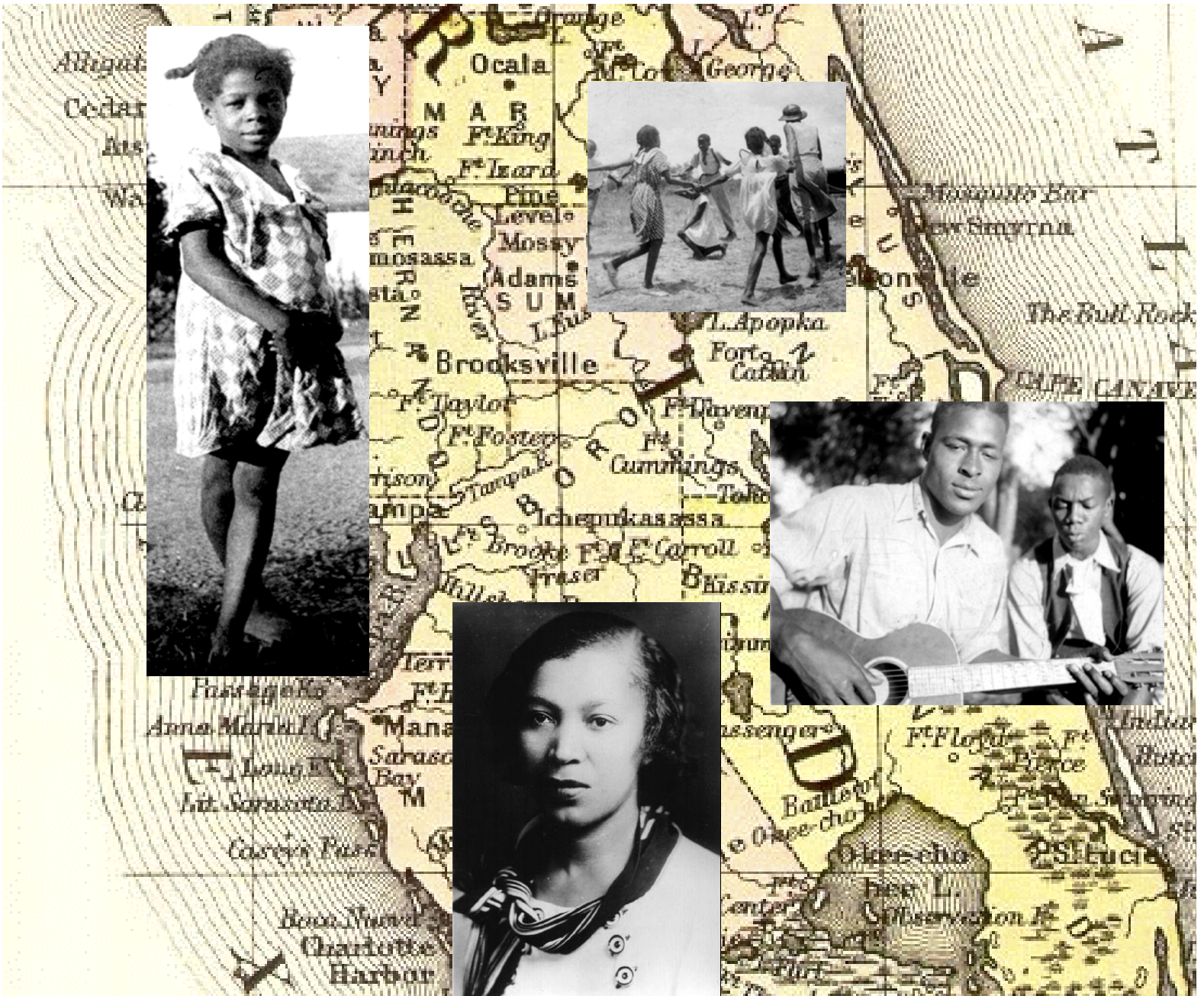


Library of Congress LIVE and The American Theater Company *present:*



# Zora!

May 4, 2004

## A Learning Guide for Teachers:

This handout is designed to help you and your students enjoy, prepare for, and discuss *Zora*. Included inside are background information, an introduction to our co-sponsors, *Library of Congress LIVE* and *The American Place Theater*, resources from the Library of Congress, and student activities.

## About Our Co-Sponsors:

*The Library of Congress* is the largest library in the world, with more than 120 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. Founded in 1800, and the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation, it is the research arm of the United States Congress and is recognized as the national library of the United States.

*Library of Congress Live* is a series of live programs that combine the vast historical treasures from the Library's collections with music, dance and dialogue. These programs provide an accessible, engaging view into history and cultures from around the world through the dynamic interplay of artistic performance and Library of Congress collections. Be sure to visit the Library's online resources at:

[www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)

*The American Place Theatre* (APT) is committed to producing high quality new work by diverse American writers and to pursuing pluralism and diversity in all its endeavors. In recent years, APT created, activated, and expanded the innovative Arts Education Programs: *Literature to Life™*, a performance based literacy program that presents professionally staged verbatim adaptations of significant American literary works; *Urban Writes*, twelve-week drama and play writing residencies in city high schools; and *Teacher's Place*, a series of workshops to learn strategies for using dramatic techniques in the classroom. Learn more at:

[www.americanplacetheatre.org](http://www.americanplacetheatre.org)

## Upcoming Performance at the Library of Congress:

**May 17, 2004**

### ***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education Decision***

Learn more about this historic decision by visiting the Library of Congress' exhibit, "Brown v. Board of Education," in the Jefferson Building. Call Susan Mordan (202) 707-9203 to find out about Teacher Institutes, or to arrange school tours.

**May 25, 2004**

**10 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

### **Coolidge Auditorium, Jefferson Building *Sing Freedom: LC Chorale hosts DCPS Choir concert***

The Library of Congress Chorale will host and join selected D.C. Public School choirs in singing songs that inspire freedom.

For more information call: (202) 707-1071

**June 3, 2004**

**10 a.m.**

### **Coolidge Auditorium, Jefferson Building *Children of Struggle***

An original musical theater piece about Ruby Bridges and other courageous children who played important roles in the Civil Rights Movement.

For more information call: (202) 707-3303



**Actress Kim Brockington** performs in New York theaters and regional theaters throughout the country. She has guest starred on *Law and Order* and *Third Watch*. She had performed in *The Guiding Light*, and as the character Lila Rousseau in the soap opera *All My Children*. She is currently working on a starring role in a PBS documentary of *Zora Neale Hurston*. Ms. Brockington is a graduate of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

This performance is a "one-woman show," meaning Ms. Brockington portrays all four characters in this performance: Zora Neale Hurston, Hurston's husband Herbert Sheen, patron Mrs. Rufus Osgood Mason III, and author Richard Wright. Pay attention to the ways Ms. Brockington "becomes" each of the characters she portrays through minor costume changes, facial expression, voice and mannerisms.

## Zora Program Goals:

Students will experience a first-person theatrical depiction of the life and career of Zora Neale Hurston. Students will learn about the study of folklife and Hurston's role in documenting and preserving African American culture.

### Education Standards:

LANGUAGE ARTS (National Council of Teachers of English)

Skill: Use listening and observation skills to gain an understanding.

Standard 9 - Develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

GEOGRAPHY (National Geographic)

Standard 4 - Places and Regions

- The physical and human characteristics of places
- People create regions to interpret Earth's complexity
- How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

HISTORY (National Center for History in the Schools)

Standard 2 - Historical Comprehension

Era 7 - The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930)

- The student understands the limitations of Progressivism and the alternatives offered by various groups.

THEATER (Education World: National Standards: Fine Arts: Theater)

Standard T.5-8.6 - Comparing and connecting art forms by describing the theater, dramatic media, and other art forms:

- Students describe and compare presentation of character, environment, and actions in theater.
- Students describe and compare the function and interaction of performing artists and audience members in theater.

**Zora Neale Hurston, (1891 -1960)**, was born just outside Eatonville, Florida, the first incorporated black town in America. She became well-known during the Harlem Renaissance as a play write and short story author. She also helped to found, with Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman, a magazine for young writers called *Fire!* Her passion was the study of her own and other cultures through the collection and documentation of folklore. (Pictured at right in 1937, Hurston demonstrates drumming on a Haitian hountar, or mama drum.) She came north to complete her education, first at Morgan Academy (now Morgan State University) in Baltimore, and then Howard University in Washington. Hurston published several stories, including *Spunk*, and a play, *Color Struck*, before she decided to pursue her interest in studying culture. She won a scholarship to study anthropology under noted scholars Franz Boas and Carter G. Woodson at Barnard College, where she also met and undertook folklife documentation trips with anthropologist Margaret Mead. Hurston made several field trips to her native Florida and the Carribean to document southern African American folk traditions in the 1920s, and with Alan Lomax in 1935 and 1939. Much of the documentation Hurston collected as a folklorist has been collected by the Library of Congress' and is available in collections in the American Folklife Center, the Motion Picture, Broadcast and Recorded Sound Reading Room, Prints and Photos Division, and Manuscript Division. In addition to her prolific writing in the 1940s and 1950s, she worked as a drama instructor, librarian and correspondent for the Pittsburgh Courier. In her later years, Hurston moved back to Florida.



## Learn More about Folklife

All people define themselves as part of many different kinds of groups: 7<sup>th</sup>-graders, Redskins fans, team members, kids from Southeast, kids from Northeast. Folklife is the set of cultural practices or rituals, crafts, music, sayings and stories that people use to create a group identity. You may have noticed cultural practices among a group of students in your school who act a certain way, or wear certain clothes that let others know who they are. Or maybe you have relatives that live in a different part of the country. You may notice they have sayings or talk differently than you do.

One of the cultural practices Zora Neale Hurston studied and documented was children's songs and games. The young girl on the cover of this learning guide was the leader of a group of children Hurston photographed and recorded. The photo of the children dancing in a circle includes Hurston (in the hat). You can hear Hurston singing some of the songs she found on her field trips by searching on the **American Memory** website for "Zora Neale Hurston." at [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov).

### Activities:

#### ★ Have students document their own folk culture.

Write down or record word games, songs, or sayings. Find an "informant," or person willing to be interviewed. (Be sure to get their permission before recording anything.) Have students create "field notes" that record the date and time of the recording, the name of the informant (or informants), and a brief description of what is being recorded. Students should be sure to ask how the informant learned the song, game or saying.

Lessons on **The Learning Page** ([www.loc.gov/learn/](http://www.loc.gov/learn/)) provide step-by-step guidelines, handouts, and **American Memory** resources:

*Learning About Immigration Through Oral History*, <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/97/oh1/ammem.html>

*Living History Project*, <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/97/florida/home.html>

*Using Oral History*, <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/oralhist/ohhome.html>

#### ★ Tell a story.

Have students collect a good story, either by asking a family member, or by researching folktales in the library. Discuss with students what makes a good story (Does it hold your attention? Is it funny? Scary?). Have students practice story telling techniques such as voice inflection, hand and face movements, etc. in small groups before telling the story to the whole class.

### Explore the Harlem Renaissance:

During the 1920s African American art and literature gained recognition as a significant component of world culture. Numerous people from the American South and the Caribbean moved to Harlem in New York City, where the blending of cultures helped foster a flowering of the arts. Such a prodigious amount of poetry, novels, literary writing, music, and art was produced during the era between World War I and World War II, that the period is now known as the Harlem Renaissance.

#### ★ Have students read poems of the Harlem Renaissance.

Langston Hughes was one of the foremost and versatile writers of this talented group. Check Today in History for a biography and resources in American Memory at:

[www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/feb01.html#hughes](http://www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/feb01.html#hughes)

Listen to a description of Langston Hughes and his poetry by a Library of Congress staff specialist. Check the transcription for a print version of Hughes' "I, Too, Sing America," and "The Weary Blues." See *Journeys and Crossings* at: [www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/hughes.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/hughes.html)

## Read More About It!

### BOOKS BY ZORA NEALE HURSTON

**Dust Tracks on a Road.** Thorndike, Me.: G.K. Hall, 1997.

**Jonah's Gourd Vine: A Novel.** Thorndike, Me.: G.K. Hall, 1998.

**Moses, Man of the Mountain.** New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.

**Mules and Men.** New York: Perennial Library, 1990.

**Seraph on the Suwanee: A Novel.** New York: HarperPerennial, 1991.

**Their Eyes Were Watching God.** New York: Perennial Library, 1990.

**Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica.** New York: Perennial Library, 1990.

### FOR TEACHERS

Valerie Boyd, **Wrapped in Rainbows: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston.** New York: Scribner, 2003.

Lucy Anne Hurston, **Speak, So You Can Speak Again: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston.** New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Carla Kaplan, **Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters.** New York: Doubleday, 2002.

Mary E. Lyons, **Sorrow's Kitchen: The Life and Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston.** New York: Collier Books, 1993.

### FOR STUDENTS

#### Non-Fiction

Philip S. Bryant, **Zora Neale Hurston.** Chicago: Raintree, 2003. Grades 4-6.

Laban Carrick Hill, **Harlem Stomp! A Cultural History of the Harlem Renaissance.** Boston: Little, Brown, 2004. Young adult.

Geoffrey Jacques, **Free Within Ourselves: The Harlem Renaissance.** New York: F. Watts, 1996. Grades 8 and up.

Pat McKissack, **Zora Neale Hurston, Writer and Storyteller.** Berkeley Heights, N.J.: Enslow, 2002. Grades 1-4.

William Miller, **Zora Hurston and the Chinaberry Tree.** New York: Lee & Low Books, 1994. Recounts a story from Hurston's childhood. Grades K-4.

A.P. Porter, **Jump at de Sun: The Story of Zora Neale Hurston.** Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books, 1992. Describes the life and times of Hurston. Grades 4-6.

Della Yannuzzi, **Zora Neale Hurston: Southern Storyteller.** Springfield, N.J.: Enslow Publishers, 1996. Grades 6 and up.

Janelle Yates, **Zora Neale Hurston: A Storyteller's Life (Unsung Americans Series).** Staten Island, N.Y.: Ward Hill Press, 1991. Young adult.

#### Fiction

Pamela Dell, **Shaky Bones: A Story of the Harlem Renaissance (Scrapbooks of America series).** Excelsior, Minn.: Traditions Books, 2004. A twelve-year-old poet enters Young Poets Competition in 1926 Harlem. Grades 4-8.

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS WEB SITE

**American Life Histories; Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940,**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>

Life histories collected in 24 states that describe the informant's family education, income, occupation, political views, religion and mores, medical needs, diet and miscellaneous observations

**Florida Folklife from the WPA Collections, 1937-1942;**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/flwpahtml/flwpa.html>

Features folksongs and folktales in many languages, including blues and work songs from menhaden fishing boats, railroad gangs, and turpentine camps; children's songs, dance music, and religious music of many cultures; and interviews, also known as "life histories." Search on *Zora Neale Hurston* to find an essay on Florida folklife, plus notes and recordings.

**Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1940,**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

First-person accounts of slavery and photographs of ex-slaves collected in the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers Project

**Southern Mosaic: The John and Ruby Lomax 1939 Southern States Recording Trip,**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/lohtml/lohome.html>

Over 700 sound recordings that represent a broad spectrum of traditional musical styles, including ballads, blues, children's songs, cowboy songs, fiddle tunes, field hollers, lullabies, play-party songs, religious dramas, spirituals, and work songs.

**Folklife and Fieldwork: A Layman's Introduction to Field Techniques,**

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/>

Prepared by the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, this online booklet contains helpful checklists, tips, and forms needed to conduct oral history interviews.

**HARLEM RENAISSANCE**

**Creative Americans; Portraits by Carl Van Vechten, 1932-1964**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vvhtml/vvhome.html>

Includes portraits of many of Hurston's contemporaries in the Harlem Renaissance, such as Countee Cullen, Arna Bontemps, author of *Drums at Dusk*, and Langston Hughes.

**The Harlem Renaissance and the Flowering of Creativity**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart7b.html>

Part of the online exhibition *The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship* that describes other creative artists and writers of the period.

**African and American History and Culture**

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mchtml/afrhm.html>

Part of American Memory Words and Deeds collection that contains Hughes' "Ballad of Booker T."

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Photos of cultural informants and Hurston playing the mama drum, are part of the collections of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Kim Brockington, courtesy American Place Theater

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