

1902

Birth of Langston Hughes



James Mercer Langston Hughes is born on February 1 in Joplin, MO, to Carrie Langston Hughes and James Nathaniel Hughes.

1915

Early Education



"Dreams"
Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Hughes moves to Lincoln, IL. He is elected eighth grade “class poet.”

I was a victim of a stereotype. There were only two of us Negro kids in the whole class and our English teacher was always stressing the importance of rhythm in poetry. Well, everyone knows, except us, that all Negroes have rhythm, so they elected me as class poet.

1920-23

Studies and Travels



Hughes graduates from high school and moves to Mexico to teach English for a year before enrolling in Columbia University for two semesters. He then works as a steward on a freighter and travels to Africa and Europe. Upon his return he works as a busboy but continues writing and publishes two landmark works: his first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, and the essay “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain.”

1929

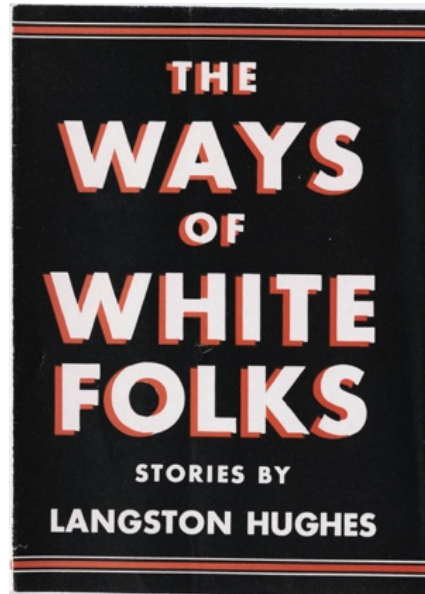
More education and travel



Hughes finishes college at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He then travels to Haiti and publishes his first novel, *Not Without Laughter*, and travels in the Soviet Union for nearly a year.

1934

Career Success



Hughes heads the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, the primary African American organization affiliated with the Community Party, and publishes his first book of short stories.

1936-42



Columbia University

Hughes serves as a newspaper correspondent for the Spanish Civil War and publishes *The Big Sea*, his autobiography up to age 28. He becomes a columnist for the African American weekly *Chicago Defender* and publishes the poetry collection *Shakespeare in Harlem*.

1953

HUAC Testimony



Mr. Cohn. Now, Mr. Hughes, would you tell this committee frankly as to whether or not there was ever a period of time in your life when you believed in the Soviet form of government?

Mr. Hughes. There was such a period.

1967

LANGSTON HUGHES, WRITER, 65, DEAD

Chronicled Negro Life in
Poems, Plays and Novels

Langston Hughes, the noted writer of novels, stories, poems and plays about Negro life, died last night in Polyclinic Hospital at the age of 65.

Mr. Hughes was sometimes characterized as the "O. Henry of Harlem." He was an extremely versatile and productive author who was particularly well known for his folksy humor.

Hughes dies on May 22 in New York City.