

## Bibliography of African-American Chicago Writers: Overview

Chicago has been home and inspiration to an amazing array of African-American authors, including:

- **Gwendolyn Brooks**, poet. In 1950 she became the first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for poetry; in 1968 she became Illinois poet laureate. Her works include *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945) and *We Real Cool* (1966).
- **St. Clair Drake** and **Horace Cayton**, sociologists. Their classic study of the South Side, *Black Metropolis* (1945), is one of the most comprehensive studies of an African American urban enclave ever written.
- **Lorraine Hansberry**, playwright. She grew up in Chicago. Hansberry is best known as the author of *Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the first drama by an African-American woman produced on Broadway. Her portrait of a single family portrays with remarkable subtlety a complex range of attitudes within the black community.
- **Willard Motley**, novelist. As a young man, visiting his mother in New York, he told her of his aspiration to go to Europe and become an author. She told him to return to Chicago: he could find material for his stories “in the city by the lake as well as Paris.” He is the author of *Knock on Any Door* (1947) and *We Fished All Night* (1951), and a contributor to the *Chicago Defender*.
- **Margaret Walker**, a poet and novelist. Her works bridged the “Chicago Renaissance” of the 1930s and 40s to the black arts movement of the 1960s. One of her best-known works is the volume *For My People* (1942).
- **Theodore Ward**, playwright. His best known work is the Federal Theater Project drama *Big White Fog* (1938), about Marcus Garvey's ill-fated back-to-Africa movement.
- **Richard Wright**, novelist. He was among the first authors to protest the treatment of blacks by whites. His renowned novel *Native Son* (1940), set in Chicago, describes what happens after a poor, black youth accidentally kills a white girl.

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## Chicago Humanities Festival Bibliography of African-American Chicago Writers

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