.00 per day for single occupancy and $27.00 for double occupancy. In the dorms are four-person suites and each suite has a private bathroom and a common room. All suite common rooms are furnished with couch, chair, and end table. All bedrooms are furnished with a bed, desk, chair, dresser, and bookshelves. All the dorms are air conditioned.

The City of Saint Louis offers many attractions including a first-rate art museum, one of the finest zoos in the world, a science center, a history museum, a botanical garden, and many other cultural institutions. One can see Major League baseball games at downtown Busch Stadium and there are many fine restaurants, as well as number of shopping malls in both the city and the surrounding suburbs. Participants will have the opportunity to visit the Scott Joplin House, the Black History Wax Museum, and the Ville, the historic black neighborhood of Saint Louis where Annie Malone, the famous hair products entrepreneur, started Poro College, where Sumner High School, the first high school west of the Mississippi for blacks was established, where such noted black celebrities as Chuck Berry and Dick Gregory grew up.

Application Process

The institute wishes to bring together elementary, junior, high school teachers, and current full-time graduate students who intend to pursue careers in K-12 teaching from various disciplines, especially English, History, Social Studies, Art, and Music. It will also accept applications from qualified non-teachers such as school librarians, media specialists, and museum staff.

How to Apply
**The application cover sheet**

The application cover sheet must be filled out online at this address:

<http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/>

Please fill it out online as directed by the prompts. **When you are finished, be sure to click the “submit” button.** Print out the cover sheet and add it to your application package. A full application consists of the items listed above, as sent to the project director.

A completed application consists of three copies of the following **collated** items:

- the completed application cover sheet,
- a résumé, or brief biography, and
- an application essay as outlined below.

In addition, it must include two letters of recommendation as described below.

The project director’s address is:

Gerald Early, Director  
The Center for the Humanities  
Washington University in Saint Louis  
Campus Box 1071  
One Brookings Drive  
Saint Louis, MO 63130

Or you can make an application request by calling Barbara Liebmann or Jian Leng at 314-935-5576 between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. Any questions about the application procedure can be directed to Barbara Liebmann or Jian Leng.

**The deadline for completed applications is March 2, 2010. Successful applicants will be notified on April 1, 2010, and acceptance deadline is April 10, 2010**

Participants will receive a stipend of $2,700.00. These stipends are intended to cover travel expenses to and from Saint Louis, books and other research expenses, and living expenses for the duration of institute. Participants who do not, for whatever reason, complete the full tenure of the project must refund a pro-rated
portion of the stipend. Stipends will be paid twice during the running of the institute: half on the first day of the institute and half during the last week.

Your essay for admission to the institute should show how the content and experience of the institute will relate to your professional assignments in the following year, and how they will integrate learning at the institute into their jobs. Your application should explain how your school will support your summer training, and how the proposed curriculum enhancement will be compatible with your school’s objectives. You will also commit to conducting at least two presentations regarding the institute at in-service programs or professional conferences, to completing a survey on the institute, to administering a survey to their students on the New Negro Renaissance in the curriculum, and to staying in communication with other members of the institute by E-mail for one year. The selected applicants should indicate they clearly understand and desire to explore the cultural, political, and social dimensions of the New Negro Renaissance and that they are ready to translate those lessons to the classroom.

Participants will receive in-serve credit for participating in the institute.

We hope that you you’ll join us this summer as we intensively explore the heroic struggle of African Americans to achieve greatness in art, self-determination in politics, equality in social relations when it left the rural, southern United States and headed for points north and west. The New Negro Renaissance is one of the great narratives of American life.

Sincerely Yours,

Gerald Early, Director
The Center for the Humanities
Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters
Washington University in St. Louis
St. Louis, MO 63130-4899
Phone: (314) 935-5576
Email: cenhum@artsci.wustl.edu
http://cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu