



The Negro in Illinois: The WPA Papers (The New Black Studies Series)

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A major document of African American participation in the struggles of the Depression, *The Negro in Illinois* was produced by a special division of the Illinois Writers' Project, one of President Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration programs. Headed by Harlem Renaissance poet Arna Bontemps and white proletarian writer Jack Conroy, *The Negro in Illinois* employed major black writers living in Chicago during the 1930s, including Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, Katherine Dunham, Fenton Johnson, Frank Yerby, and Richard Durham. The authors chronicled the African American experience in Illinois from the beginnings of slavery to Lincoln's emancipation and the Great Migration, with individual chapters discussing various aspects of public and domestic life, recreation, politics, religion, literature, and performing arts. After the project was canceled in 1942, most of the writings went unpublished for more than half a century--until now. Editor Brian Dolinar provides an informative introduction and epilogue which explain the origins of the project and place it in the context of the Black Chicago Renaissance.

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