A History and Analysis of the WPA Exhibit of Black Art at the Fort Huachuca Mountain View Officers’ Club, 1943–1946

Kayley R. Schacht, Deidre C. Gonçalves, Aaron R. Schmidt, and Adam D. Smith

June 2023

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A History and Analysis of the WPA Exhibit of Black Art at the Fort Huachuca Mountain View Officers’ Club, 1943–1946

Kayley R. Schacht, Deidre C. Gonçalves, Aaron R. Schmidt, and Adam D. Smith

US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC)
Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL)
2902 Newmark Drive
Champaign, IL 61824

Final Technical Report

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Directorate of Public Works
US Army Garrison
3040 Butler Road, Building 22526
Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613

Under Project 473343, MIPR 11746711, “Huachuca African American WWII Experience Exhibit Plan.”
Abstract

The 1943 art exhibition at the Mountain View Officers’ Club (MVOC), Fort Huachuca, Arizona should be considered one of the most significant events in the intersection of American art, military history, and segregation. Organizers of the event, entitled *Exhibition of the Work of 37 Negro Artists*, anticipated it would boost soldiers’ morale because Fort Huachuca was a predominately Black duty station during WWII. This report provides a brief history of Black art in the early 20th century, biographies of the artists showcased, and provides information (where known) about repositories that have originals or reproductions of the art today.

The following is recommended: the General Services Administration (GSA) investigate the ownership of the pieces described in this report and if they are found to have been created under one of the New Deal art programs to add them to their inventory, further investigation be performed on the provenance and ownership of Lew Davis’s *The Negro in America’s Wars* mural, for the rehabilitation of the MVOC that the consulting parties agree upon the scope of the reproduction of the art, and request archival full reproductions of the pieces of art found in the collection of the Howard University Gallery of Art.
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The work was performed by the Training Lands and Heritage Branch of the Operational Science and Engineering Division of the Engineer Research and Development Center, Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (ERDC–CERL). At the time of publication, Ms. Angela Rhodes was branch chief, Dr. George Calfas was division chief, and Mr. Jim Allen was the technical director for Environmental Quality and Installations. The deputy director of ERDC-CERL was Ms. Michelle Hanson, and the director was Dr. Andrew Nelson.

COL Christian Patterson was commander of ERDC, and Dr. David W. Pittman was the director.
1 Introduction

As of Fiscal Year 2023, plans are underway to rehabilitate the former Mountain View Officers’ Club (MVOC) for military reuse at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Part of the anticipated updates include restoring the MVOC’s interior for both military use and exhibit space and placing reproductions of art that were once displayed there during WWII. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, from their African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, granted The Dunbar Coalition, based in Tucson, Arizona, funding for MVOC exhibit research which in turn gifted those funds to the Army in 2021 where it was then transferred to the US Army Engineer Research Development Center’s Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (ERDC-CERL). This technical report focuses on the history of the 1943 art exhibit, with a special emphasis on the artists who participated in it and recommendations for the process in having the art replicated for display in the MVOC.

During WWII, Fort Huachuca was the largest training facility for Black soldiers in the United States, and the MVOC was the club for the post’s Black officers.1 In 1943, a permanent exhibit was set up inside the MVOC featuring 86 pieces of art created primarily by Black artists from around the country.2 The exhibit, entitled Exhibition of the Work of 37 Negro Artists, was significant for assembling the works of some of the Work Projects Administration’s (WPA) most prominent Black artists into one venue. In addition, the exhibit represented an important example of the WPA promoting a Black art event outside the usual urban, cosmopolitan context.3 The exhibit owed much of its success to Lew Davis, an Arizona WPA art director and Army sergeant who made important contributions to Fort Huachuca through his mural art and screen printing workshop.


2 Although the event was advertised as featuring 37 artists, only 36 are enumerated in the dedication pamphlet. Fort Huachuca Historical Museum. 1943. “Exhibition of the Work of 37 Negro Artists, Officers Mountain View Club, Fort Huachuca, Arizona,” Exhibition Pamphlet, May 16, 1943.

In this report, the terms “Black” and “White” are capitalized when used in a racial, ethnic, or cultural sense. Therefore, these terms are capitalized when used as a modifier in instances such as “Black Americans,” “White artist,” or “Black history.” This decision is in accord with a recent Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) guideline, which ERDC-CERL utilizes for its technical reports, that recommends capitalizing both terms for editorial consistency.4

1.1 Background

Fort Huachuca is located on the eastern slope of the Huachuca Mountains north and east of Sierra Vista, Arizona (Figure 1). The historic heart of the Cantonment for the fort is the Fort Huachuca Historic District (commonly called the Old Post), which overlooks the San Pedro River valley. The Army established Camp Huachuca in 1877; it did not become a permanent Army post until 1882. Most of the buildings within the Old Post area date to the late 1880s. Units within the Ninth Cavalry and the 24th Infantry, both Black divisions, were intermittently stationed in the Old Post between 1892 and 1912. Both divisions would be absorbed into larger Black units during WWII.5 The post expanded to accommodate more troops in the 1910s, prior to WWI. From 1913 to 1931, the Tenth Cavalry Black “Buffalo Soldiers” were stationed at Fort Huachuca. The Army changed the post from a cavalry to an infantry orientation in 1931, and the Black 25th Infantry Regiment took the place of the Tenth Cavalry in 1933.

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In 1941 and 1942, the historic international border outpost underwent a massive development program designed to house and support the requirements of a full strength combat division. A full-size city was constructed in that time, complete with housing, logistical, utility, administration, education, recreation, and religious facilities.6 In 1942, the 25th Infantry was incorporated into the 93rd Infantry Division. Fort Huachuca was home to the 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions, from 1942 to 1945.7 The 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions were both composed of Black troops, making Fort Huachuca the largest training facility for Black soldiers during WWII.

The MVOC at Fort Huachuca has been utilized for many different functions since its construction in 1942. It was first used as an officers’ club for the 93rd and then the 92nd Divisions’ Black officers. Part of the installation’s WWII cantonment, the MVOC provided an off duty social outlet for the member officers. Primarily a facility for dining and parties, the club also hosted organized entertainment activities and cultural events.8

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In 1943, Colonel Edwin N. Hardy, Post Commander of Fort Huachuca, invited celebrated Arizona artist Lew Davis to paint two murals for the Lakeside Officers’ Club, the installation’s White officers’ club, a social and event venue for the post’s White officers. Struck by the low morale he noticed among the Black troops during his visit, Davis began using art as a tool to empower the Black soldiers stationed at Fort Huachuca. To accomplish this goal, he set up a silkscreen studio to create posters featuring Black soldiers and organized a workshop to teach interested parties about mural painting. In addition to the silkscreen poster studio and mural painting workshop, Davis was also instrumental in arranging the *Exhibition of the Works of 37 Negro Artists* in May 1943. Davis was a private citizen during much of his work at Fort Huachuca, only being inducted into the Army and promoted to sergeant in early 1944. It is not known who exactly conceived the idea for an art exhibit at the MVOC; however, because Davis had a record of promoting art to boost morale, he may have initiated the exhibit or invested in its early stages. The exhibit showcased works from prominent Black artists from across the country, along with a handful of White artists whose works reflected the Black experience in America. After its dedication on 16 May 1943, the exhibit toured the two service clubs at Fort Huachuca before being permanently arranged in the MVOC. The exhibit remained there until around 1946, when the art was redistributed. Based on correspondence found at the National Archives and Records Administration—College Park, Maryland (NARA—College Park), the works were most likely bestowed to Howard University at that time.

### 1.2 Objective

This report is one of two deliverables for Fort Huachuca’s *African American WWII Experience Exhibit Plan–FH 2022-02*. As part of *Exhibit*
Plan–FH 2022-02, this document is Report A, and a second document, Report B, provides recommendations for interpretive exhibit plans within the MVOC and the surrounding landscape.

The purpose of this document—Report A—is to contextualize the 1943 exhibit and its participants. The event was not only significant to the installation, but for Black art of the modern era. This report provides a brief history of early 20th century Black art and the government-sponsored programs that empowered it, an overview of the exhibit dedication, and brief bibliographies of the artists whose work was selected for the show. Additionally, an appendix itemizes the 86 works of art that were on display and provides information (where known) about repositories that have originals or reproductions of the art today.

Records from NARA–College Park suggest that the entire collection from the 1943 exhibition went to Howard University in 1946; however, the status of some of the pieces is unknown. Most of the collection falls under two medium groupings: Paintings or Prints and Drawings. Because artists who created prints made several copies of their work, many copies ended up in collections outside of Howard. In the appendix table (Appendix A), only one repository is listed per work in the Prints and Drawings category; however, pieces of this medium are often found in multiple repositories. Paintings, on the other hand, are usually singular works, so a piece in this medium will not be found in multiple collections. Paintings that are not cataloged with Howard may be in private collections.

Researchers located 56 of the 86 pieces shown at the exhibition. At minimum, 23 of the works are in Howard University’s collections, and at least 32 pieces are now housed in other repositories. One piece is part of a private collection and the location of the remaining 30 pieces is unknown. Details regarding the locations of the art can be found in Appendix A.

1.3  Approach

An early phase of the project involved reviewing primary sources related to the art. These sources came from the Fort Huachuca Historical Museum, NARA–College Park, and the Main Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. Sources also came from a variety of online research tools, such as census records, draft cards, and other public records from Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org, and newspaper articles from

The ERDC–CERL research team included Kayley R. Schacht (Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education Intern), Bachelor of Arts in History and Pre-Health Studies; Deidre C. Gonçalves (Intern, pursuing Bachelor of Arts in Art History); Aaron R. Schmidt, Master of Arts in Public History, with two years of experience in history; and Adam D. Smith, Master of Architecture, who meets the Secretary of Interior Standards and has 25 years of experience in project management and military architectural history. Dr. Betsy Fahlman, professor of Art History at Arizona State University and Charles Hancock, Southwest Association of Buffalo Soldiers, assisted in locating some of the surviving artworks.

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2 Black Art in the Early 20th Century

Art necessarily reflects the historical and social context in which an artist and their cohort matures. Therefore, an understanding of early 20th century art, particularly Black art, must be related in terms of the historical trends that influenced its development and circulation. This brief account, encompassing the first few decades of the 20th century, will highlight milestones and key figures in Black art in the years preceding the 1943 art exhibition at Fort Huachuca. Although some artists and noteworthy events may not be addressed due to the limited scope of this account, it provides adequate background to demonstrate that the organization of a Black art exhibit at Fort Huachuca had some precedent in the Harmon Society shows of the 1920s and 1930s, the *Exhibition of the Art of the American Negro* in Chicago (1940), and the *American Negro Art, 19th and 20th Centuries* exhibition in New York City (1941–1942); however, no other Black art exhibition had occurred on a military installation at that time. For nearly two decades before the Fort Huachuca exhibit, Black artists were empowered by the momentum of the New Negro Movement, supported in vibrant cultural hubs like Harlem, New York, and Bronzeville, a South Side neighborhood of Chicago, and commissioned through the WPA’s Federal Art Project (FAP), a government-sponsored program for unemployed artists during the Great Depression. Along the way, Black artists attained a greater measure of recognition from all audiences for their contributions to the contemporary art scene.

2.1 Early public exposure: Black art on display, 1900–1920

Black individuals have produced visual art in North America for centuries; though for much of that time, racist social and economic institutions barred any significant recognition for their works. By the 18th and 19th centuries, a few Black artists began to receive widespread acclamation for their talents. One of the earliest Black Americans to obtain a measure of recognition, Joshua Johnson, was a respected portrait artist in Baltimore from the 1760s until the 1820s. Throughout the 19th century, a growing number of Black artists received a fair amount of attention for their compositions. Several of these artists went to Europe or New England for formal training. One of the

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best known is Henry Tanner, a painter who began his career in the United States and later earned international recognition when he moved to Paris. Still, according to respected Black philosopher and aesthete Alain Locke, Black artists had yet to find their unique voice, and “after the zeals of Abolitionism had flickered out, the goals of the few aspiring Negro artists became conventionality and the safely respectable.”

By the turn of the 20th century, an increasing number of Black artists were getting public attention, thanks in part to exhibitions at various state fairs. Some of the most noteworthy were the Jamestown, Virginia, Charleston, South Carolina, and St. Louis, Missouri, exhibitions (Figure 2). While these venues provided a communal space to display artwork, they had their shortcomings. For example, many Black artists were not offered a satisfactory amount of space to exhibit their works. Additionally, most exhibitions were “controlled by promotional exigencies,” so art likely needed to satisfy predetermined thematic criteria. Still, these exhibitions represented a trend toward increased publicity and recognition for the works of Black artists.

Figure 2. Drawing of the “Negro Building” at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition. (Image reproduced from New York Public Library. Public domain.)

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23 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art: A Pictorial Record of the Negro Artist and of the Negro Theme in Art, 9.

24 Porter. 1943. Modern Negro Art, 86.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the United States was seized by a spirit of industrialization and urban growth. The changes that occurred during this period were especially evident in the refinement of large-scale manufacturing and the mass human migration. Among such developments, American art also began to evolve—albeit at a more conservative pace than in Europe. At this time, the transition from Euro-centric styles (such as Impressionism) to a modern American vernacular had a decidedly regional focus, with most activity occurring on the East Coast.²⁶ There, White artists explored themes related to urbanism and progress, often highlighting the stark realities of city life and labor in the industrial era. Many artists began to embrace abstract techniques in their drawings, paintings, and photography, which reflected the apparent malleability of the age. While the development of modern art was well-publicized in Europe, the first large-scale American event that brought the movement to the forefront was New York City’s *International Exhibition of Modern Art* in 1913.²⁷

Simultaneously, Black art began to reflect changing attitudes and tastes regarding what drawings, paintings, sculptures, and photography could represent. This process was accelerated by increasing interest for African-based art among White Americans. Although many White Americans had a limited conception of African-based art, some Black Americans took advantage of this interest to promote a unique “Negro art idiom.”²⁸ According to art historian Sharon Patton, “visual artists took advantage of the interest in black culture to broaden the parameters of modern art, its aesthetics and imagery, to accommodate an African American artistic vernacular.”²⁹ Creativity in this respect was greatly influenced by strengthened collaboration between Black artists in urban centers of the North, a phenomenon that accelerated after WWI.

### 2.2 The New Negro Movement, Harlem, and Alain Locke

In the early 20th century, the Great Migration fostered the development of Black art communities into urban creative hearths. The term Great Migration describes the mass movement of Black Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, West, and Midwest, usually to escape racial...
violence and find better employment opportunities. This movement is usually split into two separate events, the First Great Migration (1910–1940) and the Second Great Migration (1945–1970). During the First Great Migration, nearly two million Black Americans started new lives in New York, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, and similar cities.

Following WWI, many Black soldiers believed that their efforts to defend democracy in Europe would be appreciated at home and ultimately avail to them greater respect and civil rights in the United States. However, many Black soldiers found that the opposite was true as racial discrimination intensified in the 1920s. Disillusioned by the state of civil rights in the United States, many Black Americans began to abandon the “accommodationist” philosophy championed by Booker T. Washington. This viewpoint maintained that the fight for social and political equality would be nearly impossible to ameliorate and, instead, Black Americans should focus on improving their economic status. In contrast, during the 1920s, many Black Americans prioritized a sense of pride in their cultural identity which, at times, took on an assertive tone. This firm, self-confident outlook concerning the contributions of Black Americans in the creative and political realms of society sparked the New Negro Movement in the mid-1920s. Reflecting on the connection between the First Great Migration and the New Negro Movement, anthropologist Cedric Dover stated in 1960,

This internal migration, the most spectacular in history, brought the personalities, lives, loves, heroes, troubles and successes of Negros to artistic attention, both white and coloured, in ways and urgencies previously unknown. There could have been no Negro Renaissance without it—a Renaissance so completely

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34 Although the word “Negro” is a negative term today, the authors have found no modern criticism for the term “New Negro Movement,” probably because it was a historical phrase coined in the 1920s, and the movement with which it is associated is usually discussed in positive terms.
unique in American history . . . that it deserves the name.\textsuperscript{35}

The epicenter of the New Negro Movement was in Harlem, New York City, New York, where it took on the moniker “Negro Renaissance,” or Harlem Renaissance. New York City, like many cities in the North, saw a substantial increase in its Black population during the First Great Migration (Figure 3). “A white residential area of New York in 1900 which a few Negro families had penetrated by 1906,” the Harlem neighborhood, according to Dover, “became the ‘black metropolis’ of the world by 1920.”\textsuperscript{36} Beginning at the turn of the century, Harlem became home to Black Americans from the Northern and Southern United States, as well as immigrants from the Caribbean. By the 1920s, the neighborhood fostered social and professional connections that enriched politics, music, and art (Figure 4). During the New Negro Movement, the neighborhood became home to several celebrated individuals, including Langston Hughes (author of \textit{The Weary Blues}, \textit{Not Without Laughter}, and \textit{Montage of a Dream Deferred}) and artist Aaron Douglas (known for \textit{Into Bondage} and illustrations for \textit{God's Trombones}).\textsuperscript{37}

If Harlem was the epicenter of the New Negro Movement, Alain Locke was perhaps the chief advocate and promoter of its burgeoning art scene.


\textsuperscript{36} Dover. 1960. \textit{American Negro Art}, 36.

Figure 3. A Harlem street, 1934. (Image reproduced from New York Public Library. Public domain.)

Figure 4. A jazz event in Harlem’s Cotton Club, 1930. (Image reproduced from New York Public Library. Public domain.)

38 “Seventh Avenue, looking north from West 125th Street, in Harlem, New York City, 1934,” Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints Division, New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed December 7, 2022, https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/45aff4c0-c630-0130-9e95-58d385a7bbd0.

Alain Locke was an influential aesthete and philosopher whose analysis of Black art, poetry, plays, and music set the tone for the New Negro Movement in Harlem and beyond (Figure 5). Born in Philadelphia in 1885, Locke had a distinguished early academic career. In 1912, he became an assistant professor of English at Harvard, earning his doctorate there in 1918. He also studied in Europe at schools such as Oxford and the University of Berlin. Over the course of his studies and his career, Locke became particularly attracted to theories of value associated with culture and aesthetics. He took an interest in art and the latest deliberations surrounding its purpose and efficacy, particularly in Black communities. In contrast to W.E.B. Du Bois, a prominent intellectual who believed Black artists should intentionally create works that advance the cause of social progress, Locke contended that this approach would amount to little more than propaganda. Instead, Locke reasoned that an artist should be free to express “his own individuality, and in doing that to communicate something of universal human appeal.”\(^4\) Locke likely would not have downplayed the legitimacy or importance of art that advanced a social cause, but that creating art just for the sake of conveying a message—especially if the motivation for doing so came from a source outside the artist themself—amounts to work that is hollow and inauthentic.


In 1925, Locke’s interest in aesthetic appraisal and cultural studies culminated in the publication of *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, an anthology of Black literature and art. It is believed that this book was among the earliest to catalogue the promising creative endeavors associated with the New Negro Movement, including its artistic trends.\(^{42}\) For Locke, the New Negro Movement satisfactorily addressed a major predicament in the field of Black art. Until the 1920s, few Black artists had achieved a culturally accepted, widespread measure of success. Many aspiring artists conventionally looked to Henry O. Tanner, a 19th and early 20th century Black painter who dedicated most of his time in Europe perfecting a French impressionistic technique.\(^{43}\) While American artists had traditionally aspired to study in Paris, by the opening decades of the 20th century, it became increasingly passé to imitate European trends, especially those from Paris. Locke argued that, aside from Tanner, Black artists had few Black authorities to look up to, and those who continued imitating Tanner would unavoidably be imitating an outmoded style. For Locke, the New Negro Movement provided an answer to this problem, generating a wave of original thought and a “crusade of folk expression in all the arts.”\(^{44}\) An outpouring of creativity during the 1920s and 1930s was not unique to Harlem, but manifested in other urban centers across the country, notably Chicago and Philadelphia (see sections 2.7 and 2.8).\(^{45}\)

### 2.3 The rise of federally sponsored art

#### 2.3.1 Creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA, 1935–1939)

Much of the prolific output that occurred during the 1930s and into the 1940s was made possible through the sponsorship of Depression-era programs like the WPA. In Locke’s estimation,


The work of the Negro artist was just beginning to gather momentum of its own in terms of wider access to professional galleries and exhibitions, when the onset of the depression threatened all these gains. All, indeed, would have been disastrously nipped in the bud but for the timely intervention of the Federal Art Projects. 46

The WPA was founded on 6 May 1935, by President Roosevelt’s Executive Order No. 7034. It became the latest of a series of “alphabet agencies” created to curb the economic crisis of the Great Depression.47 Funding for the WPA and several other assistance programs came from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. These programs constituted the Second New Deal, the largest work relief project in American history.48

A variety of aid programs on the state and federal level preceded the WPA. Early responses to the economic crash came directly from the states. About half of the states had emergency relief administrations organized by 1932, but the lack of a comprehensive federal aid program rendered state action ineffective.49 Unemployment reached its peak in 1933, with a quarter of the American workforce being jobless. For Black Americans, unemployment rates skyrocketed to 50 percent. Immediately following his election, President Roosevelt enacted relief efforts focused on rural needs and bank stabilization. Cash relief was also offered for eligible parties through the 1933 Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The same year, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) became the first federal work relief program. Both programs offered unprecedented relief without statutory racial discrimination, allowing many Black Americans access to federal aid for the first time.50

46 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 10.
The Civil Works Administration (CWA), established in late 1933, was the most direct precursor to the WPA. The CWA was created as a very temporary employment program intended to help families through the winter, and ultimately employed over four million Americans in a variety of jobs.\(^{51}\) Though some CWA projects were critiqued for being pointless, the agency demonstrated that the concept of government-sponsored work relief programs had potential.\(^{52}\)

The WPA collaborated with local and state governments with the purpose of moving “from the relief rolls to work on such projects or in private employment the maximum number of persons in the shortest time possible.”\(^{53}\) Most WPA projects were instituted locally based on the population of residents receiving government aid and the social and infrastructural needs of the area. Though projects proposed by local officials had to be approved at the state and presidential level before being enacted, the process enabled communities to address many of their own needs with financial assistance from the federal government.\(^{54}\) Local project sponsors were responsible for roughly one-fifth of WPA costs, ultimately providing $2,837,713,000. The federal government provided $10,136,743,000.\(^{55}\)

From 1935 to 1943, the WPA employed over eight and a half million Americans in a wide range of projects. WPA workers participated in a variety of fields, including infrastructure, education, conservation, military mobilization, and fine arts.\(^{56}\) Thanks to local lobbying efforts, the WPA and other federal work relief projects were active at Fort Huachuca throughout the 1930s. Laborers renovated existing post buildings, created waterworks infrastructure, and completed various stonework projects.\(^{57}\) With such an array of projects, employees were able to put many pre-existing skills to good work and develop new trade capabilities. This was

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\(^{55}\) Final Report on the WPA Program, III.

\(^{56}\) Thompson. 2016e. “Works Progress Administration (WPA) (1935).”

certainly true in the realm of the arts, supported by WPA subsection Federal Project No. 1.\footnote{Thompson, L. 2016b. “Federal Project Number One (Federal One) (1935),” The Living New Deal. \url{https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/federal-project-number-one-federal-one-1935-1939/}.}

Federal Project No. 1, established shortly after the WPA, made employment provisions for artists, musicians, writers, historians, and actors, as well as educational opportunities (Figure 6). Local governments were often unwilling to support the arts at this time, and thus were not required to assist in funding for projects in the realm of creative labor.\footnote{Final Report on the WPA Program, 63.} FAP was established under Federal Project No. 1 in 1935 for the specific purpose of sponsoring fine arts. The national director of the FAP was Holger Cahill, who later selected the art to be shown at the 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibit.\footnote{Kalfatovic, M. R. 1994. The New Deal Fine Arts Projects: A Bibliography, 1933–1992. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., xxx–xxxi; Art Digest, The. 1943. Issue 7, August 1943, 15, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Main Library.}

To underscore the social and cultural value of art, the federal government fully backed creative WPA projects, which came to occupy about five percent of the overall budget.\footnote{Mintz and McNeil. 2018. “Jobs Programs.”} Congress suspended federal funding for Project No. 1 in mid-1939; however, the quality of cultural production during the federal funding period inspired many state and local sponsors to continue financing arts projects.\footnote{Thompson. 2016b. “Federal Project Number One (Federal One) (1935).”} Thousands of Black and White creators and performers were supported by the WPA through its active period, including most of the artists in the Fort Huachuca art exhibition.
2.3.2 The Work Projects Administration (WPA, 1939–1943)

By 1939, the height of the New Deal had reached an end. After the Reorganization Act of that year, the WPA operated on a reduced scale and changed its name from the Works Progress Administration to the Work Projects Administration, retaining the same acronym it had before. The pared-down program remained active for another 4 years, before officially dissolving in June 1943. Executive reorganization was affected to “reduce expenditures, to increase efficiency of operations, to regroup agencies, to reduce the number of agencies by consolidation, and to eliminate overlapping and duplication of effort.”

The WPA was successful in providing mass employment, but conservative businesspeople and elected officials on both ends of the political spectrum contended that its projects

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were neither cost effective nor efficient. Despite the scope and scale of the WPA and other New Deal relief agencies, the American economy did not fully recover until it engaged in war-related industry. Nonetheless, the WPA was a vital program on which a quarter of American families relied and from which nearly all participants benefited during the Great Depression.

2.4 Notable Black art exhibitions in the 1920s–1940s

Before the 1920s, Black artists had few venues in which to exhibit their work (see Section 2.1). The New Negro Movement and a growing interest in Black art made it possible for Black Americans to begin exhibiting their drawings, paintings, sculptures, and photography at many notable exhibitions beginning in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. The following sections provide examples of such showcases.

2.4.1 The Harmon Exhibitions, 1928–1933

The Harmon Exhibitions were a series of annual juried shows that took place in New York City between 1928–1933 (except 1932). They were made possible through the William E. Harmon Foundation, a philanthropic organization which, as one of its objectives, sought to promote creative excellence from Black Americans in a variety of professions. The exhibitions themselves were the first to exclusively feature Black works. Significantly, the Harmon Exhibition began touring the United States, which circulated the efforts of Black artists to an even broader audience. Some of the more notable locations visited by the Harmon Exhibitions included the Denver Art Museum, Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and Howard University in Washington, DC.

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66 Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. n.d. “Great Depression Facts.”


2.4.2 Exhibition of the Art of the American Negro, 1940

The *Exhibition of the Art of the American Negro* took place in Chicago between 4 July and 2 September 1940. This monumental art show was a highlight within an even larger event, the *American Negro Exposition*. The exposition and its art show took place inside the Coliseum, a massive, enclosed venue south of the Chicago Loop. The exposition was organized in response to Chicago’s 1933 “Century of Progress” World’s Fair, which did not portray Black Americans in a positive light. In contrast, the 1940 exposition was organized to showcase achievements made by Black Americans in science, art, music, literature, and other fields.

Several individuals who later participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art show submitted work in the *Art of the American Negro* exhibition. Charles White won first prize in the “Black and White” category for his submission *There were no Crops this Year*, William Carter won first prize in the watercolor division for his painting *Study in Gray*, Eldzier Cortor was awarded second place in the oils category for *Sense of Loneliness*, and Sargent Johnson placed third in sculptures for his submission, *Head of Girl*. Other artists at the show who later participated in Fort Huachuca’s exhibit include Charles Davis, Allan Crite, Elba Lightfoot, Edward Loper, John Lutz, Charles Sallée, Charles Sebree, Dox Thrash, Earl Walker, and Charles White.

2.4.3 American Negro Art, 19th and 20th Centuries exhibition, 1941–1942

The *American Negro Art, 19th and 20th Centuries*, exhibit was held at New York City’s Downtown Gallery from 9 December 1941 until 3 January 1942. The event received support from several well-known politicians, city mayor Fiorello La Guardia, and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The exhibit was intended to celebrate the works of living Black artists, encourage other museums to acquire Black art, and raise money for the Black art fund. The *American Negro Art, 19th and 20th Centuries*, exhibit was especially

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71 This building is not extant.


significant because it was held at a commercial gallery. Elba Lightfoot and Dox Thrash were among the artists who submitted works for this show and later participated in the Fort Huachuca exhibit.

2.4.4 Other WPA projects and exhibitions with Black artist involvement

Most WPA exhibitions in which Black artists participated came about through the efforts of community art centers and galleries. As of 1938, 58 federally sponsored community art centers existed nationwide with the purpose of local art education and creative exposure. The activities of majority Black centers in the urban North are most thoroughly documented due to their metropolitan surroundings and famous artist membership; the foremost of these being the Harlem Community Art Center and the South Side Community Art Center.

The Harlem Community Art Center is commonly viewed by historians as the paradigm for Black creative organizations of the WPA-era. The center engaged with various institutions to organize and host several Black art exhibitions during its short existence. In August 1938, a student cohort from the Harlem Community Art Center presented 40 lithography and watercolor pieces at the YMCA of Chicago. The center later held the Exhibition of Negro Cultural Work on the Federal Arts Projects of New York City to highlight the contributions of Black Americans in all branches of Federal Project no. 1 in February 1939.

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78 The Harlem Community Art Center existed until 1942. In 2001, the Harlem Arts Alliance was established in the same building at 290 Lenox Avenue, New York City, New York. Columbia University. 2008. “Harlem Community Art Center.” Mapping the African American Past. https://maap.columbia.edu/place/58.html. The center is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Further discussion of the South Side Community Art Center appears in section 2.7.
80 “Harlem Community Art Center,” Mapping the African American Past.
Notably, the Harlem Community Art Center often collaborated with local medical institutions, including the Bellevue Hospital and the Harlem Hospital. The center was known to hold classes for hospitalized community members, particularly children. In late 1938, Bellevue and the New York FAP sponsored an exhibition at the Harlem Community Art Center entitled *Art and Psychopathology*. The exhibit featured over 100 works of various mediums completed by patients in the hospital’s psychiatric division. Prominent members of the Harlem Community Art Center, such as Charles Alston and Fort Huachuca presenter Elba Lightfoot, were also commissioned by the WPA to create a series of murals in Harlem Hospital. In 1936, this commission marked the first major federal commission for Black artists.

Though Harlem often claims historians’ attention, similar community art centers and galleries existed around the country. In a 1938 speech delivered to the American Teachers Association at the Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, Assistant Director of the FAP Thomas C. Parker highlighted five of these institutions as particularly important for the dissemination of Black art. Harlem’s center was listed alongside those in Raleigh, North Carolina, Greensboro, North Carolina, Jacksonville, Florida, and Memphis, Tennessee. The Raleigh, Greensboro, and Jacksonville centers were opened in 1936 as (segregated) extension sites for existing galleries, intended to serve the Black community specifically. An article from *The New York Age* commented that “great interest and success have attended the Negro Extension Galleries,” though it is unclear how that success compared to the galleries’ White counterparts.

The activities of the Southern community art centers and galleries are severely under-documented, though it is evident that they positively engaged with local Black populations and institutions. Parker noted that the centers in Raleigh, Greensboro, and Memphis were established through collaboration between the FAP and area Black colleges and universities. The relationship between Historically Black Colleges and Universities and

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83 “Harlem Community Art Center,” Mapping the African American Past.
the FAP, in addition to private institutions like the Harmon Foundation, was foundational in enabling Black artists, establishing a Black art presence, and preserving Black creative works. This is demonstrated in community exhibitions, such as *Paintings by Negro WPA Artists*. Hosted at the Crosby Garfield Extension Gallery on Shaw University’s campus, the Raleigh exhibition featured an array of works, including Eldzier Cortor’s *She Didn’t Forget*, which was also presented at the 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition (Figure 7). Regardless of region or surviving documentation, community art centers provided an opportunity for creative education and presentation in Black communities that were largely neglected in national showcases of “American art.”

Figure 7. Visitors at *Paintings by Negro WPA Artists*, Crosby Garfield Extension Gallery, between 1930 and 1945. (Image reproduced from the Archives of American Art. Public domain.)

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2.5 **Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists at Fort Huachuca, 1943**

The *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* was dedicated 16 May 1943 at the MVOC, Fort Huachuca’s segregated club for Black officers (Figure 8). The exhibit was organized under the supervision of Lew Davis and encouraged by Fort Huachuca’s Post Commander, Colonel Edwin Hardy. Administrators in the FAP, including National Director Holger Cahill, also assisted in exhibition planning. It is not known who exactly conceived the idea for an art exhibit at the MVOC. However, correspondence between W. J. Jamieson, Arizona WPA Administrator, and Florence Kerr, the Assistant Commissioner for the WPA in Washington, DC, suggests that the idea emerged sometime in 1942.\(^\text{92}\) Around December 1942, Jamieson and his staff informed a Mrs. Isham (likely Mary H. Isham, the Regional Supervisor of Professional and Service Projects for the WPA) about the potential exhibit, and asked her where they could procure Black art on behalf of Fort Huachuca.\(^\text{93}\) Isham suggested that Jamieson contact California’s WPA Administrator, Henry Amory. In the meantime, Isham also contacted Kerr in Washington, DC, to see if Black art could be collected on behalf of Fort Huachuca. On 16 January 1943, Jamieson informed Kerr that the California district was unable to lend any artwork. Because of this response, Jamieson suggested that an attempt should be made to gather Black WPA artwork from throughout the United States, though he did not indicate who would be responsible for collecting the pieces. Jamison also remarked that Colonel Hardy had great interest in the project and asked that all art be sent to Lew Davis at Fort Huachuca.\(^\text{94}\)

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\(^\text{92}\) W. J. Jamieson to Florence Kerr, January 16, 1943, Archives of American Art.


\(^\text{94}\) Jamieson to Kerr, January 16, 1943.
Given that Davis had been invited to Fort Huachuca in 1942 to begin working on two murals for the Lakeview Officers’ Club (the segregated club for White officers), several factors indicate he may have been the one who suggested placing artwork in the MVOC. Recalling his initial visit to Fort Huachuca, Davis said he was struck by the low morale of the Black troops stationed there. Although he did not provide specific examples of the low morale he witnessed, he did remember that many of the Government Issued Army posters had been ripped from the walls—most men stationed at Fort Huachuca had no affinity for these posters, which typically depicted blonde-haired, blue-eyed White soldiers. To boost morale, Davis offered to set up a silkscreen printing studio to create posters featuring Black soldiers. After establishing the silkscreen studio, Davis also set up a mural painting workshop for fellow artists on post. Desiring to see these artistic enterprises continue at Fort Huachuca, Davis enlisted in the Army in January 1944 and was stationed at Fort Huachuca with special permission.

95 Correspondence by Colonel Hardy on December 16, 1942, suggests that Davis had already visited Fort Huachuca before that date. Colonel Edwin N. Hardy to Ray Vyne, December 16, 1942, Archives of American Art.


from Colonel Hardy.\textsuperscript{98} It is clear from these examples that Davis promoted art at Fort Huachuca to boost morale, so Davis may have also conceived the art exhibit. Additionally, the pieces assembled for the 1943 exhibit were produced by WPA artists, an association with which Davis had a strong connection as a former Arizona WPA art director.\textsuperscript{99}

On 2 February 1943, Kerr confirmed that the Washington, DC, WPA office had received Isham’s December 1942 inquiry about procuring Black art for Fort Huachuca. Kerr explained that art was being collected at the Washington, DC, office and the WPA’s Central Allocation Center in Chicago.\textsuperscript{100} This center was established during WWII to “disburse moveable, undistributed artwork from various state projects.”\textsuperscript{101} The collection process continued steadily, and by February 1943, a total of 35 works had already been assembled for Fort Huachuca’s exhibit. Kerr explained that additional pieces were expected upon the conclusion of other WPA exhibits containing Black art.\textsuperscript{102}

While the Central Allocation Center was responsible for gathering potential artwork, Holger Cahill, National Director of the WPA’s FAP program, made the final determination of which pieces to present.\textsuperscript{103} In March 1943, Cahill planned to visit Colonel Hardy at Fort Huachuca and tour the MVOC. During the visit, Cahill hoped to inspect the MVOC and its surroundings to determine which pieces would be appropriate for the venue. However, for unknown reasons, Cahill was unable to visit Fort Huachuca. Despite this fact, Colonel Hardy assured Cahill in April 1943 that exhibit preparations were progressing smoothly, and that Davis was getting ready to arrange the first shipment of paintings.\textsuperscript{104}

President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Cahill as director of the WPA’s FAP in 1935. Cahill’s career in art began in the 1920s, when he began

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{Apache Sentinel}. 1944. “Mr. Lew Davis Returns to Fort as Private Davis.” \textit{Apache Sentinel}, February 4, 1944, 2, Arizona Memory Project Digital Newspaper Collection, \url{https://azmemory.azlibrary.gov/nodes/view/32142}; Edwin N. Hardy to Major General F.H. Osborn, September 1, 1944, RG: 107, Box/Entry, NARA–College Park.


\textsuperscript{100} Florence Kerr to Ray N. Vyne, February 2, 1943, Archives of American Art.


\textsuperscript{102} Florence Kerr to Ray N. Vyne, February 2, 1943.

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Art Digest, The}. 1943. Issue 7, August 1943, 15.

\textsuperscript{104} Colonel Edwin N. Hardy to Holger Cahill, April 15, 1943, Archives of American Art.
working at the Newark Art Museum. He developed an interest in American art and began cataloging as many works as he could locate. Cahill was especially interested in American folk art and works by unidentified artists. Writing to Colonel Hardy on 24 April 1943, Cahill remarked that New Deal-era art initiatives over the preceding ten years provided valuable opportunities for Black artists to produce new works. Cahill also believed that the works selected for Fort Huachuca’s exhibit were a representative example of the diversity of art created under WPA sponsorship.

Colonel Hardy fully supported the exhibit, both to improve the appearance of the MVOC and to boost morale. Colonel Hardy said as much in remarks he prepared for the exhibit’s dedication on 16 May 1943 (Figure 9). In a pamphlet produced for the ceremony, Colonel Hardy explained:

This program will not only solve our original desire to attractively decorate the Club but will serve a much broader and deeper purpose. It will provide an opportunity for every officer, soldier, and civilian at this station to study this unique collection of American Negro Art. This collection will not only be a worthy cause of pride in the accomplishment and promise of Negro artists but will serve as an inspiration to all of us as representing one of the steps in the development of a broader and better American citizenship.

The exhibit opened at the MVOC from 16–22 May 1943, then toured to the Service Club No. 1 from 23–29 May, then to the Service Club No. 2 from 30 May–5 June. After being featured at the Service Club No. 2, the exhibit returned to the MVOC for permanent exhibition. Headlines in the 92nd Infantry paper, The Buffalo, promoted the exhibit before its opening and exalted its success after the dedication ceremony (Figure 9–Figure 11).

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106 Holger Cahill to Colonel Edwin N. Hardy, April 24, 1943, Archives of American Art.
Figure 9. Colonel Hardy speaking at the exhibit dedication, 1943. (Image reproduced from Fort Huachuca Museum. Public domain.)

Figure 10. A headline in *The Buffalo* promoting the art exhibit, 12 May 1943. (Image reproduced from *The Buffalo*. Public domain.)

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The dedication pamphlet stated that 87 works of art created had been prepared for the exhibit (Figure 12). The works fell into four broad categories of mediums: oils (which included all types of paintings), prints and drawings, murals, and sculptures. The oils category included 38 entries painted by 23 individuals, a diverse group which included well-known artists (e.g., Eldzier Cortor and Archibald Motley) and lesser-known artists (e.g., Earl Walker and Henry Avery). The prints and drawings category offered 44 pieces by a less diverse group of only 13 artists. Fourteen of the 44 pieces were produced by Dox Thrash, a master of carborundum printing. There was one submission in the mural category, Charles White’s renowned painting *Five Great Americans*, which celebrated prominent Black figures in American history. There were three submissions for the sculpture category, which included one work by burgeoning artist Lester Mathews and two pieces by renowned sculptor Sargent Johnson.

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111 Carborundum printing is a process in which carborundum (carbide silicon, a very hard compound) is blasted against a metal plate, creating an abrasive surface. The prepared plate is then etched or brandished for printmaking. The process was invented by WPA artists in Philadelphia in the late 1930s. Medley-Buckner, C. 1999. “Carborundum Mezzotint and Carborundum Etching.” Print Quarterly 16 (1): 34–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41825234.

Although the event was billed as an *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*, only 36 artists are actually printed in the pamphlet. Additionally, seven artists identified as “White” according to public records such as census data and draft cards. It is possible that, despite identifying as “White,” these artists were included in the exhibition because their body of work depicted Black individuals or themes related to the Black experience in America. All the exhibit artists are explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

In addition to the exhibit itself, the dedication ceremony was a significant social event at Fort Huachuca and was attended by prominent Black artists, including Hale Woodruff, Vernon Winslow, and Richmond Barthé (Figure 13). All three gave speeches during the program; Woodruff prepared an address titled “Art in Wartime,” Winslow spoke on “The Negro in Art,” and Barthé gave a speech concerning “Public Sponsorship of Art.” Colonel Hardy was at hand to make the welcoming address and officially present the collection to those in attendance. Additionally, the presentation was enriched with the vocal talents of Lawrence Whisonant, an accomplished musician who, after the war, changed his name to
Lawrence White and became a well-known opera singer. The backgrounds of Colonel Hardy, Hale Woodruff, Vernon Winslow, and Richmond Barthé are explored in more detail in sections 2.9.2 and 2.9.3.1 through 2.9.3.3. The audience also included many prominent figures, including Major-General Edward M. Almond (Commanding General of the 92nd Infantry Division), Colonel Midian Othello Bousfield (Commanding Officer of the Medical Corps at Fort Huachuca and governor of the MVOC), Thomas E. Campbell (former governor of Arizona), and Dr. Olaf A. Anderson (dean of the Fine Arts Department at the University of Arizona), among other distinguished guests and their families (Figure 14–Figure 15).

Figure 13. Left to right: Vernon Winslow, Hale Woodruff, Colonel Hardy, Lieutenant Colonel Carroll F. E. Nelson, and Richmond Barthé at the exhibit opening in 1943. (Image reproduced from Fort Huachuca Museum. Public domain.)

Figure 14. Guests at the dedication of the art exhibit in 1943. Lew Davis is seated in the front row, third from the right. His wife, Mathilde Davis, is seated in the same row, second from the left. (Image reproduced from Fort Huachuca Museum. Public domain.)

Figure 15. A sample of an invitation to the exhibit. (Image reproduced from Fort Huachuca Museum. Public domain.)
The exhibit was significant enough to capture the attention of the *Art Digest*, a professional magazine with national readership. The magazine’s August 1943 edition featured a picture of several of the exhibit’s prominent organizers and guests—Vernon Winslow, Hale Woodruff, Colonel Hardy, Lt. Colonel Carroll F. E. Nelson, and Richmond Bathe (see Figure 13). An extended caption accompanying the picture explained that Lew Davis was the chief supervisor of the exhibit and the art itself had been selected by Holger Cahill.\(^\text{115}\)

After rotating through Service Club No. 1 and No. 2, the art remained in the MVOC for over a year before discussions concerning its safe removal surfaced. The topic arose because officials believed that Fort Huachuca was facing imminent closure in the fall of 1944. In an effort to remove the art at the MVOC in a suitable manner, Colonel Bousfield wrote to President Mordecai Johnson of Howard University (a historically Black college in Washington, DC) on 15 September 1944 and asked if the university would be interested in receiving some of the WPA art.\(^\text{116}\) On 30 September, President Johnson wired Colonel Bousfield and affirmed his interest in securing the art.\(^\text{117}\) In the meantime, plans to close Fort Huachuca and the MVOC had stalled sometime in early October. In a telephone conversation between President Johnson and Colonel Hardy on 17 October 1944, Johnson remarked that he was satisfied to learn the MVOC would continue operating for the short-term. However, he reiterated that Howard University was the most appropriate place to send the artwork when authorities did officially close Fort Huachuca and the MVOC. In Johnson’s estimation, Howard was the most suitable venue for four reasons: the school had a long history of federal government support, the university had a respected ROTC, it maintained an art gallery with national clientele, and the gallery occasionally took its art on tour, exposing it to a broader audience.\(^\text{118}\)

\(^{115}\) *The Art Digest*, Issue 7, August 1943, 15.

\(^{116}\) Colonel M.O. Bousfield to President Mordecai W. Johnson, September 15, 1944, RG 107: Box 207, Entry 91: Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 1940–1947, Fort Huachuca, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

\(^{117}\) G. Frederick Stanton to James C. Evans, October 4, 1944, RG 107: Box 208, Entry 188: Office of Assistant Secretary of War Civilian Aide to the Secretary, 1940–47, Fort Huachuca, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

\(^{118}\) President Mordecai W. Johnson to Colonel Edwin N. Hardy, October 30, 1944, NARA College Park.
A year and a half later, plans were underway again to close Fort Huachuca and the MVOC, and President Johnson followed up on his intentions to secure the art for Howard. On 28 February 1946, President Johnson reached out to Lieutenant Colonel Lamb to make “application on behalf of Howard University for the WPA art objects which have adorned the Mountainview Officers’ Quarters [sic] at Fort Huachuca.” On 15 March, he forwarded a request for assistance to Marcus Ray, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War. A few days later, Ray wrote Fort Huachuca to determine the “feasibility of releasing the murals, paintings, and other items to [Howard].” Colonel G.B. Appelman, an infantry commander at Fort Huachuca, responded to Ray’s letter on 28 March 1946, explaining that the House Committee of the Officers’ Club had determined to donate the art to Howard, with the expectation that Howard would pay for packing and shipping. Here the archived correspondence ends.

2.6 **Significance of the Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists**

Apart from regional newspaper articles and a brief mention in the *Art Digest*, the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* did not generate much attention in 1943. Although the exhibit did not receive widespread coverage, it was a nationally significant event. The significance of the exhibit is best understood in comparison to other exhibits in which Black artists participated, especially through the WPA’s Federal Art Project. In her 2016 journal article “Expansion and Redirection: African Americans and the New Deal Federal Art Projects,” art historian Mary Ann Calo examines the historiography surrounding Black involvement in FAP art projects, Community Art Centers, and exhibitions. To aid future research on this topic, Calo contends that “scholars should . . . pay closer attention to the exhibition opportunities afforded Black artists on the federal projects, from the standpoint of quantity, content, location, and status.” Since WPA officials helped organize the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* and it contained works created exclusively by WPA artists, Calo’s criteria provides the best framework through which to consider the exhibit’s significance. In short, a principal reason why the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*...
Artists was important is because it occurred outside of a metropolitan context, introducing countless individuals to the works of nationally significant artists.

**Quantity:** Fort Huachuca’s exhibit contained 87 pieces of art created by 36 artists. Although seven artists are identified as White in public documents most of the participants were Black Americans. Apart from an inventory of displayed artwork at FAP Community Art Centers and exhibitions, quantitative comparisons are difficult to make. Part of this difficulty stems from an incomplete accounting of FAP art centers and galleries. Calo concedes that more scholarship is needed in this area.\(^\text{124}\)

**Content:** At the national level, participation by Black artists in major WPA exhibitions was minimal.\(^\text{125}\) Although community art centers and other FAP projects improved representation for Black artists at the regional level, most local shows were medium-specific.\(^\text{126}\) Almost all the work displayed at Fort Huachuca was created by Black artists, and a high percentage of participants were well-known in their profession. Additionally, Fort Huachuca’s exhibit featured a variety of mediums, including watercolor paintings, oil paintings, prints, drawings, and sculptures.\(^\text{127}\)

**Location:** Events featuring Black artists were expected in cosmopolitan centers, such as Harlem, New York, where centers of Black cultural production had been established and exhibitions catered to the general public.\(^\text{128}\) However, further investigation is needed to examine the extent and impact of FAP activities (as they relate to Black art) outside of these urban cores. Calo states that “Expanding discussion . . . to consider activities outside of major metropolitan areas has the potential to place a greater variety of Black experiences at the center of scholarly inquiries into the effectiveness of New Deal art projects.”\(^\text{129}\) Fort Huachuca’s exhibit was held at remote, predominately-Black military base in southern Arizona—which is significant in itself. However, the greater implication of this fact is that the audience primarily consisted of servicemen and servicewomen.

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\(^\text{124}\) Calo, “Expansion and Redirection,” 86.
\(^\text{125}\) Calo, “Expansion and Redirection,” 89.
\(^\text{129}\) Although Calo refers specifically to Community Art Centers in this statement, the recommendation can apply to other WPA-FAP sponsored activities. Calo. 2016. “Expansion and Redirection,” 87.
Assuming that not all personnel at Fort Huachuca came from communities with Black FAP projects or community art centers, the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* likely exposed countless individuals to the works of nationally significant artists. Scholars often consider the FAP’s activities, especially through the community art centers, as “inclusive in principle, and implicitly educational and social in purpose.” In concurrence with this claim, the exhibit at Fort Huachuca stands out as an important (and little known) example of outreach beyond the typical metropolitan context.

**Status:** The Fort Huachuca exhibit featured the works of many high-profile WPA Black artists from across the country, such as Archibald Motley, Dox Thrash, and Sargent Johnson. Encountering the works of several prominent artists in one venue was expected at a nationally billed event, such as the *Exhibition of the Art of the American Negro* in Chicago, but notable at Fort Huachuca given its status as a remote military post. While the quantity of art at Fort Huachuca did not match the Chicago exhibition (87 pieces versus over 300), the status of its participants is comparable.

While useful, comparing the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* with WPA-FAP activities alone may imply that its significance is limited to this context. For the criteria enumerated above, the exhibit should be considered a significant event in American art and military history beyond its association with WPA organizers and artists. During research, the authors of this report encountered no sources suggesting the Army had ever hosted an event celebrating the artistic or cultural contributions of Black Americans before the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*. Therefore, the authors also believe this

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131 “Exhibition of the Art of the American Negro,” Pamphlet. 1940.
133 A cursory examination of articles on Newspapers.com did not reveal any art exhibits hosted by the military or Army between 1900 and 1940. During WWII, Fort Custer (Battle Creek, Michigan) hosted at least three Army art exhibits. The initial exhibit, held on 3 Aug, 1941, represented “the first army art exhibit to be held in the United States since the present defense training program was begun last November [1940].” “Custer Soldiers Ready to Give Art Exhibition,” *Detroit Sunday Times*, July 13, 1941. In the spring of 1945, the top 30 works of art from all Service Commands were assembled for an anticipated 4th of July Army art show in Washington DC. “American Carries Torch for Culture During War,” *The Bedford Daily Times-Mail*, Bedford, IN, January 9, 1945. During WWII, the War Department supported the work of civilian artists to visually document military life and operations. Later, the Army established a Historical Properties Section responsible for curating and exhibiting over 2,000 pieces of art it had accumulated through these wartime efforts, becoming the basis for the present-day Army art collection program. “Army Art Program: A Brief History,” United States Army Center of Military History, accessed January 12, 2023, [https://history.army.mil/](https://history.army.mil/).
event represented an important and unprecedented moment in the Army’s pre-integration era (desegregation in the US Armed Forces did not occur until Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948).134

2.7 **Bronzeville, Chicago and the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC)**

Participants in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibition came from a variety of cultural hubs across the country. These communities fostered social and professional kinships that enriched the development of Black political, social, musical, and artistic movements in the early 20th century. One such location was Bronzeville, a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago (Figure 16). Bronzeville’s population grew significantly in the 1910s and 1920s as Black Americans from the South moved to Northern urban centers in search of steady employment. Given its location within a major American city, Bronzeville blossomed into a hub of intellectual and artistic activity, much like Harlem in New York City.135

The neighborhood earned the moniker of “Black Metropolis” and boasted several landmarks, such as the opulent Pekin Theater and the Wabash YMCA, one of the earliest Black YMCAs in the country (Figure 17).136 Many prominent Black Americans of the early and mid-20th century had ties to Bronzeville, including trumpeter Louis Armstrong, author Richard Wright, aviator Bessie Coleman, and Civil Rights activist Ida B. Wells.137 Bronzeville also became home to several budding and established artists in the 1930s and 1940s, many of whom had ties to the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC).138

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Figure 16. Demographic map of Chicago, 1933. The area constituting a higher percentage of Black residents south of Chicago demarcates the Bronzeville neighborhood. (Image reproduced from Library of Congress. Public domain.)

Social Science Research Committee. 1933. “Map of Chicago, Showing Area Occupied by Predominant Racial or Nationality Groups,” Social Scientists Map Chicago Digital Collection, University of Chicago Library.
The SSCAC was established in 1940 in Chicago’s culturally vibrant Bronzeville neighborhood. During the 1930s, the WPA Art Project sought to enrich communities throughout the United States by supporting the creation of local art venues. The FAP promised to subsidize renovation and maintenance costs if local citizens raised the money to buy or rent a facility. The Bronzeville community believed that their neighborhood was a prime spot for such a venue, and in 1938, residents established the Community Art Center Committee to search for an appropriate facility. The committee found a potential venue on Michigan Avenue, the former Sovens Mansion, and successfully raised money for its purchase.

When it opened in 1940, the SSCAC became the country’s first Black art institution, and it is currently the oldest continually operating center for Black art. The early success of the SSCAC may be attributed to the efforts of several influential Black artists, including Margaret Taylor-Burroughs, Eldzier Cortor, Charles White, Archibald Motley, William Carter, Henry Avery, Joseph Kersey, and Bernard Goss. Cortor, White, Motley, Avery, and Carter all participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit. A special dedication ceremony at the SSCAC attracted a significant amount of

attention, and even featured an appearance by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt (Figure 18). Given its status as a creative hub for Black art, it is no surprise that so many participants at Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibition have ties to the SSCAC, or to the art scene in Chicago as a whole. Today, the SSCAC is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with Black social history and artistic enterprise.142

Figure 18. Eleanor Roosevelt at the dedication of the South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC). (Image reproduced from Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. Public domain.)

2.8 The Pyramid Club, Philadelphia

Another creative hub for artists at Fort Huachuca’s exhibition, and black art in general, was Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Pyramid Club was created in 1937 for the “cultural, civic, and social advancement” of the local Black


The club was formed by a group of Philadelphian Black professionals led by Dr. Walter Jerrick, a physician. For the first two years, Jerrick and the original members gathered in the basement of a downtown YMCA before acquiring a building at 1517 Girard Avenue in 1940. The property was recently nominated to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places due to the club’s cultural impact on the city (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Photo of the Pyramid Club, c. 1940s. (Image used with permission from Temple University. Applicable rights reserved.)

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The Pyramid Club attracted many middle-class Black Americans across the city, with membership hovering around 350 men at the club’s height.\textsuperscript{149} For a fee of $120.00, plus $2.40 a month, members had access to several creative showcases and lectures from prominent figures, including Langston Hughes, Duke Ellington, Marian Anderson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Oppenheimer.\textsuperscript{150} The club also housed a restaurant and bar, a highly valued social space amid racial segregation. In addition to membership dues, Pyramid Clubbers were required to join the NAACP, making the organization the only known social club of the time with such a requirement.\textsuperscript{151} Though many women engaged with the NAACP and attended club events, they were not permitted as members but were welcome in the space as part of the Pyramid Wives Club. Despite their official exclusion, several women acted on project coordination committees.\textsuperscript{152}

The Pyramid Club is most remembered for its contribution to the visual arts. In 1941, the club hosted its first annual art exhibition, a tradition which continued for over a decade. Philadelphia native and Fort Huachuca presenter, Humbert Howard, was the club’s art director, tasked with handpicking pieces to be included in the exhibitions (Figure 20). Several artists involved with the 1943 Huachuca exhibition also showed at the Pyramid Club, including Richmond Barthé, Hale Woodruff, Dox Thrash, Edward Loper, Samuel J. Brown, and Claude Clark.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{149} Gregory. 2010. “Legacy of a Clubhouse.”
\textsuperscript{153} Howard. 2010. “Pyramid Club’s Black Art Legacy.”
Exhibitions at the Pyramid Club mainly highlighted Black artists but also included some White creators who explored Black themes and subjects in a respectful manner. By 1945, Howard opened the annual displays to all artists, regardless of race or subject matter. He believed that complete integration would popularize the club, and that the presence of prominent White artists in the collection would lend credibility to underrecognized Black artists. The decision was not free from critique. In 1949, Pyramid Club members raised valid complaints that the exhibition featured more White artists than Black artists, and that many of the White artists had ties to racially discriminatory institutes and galleries.

Though controversial, Howard stood by his integrationist practices through his time as director with some success. Howard worked to strengthen the club’s longstanding relationship with the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and mediated significant artistic and intellectual exchange with the academy. The school provided many pieces (by Black and White artists) for

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the club to display, while the club encouraged the school to advocate more strongly for Black artists in the academic community. The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts proved to be a faithful ally, and many Pyramid Club works live on in their collections.

In the late 1950s, the Pyramid Club experienced significant tension as to the organization’s purpose and direction. Generational differences plagued club members. The younger members viewed the original class as elitist and old-fashioned. They wished to take a more active role in the Civil Rights Movement and be more welcoming to the working class by reducing membership fees. Older members resisted change by withholding payments or simply leaving the club. More broadly, integration and wealthy Black suburbanization reduced the centrality of and need for the Pyramid Club. The group officially disbanded in 1963.

2.9 Social Realism at the MVOC exhibition

While several styles of art were represented at Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit, many of the pieces may be broadly considered products of the Social Realist movement. The Social Realist movement emerged between WWI and WWII, a time when souring economic conditions and international political upheaval prompted many artists to portray the world as it was. Through Social Realist art, painters, illustrators, and photographers aimed to make their work more relatable to the general public. Not surprisingly, this meant that artists frequently created pieces portraying substandard working conditions or changing social habits, while other pieces offered a social commentary on the role of government, at large, for its part in the economic depression.

Social Realist art often attempted to elevate the status of society’s marginalized citizens. Consequently, art from this movement portrayed members of the working class as the unsung, but essential, heroes of society. Due to a large-scale transition in labor from agriculture to factory work, art from this period frequently depicts the working class in industrial and urban settings. The worker-hero, in this context, was sometimes portrayed in a stoic or proud manner, as a contributor to a greater good.

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other works, Social Realist artists attempted to illustrate the negative attributes of labor and an overbearing Capitalist system. In such instances, artists typically portrayed a solitary figure, or group of figures, engaged in back-breaking, monotonous, or demoralizing labor.161

During the Great Depression, Social Realist artists received a boost from Federal New Deal programs, beginning with the Public Works of Art Program (PWAP, 1933–1934) and later with the WPA. Many Social Realist artists, considering themselves to be members of the working class they depicted, also formed the Artists’ Union during the 1930s, which was associated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.162 WPA artists often tended to create works influenced by Social Realism.163

Because the Social Realist movement attempted to elevate the status of society’s marginalized citizens, artists also created works depicting the triumphs and struggles of racial minorities, especially Black Americans. Some artworks from this period depicted Black Americans engaged in industrial labor, reflecting the fact that many had moved from the South to the cities of the North after the Great Migration. Social Realist artwork, therefore, sometimes depicts Black Americans engaged in industrial pursuits or any number of issues that Black communities faced, ranging from workplace and social discrimination to lynching.164

Edmond Malnate’s Tobacco Rows, selected for the Fort Huachuca exhibit, is a good example of art that seeks to show the unnerving side of labor. The central subject, a farmer, trudges through a seemingly endless field of tobacco rows at the end of a long workday. His slouched body conveys a deep sense of exhaustion that may be both temporal and existential (Figure 21). Bryant Pringle’s lithograph, Arc Welder, depicts its central figure in the act of work. Visual cues from the subject’s face, which might have provided clues about his temperament, are obscured by the welder’s mask (Figure 22).

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162 The Art Story. 2015. “Summary of Social Realism,”


164 The Art Story. 2015. “Summary of Social Realism,”
Figure 21. Edmond Malnate (1916–2003), Tobacco Rows, 1941, carborundum mezzotint, 7 1/2 in. × 11 1/4 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 44. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Not all Social Realist work commented on labor, as is evident from other pieces at the Fort Huachuca exhibit. For example, Raymond Steth’s Patton St. Derelict and Debris show dilapidated urban environs with few signs of life (Figure 23–Figure 24). As an artist, Steth is conventionally associated with the American Scene movement of the early 20th century, an overarching category that contains Social Realism. Depictions of “typical American life and landscape . . . in a naturalistic, descriptive style” characterize the American Scene style. Patton St. Derelict and Debris, while American Scene pieces in the broadest sense, seem to fall squarely in the Social Realist category. Undoubtedly, these lithographs convey a social commentary about the substandard conditions which

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many Americans, particularly Black Americans, faced in the interwar years.

Figure 22. Bryant Pringle (1917–unknown) *Arc Welder*, c. 1940, lithograph, National Gallery of Art, exhibit number 64. (Used with permission from National Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 23. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Patton St. Derelict*, c. 1935, lithograph, 16 in. × 11 1/2 in., Free Library of Philadelphia, exhibit number 72. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

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In contrast, the scene paintings of Allan Rohan Crite attempted to demonstrate that Black Americans of the 1930s cannot be uniformly classified as an economically deprived people, despite the hardships brought on by the Great Depression. Crite hoped that his art, which often depicted middle class street scenes, would become an accepted expression of the Black experience that was as authentic as the working-class perspective found in most Black art at the time.\textsuperscript{170} Crite’s submission to the Fort Huachuca Art Exhibit, \textit{Shawmut Avenue}, depicts the levity of a hot summer day in a middle-class neighborhood. As throngs of children gather under the refreshing spray of an opened fire hydrant, adults look on from a nearby sidewalk. As a Social Realist painting, this work tells the story of an intergenerational, Depression-era neighborhood that appears to be economically buoyant and alive with activity (Figure 25).\textsuperscript{171}


2.9.1 Lew Davis

An instrumental figure in Fort Huachuca’s WWII art scene was Lew Davis, a White artist known for his Western landscapes, mining scenes, and mural paintings. Born in the mining town of Jerome, Arizona, on 2 November 1910, Davis exhibited a penchant for art at an early age. However, he was reluctant to express his artistic talents publicly because the profession was viewed derisively in his hometown.\(^{172}\) Realizing that his opportunities were limited in Arizona, Davis moved to New York City in 1927 to study at the National Academy of Design. There, he principally worked in a realist style, painting figures and still life in a representational manner. Supported by the WPA, Davis returned to Arizona in 1936 and chiefly painted scenes that depicted the toils of mining and life in the copper camps.\(^{173}\) Davis became State Supervisor of the Arizona WPA Art Project in the late 1930s and enjoyed a reputation as an accomplished muralist.\(^{174}\)


Throughout the Great Depression, Davis produced works that reflected the hardships of the average American, particularly the working class. One example includes *Eight Figures* (Figure 26). The painting shows seven women sewing in a factory while a standing overseer supervises their work.\(^\text{175}\) Davis’s painting aligns with the Social Realist tendencies of the era, which often underscored the importance of the working class. In *Eight Figures*, Davis did not glorify labor for its own sake; instead, he represented the average worker in a realistic manner, and did not shy away from depicting the monotony of labor. Significantly, the painting focuses on the faces of the seven laborers, while the head of the overseer is cut off by the frame of the painting. Such an arrangement destines the overseer, a man of high position, to a state of anonymity. To be sure, this painting exemplifies Davis’s ambition to dignify the disheartened through art, an approach he maintained in the years to come.\(^\text{176}\)

Figure 26. Lew Davis (1910–1979), *Eight Figures*, 1935. (Used with permission from Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire. Public domain.)\(^\text{177}\)


By the early 1940s, Davis had earned a positive reputation for his mural-painting abilities, having successfully completed Post Office murals in Los Banos, California, and Marlow, Oklahoma.178 At the invitation of Post Commander Colonel Edwin Hardy, Davis came to Fort Huachuca in 1942 to create two murals for the Lakeside Officers’ Club. These murals were to depict two important events in the history of Fort Huachuca; the founding of the post in 1877, and the surrender of the Apache leader Geronimo.179 However, while visiting Fort Huachuca, Davis was discouraged to find that morale was low among many of the Black soldiers. Davis attempted to boost morale through art, establishing a silkscreen print studio and a mural painting workshop by mid-1943.180 At this time, Davis was a private citizen, though he worked closely with the post’s enlisted men. With the assistance of three privates—George P. Everett, William I. Scales, and Charlie W. Evans—Davis created at least nine vibrant posters featuring bold colors, smooth matte backgrounds, and eye-catching typography. The posters broadcasted a variety of messages, cautioning soldiers about sexually transmitted diseases, encouraging them to purchase War Bonds, admonishing the spread of rumors, and advising soldiers to take their training seriously (Figure 27–Figure 36).181

Figure 27. A poster encouraging soldiers to purchase War Bonds. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 28. A poster advising soldiers to get checked for syphilis. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 29. A poster advising soldiers to get checked for gonorrhea. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 30. A poster discouraging the spread of sensitive information. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 31. A poster encouraging soldiers to care for their equipment. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

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Figure 32. A poster encouraging soldiers not to waste food. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 33. A poster advising soldiers not to spread rumors. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 34. A poster encouraging Black soldiers to perform honorably. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 35. A poster encouraging soldiers to remember their training during combat. (Image reproduced from Arizona Heritage Center, Tempe, Arizona. Public domain.)

Figure 36. Privates William A. Scales (left), Charlie W. Evans (middle), and George A. Everett (right) work in the silkscreen studio. (Image reproduced from Fort Huachuca Historical Museum. Public domain.)

While at Fort Huachuca, Davis also developed a mural painting workshop to instruct budding artists in the finer points of mural composition and finishing. A newspaper photograph from October 1943 shows two students, Thurman Dillard and Ted Shearer, putting finishing touches on “The Surrender of Geronimo,” indicating the workshop had been established before that time (Figure 37). The workshop was beneficial in two ways. First, the assistance provided by other artists on post helped Davis complete his murals for the Lakeside Officers’ Club in a timely manner. Second, Davis’s instruction gave his colleagues skills they could use after leaving the Army. One of the artists who took advantage of Davis’s workshop was Thurman Dillard, who was himself a participant in the 1943 Fort Huachuca Art Exhibit. Through Davis’s mentorship, Dillard refined his own skills and made connections that eventually led him to earn a master’s degree in mural painting at Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

Figure 37. Photograph of Thurman Dillard (right) helping with Davis’s mural, The Surrender of Geronimo, in 1943. (Image reproduced from the Apache Sentinel. Public domain.)

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To ensure that he could continue operating the mural workshop and silkscreen studio, Davis enlisted in the Army with the intention of being permanently stationed at Fort Huachuca.194 He left Arizona shortly before Christmas, 1943, to begin boot camp. His formal induction took place at Fort MacArthur, California, on 10 January 1944. He returned to Fort Huachuca on 19 January 1944, as Private Lew Davis.195 By June of that year, Davis was promoted to Sergeant.196 Due to segregation statutes in the Armed Forces, he needed authorization to work as a servicemember at Fort Huachuca. In a letter to Major General F.H. Osborn, the Army’s Morale Services Division Director, Colonel Hardy explained, “When his [Davis’s] time for induction arrived [in late 1943], I arranged to have him assigned to this station which required special permission in view of the fact that he is a white man.”197 Davis did not remember encountering any obstacles, remarking that “General Marshall approved a hundred percent . . . and if any trouble came up he would take responsibility.”198

In 1944, Davis began work on a third mural at Fort Huachuca, which he planned to display in the MVOC. This mural consisted of a panoramic series of five individual panels which, when viewed collectively, depicted the role of Black Americans in five of the country’s most significant wars: the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and WWI.199 Entitled The Negro in America’s Wars, the mural debuted to much fanfare at the MVOC on 20 August 1944 (Figure 38). At its dedication, the mural was unveiled one panel at a time, and each panel was accompanied with a script written and orated by celebrated New York playwright Theodore Browne, who happened to be stationed at Fort Huachuca (Appendix C). Additionally, the presentation was enriched with the vocal talents of Lawrence Whisonant.200

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194 Apache Sentinel. 1944. “Mr. Lew Davis Returns to Fort as Private Davis.”
195 Apache Sentinel. 1944. “Mr. Lew Davis Returns to Fort as Private Davis.”
197 Colonel Hardy to Major General F.H. Osborn, September 1, 1944.
Davis’s contributions are notable considering that he, as a White man, helped establish a robust art program at Fort Huachuca and painted a five-part mural to recognize the wartime achievements of Black Americans. According to art historian Betsy Fahlman, “Few white artists were interested in Black history during this period . . . That the Fort Huachuca murals were done by a white artist in an era of rigid racial segregation makes them extraordinary celebrations of Black history.” Besides his desire to boost morale at Fort Huachuca, Davis did not provide any additional reason for establishing artistic enterprises at the installation. Thurman Dillard, a student in Davis’s mural workshop and one of the artists in the 1943 exhibition, also wondered about Davis’s decision to stay at Fort Huachuca. Over forty years later, Dillard recalled, “During the war, the Army was segregated, and Lew enlisted in a Black outfit. I don’t know why, he never told me why.”

Later in life, Davis stated that he had sympathy for minority groups, such as Black Americans and Native Americans, because he believed artists were also members of a minority group. In the copper mining town where he grew up, Davis recalled that “being an artist was associated with being a sissy,” an attitude that made him self-conscious about his profession the rest of his life. As both an artist and as someone who grew up with people from non-White groups during his childhood, Davis reflected, “I felt I understood something about minorities because I was one. And I knew Indians well; I’d lived among the Hopis since I was very young. I knew Mexicans and all that sort of thing. I knew what were called

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201 Apache Sentinel. 1943. “Putting on the Finishing Touches.”
202 Fahlman, New Deal Art in Arizona, 145.
minority groups and I didn’t see why the Negro would be any different.”

Following his work at Fort Huachuca, Davis remained an active painter. Like other artists, Davis’s style evolved considerably after WWII and became increasingly abstract. Working from a remote desert home in Arizona, Davis was inspired to create nature-based works exhibiting vivid colors. In his later years, his paintings became less representational of physical reality and were intended to evoke emotion through carefully organized shapes. Davis continued producing art until his death in 1978. Reflecting on Davis’s life, art historian Carolyn Robbins remarks,

Not only did he paint the copper mine with an unparalleled perception, he also recorded the proud history of the Black American soldier, finally concluding his life by celebrating the wonder and beauty of the desert and its inhabitants . . . Davis cultivated, inspired and nurtured the arts in Arizona, helping to build a community that today values and enjoys its artists and creations.

2.9.2 Colonel Edwin N. Hardy

Wartime Post Commander of Fort Huachuca Colonel Edwin Hardy was born in Bells, Tennessee, in 1887. He graduated from West Point Military Academy in 1911 before serving with the 8th US Cavalry Regiment in the Philippines until 1914. During WWI, Hardy was a member of the 6371 Reserve Army Officers and acted as a domestic training officer. He was stationed at Fort Grant, Arizona, near the Mexican border as Captain of

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211 Untitled Essay, Michaels Collection, Military Affairs Committee-Bisbee Chamber of Commerce, Miscellaneous Years. Fort Huachuca Museum, 350.
Troop L of the 17th Cavalry. His troop patrolled the border in the case of disturbances related to the Mexican Revolution. 212

Hardy’s leadership and diplomatic qualities did not go unnoticed in his early career. Shortly after marrying Charlotte Reeder in 1919, the couple traveled to South America with the American Legation.213 Hardy was chosen to act as military attaché in Quito, Ecuador, and Bogota, Colombia, though little record of his experience there remains.214 Edwin and Charlotte returned to the United States in 1921 and settled at Fort Leavenworth for a short period. There, Hardy studied at the Cavalry General Staff School, graduating as a major in 1923.215 He was then stationed at Fort Riley, where he lived with his wife and two children until 1932.216

Hardy had a deep love for horses and the cavalry and hoped to receive command of a cavalry combat unit during his career. In 1932, he was pleased to be named Commander of Fort Robinson Depot in Nebraska.217 During his five years as Commander, he oversaw horse remount processing and hosted a CCC camp and hospital.218 Hardy was then transferred to the Quartermaster Corps and acted as Chief of Remount until 1942.219 The last commander of the US Army Remount Service, he was described as “through and through a cavalryman” and was saddened by the mechanization of “the branch to which he had devoted a lifetime.” With horses being phased-out of combat, Hardy’s dream of commanding a traditional cavalry unit never came true. Instead, he was assigned as post commander of Fort Huachuca in April 1942. 220

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217 Untitled Essay, 360, Michaels Collection.


219 Untitled Essay, 360, Michaels Collection.

Before Hardy’s arrival, the cities surrounding Fort Huachuca—Tucson, Tombstone, and Bisbee—experienced growing racial tension and hostility towards the post’s Black servicepeople. The challenging situation “demanded a soldier and a diplomat.”221 Hardy’s experience as a military attaché made him an attractive candidate. He was seen as particularly well qualified due to his federal work with people of various cultures and ethnicities, both in the Philippines and South America.222

Hardy was disheartened by Fort Huachuca’s state of affairs at the time of his arrival. He observed poor facilities, disrespect of Black Soldiers off-post, a general lack of military discipline, and issues with gambling, alcohol, and prostitution in the neighboring town, Fry.223 Col. Hardy set to work to make the fort a desirable living space, establishing various recreational programs and facilities, including athletic fields, movie theaters, and art and academic courses. Neglected military routine was reinstated and instantly raised troop morale.224 Hardy also approached a group of Black businessmen from Chicago regarding funding for facility development in Fry. Truman K. Gibson, Sr., Truman K. Gibson, Jr., Charles Jackson, George Bynum, and a Mr. Robinson visited Fry with Hardy in July 1942, and, in consultation with their associates in Chicago, volunteered to sponsor Fry’s transformation into a respectable entertainment area, complete with shops, beer halls, and a USO center.225 The amusement center in Fry, locally known as “Green Top,” was designed by well-known Black architect Paul Williams who had graduated from the University of Southern California in 1919.226 William Edouard Scott, acclaimed Black artist and 1907 graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) painted seven murals for the interior titled New Peace with Victory.227 The amusement center opened on Friday, 26 March 1943 (Figure 39).

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221 Untitled Essay, 359, Michaels Collection.
222 Untitled Essay, 361, Michaels Collection.
223 Untitled Essay, 346, Michaels Collection.
224 Untitled Essay, 361, Michaels Collection.
Still during his first year as post commander, Hardy came under fire for the announcement that the MVOC would be a segregated club for Black officers at Fort Huachuca. In an interview with the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Hardy made it clear that the decision lay in the hands of the War Department, which “right or wrong” had provided around $150,000 to provide for two segregated clubs. The article alleged that money would be distributed evenly between the clubs.\(^{228}\) In reality, the Lakeside Officers’ Club was completed at a cost of $251,868, while only $78,648 was expended for the MVOC.\(^{229}\)

Because documents detailing construction authorization and appropriations have never been found, it is unclear if the MVOC was originally built as a Black officers’ club. In part, this uncertainty stems from the fact that the MVOC was built according to the precepts of a standard service club plan. A


\(^{229}\) “Facility No. 66050,” Real Property Record Card, Real Property Office, Master Planning Division, Fort Huachuca, Arizona; “Facility No. 43002,” Real Property Record Card, Real Property Office, Master Planning Division, Fort Huachuca, Arizona.
directive ordering the creation of segregated officers’ clubs for Black and White officers, authorized by the office of the post commander at Fort Huachuca on 4 July 1942, was issued while the Lakeside Officers’ Club and the MVOC were already under construction. It is possible that the MVOC was originally intended to be a service club, and Lakeside Officers’ Club was built for Black and White officers. Alternatively, officials at Fort Huachuca may have intended to create two officers’ clubs at Lakeside and the MVOC which would be open to both Black and White officers but decided to segregate the unfinished clubs after the official directive was issued in July 1942. It is also possible that officials at Fort Huachuca intended to create two separate, segregated officers’ clubs at Lakeside and the MVOC from the earliest planning stages.230

Though unable to override the War Department’s decision, Hardy was remembered as “an effective administrator who treated his soldiers with as much fairness as an unfair situation would permit.”231 He contacted Lew Davis to organize the creation of historical murals for both officers’ clubs and supported the formation of the silkscreen print workshop, which created instructional posters depicting Black servicepeople.232 With Davis’s assistance, Col. Hardy also played an active role in the coordination of the 1943 Black artist exhibition.233

Col. Hardy completed his assignment at Fort Huachuca in July 1945 and remained near the post for the rest of his life. He spent his retirement with his family in the Scarlet Gate Ranch in the Huachuca Mountains.234 In 1963, Hardy died of heart disease at the Fort Huachuca Army Hospital and is buried at the post cemetery.235

2.9.3 Other prominent artists who attended the 1943 exhibition

The following individuals—Hale Woodruff, Vernon Winslow, and Richmond Barthé—were prominent Black artists who were invited to speak at the dedication of the 1943 Fort Huachuca art exhibit. However, they did

not have any of their works exhibited at the event, so they are not included with the rest of the artists in Chapter 3. Brief biographies of these individuals are provided below.

2.9.3.1  Hale Woodruff

Painter and muralist Hale Woodruff was born in Cairo, Illinois, in 1900. At a young age, Woodruff and his mother moved to Nashville, where they boarded with a relative while he attended school. Woodruff remained in Nashville through his high school years. He first engaged with the arts during this time, becoming a political cartoonist for his school newspaper.

After completing his secondary education, Woodruff relocated to Indianapolis. He continued illustrating professionally for a local Black newspaper, supplementing his work as a café porter. In 1921, he became an office secretary for Indianapolis’ Black YMCA. The institution boasted one of the largest member populations in the country and held significant influence in the Black community. There, Hale was a part of a socially and politically active organization that drew in many prominent Black figures. His immersion in conversations regarding civil advancement and welfare undoubtedly informed his later art and action.

While living in Indianapolis, Woodruff pursued a career in art. He attended the John Herron Art Institute and participated in his first public showing, the Indiana Artists’ Exhibition, in 1923. It was at the Herron Institute that Woodruff first encountered African art. He developed a deep academic interest in the culture and style through Carl Einstein’s

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1921 publication *Afrikanische Plastik*, given to him by a German classmate. The influence of African art can be seen in his later works.

Woodruff’s art also exhibits a blend of European styles, developed during a four-year period in France. In 1928, Woodruff won a financial award for a submission in a Harmon Foundation exhibition, which he used to travel to Paris for study at the Académie Moderne and Académie Scandinave. Cubist and post-Impressionist motifs can be seen in many of his pieces, and the color and depth of his landscape works specifically show Cézanne’s influence. While in Paris, Woodruff remained engaged with the Black art movement through his association with Alain Locke.

Shortly after his return to the United States in August of 1931, Atlanta University offered Woodruff a teaching position. By the end of September, the artist had settled in Georgia and taken charge of the University art department (Figure 40). He personally instructed painting and drawing courses that were open to students from all of Atlanta’s Black colleges and aided in fine arts program development at the smaller institutions. In 1942, Woodruff founded the Atlanta University Art Annuals, which allowed students to display their work on a national stage and view works by famous Black artists. The Annual ran until 1970 and had a strong positive impact on Black art in the American South, leaving a large collection at Atlanta University.

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246 Rothstein, Arthur, photographer. *Untitled photo, possibly related to: Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia. The painter Hale Woodruff*. United States Atlanta Fulton County Georgia, 1942, accessed December 7, 2022, [https://www.loc.gov/item/2017767783/](https://www.loc.gov/item/2017767783/).


Woodruff continued honing his own skills during his time in Atlanta. In 1938, he traveled to Mexico City to study muralism with Diego Rivera. This experience was formative for Woodruff’s career and led directly to his most famous work: the 1939–1942 Amistad mural series. The six-mural collection was produced for Talladega College in Alabama and depicted scenes of Black history in a thematic journey from enslavement to freedom and sociopolitical agency. In the 1940s, Georgia landscapes and scenes of rural Black life dominated his work. His inclusion of the mundane and structures representing agrarian poverty led him to refer to his style as the “Outhouse School.”

Woodruff’s impact on Southern Black art education, his powerful depictions of Black life, and his friendship with Alain Locke earned him national acclaim in the art community. Likely for these reasons, he was selected to aid in the Fort Huachuca exhibition. Though he did not present his own art, he delivered an address entitled “Art in Wartime” during the 1943 exhibition dedication ceremony.

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A few years after his involvement with art at Fort Huachuca, Woodruff moved to New York City to teach at New York University. He taught there for over twenty years, retiring in 1968. During that time, Woodruff co-founded the Spiral organization, a collective that considered the artists’ role in the Civil Rights Movement. The group was first formed in 1963 to organize artist travel to the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. For two years, the Spiral met to discuss politics, social justice, and aesthetics before disbanding in 1965. Woodruff’s association with the Spiral and NYU inspired him to explore abstraction in his art and kept him deeply engaged with the Black art movement.252

The quality and cultural impact of Woodruff’s work was recognized during his lifetime and beyond. Two solo retrospective exhibitions were held during his life: at New York University in 1967 and at Harlem Studio Museum in 1979.253 Woodruff died in New York City in 1980. His art remains in several acclaimed institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art.254

2.9.3.2 Vernon Winslow

Vernon Winslow was born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1911, where his father was employed as a sign company foreman.255 Vernon’s father died during his early teenage years, and the family relocated to Chicago. There, Winslow worked as a messenger for a local oil company.256 He developed an interest in painting during his childhood and sought to study art. In an interview, Winslow recalled being told he would not be accepted into any private art schools due to his race; however, he was invited to study at the SAIC on scholarship.257 He graduated with a degree in advertising design.258

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During his studies, Winslow heard about Hale Woodruff's school of teaching in Atlanta. He was intrigued by Woodruff's “international quality” and enrolled at Morehouse College in hopes of studying under the master painter.\footnote{Vernon Winslow, Interviewed by Winifred Stoelting, May 27, 1977.} At the time, Woodruff was an instructor at Atlanta University, though he oversaw the development of art programs at the neighboring Morehouse and Spelman Colleges. Winslow was able to study with Woodruff during his time as a student, and greatly admired Woodruff’s artistic talent and capability as a teacher.\footnote{Vernon Winslow, Interviewed by Winifred Stoelting, May 27, 1977.}

In the meantime, Winslow developed a personal interest in education. He taught an art class at the Spelman laboratory high school during his time as a student at Morehouse and later moved to New Orleans to pursue a master’s degree in education from Tulane University.\footnote{Clapp J. 2022. “Tune Into Recordings of Vernon ‘Dr. Daddy-O’ Winslow, New Orleans’ First Black Radio DJ.” Gambit, Feb. 2, 2022, \url{https://www.nola.com/gambit/music/article}.} By the time of the Fort Huachuca exhibition, Winslow held a full-time position as an associate professor of art at Dillard University in New Orleans.\footnote{New York Age, The. 1944. “Ft. Huachuca Dedicated Many Recreational Centers,” New York Age, January 15, 1944. \url{https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/40810604/}.} He taught courses in paint, design, mass media, and art marketing.\footnote{Vernon Winslow, Interviewed by Winifred Stoelting, May 27, 1977.} Likely due to his personal success and association with Woodruff, Winslow was selected to deliver a presentation entitled “The Negro in Art” at the 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition.\footnote{“Exhibition of the Work of 37 Negro Artists,” Pamphlet.}

Winslow was a commanding speaker and came to be known for his voice. After WWII, he turned to radio as a second source of income with the growing popularity of “race music” on White mainstream stations. Black people, however, were not permitted to announce on radio even as Black music gained traction. Winslow was hired by a New Orleans radio station to write scripts and coach the station’s White announcers to use lingo and tone that would appeal to Black audiences.\footnote{Clapp. 2022. “Tune Into Recordings of Vernon ‘Dr. Daddy-O’ Winslow, New Orleans’ First Black Radio DJ.”}

The radio station gained popularity through Winslow’s efforts, though he was unable to take credit for them at the time. One night in 1949, Winslow was fired for taking the air in the absence of the usual announcer. He
protested the station’s actions in his *Louisiana Weekly* column, criticizing the co-option of Black music without allowing any lack voice representation. In response to his article, several Black advertisers also left the station. Winslow was soon approached by Jackson Brewery regarding an advertising consultant position, which Winslow accepted. The brewery later sponsored Winslow’s very own radio show, making him the first Black radio DJ in New Orleans—“Dr. Daddy-O.” Today, Winslow’s art is little remembered, but a large collection of his radio recordings is preserved at Tulane University.

2.9.3.3 Richmond Barthé

Richmond Barthé was born on 28 January 1901 in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Not much is known about his upbringing, though it is evident that Barthé possessed an affinity for art at an early age. In his youth, he moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, dropping out of school at 16 to begin working. He continued to create art while supporting himself through various odd jobs, and even submitted some of his paintings to his local church for a fundraiser. The parish priest was thoroughly impressed with the paintings and recommended that he study art. However, Barthé was denied entry into the New Orleans Art School because of his race. Undeterred, he applied and was accepted into the SAIC, where he studied between 1924 and 1928.

Barthé first came to the public’s attention in 1927, when he was acclaimed for his portrait drawings and sculptures at the *Negro in Art* exhibit, hosted by the Chicago Women’s Club. His sculptural talent was praised by

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contemporary Black artist and critic, James Porter, who admired Barthé for creating serious works with sensitive application of innovative sculpting techniques. According to Porter, many Black artists attempted to create works that imitated the styles of traditional African art, but fell short because they did not have “a clear conception of African decoration.” In particular, it was the details and patterning of African sculpture that American artists imitated poorly. However, Porter maintained that artists who focused on studying the overall form and massing of African sculpture usually produced successful works. In Porter’s estimation, Barthé was counted among this group, and his attempt to study the overall form of African art instead of its finer details led him to create sculptures that were highly original. By the 1930s, “it was almost impossible to detect . . . a trace of the erstwhile African influence.” Barthé later moved to New York City, where he met some of the most important figures of the New Negro Movement and the Harlem Renaissance—including Alaine Locke. Barthé’s growing reputation, and his association with Locke, made him an attractive candidate to speak at the dedication of Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit, where he delivered an address entitled “Public Sponsorship of Art.”

Barthé became especially well-known for creating sculptures portraying religious themes, Black historical figures, and theater personalities. He was widely acclaimed for his talents, and participated in numerous art shows, including the Harmon Exhibits, Chicago’s 1933 Century of Progress exposition, New York City’s 1939 World’s Fair—“The World of Tomorrow,” and several solo shows. He earned several honors and awards during his early career, but he soon grew exhausted from all the attention he received. He moved to Jamaica in the late 1940s and remained active throughout the Caribbean until the late 1960s. He moved back to the United States and died in Southern California in 1989.

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3 The Exhibit Artists and Key Figures

This chapter provides biographies of the artists who participated in the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*. While some individuals have a prominent reputation in the field of fine arts, several artists at the exhibition are not well-known. Although the event was billed as an *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*, seven artists identified as White people according to public records such as census data and draft cards—Stuart Bruce, Knute Heldner, Paul Laessle, Edmond Malnate, Bernard Schardt, Adrian Troy, and Joseph Vavak. It is possible that a few may have identified as part of White society although they had some Black heritage. It is also possible that, despite identifying as White people, these artists were included in the exhibition because their body of work depicted Black individuals or themes related to the Black experience in America.

3.1 Henry Avery (1902–1982)

3.1.1 Biography

Henry Arcentral Avery was born in Morganton, North Carolina, in January 1902. By the time Avery was eight years old, he was residing in the Colored Orphan Asylum in Fishing Creek Township, North Carolina.²⁸² Little else is known of his early childhood, and it is unclear how Avery developed an interest in the visual arts. Avery joined the US Army as a teenager, serving from 1920 to 1923.²⁸³ Though his period of service is outside the official scope of the conflict, Avery’s gravestone denotes him as a WWI Private First Class (Figure 41).²⁸⁴

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By the mid-1930s, Avery had relocated to Chicago, becoming a part of the vibrant arts community in Bronzeville. He began working for the Illinois FAP Easel Division (part of the WPA) in 1937. The same year, Avery participated in his first exhibition, presenting as a part of the Chicago Artists’ Group at the Art Institute in the 48th Annual American Painting and Sculpture Exhibition. Avery’s artistic skills were largely self-taught, with no records indicating he had any official training. Despite this, Avery exhibited remarkable creative and administrative talent and was named chairman of the site committee responsible for developing the SSCAC in 1938.

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Avery continued producing art during his time as chairman, specializing in still life and mural paintings. He is notably accredited as a muralist for the Masonic Temple and Regal Theater in Chicago, as well as the Civic Center in Alton, Illinois.\footnote{Porter. 1943. \textit{Modern Negro Art}, 132.} He continued producing government-sponsored art through the early 1940s.


3.1.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Avery presented two pieces at the 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition, entitled \textit{Girl with Peaches} and \textit{Big Apple}. Based on the style of Avery’s surviving pieces, these oil paintings likely showed qualities of post-impressionism and folk art. Until definitive originals or reproductions are located, it cannot be known for certain what these paintings looked like. However, it appears that \textit{Big Apples} is visible in the upper left-hand side of a group photo at the exhibit (Figure 42).
3.2 Samuel Joseph Brown (1907–1994)

3.2.1 Biography

Samuel Joseph Brown was born in Wilmington, North Carolina, on 16 April 1907. When he was still a child, Brown and his parents moved to Philadelphia as a part of the Great Migration. There, he completed his formal education, graduating with a degree in art education from the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art and later earning a

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Master of Fine Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. During his time as a student, Brown met fellow artist Dox Thrash (also featured in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibition), with whom he shared a studio space for many years. In 1933, Brown joined the PWAP in Philadelphia, becoming the first Black artist to do so. His position as an Easel Division painter and printmaker for the WPA supplemented his existing work as an art instructor in the local public school district (Figure 43).

Figure 43. Samuel Joseph Brown printmaking. (Used with permission courtesy of Temple University. Applicable rights reserved.)


During his time working with the WPA and beyond, Brown’s works were recognized by notable art institutions and news media outlets. Some of his early pieces drew attention due to their poignant racial commentary. In 1933, Brown’s art was featured on the cover of *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP. The following year, Brown’s *The Lynching* was published in major Black newspaper, *The Philadelphia Tribune*. In 1934, his piece displayed at the Corcoran Gallery of Art garnered the attention of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The two developed a friendship, with the First Lady making visits to Brown’s home and purchasing some of his art for display in the White House. Brown’s acclaim later reached the international stage when he became the only Black artist in the Museum of Modern Art’s 1939 “New Horizons in American Art” exhibition in Paris.

Brown retired from his long public-school teaching career in 1971. After his retirement, he continued painting and printmaking until his death in 1994, and his works were shown in several exhibitions. His work is housed in many federal, university, and private collections, including the White House, Brown’s alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, and the National Gallery of Art.

### 3.2.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Brown was skilled in a variety of artistic mediums, specializing in watercolor, oils, lithograph prints, and pencil drawings. He showed the same versatility in his subject matter and style, which included watercolor portraiture, abstract urban landscapes, and folk-style scenes depicting the Black experience. Black themes remained constant in his work, evoking a spectrum of emotions consistent with the reality of

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Black American life in the early 20th century. The figures in Brown’s folk-style pieces were often shown with exaggerated features, at times appearing as caricature. Art historians have praised Brown’s masterful employment of this style to emphasize pain and struggle. Four of Brown’s six contributions to the 1943 exhibition at Fort Huachuca, though, use exaggerative technique to represent childlike innocence, such as his painting Writing Lesson (Figure 44) and a lithograph of the same name (Figure 45). The titles of two other submissions, Child Smiling and Child Reading (no attributable images), suggest similar content and style, perhaps inspired by his career as an educator. Brown submitted two additional pieces to the 1943 exhibit, a painting titled Portrait Study (no attributable image) and a print titled Abstract (Figure 46).

Figure 44. Samuel Joseph Brown (1907–1994), *Writing Lesson*, c. 1936–1937, watercolor, Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 31. (Used with permission from *The Negro in Art*, 1940. Applicable rights reserved.)
Figure 45. Samuel Joseph Brown (1907–1994), *Writing Lesson*, 1937, lithograph, 9 in. × 7 in., The Free Library of Philadelphia, exhibit number 59. (Used with permission from GSA Fine Arts catalog. Applicable rights reserved.)
Figure 46. Samuel Joseph Brown (1907–1994), *Abstract*, c. 1937, lithograph on wove paper, 12 in. × 9 1/2 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 58. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
3.3 Stuart Bruce (1898–1975)

3.3.1 Biography

Stuart Bruce Pepper (known professionally as Stuart Bruce) was born in Chicopee, Massachusetts on 28 May 1898. While Bruce seems to have secured a measure of regional and, according to one article from the 1940s, national recognition during his lifetime. However, today, little appears to be known about his productive years or the circumstances which cultivated his interest in the arts. A general impression of his upbringing can be abstracted from census data. In 1900, two-year-old Stuart Bruce and his family resided in Chicopee, where his father, Charles Pepper, worked as a bicycle manufacturer. Ten years later, the family had moved to Detroit, Michigan, where Charles had secured work in the city’s burgeoning automotive industry. While in Detroit, Stuart Bruce attended Central High School, where his early interest in art motivated him to become a founding member of the school’s art club in 1915. After high school, Bruce found employment as a Detroit advertising artist. Census records indicate that Bruce had moved to New York City by 1930, where he worked as a sketch artist. During the 1930s, Bruce returned to his native Massachusetts and became head of Boston’s Cambridge Art School. By the early 1940s, Bruce found work as an educator at the Cummington School of the Arts in Cummington, Massachusetts, and had earned a positive reputation as a watercolor painter.

There are few details surrounding the remainder of Bruce’s life. It appears Bruce moved to New Hampshire in the 1940s, where he taught art at the Valley Hotel Studio in Hillsboro. A Social Security record indicates that
Bruce made New Hampshire his home for the next 25 years. He died in September 1975. 321

3.3.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

It is unclear how Bruce became involved in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit; unlike most of the participants, Bruce was a White artist. 322 Details about his piece at the Fort Huachuca exhibit, *Man Shoveling*, are unknown (no attributable image).

3.4 William Sylvester Carter (1909–1996)

3.4.1 Biography

William Sylvester Carter was born in St. Louis, Missouri on 5 May 1909. 323 After graduating high school, Carter earned a scholarship to the SAIC, where he studied from 1930 to 1931. While in Chicago, Carter honed his skills in Bronzeville. Here, he became an active member in the Chicago Black Renaissance and associated with talented Black artists such as Archibald Motley Jr., Eldzier Cortor, and Charles White (all of whom submitted artwork for Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibit). 324 After gaining valuable experience at the SAIC, Carter continued his education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. 325 Like other Depression-era artists, Carter found employment through the FAP, and his work was exhibited in several prominent venues, such as the Chicago Art League in 1934, the Art Institute of Chicago in 1937, and the Hull House in 1938. In 1940, Carter achieved a highpoint in his early career when he exhibited his work in Chicago’s *American Negro Exhibition*, where he won first place in the watercolor category. 326 In addition to the *American Negro Exhibition*, Carter enjoyed recognition at another significant event in 1940 when he was featured as one of the inaugural artists at the opening of Chicago’s SSCAC. 327

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322 Bruce’s race is enumerated as White in draft registration cards and census records.


327 “South Side Community Art Center Archives,” Mapping the Stacks.
Carter was a versatile artist whose subjects included landscapes, human figures, and floral compositions. His preferred medium of choice was paint, and using watercolors, oils, and tempuras, Carter’s pieces ranged from mimetic still-life scenes to abstract compositions. Although he tried to support himself with his art, Carter often supplemented his income through other means. In addition to his career, Carter also “served as a substitute teacher in Chicago Public Schools, painted decorative shower curtains, did manual labor for R.R. Donnelley & Sons printing company, and worked as a porter on cross-country trains, among other jobs.”

Carter finalized his education at the University of Illinois in the 1950s, where he earned BA and BFA degrees (Figure 47). He created art through the remainder of his life and showed work at solo and group exhibits in his later years. Carter died in 1996.

Figure 47. William Sylvester Carter in 1955. (Used with permission from the University of Illinois Yearbook Urbana-Champaign. Applicable rights reserved.)

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330 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 1955 Yearbook, 154.
3.4.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Securing a prominent reputation in the Black art community by the early 1940s, Carter was invited to show his work at Fort Huachuca’s art exhibit in 1943. His two submissions, *South Side Alley* and *Landscape* (no attributable images) were categorized as oil paintings in the exhibition pamphlet. However, additional details about the paintings, including their appearance, are unknown. Due to Carter’s expressive versatility, it is difficult to speculate how the paintings may have looked. However, if they resembled other pieces in Carter’s portfolio, they may have exhibited a characteristically vibrant color palette.

3.5 Ralph Chessé (1900–1991)

3.5.1 Biography

Ralph Chessé was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 6 January 1900. His childhood was spent between his native city of New Orleans and his adopted city of Chicago, where he had other family members. As he came of age, Chessé expressed interest in both art and theater. Believing at first that painting offered good prospects for the future, Chessé enrolled at the SAIC in 1918. However, after a year at the Art Institute, Chessé moved back to New Orleans to pursue his other interest, theater. There, he exercised his thespian aptitude in a variety of roles, serving as an actor, assistant stage manager, and make-up artist. During the 1920s, Chessé traveled frequently and found ways to work in both applied art and theater. During this decade, Chessé lived in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, participating in varied activities including puppet-making, scene painting, acting, and printmaking.331

During the 1930s, Chessé continued practicing a mix of art and puppetry. He was commissioned in 1934 to complete a fresco in San Francisco’s Coit Tower, but never painted such murals again. For much of the decade, Chessé worked with marionettes, and eventually became director of puppetry at San Francisco’s Federal Theater.332

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From 1953 to 1969, Chessé produced a kids’ television series called, “Brother Buzz” which was (and still is) the longest running children’s television program in San Francisco. Later, he traveled to Europe, which influenced his future career path. When he got the opportunity to visit France for the first time, he was inspired to paint again. He died in March 1991 in Ashland, Oregon and was buried in San Francisco where he spent most of his career.

3.5.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Chessé’s involvement with the WPA during the 1930s and 1940s made him a potential candidate for Fort Huachuca’s 1943 Exhibit. Here, he had one piece on display, simply titled Family Group (Figure 48). This colorful silkscreen print is evocative of the scenery Chessé might have constructed for a marionette show. Four bold colors dominate the print: blue, green, red, and brown. The foreground and background are flat, blending into the same plane. The center of the composition is dominated by a stalky, nearly limbless tree, the foliage of which drapes downward like a viscous liquid. The verticality of the tree is complimented by the verticality of the four figures beneath it. Although this family group is together (in the sense that they inhabit a shared space), the lack of eye contact between them suggest that the members might be emotionally distant from each other. In a whimsical and almost imperceptible touch, Chessé portrays the youngest member of the family holding a dead rat.

333 Harter. “Ralph Alexandre Chessé.”
3.6 Claude Clark (1915–2001)

3.6.1 Biography

Born in Rockingham, Georgia, on 11 November 1915, Claude Clark is one of the most celebrated Black artists of the 20th century. As a child, he moved from his birthplace to Philadelphia as part of the Great
Migration. From 1935–1939, Clark attended the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. Clark then began working for the WPA as a printer and did so until 1942. At the Philadelphia Fine Prints Workshop, Clark worked alongside other influential artists such as Dox Thrash and Raymond Steth (also featured in the 1943 exhibition). There, he aided Thrash in the development of the color carborundum printing process.

Due to financial strains, Clark adapted his style and painting methods to reflect a spirit of frugality. For instance, he would search for materials in trash bins outside of schools to reuse for his own paints, which he ground himself. Clark also became proficient at using a palette knife. Due to the cost of paint brushes, this was an economical choice; however, it became definitive of Clark’s style, which was inspired by the rich tones and thick textures of Cézanne and Van Gogh. Most of Clark’s WPA-era pieces are considered part of the Social Realist movement, but his later works ventured into abstract and modern styles. Regardless of style, Clark desired his works to convey authentic experiences of Black life beyond the boundaries of politics, racism, and inequity.

After the disbandment of the WPA, Clark applied his artistic skills and personal ideology to a decades long career in education. He acted as a Philadelphia public school district art instructor from 1945 to 1948 before accepting a position as an associate professor of art at Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama. Clark later moved to Oakland, California, where he taught art at the Alameda County Juvenile Facility and Merritt College until his retirement in 1981. As an educator, Clark sought to familiarize his students with Continental African and Black American art styles and traditions. In 1969, he authored a book combining his passions for education and Black cultural history entitled *Black Art Perspective: A

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339 AAREG. n.d. “Claude Clark, Artist Born.”
342 AAREG. n.d. “Claude Clark, Artist Born.”

3.6.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Clark presented four prints at the Fort Huachuca exhibition. *Hills* and *Jumpin’ Jive* demonstrate the color carborundum printing process the artist developed alongside Dox Thrash. (Figure 49–Figure 50). Those pieces, along with *Time Out* (an etching) and *Boogie-Woogie* (a lithograph), are representative of Clark’s WPA-era print works (Figure 51–Figure 52). *Hills* gestures to the vibrant colors and textures of Clark’s popular palette knife works, while *Jumpin’ Jive, Time Out,* and *Boogie-Woogie* show Clark’s early penchant for Social Realism, expressing both the challenges and joys of the Black experience.

Figure 49. Claude Clark (1915–2001), *Hills,* c. 1940, color carborundum relief etching, 6 1/2 in. × 9 3/4 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 62. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 50. Claude Clark (1915–2001), *Jumpin’ Jive*, c. 1940, Color carborundum relief etching, 7 1/2 in. × 9 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 60. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 51. Claude Clark (1915–2001), *Time-Out*, c. 1939–1940, etching, 9 in. × 10 7/8 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 63. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.7 **Eldzier Cortor (1916–2015)**

3.7.1 **Biography**

Shortly after his birth in 1916 in Richmond, Virginia, Eldzier Cortor and his parents moved to Chicago as part of the Great Migration.\(^{351}\) Cortor immersed himself in the city’s vibrant art community from a young age, joining the Chicago Arts and Crafts Guild at age 16. There, he developed his skills alongside Charles White, a muralist also featured in the Fort Huachuca exhibition.\(^{352}\) Cortor went on to earn a fine arts degree from the SAIC in 1938.\(^{353}\) From there, Cortor became a founding member of the

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SSCAC. With funding from the WPA, he worked in the center as an easel painter from 1938 to 1943, mainly capturing images of urban poverty endemic in his community.354

At the time of that 1943 exhibition, Cortor had not yet developed the signature style that art historians recognize today. This style, drawing from a combination of African folk art, Surrealism, Cubism, and Dada would help define Cortor’s artistic legacy.355 His style was largely inspired by his travels in the mid to late 1940s. In 1944 and 1945, Cortor received grants from the Rosenwald Fund to travel to the American coastal South and paint the Gullah people there.356 Cortor lived in Gullah communities for two years and gained national recognition for his portraits of Gullah women.357 Cortor received another travel grant in 1949, this time from the Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed him to visit a series of Central American countries to continue his studies of neo-African communities.358

As his career progressed, Cortor developed a nearly exclusive thematic focus on Black womanhood. Many of his pieces feature nude female figures inspired by the women he encountered on his travels.359 Cortor was the first artist to primarily focus on the Black female body, a decision that some audiences found untoward due to the deep, painful history of sexual abuse and exploitation of Black women.360 However, Cortor’s artistic intentions and execution glorified his subject, representing the Black woman as symbolic of “the Black Spirit . . . a feeling of eternity and continuance of life.”361 Stylistically, Cortor achieved this by presenting his figures in a surreal perspective or setting, so to add a sense of enchantment to images of Black existence, particularly in contention with poverty.

Cortor continued painting almost to the time of his death, boasting a remarkable 70-year artistic career. Just months before he died, the Art Institute of Chicago held a solo exhibition entitled *Eldzier Cortor Coming Home*, which featured more than 30 pieces donated to the museum by the Cortor family. Many of his works remain in the institute’s permanent collection, with others being housed at Howard University, the Museum of Modern Art, the Library of Congress, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Smithsonian American Art Museum. Cortor died in New York City in November 2015.

### 3.7.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Cortor presented six pieces in the Fort Huachuca exhibition: oil paintings *She Didn’t Forget* (Figure 53), *Adjustment* (Figure 54), and *Still Life Figure*, and prints and drawings *The Task, Study No. 10*, and *Study No. 11*, (no attributable images). Completed during his time with the SSCAC, the known pieces reflect Cortor’s interest in presenting images of urban poverty in his community. Like nearly all his works, Cortor did not use models for either work. The warm tones and varied proportions of the family scenes harken forward to the characteristics of Cortor’s later Surrealist works while maintaining their Social Realist context. The subjects of the other four pieces included in the exhibition are unknown. Based on his contemporary repertoire, *The Task, Study No. 10*, and *Study No. 11* may be pen sketches or aquatint etchings of female figures.

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363 Cortor et al. 2020. “Eldzier Cortor through the Eyes of His Son.”
367 Cortor et al. 2020. “Eldzier Cortor through the Eyes of His Son.”
Figure 53. Eldzier Cortor (1916–2015), *She Didn’t Forget*, c. 1930, oil on canvas, 30 in. × 24 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 5. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
3.8 Allan Rohan Crite (1910–2007)

3.8.1 Biography

Allan Rohan Crite was born in North Plainfield, New Jersey on 20 March 1910. Soon after his birth, Crite and his family moved to Boston, where his father secured a job as an engineer. While in his youth, Crite's mother frequently escorted him to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Isabella
Steward Garner Museum, a prominent art museum in Boston. These visits reinforced Crite’s budding artistic inclinations, and in 1929 he became a student at Boston’s School of the Museum of Fine Arts. In the 1930s, Crite became involved with the Public Works Administration Project and the Massachusetts Art Project. During his early career, Crite had the opportunity to show his art at several notable expositions, including the Boston Society of Independent Artists (1929), several university exhibits (including Harmon, Dillard, and Howard Universities), and the prominent 1940 American Negro Exhibition in Chicago.

A longtime resident of Boston’s lower Roxbury neighborhood, Crite found inspiration in the middle-class Black neighborhoods in which he worked and worshiped. Particularly during his early career, Crite attempted to create a body of artwork that normalized the presence of Black Americans in middle-class settings. According to scholar Julie Leven Caro, he hoped his art would be considered an accepted expression of the Black experience that was as authentic as the working-class, folk-centered perspectives that influenced most Black art at the time. A productive and exceptionally observant artist, the result of Crite’s efforts is a large collection of scenes that depict Boston’s South Side neighborhoods and its residents in detail. Some of the settings he illustrated, dating from the Interwar and WWII eras, depict built environments that no longer exist due to urban renewal efforts in the 1950s. In addition to street scenes, Crite was also known for his portraits and religious art.

Following the Fort Huachuca exhibit, Crite continued with his artistic pursuits, finding regular employment as an illustrator with the Boston Naval Shipyard’s Planning Department until 1976. He continued to paint on his own time, transitioning from the street scenes of his early career to

372 | Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 131.
pieces with more religious overtones. Crite died in Boston on 6 September 2007.376

3.8.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Crite had one oil painting at Fort Huachuca’s art exhibit. His entry, entitled *Shawmut Avenue*, was completed in 1939 and appears to be representative of the dynamic Boston street scenes he was creating at that time. *Shawmut Avenue* is an energetic composition depicting the levity of a hot summer day in a middle-class, Black neighborhood. As throngs of children gather under the refreshing spray of an opened fire hydrant, adults look on from a nearby sidewalk. As a Social Realist painting, this work tells the story of an intergenerational, Depression-era neighborhood that appears to be economically buoyant and alive with activity (Figure 55).

Figure 55. Allen Rohan Crite (1910–2007), *Shawmut Avenue*, c. 1939, oil on canvas board, 18 in. × 24 in., exhibit number 6. (Used with permission from Artnet. Applicable rights reserved.)377

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3.9  Charles Davis (1910–1963)

3.9.1  Biography

Charles Davis was born on 3 November 1910, as the second of six children.\textsuperscript{378} The Davis family resided in Evanston, Illinois, and Charles remained in the Cook County area into his adulthood. Davis married his first wife, Hazel, at age eighteen, and by 1930, the couple had an infant child, Charles, Jr. At that time, Davis was working as a dishwasher at a local restaurant.\textsuperscript{379}

In the early 1930s, Davis joined Eldzier Cortor and Charles White in the Chicago Arts and Crafts Guild, studying under local painter George Neal.\textsuperscript{380} He later enrolled in the SAIC where he studied painting from 1936 to 1938. As a student, he participated in his first public exhibition at the South Side Settlement House in 1937, a reform institution for Black residents of Chicago.\textsuperscript{381} The next several years marked the most productive part of Davis’s artistic career. With funding from the WPA, Davis created a series of murals entitled \textit{The Progress of American Industry} between 1937 and 1938. The six murals highlighted various fields of labor, from lumbering to bridge building.\textsuperscript{382}

In 1938, some of his smaller-scale works were featured in showings with the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Artists Group, and the Hull House, a social house for immigrants in Chicago.\textsuperscript{383} He also presented with the American Negro Exhibition in 1940 alongside many other artists included in the 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition.

Davis’s artistic career was put on hold when he enlisted in May 1944. He served in the US Navy as a fireman until he was honorably discharged on 19 January 1945. Little is known about his life following his military service. Davis died in 1963 and was buried in Holy Sepulcher Cemetery, near


Chicago. He was survived by his second wife, Alma B. Davis. Many of Davis’s works have been lost or incorporated into private collections over the years, though his mural series is preserved in the Richmond County Courthouse of Staten Island, New York.

### 3.9.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Davis showed three oil paintings at the Huachuca exhibition: *Benediction*, *Johnny Mae Sewing* (no attributable images), and *Newsboy* (Figure 56). *Newsboy* provides an example of his typical Social Realist style. Davis’s art usually depicted ordinary people and places associated with Bronzeville, which he presented using rich color and soft brushstrokes.

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**Figure 56.** Charles Davis (1910–1963), *Newsboy*, c. 1934, oil on canvas, Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 8. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

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385 “Richmond County Courthouse: Charles Davis Murals—Staten Island, NY.”

3.10 Thurman William Dillard (1918–1991)

3.10.1 Biography

Thurman William Dillard was born in St. Louis, Missouri, on 22 December 1918. His father was murdered when Dillard was a small child, leaving the family without a source of income. By 1930, Dillard’s aunt, a housekeeper, had moved in with the family to provide care and financial support. Dillard resided with his family into his twenties, working as a waiter. He then studied full-time at Stowe Teachers College in St. Louis before joining the Army in 1942.

Sergeant Dillard was stationed at Fort Huachuca and quickly engaged with creative opportunities on the base (Figure 57 and Figure 58). When he was not training or working as an ordnance clerk for the Supply and Service Detachment, Dillard was often found in the art workshop on the Old Post. There, he learned mural and printmaking skills from Lew Davis and worked with Davis to complete several works, including a mural for the Lakeside Officers’ Club. A pair of Dillard’s paintings were also included in the Ninth Service Command’s Arts and Crafts Traveling Show in 1945. Additionally, Dillard had several poems published in the base newspaper and won multiple honors for his writings in national poetry competitions.
Sergeant Dillard, who has been stationed at Fort Huachuca for nearly three years, is assigned to the Supply and Service Detachment, where he is an ordnance clerk.

The paintings which were accepted for the exhibit are: “Singing the Spirituals” and “Tales From Vienna Woods.” Both were done on off-duty hours by Sgt. Dillard. Over 380 entries were submitted in the contest, the best works being selected and twenty-five per cent, not meeting the standards, rejected. The contest included paintings and drawings, photographs, posters and crafts.

Is Diligent Worker

Sgt. Dillard never studied art formally, but for more than two years has devoted all of his leisure time to study of the field he will make his career. Evenings and Sundays find him hard at work in the Art Workshop on the Old Post with his painting.

The sergeant is also an accomplished poet, having placed among the first six in an annual poetry contest sponsored by THE SPAN, a St. Louis Poetry magazine, last year, and having many of his poems published by national publications. In December, he placed third in the Ralph Chaney Memorial Association poetry contest. The prize-winning poems are re-published on page two of this issue.

Sgt. Dillard is a former student at Stowe Teachers College in St. Louis, Mo., where his mother resides. He is impatient for peace to come so that he may devote all of his time to painting and poetry.

394 “Huachuca Sergeant Exhibits Paintings in NSC’s Art Show.”
3.10.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

During his time stationed at Fort Huachuca, Dillard produced *Aviator*, an oil painting included in the exhibition. The piece was likely inspired by his experience on a military base, though its qualities are unknown (no attributable image).

3.11 Walter Ellison (1900–1977)

3.11.1 Biography

On 20 February 1900, Walter Ellison was born to a farming family in Eatonton, Georgia. Ellison was the eldest of seven children and began working as a farmhand at an early age, helping in the fields full-time after

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he completed his first year of high school. In April 1918, Ellison was drafted into the Army. He trained at Camp Gordon, Georgia for several months but was never deployed. The family relocated soon after Ellison’s return to accommodate his father’s new railroad job, settling for a few years in Bibb County, Georgia. There, Ellison met Jemmie Adams, whom he married in 1923.

By the 1930s, Walter and Jemmie were living in Chicago. Ellison worked as a garage porter in the Bronzeville neighborhood, where he developed an interest in the arts. He spent some time studying painting at the SAIC and the Hull House before earning a position with the Chicago FAP. With aid from the WPA, he helped establish the SSCAC alongside Cortor, Sebree, White, and other notable Black artists. Similarities in style lead art historians to believe Ellison also worked closely with French immigrant Adrian Troy during his time with the SSCAC.

Ellison’s style and subject matter drew from his personal experience of place and movement, as well as his observations of Black poverty and joblessness during the Great Depression. He was particularly interested in the Great Migration, in which he was a participant, and worked to capture an intimate view of Black migrants in his works. He also produced several pieces depicting the underground world of policy wheel gambling, a popular pastime for the large portion of Black Americans denied employment during the 1930s.

Ellison seemingly abandoned his artistic career in the post-war years. Though he may have continued painting privately, there are no records of additional pieces dated past this time. He remained in Chicago, working as

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a porter at a wholesale store into the 1950s. Ellison died in the city on 17 February 1977. His pieces are held in the Art Institute of Chicago, The St. Louis Art Museum, and the Chicago Public Library.

3.11.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

The nature of Ellison’s two pieces presented at Fort Huachuca—The Story Book (oil) and Monotype (print)—are unknown (no attributable images).

3.12 Felix Gaines (1908–1991)

3.12.1 Biography

Felix Gaines was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on 30 July 1908, where he was raised by his parents Thomas Gaines and Ada Duncan. Little is known about Gaines’ childhood and education, though he remained in Birmingham through his adulthood. Gaines married Fannie Davis in 1928, and the pair had a daughter, Rosa Lee, the following year. At that time, Gaines was working as a laborer at a mattress factory, with no record of any artistic education or experience.

By the late 1930s, Gaines had established himself as an artist. He was hired as part of the FAP to paint two murals in the WPA-funded Black community center in Selma. He completed the murals, entitled Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, and Agriculture, in 1937. Swing Low depicts a celestial chariot flying above a group of Black worshipers, while Agriculture shows a scene of Black farmers in the South. Both are done in Social Realist style.

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Gaines’ style changed significantly in the post-war years, both in style and scale. In 1946, Gaines created a portrait of George Washington Carver stylistically termed as a “Psycho Beautigraph Etching,” a piece now housed in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Gaines likely invented this term, as very little information about it exists beyond this work. The textured black and white portrait does offer an intimate view of its subject, leading to the assumption that “psycho” points to psychology, or character investigation, in the work. An article in the St. Petersburg Evening Independent reveals that Gaines made several portraits of Dr. Carver to put in Black schools and churches. His assistant, Elliot Robbins of the Tuskegee Institute, stated that he did so “with the idea of encouraging Negro youth to seek higher education, and at the same time [improve] race relations.” Nearly two decades later, Gaines produced a similar etch portrait of recently deceased President John F. Kennedy surrounded by a spiderweb. The piece was titled The Web of Freedom, and likely represented a similar sentiment regarding race relations.

Very little is known of Gaines’ later life, apart from a 1980 Alabama County record documenting his marriage to Mattie Louise Harris in Montgomery. Gaines died in Birmingham in 1991. The following year, his Selma Community Center murals were relocated to the Old Depot Museum, also in Selma, where they remain today.

### 3.12.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Nothing is known about the style or subject of Gaines’ oils featured at the Fort Huachuca exhibition, Mural Sketch, No. 1 and Mural Sketch, No. 2 (no attributable images). Based on the murals he created for the FAP a few years before the exhibition, it is possible that the sketches depict some aspect of Southern Black life in the Social Realist style. In correspondence from 24 April 1943, FAP director Holger Cahill remarked that Gaines had created the two sketches for a recreation center in Selma, Alabama. In his

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estimation, Cahill thought they were significant for the folk poetry they embodied.415

3.13 Theodore Gillien

No useful leads have surfaced regarding Theodore Gillien. This included investigation of public documents on Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and FamilySearch.com. Gillien had one piece selected for the art show, a painting titled *Blues in Flood Time*. It is not known what this work looks like, and unfortunately, the obscurity of its creator makes it impossible to predict any characteristic features it may possess.

3.14 Knute Heldner (1877–1952)

3.14.1 Biography

Knute Heldner (referred to as “Holdner” on the exhibition program) was born on a small farm in Småland, Sweden, in 1877.416 He was educated in Karlskrona and Stockholm before joining the Swedish Navy in his early teens. After several years of service on the North Sea, Heldner immigrated to the United States in 1902. Heldner moved frequently following his arrival, working a series of odd jobs in Wyoming, Minnesota, and Illinois.417 During this time, he began painting, often using his work environment as inspiration. In 1915, Heldner presented for the first time at the Minnesota State Fair, where he won a gold medal for his painting.418

Around that time, Heldner began pursuing art as a profession. He took classes at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, the SAIC, and the Art Students League in New York City before settling in Duluth, Minnesota, to teach at the Rachael McFadden Art Studio. He married his student, Colette Pope, in 1923. The couple honeymooned in New Orleans and later established a winter home in the city. Heldner was entranced by the life and landscape of New Orleans and would produce most of his works there.419

415 Holger Cahill to Colonel Edwin N. Hardy, April 24, 1943, Archives of American Art.
https://thejohnsoncollection.org/knute-heldner/.
https://64parishes.org/entry/knute-heldner.
Knute and Colette traveled seasonally between Duluth and New Orleans, creating and presenting their works in both locales. A series of exhibition awards and a grant from the city of Duluth allowed Heldner to continue his art studies in Europe. From 1929 to 1932, he traversed the continent to study Post-Impressionist style. European critics referred to his works as “savage grandeur” because of their beautiful, yet brutal expression of reality.420

Heldner was a self-proclaimed post-Impressionist, though he also demonstrated interest in Social Realism. Many of his early pieces were inspired by his experiences with hard labor and poverty shortly after his arrival in the United States. His annual immersion in New Orleans resulted in many landscape works, which showcased his post-impressionist leanings. Oil paintings of the bayou were Heldner’s best-selling works, though he retained a fascination with the range of human experience in the city and its rural surroundings.421 During his employment with the Louisiana FAP, Heldner created fifty drypoint etchings depicting the structures and people of the French Quarter, as well as three murals examining Southern agrarian life.422

After his employment with the WPA, Heldner continued creating and teaching art. Knute and Colette shared a studio through the 1940s, spending a brief period in Saint Augustine before returning to New Orleans with their young daughter, Paulette.423 Back in Louisiana, Heldner taught art courses and gave art criticism lectures for the New Orleans Art League. He also attempted playwriting, composed short stories, and wrote a series of philosophical essays contending with suffering and the divine in the aftermath of global conflict.424 By the 1950s, Heldner’s creative production stalled due to illness and severe marital strife. He died in New Orleans in November 1952.425 Heldner’s works are housed at Louisiana State University and the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, as well as in few European galleries.426

### 3.14.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

*The Flood* is a black and white etching featured at the Fort Huachuca exhibition (Figure 59). Based on the medium and content, it is possible that the print is a part of the collection Heldner produced during his employment with the Louisiana FAP. Regardless, the style and subject of *The Flood* show Heldner’s engagement with Social Realism, though the piece is not representative of a majority of his works. With Heldner being born in Sweden and identifying himself as “white” on various US census forms, he is included in the group of seven artists at the exhibit who identified as a white person.

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**Figure 59.** Knute Heldner (1877–1952), *The Flood*, c. 1937, etching, 7 1/2 in. x 8 3/4 in., Weisman Art Museum, exhibit number 48. (Used with permission from Weisman Art Museum. Applicable rights reserved.)

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3.15 Humbert Howard (1905–1990)

3.15.1 Biography

The birth year of Humbert Howard is widely debated; some records state he was born in 1905, while others contest he was born in 1915. However, it is known that his birthplace was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which is where he spent most of his productive life. During his youth, Howard had an interest in art as well as other activities; in high school, he involved himself with Art Club, Varsity Football, and Varsity Track. He eventually settled on art, and attended Howard University in Washington, DC, the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania, and the International Academy of Arts and Letters in Rome.

Howard rose to prominence in the 1930s and finished the decade showing his paintings at the 1939–1940 World’s Fair in New York City. The following year, he became Director of the Pyramid Club, an artistic organization created in 1937 for the “cultural, civic, and social advancement” of the local Black community (see Section 2.8). Howard held this position for 18 years, stepping down in 1958. Under Howard’s leadership, the Pyramid Club began to adopt a more integrationist stance, allowing both Black and White artists to submit works for the club’s shows based on their merit. During his time with the Pyramid Club, Howard’s output became more modernist as he became acclimated with the works of contemporary artists around him (Figure 60 and Figure 61).

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Figure 60. Humbert Howard (far right) at the Pyramid Club. (Used with permission from Temple University. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 61. Humbert Howard (second from right) at the Pyramid Club. (Used with permission from Temple University. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Howard remained active with the Pyramid Club following the art exhibit at Fort Huachuca. In 1960, he became a member of the Philadelphia Art Alliance. He maintained this membership for 30 years. In 1970, he was awarded an Honorary Degree and Silver Metal for his painting abilities by the International Academy of Arts and Letters. Howard died in his hometown of Philadelphia in 1990.435

3.15.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Howard had one piece selected for the 1943 exhibit at Fort Huachuca, a painting titled *The Gardener’s House*. It is not known what this composition looked like. If it is anything like his other works, this painting may have a vibrant color palette and an abstract arrangement of features.436

3.16 Sargent Claude Johnson (1887–1967)

3.16.1 Biography

Sargent Claude Johnson was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1887. Johnson was one of six children born to an Afro-Indigenous mother and a father of Swedish descent. Due to their light skin tone, many of the children chose to identify themselves as white people. Sargent, meanwhile, maintained a lifelong connection with his Black heritage (Figure 62) and identified himself as a Black person.437 This cultural connection was bolstered by Johnson’s relationship with his aunt, May Howard Jackson. In 1902, following the death of both of their parents, Sargent and his siblings moved to live with their aunt and uncle in Washington, DC. May Howard Jackson was a prominent sculptor, typically producing works that reflected traditional African art.438

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Johnson began his artistic education at Worcester Art School in Massachusetts before moving to San Francisco to attend the A.W. Best School of Art. He studied there from 1915 to 1919 under Neo-Impressionists Alice and Arthur Best. Johnson, however, never adopted the Neo-Impressionist style. Rather, he specialized in a “reductive Modernist style of sculpture” which he learned from instructor Ralph Stackpole at the California School of Fine Arts. Johnson attended the California School of Fine Arts, now called the San Francisco Art Institute, until 1923. He remained in California with his wife and young daughter, working for a time as a frame-maker at an art store.

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During the late 1920s and 1930s, Johnson created sculptures, ceramics, and bas-reliefs prolifically. His work gained national recognition in 1926, when the Harmon Foundation in New York City included his work in an exhibition. The foundation maintained a relationship with Johnson, and over the next several years, he won the Otto H. Kahn prize, the Bronze Award, and the Robert C. Ogden prize for his works displayed in Harmon exhibitions. In the late 1930s, the WPA sponsored a few of Johnson’s major projects, including a 24-foot-long redwood relief organ screen for the California School for the Deaf and Blind and the interior design of the San Francisco Maritime Museum in Aquatic Park.

After the war years, Johnson took several trips to Mexico, where he drew inspiration from Mexican muralists. Art Historian James Porter noted that Johnson “managed to achieve something of the suppleness of fancy and monumentality of design that we associate with Diego Rivera.” After these travels, he began incorporating Mexican culture and indigenous people into his works. He continued traveling and creating until his death in 1967. His artistic legacy survives in permanent exhibitions in the San Francisco area and nationally.

3.16.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Johnson’s works were known for emphasizing the beauty and dignity of the natural, with focus on wildlife and Black American individuals. His simple terracotta sculpture, Hippo (Figure 63), reflected this sentiment. Many of Johnson’s surviving sculptures, particularly his busts utilize terracotta, though he was known to use metals, wood, and ceramic, as well. He also created several full-body figures from black Oaxacan clay. The material and style of Johnson’s second sculpture included at Fort Huachuca, Woman, is unknown.

443 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 133.
3.17 Lawrence Jones (1910–1996)

3.17.1 Biography

Lawrence Jones was born on Christmas Day, 1910, in Lynchburg, Virginia. Jones was notably proud of his heritage, as his mother was alleged to be descended from Sally Hemings. His family also had a deep engagement with the arts, which encouraged Jones and his siblings to pursue careers in the creative realm. Jones’ father worked as a choral director, and his siblings would go on to become sculptors and musicians. Jones developed a serious interest in the visual arts as a high school student, and the Lynchburg community quickly recognized his talent. At the time of Jones’ graduation, a group of Lynchburg residents pooled enough money to send him to study at the SAIC, where he studied from 1934 to 1936.

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452 Clarion-Ledger. 1967. “Jackson State Artist in International Show.”
Jones was very active in the mid-1930s Chicago art scene. While still a student, he acted as the artist in residence for the Hull House and found work with the Illinois FAP. Based on his works, Jones resonated deeply with the strife of urban laborers during the Great Depression. Most of his pieces at the time reflected Chicago living, showing both the large-scale “ghetto” community and images of individual despair. Jones carried concern for the working class throughout his artistic career and personal life.

In 1937, Jones moved to New Orleans to pursue a teaching career in Dillard University’s art department. He spent the next few years as both teacher and student, instructing painting courses while taking classes to complete his own degree. He graduated from Dillard in 1940. Shortly after his graduation, Jones took a teaching position at Fort Valley State University in Georgia.

The early 1940s offered Jones many new and unexpected career opportunities. In 1941, Jones traveled to Mexico City with a Rosenwald Fellowship to study with the Taller de Gráfica Popular. There, Jones was inspired by the Mexican muralist style and the antifascist, prolabor, leftist leanings of the group, both of which would inspire his later efforts. Unfortunately, his time in Mexico was cut short. Jones was drafted into the Army in late 1941 and departed immediately to Fort McClellan, Alabama. He served as an illustrator, creating visual training aids and producing a mural for the fort’s Enlisted Men’s Service Club entitled Courage, Fraternity, Strength. He returned to Fort Valley after the war and married a Cuban woman named María Luisa Ramírez.

For the next several decades, Jones’ artistic career flourished, informed by his ideological resolve. His works became overtly anti-imperialist and anticapitalist, and themes of racial equity came to the fore. Outside of the

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studio, Jones acted as a vice chairman for the People’s Progressive Party of Georgia, an interracial platform battling against the Ku Klux Klan, federal poll taxes, the government loyalty order, and unjust employment legislation.\textsuperscript{460} Administrators at Jackson State University recognized Jones’ artistic and political value and invited him to establish an art department in 1949. Jones taught there until his retirement in 1978.\textsuperscript{461} His art received more praise in these later years than ever before. In the 1960s, he won several awards for his oil paintings depicting the Black American experience. His prints were also selected by the American Soviet Friendship Society to tour Russia in 1966.\textsuperscript{462} Additionally, Jones traveled to several African nations in 1974 with the Educators to Africa Association.\textsuperscript{463}

Jones died in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1996. As an artist and educator, Jones had a strong impact on his Southern communities even beyond his death.\textsuperscript{464} His legacy remains in the large gallery of Harlem Renaissance and continental African art present at Jackson State University, as well as in his personal works located in several prominent collections.\textsuperscript{465}

### 3.17.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Jones presented two prints at the Fort Huachuca exhibition: \textit{St. Louis Cathedral} and \textit{Wagon} (no attributable images). Most of the artist’s other surviving works are black and white lithographs, so it is possible that the two prints were created in the same medium. \textit{St. Louis Cathedral} was likely inspired by the church of the same name in New Orleans, where Jones studied and taught. The contents of \textit{Wagon} are unknown but may follow Jones’ preferred subject matter to depict labor or mobility in the Depression-era working class.


\textsuperscript{462} Clarion-Ledger. 1967. “Jackson State Artist in International Show.”

\textsuperscript{463} Crouther. 2017. “Lawrence Arthur Jones.”


\textsuperscript{465} Jackson State University. n.d. “Permanent Collection.” Art Gallery. \url{https://www.jsums.edu/theartgallery/permanent-collection/}. 
3.18 Paul Laessle (1908–1988)

3.18.1 Biography

Paul Laessle was born on 21 December 1908, in Germantown, Pennsylvania. A descendant of immigrant German grandparents, Laessle was among a handful of White artists who participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibit. His father, Albert, was a renowned sculptor and member of the National Academy of Design. Paul’s mother, Mary, was also a professional sculptor and portrait painter, though census data does not indicate that she was officially employed.  

Laessle’s adolescence is largely undocumented, though his parents likely laid the foundations for his artistic career. In the early 1930s, Laessle attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where his father was an instructor. It is unknown if Paul ever studied with his father, who is best known for his animal sculptures. Regardless, Paul never adopted his father’s preferred medium, and instead dedicated himself to watercolor portraiture and lithograph printing. His impressionist portrait style was inspired both by his mother’s works and his multiple periods of study in Europe, funded by the Cresson Travelling Scholarship.  

In the late 1930s, Laessle was employed by the Pennsylvania WPA. He showed many watercolor pieces in WPA-sponsored exhibits, including the New York World’s Fair (April 1939–October 1940). The same year, he presented a one-man show at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Art, introducing carborundum prints to his repertoire (see Footnote 115). Laessle was also working as a freelance artist and photographer at the time. The outbreak of war briefly reoriented Laessle’s career path, and he worked as a military mechanic for a few years before becoming the artist in residence for the Maritime Service Training Station in Sheepshead Bay, New York, in 1945.  

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After the war, Laessle relocated to Miami. There, he worked as a travelling artist, taking his “painting wagon” around the state to paint watercolor landscapes and portraits. He later earned a teaching position at Terry Art Institute, where he was employed until 1956.\textsuperscript{471} Laessle remained in Florida until his death in 1988. A few of his prints are now held in the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Gallery of Art.\textsuperscript{472}

### 3.18.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

It is unclear why FAP director Cahill selected one of Laessle’s pieces for the Fort Huachuca exhibition, as his works did not commonly depict Black individuals or culture. His work, a black and white lithograph entitled \textit{Night Goings On}, shows several shadowed figures gathered under a streetlight and does not offer a clear explanation regarding its inclusion in the exhibit (Figure 64).\textsuperscript{473} It is possible that Laessle had a connection with one of the many presenting artists also based in Philadelphia (Humbert Howard, Raymond Steth, Dox Thrash, and others), which brought his work to the attention of Cahill.

\textsuperscript{471} Frankel. 2022. “Laessle, Paul___Miami.”


Figure 64. Paul Laessle (1908–1988), *Night Goings On*, c. 1935–1939, lithograph, 12 3/8 in. × 9 3/8 in., Baltimore Museum of Art, exhibit number 43 (Used with permission from Baltimore Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.19 Elba Lightfoot (1907–1989)

3.19.1 Biography

One of two women among the 36 artists, Elba Lightfoot was born around 1907. Census records of her birthplace vary over the decades, listing Kansas, Arkansas, and Illinois as possible locations. The Lightfoot family settled in Evanston, Illinois, by 1910. Elba and her four younger siblings would reside there until the 1930s. Her father worked as a plasterer and her mother was privately employed as a housekeeper.

Lightfoot had an interest in professional art from a young age, though she often had to work odd jobs to support her creative development. In her late teenage years, she had established herself as a local artist with her own listing in the Evanston City Directory. In 1930, Lightfoot was officially employed as a private household cook. The position offered her sufficient funds to relocate to New York City the following year. There, Lightfoot took classes at the Grand Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Lightfoot immersed herself in the city’s art scene over the next several years, often contending with discrimination based on both race and gender. Lightfoot engaged with other Black artists and academics to establish the Harlem Artists Guild in 1935, using the group as a platform to promote the visual arts and address issues of social and political inequity. The rise of the WPA in New York fueled the Guild’s activity, as Black artists—particularly female Black artists—were frequently overlooked in WPA projects and administrative boards.

In 1936, the WPA supported Lightfoot and several other Black artists in the Harlem Hospital Center project, one of the first large-scale federal

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475 1910 Census indicates Arkansas, 1920 and 1930 Censes indicate Kansas, and 1950 census indicates Illinois as Lightfoot’s birthplace.


478 1930 Census, “Elba Lightfoot.”


commissions offered to Black creators. Lightfoot composed a mural entitled *Toy Parade* for the pediatric department. The inclusion of Black motifs brought criticism from the hospital’s superintendent, who initially rejected several artists’ mural designs. Charles Alston, a co-founder of the Harlem Artists Guild and leader of the WPA project, accused the superintendent of racial discrimination, and public outcry eventually led to the reversal of the decision.

Lightfoot was an active member of the Harlem Community Art Center and other local art-based movements. Her works, including mural segments and portraits, were often included in the Art Center’s exhibitions. She was also involved in the Riverdale Children’s Association, participating in auction benefits as a member of the artists committee. Most of these works have been lost, and thematic focus and style of Lightfoot’s work is unclear, apart from her contribution to the Harlem Hospital (Figure 65).

There are few records of Lightfoot’s postwar artistic career. She likely continued painting privately, though was officially employed at a baking company as of 1950. She remained involved in the city’s creative scene, as she and her husband, Alberto De Reyes, lived with stage actress Evelyn Davis, who also engaged with racial equity movements in the arts. Lightfoot died in Manhattan in 1989.

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3.19.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

*Mural Panel*, an oil painting by Lightfoot, was included in the Fort Huachuca exhibition (no attributable image). The title of the piece and the absence of other works by the artist precludes any conjecture about the painting’s subject matter and style.

3.20 Edward Loper (1916–2011)

3.20.1 Biography

Edward Loper, Sr., was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on 7 April 1916. His parents were very young, so Loper’s grandmother was responsible for a great

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deal of his upbringing. In his young years, it seemed that Loper would grow to be a professional athlete rather than a professional artist. He showed great talent on both his football and basketball teams at Howard High School, even earning an athletic scholarship at Pennsylvania’s Lincoln University. Unfortunately, his family’s financial circumstances prevented him from attending college, and he entered the workforce shortly after graduating high school.489

In the late 1930s, Loper earned a position with the Delaware WPA Easel Division, despite having no prior record of artistic experience.490 Loper was tasked with producing illustrations of American furniture and décor. Over his four-year stint with the WPA, he created over one hundred illustrations to be catalogued in the Index of American Design in Washington, DC.491 His folk-realist depictions revealed his artistic talent for detail and precision and awoke his creative passions. He began to study art independently, taking weekend trips to the Philadelphia Museum of Art to expand his knowledge and skill. Loper was quickly recognized as a natural talent, becoming the first Black artist to present at the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts only a year after beginning work for the WPA.492

After his time with the WPA, Loper worked at the Allied Kid leather tanning factory until 1947. He then began his teaching career and would instruct art students at various institutions before opening his own studio. Loper taught painting for over 20 years before he received formal instruction himself. In 1963, he received an invitation to study at the Barnes Foundation in Pennsylvania and spent many years taking classes with the Foundation’s director, Violette de Mazia.493 Throughout his career as a student and educator, he gradually adopted a post-modernist style. He mostly created cityscapes, along with a few portraits and human subject genre scenes. Loper’s later works featured increasingly vibrant colors and strong cubist influences, mainly drawn from Picasso and Cézanne.494

Before Loper’s death in 2011, multiple Delaware art institutions hosted retrospective exhibitions that featured nearly 70 years’ worth of art. In

490 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 134.
491 African American Registry. n.d. “Edward Loper Sr, Artist Born.”
492 African American Registry. n.d. “Edward Loper Sr, Artist Born.”
493 African American Registry. n.d. “Edward Loper Sr, Artist Born.”
494 African American Registry. n.d. “Edward Loper Sr, Artist Born.”
honor of his career, Delaware State University named Loper an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts. He also received the Governor’s Award for the Arts. Loper’s works remain in many permanent collections, including those at the Philadelphia Art Museum, the Delaware Art Museum, and the Corcoran Gallery. His personal and artistic legacy also lives on through his son, Edward Loper, Jr., who is also a professional artist.495

3.20.2  Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

The nature of Loper’s McCauley Street, shown at Fort Huachuca, is unknown (no attributable image). Based on the title, the piece likely reflects the characteristics of Loper’s early independent works—warmly colored oil landscape depictions of areas in and around the artist’s hometown.496

3.21  John C. Lutz (1908–1988)

3.21.1  Biography

Lutz was born in Hickory, North Carolina, on 27 July 1908. Little is known about Lutz’s childhood, apart from the fact that he was a predominantly self-taught artist. By his early twenties, Lutz had relocated to Atlantic City, New Jersey. There, he worked days while taking evening art classes at a local high school.497

Lutz moved to Cincinnati a few years later and began working for the local FAP Mural Division. There, he produced murals for the Harriet Beecher Stowe School before transferring to the Easel Division, where he worked until 1940. In that time, Lutz presented his work at the Cincinnati Museum and the Cleveland Federal Art Gallery.498 He also showed at the 1940 American Negro Exhibition alongside many other artists featured at Fort Huachuca, and it is likely there that he secured a place in the 1943 exhibit.

Lutz submitted a draft registration card in his last year of employment with the Ohio WPA. There is no concrete record stating that Lutz enlisted in the military. However, immigration and naturalization records show that Lutz took multiple trips to the Pacific in the mid-1940s. In 1947, he journeyed


496 African American Registry. n.d. “Edward Loper Sr, Artist Born.”

497 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 134.

498 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 134.
from Pearl Harbor to San Francisco on the USS *Breckinridge*, part of the postwar commissioned fleet responsible for transporting servicemembers and their dependents.\(^{499}\) At that time, Lutz was unmarried and childless, possibly traveling in some military capacity.

By 1948, Lutz had returned to North Carolina, where he married Occie Settles.\(^{500}\) The couple had a son, John Choram Lutz, Jr., on 17 May 1949.\(^{501}\) The family was living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, at the time, with Lutz employed as a building contractor.\(^{502}\) There is no record of any additional art production for the remainder of Lutz’s life. He died in Hennepin, Minnesota, on 28 June 1988.\(^{503}\)

### 3.21.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

At Fort Huachuca, Lutz presented an oil painting entitled *Early Snow* (no attributable image). The lack of preserved works by the artist precludes any commentary on his technique or style.

### 3.22 Edmond Malnate (1916–2003)

#### 3.22.1 Biography

Edmond Malnate was born on 16 July 1916, in Quincy, Massachusetts.\(^{504}\) Like several other artists who participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit (such as Stuart Bruce, Theodore Gillien, and Lonnie Moore), little is known about Malnate’s productive years or the circumstances which cultivated his interest in the arts. As with Stuart Bruce, census data provides a general impression of Malnate’s upbringing. While still a child, Malnate moved to Philadelphia, where his father worked as a ship fitter in

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Malnate spent most of his productive adult years in Philadelphia, where he found work in advertising. By 1940, he had secured a job as a WPA artist at 510 South Broad Street—a Philadelphia mansion which, until the 1930s, housed the city’s renowned John G. Johnson Art Collection. Malnate later found work as a draftsman before enlisting in the Army in February 1943.

A descendant of French-Canadian and Italian grandparents, Malnate was among a handful of White artists who participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibit. Like other White artists featured in the exhibit, Malnate may have participated in the show because his body of work depicted Black individuals or themes related to the Black experience in America.

After the war, Malnate resumed his artistic career. In 1946, he collaborated with other veterans to produce a set of children’s books, of which Malnate wrote and illustrated at least one selection, entitled Tuffy. By 1950, Malnate was working once again in the Philadelphia advertising industry, where he likely used his skills to produce visual layouts. Malnate's career advanced steadily and by the late 1950s, he became art director of the Ullman Organization, a Philadelphia advertising firm. Malnate died on 6 November 2003 at the age of 87.

### 3.22.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Malnate submitted one piece for the 1943 exhibit, a print he titled Tobacco Rows (Figure 66). Completed in 1941, Tobacco Rows is a carborundum

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509 1920 Census, “Edmond B Malnate.”


mezzotint print produced from a 6 in. \( \times \) 9 7/8 in. plate.\(^{513}\) The composition depicts a fieldhand trudging through a wide, endless landscape of young tobacco plants, perhaps at the end of a long day. The piece is almost entirely black, save for a diffused glow near the horizon which accentuates the roof of a distant house and the man in the foreground. The slumped position of the man's torso and his drooping arms convey an overwhelming exhaustion which, considering his occupation, may be as much an existential enervation as a physical one. The house in the background beckons as a welcoming refuge, though the viewer is inclined to wonder whether the fieldhand has enough energy to make it there, or if he is welcome.\(^{514}\)

Figure 66. Edmond Malnate (1916–2003), Tobacco Rows, 1941, carborundum mezzotint, 7 1/2 in. \( \times \) 11 1/4 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 44. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)\(^{515}\)

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\(^{514}\) Edmond Malnate, Tobacco Rows, 1941, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Removed from online catalog.

\(^{515}\) Edmond Malnate, Tobacco Rows, 1941, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Removed from online catalog.
3.23 Lester Mathews (1911–1990)

3.23.1 Biography

Lester Mathews was born in Pittsburgh on 8 August 1911, with little else known about his early life or interest in sculpture.\(^516\) By 1935, Mathews resided in Oakland, California. He completed his third year of university level art studies in 1940 while working as a government project commercial artist.\(^517\) During his time with the FAP, Mathews worked under popular California modernist George Harris.\(^518\)

Mathews’ works were included in several California showings over the decade. In 1940, he presented alongside Harris in an Art Week exhibition in Oakland City Hall. Fellow sculptor Sargent Johnson was also featured.\(^519\) The following year, his door relief carving, *Tree of Life*, was shown in a popular presentation of trends in American sculpture at the San Francisco Museum of Art.\(^520\) Mathews presented his only known solo exhibition at Chabot Gallery in Los Angeles in 1949. He showed a variety of mediums, including “paintings, sculpture, ceramics, lamps, and other ‘art for the home.’”\(^521\) Apart from this versatility, nothing is known about the artist’s preferred themes or style.

There are few records of Mathews’ personal life. He married Orby Wilson in 1942 in Carson City, Nevada, before the couple returned to California.\(^522\) Later, Mathews moved to Los Angeles, likely with his wife. He died there in March 1990.\(^523\)

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\(^{518}\) *World War II Draft Cards*, “Lester Nathan Matthews.”


\(^{520}\) Dungan. 1941. “Sculpture Show in S.F. is Leading Art Attraction.” *Oakland Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1941. [https://www.newspapers.com/image/147785869/](https://www.newspapers.com/image/147785869/).


3.23.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Mathews’ association with the FAP and fellow California-based sculptor Sargant Johnson perhaps led to his inclusion in the Fort Huachuca exhibition. There, Mathews presented a single sculpture entitled *Head*. Details about the piece are unknown (no attributable image).

3.24 Lonnie Moore (1905–1991)

3.24.1 Biography

Like several artists who submitted work for the 1943 Art Exhibit at Fort Huachuca, little is known about Lonnie Moore. There are few details about her life, and even fewer details concerning her artistic pursuits. As with Stuart Bruce and Edward Malnate, a general impression of Moore’s upbringing and early ventures into art can be reconstructed from census data and other relevant records. She was born in Oktibbeha County, Mississippi, as Lonnie Henderson on 21 January 1905.524 Little is known about her childhood, except that she did not receive a secondary education after sixth grade.525 By 1926, Henderson had moved to Ohio and married Maddix Moore, a native Mississippian who worked in Ohio as a coal miner.526 She may have moved to Ohio in search of work, joining thousands of other Black Americans in the Great Migration. Based on the birthplaces of their children listed in the 1940 census, Lonnie and Maddix Moore moved from Ohio to Tennessee in 1928, then relocated to Illinois in 1930. The family ultimately settled in Chicago, where Lonnie Moore secured a job with the Illinois Federal Art Project.527 There, she was part of the FAP’s Easel Division.528 Like many other WPA artists in Chicago, Moore may have been active in the SSCAC, which would have allowed her to forge connections with the city’s most prolific artists.

The details surrounding Moore’s later years are more indefinite than her early years. A 1950 census reveals that she and her husband Maddix continued to reside in Chicago with seven of their children, who ranged in age from six to 20 years old. Based on the census data, Moore no longer had

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526 Summit County, Marriage Records, “Lonnie Henderson.”
527 1940 Census, “Lonnie Moore.”
a formal occupation in art by 1950. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the remainder of her life. Moore died in Chicago on 20 March 1991.

3.24.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Because many entrants in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 art exhibit were WPA artists, it is probable that Moore learned about the exhibition through her association with the Illinois Art Project. Her contribution is significant, since she appears to be one of only two women who participated in the exhibition. According to the exhibit pamphlet, Moore had one piece selected for the show, a painting titled *After School* (no attributable image). Unfortunately, the characteristics of this painting are unknown, and due to Moore’s low profile, it is not possible to conjecture how this piece may have compared with her typical artwork.


3.25.1 Biography

Archibald Motley, Jr., was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1891 to middle class parents. His mother was a teacher, and his father was a Pullman porter, a profession that has been credited in the formation of the Black middle class. When Motley was a small child, the family moved to Englewood, a predominantly White neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. Due to the family’s economic status and light skin tone, Motley was afforded greater access to resources and opportunities than many of his Black artist peers.

Motley studied at the SAIC, graduating in 1918. He was one of the first Black students accepted into the program and his early style was significantly influenced by the institute’s curriculum. His training was “academic, rigorously focused on the human figure, and steeped in European tradition.” Motley developed a great talent in portraiture,

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532 Alvarez et al. 2014. “Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist.”
533 Alvarez et al. 2014. “Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist.”
inspired by Renaissance artists like Rembrandt. He received top grades in his portrait classes and earned a Class Honorable Mention for “general excellence” in oil portraiture, an award given to only nine students in his class of several hundred.534

Following his academic career, Motley hoped to engage in a career in European-style fine art, namely as a professional portraitist. This goal was hindered by a lack of clientele, as White customers had a predilection for White artists, while most Black Chicagoans lacked either the means or interest in portraiture.535 In need of employment, Motley joined his father as a Pullman porter from 1918 to 1925, but continued painting on the side, using family and Englewood community members as his subjects.536 He used his formal training to depict Black subjects in a classically European style.537

Considered a part of the Harlem Renaissance movement, Motley believed art should be used as a mode for Black social and cultural advancement. However, he did not wish to shun his academic conventions in favor of specifically Black aesthetics. The year of his graduation, Motley submitted an essay to the Black-owned Chicago Defender entitled “The Negro in Art.” In this piece, he wrote of his desire for Black artists to be afforded the same stylistic versatility and individualism as White artists, rather than being restricted solely to Black subjects and traditional African-rooted styles.538 Despite this sentiment, Motley almost exclusively painted Black subjects in his work, however he did achieve great versatility in terms of style.539

In 1929, Motley was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed him to study art in Paris for a year. There, he studied classical art in the Louvre, but also developed a fascination with bustling life of the city. Jazz Era aesthetics and other Black influences featured prominently in Parisian culture. Based on this experience, as well as observations of the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago’s South Side, Motley adopted a new style: Modernist genre art. This new style would become a hallmark of Motley’s work. He primarily painted urban night scenes “inspired by the rhythm and

colors of jazz. Motley continued using this style for the duration of his career, including his employment in the Illinois FAP mural division, which spanned from 1935 to 1939.

With few exceptions, Motley’s notable career began to fade around the close of WWII, though his works would continue to be featured in a variety of retrospective Black artist exhibitions. Shortly before his death, Motley received an honorary doctorate from his alma mater. He was also included in a White House honors ceremony for Black artists during President Carter’s administration. He died in his home city in 1981.

3.25.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Motley’s three paintings included at the Fort Huachuca exhibition included The Plotters (1933), Carnival (1937), and Arrival of the Slaves (c. 1938). Each feature his distinctive Modernist genre style, complete with diffused lighting and borderline chaotic narratives. Each piece was produced during his time with the Illinois FAP. The scenes, though depicting different temporal and cultural contexts, are all heavily populated with a variety of characters intended to represent the vibrancy and diversity of life within Black communities (Figure 68–Figure 67).

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Figure 67. Archibald Motley, Jr. (1891–1981), *Arrival of the Slaves*, c. 1938, oil on board, Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 15. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 68. Archibald Motley, Jr. (1891–1981), *The Plotters*, 1933, oil on canvas, 36 1/8 in. × 40 1/4 in., Private collection, exhibit number 21. (Used with permission from Private Collection. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.26 Frank Neal (1914–1955)

3.26.1 Biography

Frank Neal was born in Palestine, Texas, on 12 July 1914. Nothing is known about Neal’s upbringing or early interest in the arts. At some point in his early adulthood, Neal relocated to Chicago, where he attended the SAIC.

Like many other participants in the Fort Huachuca exhibition, Neal was active in the SSCAC, both as an artist and event planner. He was responsible for planning the center’s Artists and Models Ball fundraiser for several years. The benefit was a glamorous affair, especially considering the concurrent Great Depression, and successfully highlighted Black creation.
and achievement in the visual and performing arts. Neal was an astute choice for this position, as he was also engaged in the city’s acting and dancing communities. In addition to this role, Neal was employed by the WPA, working at the National Defense Machine Drafting School.

In the early 1940s, Neal continued painting in association with the SSCAC, though his employment status is unclear. The 1940 Census does not indicate that either Neal or his wife, Dorcas, were officially employed.

For the remainder of his career, Neal exhibited extreme creative versatility. In 1943, Neal moved to New York City with his wife and infant daughter. Though he continued painting in his new home, his focus shifted primarily to dance. Neal performed in three Broadway shows in the 1940s, acting as dance captain in his final production, *Finian’s Rainbow*. After this period, Neal relocated once again, opening a custom display and serving tray business in Mexico for a short time. There, he developed a spray glaze for the trays that protected them from breakage and discoloration, an accomplishment that earned him the title of “chemist” in one wide-spread news article. The article also praised his painting, reporting that such figures as Frank Sinatra, Leonard Bernstein, and Vincent Minnelli all owned “Frank Neals.”

In this artistic prime, Neal’s works were reportedly displayed at the Chicago Art Institute, the Brooklyn Art Museum, and the Carnegie Art Museum. Unfortunately, evidence of this popularity did not extend beyond the 1953 article and few of his works remain on public display. Neal was killed in a car accident in May 1955.

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550 World War II Draft Cards, “Frank Woodard Neal.”
3.26.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

In the early 1940s, Neal painted *Girl in a Yellow Hat*, his piece displayed at the Fort Huachuca exhibition (Figure 70). The oil wash portrait features delicate earthy tones and soft, almost indistinct lines, apart from the girl’s large dark eyes. The trend of experimenting with the size and depth of human features is common in Neal’s few surviving works.556

Figure 70. Frank Neal (1914–1955), *Girl in Yellow Hat*, 1943, oil wash, 12 1/2 in. × 9 1/8 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 28. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.27 Bryant Pringle (1917–unknown)

3.27.1 Biography

The life of Bryant Pringle, like several artists who participated in Fort Huachuca’s 1943 exhibit, is largely shrouded in mystery. He was born on 3 August 1917, in Camden, New Jersey.557 His mother, Urcelia (née O’Connor) Pringle was a native of Jamaica who immigrated to the United States in 1914, and his father, Jonathan Pringle, was a native of Philadelphia.558 Bryant’s early childhood was spent in Camden, where his father worked in a laboratory setting and his mother raised him at home.559 By the time Bryant’s first sibling was born in 1923, the family had relocated to Philadelphia.560 According to census data, Pringle attended school through the eighth grade.561 Without any record of higher education, it is likely that Bryant was a self-taught artist.

By 1940, Pringle was employed by the Philadelphia WPA art program, likely in the printmaking division based on the nature of his surviving pieces.562 At the same time, Pringle was working as an artist for the Philadelphia School Board, though the capacity of his work is unknown.563

In 1940, Bryant married Theresa C. Joseph in Philadelphia, though their marriage was short lived.564 Bryant applied to marry Winona Tripp in September 1946, with whom he already had an infant child.565 Bryant met and married Winona in Honolulu, where he traveled several times during WWII and beyond. These travels are recorded in Department of Justice records of immigration and naturalization, which show Pringle as a

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562 World War II Draft Cards, “Bryant Ethelberth Pringle.”

563 1940 Census, “Bryant Pringle.”


passenger on military vessels, such as the submarine USS *Sea Flasher* in July 1944 and the United States Army Transport *General Patrick* in 1950, indicating service or auxiliary involvement.\(^{566}\) In 1950, Bryant reported his occupation as an Auto Mechanic, perhaps a role he performed throughout the war and during his stints in Hawaii.\(^{567}\)

Bryant and Winona had two children in Hawaii before returning to Philadelphia.\(^{568}\) Pringle was recorded as still living in Philadelphia in 1999, though details regarding his later life and death are unknown.\(^{569}\) Three of his lithograph pieces, *Arc Welder*, *Port of Philadelphia*, and *Friday* are currently held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.\(^{570}\)

### 3.27.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Pringle presented one lithograph at the Fort Huachuca exhibition. *Arc Welder*, a gritty depiction of an industrial laborer, may have been inspired by the artist’s interest in mechanics (Figure 71).

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\(^{568}\) *1950 Census,* “Bryant Frengle.”


Figure 71. Bryant Pringle (1917–unknown), *Arc Welder*, c. 1940, lithograph, exhibit number 64. (Used with permission from National Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

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3.28 Charles L. Sallée, Jr. (1911–2006)

3.28.1 Biography

Charles Sallée, Jr., was born in Oberlin, Ohio, on 4 May 1911. The family relocated to Sandusky, Ohio, several years later, where his father opened a construction contracting business. The eldest of fourteen children, Sallée helped support his family by aiding his father’s company before pursuing an art education.

As a young adult, Sallée moved to Cleveland, where he joined the Karamu House (then named the Playhouse Settlement). The House was a hub for Black arts and culture, attracting performance and visual artists of all kinds. Sallée was one of the first art students to enroll under the tutelage of master printmaker Richard R. Beatty. He showed immediate promise, and soon became Karamu’s first Gilpin Award winner. The scholarship award allowed Sallée to study at the John Huntington Polytechnic Institute (1932–1933) and, later, the Cleveland Institute of Art (1933–1938). Sallée became the first Black artist to graduate from the Cleveland Institute of Art, and in 1939, he received a second degree in education from Western Reserve University.

Sallée remained active in the Karamu house though 1941, creating many of his works with the sponsorship of the WPA. He produced several prints and oil paintings, as well as murals for local schools, hospitals, and housing projects. His works were included in several exhibitions around the country, including those at the Library of Congress in 1940 and the Associated American Art Galleries of New York in 1941. He presented his first solo exhibition in North Canton Library, Ohio, in 1940.

Over the course of his career, Sallée exhibited enormous creative range. In 1943, Sallée put his artistic talent to new uses when he was drafted into the Army Corps of Engineers to serve as a cartographer and camouflage

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575 Porter, Modern Negro Art, 129.
designer.\textsuperscript{578} During his assignment, he was deployed to Europe and the Philippines.\textsuperscript{579} He returned safely to Cleveland in 1945 and took a position as an art teacher. By 1950, he had abandoned teaching and painted full-time from a home studio.\textsuperscript{580} Sallée later opened his own interior design firm. His first major commission was the Tijuana night club (since demolished). There, he constructed a revolving stage decorated with Pacific Island-inspired murals where several famous musicians, including Billie Holiday, would perform.\textsuperscript{581} He was later commissioned by Cleveland Trust, the Stouffer Hotel, and the Cleveland Browns.\textsuperscript{582}

Sallée died in a Cleveland nursing home in 2006 after a long and successful career. His works were included in several major retrospective exhibitions, including \textit{Yet Still We Rise: African American Art in Cleveland, 1920-1970; Hardship to Hope: African American Art from the Karamu Workshop}; and a collection displayed at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, in Beachwood, Ohio.\textsuperscript{583}

\subsection*{3.28.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition}

The four pieces Sallée presented at Fort Huachuca reflected his typical print style: black and white, highly textured depictions of Black living in the urban North. He worked to capture a range of experience across his works, creating images of labor, as in \textit{Used Cars} and \textit{The Post Setters}, night life, as in \textit{Swingtime}, and the private domestic sphere (Figure 72–Figure 74). \textit{Bertha} is representative of Sallée’s empathetic character study portraits (Figure 75).\textsuperscript{584}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{578} Cleveland Museum of Art. n.d. “Bedtime, 1940.”
\item \textsuperscript{579} Tyler Courier-Times. 2001. “Artist Painted Strokes of Cleveland’s History.” \textit{The Tyler Courier-Times}. \texttt{https://www.newspapers.com/image/590734922/}.
\item \textsuperscript{581} Tyler Courier-Times. 2001. “Artist Painted Strokes of Cleveland’s History.”
\item \textsuperscript{582} “Bedtime, 1940.”
\item \textsuperscript{583} “Bedtime, 1940.”
\item \textsuperscript{584} “Bedtime, 1940.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Figure 72. Charles Sallée, Jr. (1911–2006), *Used Cars*, c. 1935, soft ground etching, 7 in. × 9 ½ in., Case Western Reserve University, exhibit number 49. (Used with permission from Case Western Reserve University. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 73. Charles Sallée, Jr. (1911–2006), *The Post Setters*, c. 1935, soft ground etching, 5 ½ in. × 6 ¾ in., Case Western Reserve University, exhibit number 66. (Used with permission from Case Western Reserve University. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 74. Charles Sallée, Jr. (1911–2006), *Swingtime*, c. 1935, aquatint and etching, 5 ½ in. × 6 3/4 in., Case Western Reserve University, exhibit number 67. (Used with permission from Case Western Reserve University. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 75. Charles Sallée, Jr. (1911–2006), *Bertha*, c. 1935, aquatint and etching, 7 in. × 9 1/2 in., Case Western Reserve University, exhibit number 65. (Used with permission from Case Western Reserve University. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.29 Bernard Schardt (1904–1979)

3.29.1 Biography

Bernard Schardt was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1904. Schardt began his higher education at the University of Wisconsin, but his interest in the arts brought him to the SAIC, where he earned his degree in 1924. Shortly after, he relocated to New York City, where he studied with the Art Students League until 1928. From this point on, Schardt was deeply engaged in the New York art scene. Schardt was employed by the New York City WPA starting in 1935.\(^{589}\) He showed remarkable artistic and organizational talent and was soon named to positions of authority within the local FAP. Appointed as the administrator of the allocations division, Schardt oversaw the creation of WPA art exhibitions, including a showing at the 1939–1940 New York World’s Fair. He later worked as the head of the Poster Division. Beyond his administrative responsibilities, Schardt produced many artistic works during his time with the WPA. Most of his pieces were done in his signature woodcutting style, though he was also a practiced lithographer.\(^{590}\)

During Schardt’s time with the WPA, he married fellow artist and WPA employee Nene Vibber. The couple shared a loft workspace with Jackson Pollock for many years, who remained a close friend throughout Schardt’s career.\(^{591}\)

In the late 1930s, Schardt started working for the National Youth Administration Art Production Unit.\(^{592}\) He acted as an instructor through the early war years as the unit produced military recruitment posters.\(^{593}\) Schardt remained committed to youth development in the arts for the rest of his life, giving lessons at the Brooklyn Museum into his retirement. Bernard Schardt died in North Truro, Massachusetts, in 1979, leaving his


\(^{590}\) British Museum. n.d. “Bernard Schardt.”

\(^{591}\) British Museum. n.d. “Bernard Schardt.”

\(^{592}\) The National Youth Administration was a New Deal organization created under the 1935 Emergency Relief Appropriation Act. It was established to engage young people (ages 16–25) in a range of work and service projects like those of the WPA. “National Youth Administration (NYA) (1935),” The Living New Deal, November 18, 2016, https://livingnewdeal.org/glossary/national-youth-administration-nya-1935/.

artistic legacy in collections at the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Brooklyn Museum.594

3.29.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Schardt was one of seven artists at the exhibit who identified as White. Girl Sewing was produced in Schardt’s typical woodcut medium, though the tone of the piece diverged from that of many of his other works. Scenes of labor were common in his repertoire, along with portraits of the Depression’s downtrodden. Many of the artist’s woodcuts were colorless, which effectively captured the glumness of his subjects. However, Schardt created a few warmly colored woodcut portraits of Black women carrying out domestic work.595 Girl Sewing is among his depictions of Black womanhood (Figure 76).

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Figure 76. Bernard Schardt (1904–1979), Girl Sewing, c. 1934–1943, color woodcut on paper, 13 7/8 in. × 11 1/8 in., Smithsonian American Art Museum, exhibit number 53. (Used with permission from Smithsonian American Art Museum. Applicable rights reserved.)

3.30 Charles Sebree (1914–1985)

3.30.1 Biography

Charles Sebree was born on 23 March 1914, in White City, Kentucky.\(^{597}\) Sebree engaged with visual arts from a very early age, learning basic sculpture and drawing techniques from his uncle. A natural artist, his talent was recognized by his elementary teachers, who tasked him with creating drawings and other decorations for the school.\(^{598}\) Sebree and his mother relocated to the South Side of Chicago in 1924. There, Sebree continued to exhibit remarkable skill. When he was 14 years old, Sebree’s teacher presented a piece of his art to the Chicago Renaissance Society. The society purchased the piece, entitled *Seated Boy*, and published a reproduction on the front page of their magazine.\(^{599}\)

Catching wind of the child’s early success, the SAIC offered Sebree a scholarship to attend weekend classes shortly after the publication circulated. He would later enroll as a full-time student at the Institute, where he spent three years. During his young adult life, Sebree worked closely with the Bronzeville art community as a member of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Guild, as well as the WPA-sponsored SSCAC. There, he befriended several Black artists also featured in the Fort Huachuca exhibition, including Eldzier Cortor, Archibald Motley, Jr., and Charles White (Section 3.7, Section 3.25, and Section 3.36). Sebree worked in the Chicago FAP’s Easel Division until he was drafted in 1942. Never deployed, Sebree remained stationed at Camp Robert Smalls, a segregated Navy training facility in northern Illinois, for the duration of his service.\(^{600}\)

After the war, Sebree moved to New York City. There, he fostered another creative passion—theater. At the SAIC, Sebree met the well-known Black dancer, anthropologist, and activist Katherine Dunham, who helped him foster an interest in theatrical and performing arts. While in Chicago, Sebree acted as a dancer and set designer for Dunham’s dance company. His theater engagement grew in New York City, where he wrote and directed productions for the American Negro Theatre. Sebree’s musical production, *Mrs. Patterson*,


\(^{600}\) AAREG. n.d. “Charles Sebree, Artist, and Playwright Born.”
premiered on Broadway in 1954. This interest in performance influenced Sebree’s visual arts as well, as his subjects were often actors, harlequins, and traveling street performers.

Sebree developed many prominent connections in the New York Black creative scene. Beyond the theater, Sebree developed a close friendship with Billie Holiday and Alain Locke. Locke called Sebree “one of the most talented of the younger contemporary modernists.” Locke also introduced Sebree to Harlem Renaissance poet Countee Cullen, for whom Sebree worked as an illustrator for a time.

In his later career, Sebree experimented with texture, bolder colors, and increasing abstraction of the human form. His works also became smaller, as he did most of his work in his home at the kitchen table. Sebree moved to Washington, DC, in the late 1950s, where he would spend the rest of his life. He remained involved in the creative scene at Howard University until his death in 1985.

### 3.30.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Sebree was likely invited to present at the Fort Huachuca exhibition due to his connections with the military and the WPA. Art historian James Porter described Sebree’s work as having a “definite inclination toward the mystical and ineffable of human life.” He produced portraits almost exclusively, using an artistic style that is considered strongly modernist. His portraiture features the abstract whimsy many associate with the works of Pablo Picasso, particularly those produced in his later career. In his Chicago years, Sebree showed great interest in Byzantine icons, and his use of color and bodily proportion presented iconographic style with a modern twist. It is likely that Portrait of a Man, shown in the Fort Huachuca exhibition, reflected these characteristics (no attributable image). The title of Sebree’s

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603 Locke. 1940. The Negro in Art, 135.
other piece in the exhibition, *Sunflowers*, may indicate a divergence from his typical human subject (no attributable image).

### 3.31 Raymond Steth (1917–1997)

#### 3.31.1 Biography

Raymond Steth was born in Norfolk, Virginia, on 25 June 1917. Steth grew up in a Pentecostal farming family, an experience which greatly influenced his future artistic vision. The family relocated to Philadelphia when Steth was still a child, and Raymond attended school in the city. After completing tenth grade, Steth left school to work as a local sign painter and vaudeville performer.

A few years later, Steth found employment with the WPA Graphics Division in Philadelphia. He worked closely with several other prominent Black artists, including Samuel Brown, Claude Clark, and Dox Thrash, and aided Thrash in the development of the carborundum mezzotint printing process. Steth used this process, as well as traditional lithography, to create numerous black and white prints during his employment with the WPA. In 1941, Steth received his first academic art training at the Philadelphia College of Art. He attended classes there until 1943, also studying at Philadelphia's Barnes Foundation from 1942 to 1944.

Steth's art career was interrupted when he enlisted into the Navy in 1944. He engaged in active domestic service for 19 months before being honorably discharged in January 1946. Immediately after his release, Steth returned to his wife and two young sons in Philadelphia and resumed his creative efforts.

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610 AAREG. n.d. “Raymond Steth, Graphic Artist Born.”

611 AAREG. n.d. “Raymond Steth, Graphic Artist Born.”


614 1940 Census. “Raymond Steth.”
After the war, Steth reengaged in the Philadelphia art scene in a variety of roles. In 1948, Steth founded the Philographic School of Art in Philadelphia. He acted as director for five years, honing fine and commercial art programs while continuing his own studies at the Fleisher Art Memorial. At the same time, Steth taught printmaking courses at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art. He retired from his teaching and administrative positions in 1954, becoming a full-time artist in residence at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He remained there until his death in February 1997. His pieces are housed in many Philadelphia art institutions, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art.

### 3.31.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Steth produced most of his works during his time with the Philadelphia graphics division, including all eight prints presented at the Fort Huachuca exhibition: *Sidewalk Quintet* (1935), *Debris* (c. 1935), *Despair* (c. 1935), *Patton St. Derelict* (c. 1935), *Evolution of Swing* (1939), *Reggie* (1939), *Apostolic* (c. 1940), and *Recreation* (date unknown) (Figure 77–Figure 83); no attributable image for *Recreation*). Like many artists of the time, Steth partook in the American Scene movement, producing art inspired by the sociopolitical environment of the Great Depression. He often adapted Mexican muralist styles to create “a flowing, allover composition that conveys an intelligible narrative.” Many of Steth’s pieces documented his contemporary environment, showing the suffering of Black urban and agrarian laborers and community reliance on faith structures, as in *Despair* and *Apostolic* (Figure 79 and Figure 82). Other works used a sweeping geographical and temporal frame to explore the ubiquitous influence of Black history and experience on American culture, the most notable being *Evolution of Swing* (Figure 81).

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617 See Figure 72–Figure 78.

618 AAREG. n.d. “Raymond Steth, Graphic Artist Born.”


620 MET. n.d. “Evolution of Swing (1939).”
Figure 77. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), Sidewalk Quintet, c. 1935, lithograph, 7 5/8 in. × 10 3/4 in., Newark Museum, exhibit number 69. (Used with permission from Metropolitan Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 78. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Debris*, c. 1935, etching, 6 1/2 in. × 9 3/4 in., exhibit number 70. (Used with permission from Artnet. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 79. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Despair*, c. 1935, lithograph, 5 ½ in. × 9 ½ in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 71. (Used with permission from Metropolitan Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 80. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Patton St. Derelict*, c. 1935, lithograph, 16 in. × 11 1/2 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 72. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 81. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Evolution of Swing*, 1939, lithograph, 12 11/16 in. × 16 3/4 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, exhibit number 45 (Used with permission from Metropolitan Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved).  

Figure 82. Raymond Steth (1917–1997), *Apostolic*, c. 1940, lithograph, 7 5/8 in. × 12 7/8 in., Metropolitan Museum of Art, exhibit number 73 (Used with permission from Metropolitan Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved).

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3.32 Dox Thrash (1893–1965)

3.32.1 Biography

Dox Thrash, one of the most prolific Black artists of the early 20th century, was born on 22 March 1893, in Griffin, Georgia. Thrash grew up in a cabin previously inhabited by an enslaved family with his mother, a private cook, and three siblings. As a teenager, Thrash did clerical work for a local

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railroad company, though he always had a passion for art. Very few Southern schools would consider admitting a Black student, so Thrash left home in search of an integrated art institution at the age of fifteen. He settled in Chicago, where he worked as an elevator operator for the American Bank Note Engraving Company while taking night classes at the SAIC.

Thrash joined the Army in September 1917, an experience that would help jumpstart his art career. He was deployed to France in 1918 as a private in the 92nd Division. Mustard gas poisoning and shell shock hospitalized Thrash during his service, and he spent his recovery period entertaining other patients with vaudeville performances. Upon his return, Thrash toured the American South on a vaudeville circuit for a few months before settling back in Chicago. Thrash then enrolled full-time at the SAIC with a government financial aid reward for his service in WWI. At the same time, Thrash took up drawing cartoons for a Chicago newspaper.

Thrash moved to Philadelphia in the late 1920s, where he would profoundly impact the art community for the remainder of his career. He worked as a self-employed artist for several years before becoming the first Black artist assigned to the WPA Fine Print Workshop in 1937. Thrash immediately connected with other Black artists and professionals in the Philadelphia Pyramid Club, an institution that strongly supported Thrash’s work. Alain Locke also promoted Thrash’s art, personally selecting many of his pieces for display in national Black art exhibitions. The Harmon Foundation also provided financial support in many of the artist’s endeavors.

Thrash is most celebrated for his contributions to printmaking during his time at Philadelphia’s Fine Print Workshop. There, he worked alongside

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635 Donnelly. 2016. “Art of Dox Thrash.”
Samuel Brown, Claude Clark, and Raymond Steth, all of whom shared a predilection for Social Realism works. In his character studies, genre scenes, and landscapes, Thrash depicted scenes of ordinary life, work, and leisure for Black Philadelphians, as well as the challenges of Southern living based on childhood memories. He succeeded in presenting authentic slices of life with incredible care and dignity. The artist’s acclaim came also from his development of a new printmaking process—carborundum mezzotint printing. Carborundum, or synthetic silicon carbide, is currently used in bulletproof vests and car brake discs; however, Thrash used the material to apply more ink on printing plates. The process gave Thrash’s prints more contrast and depth, as he was able to apply color from dark to light. Thrash originally called the new prints Opheliagaphs, in honor of his mother. The medium was official recognized at a 1938 exhibition in the National Museum of Natural history in Washington, DC.

Thrash continued creating in a variety of styles until the end of his life. Unfortunately, his carborundum medium was never popularized beyond Philadelphia and is rarely seen outside of works from the Fine Print Workshop. Thrash died in Philadelphia in 1965, survived by his wife Edna McAllister. His contributions have been recognized in multiple retrospective exhibitions, including the 2001 *Dox Thrash: An African-American Master Printmaker Rediscovered* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the 2015 Woodmere Art Museum presentation *We Speak: Black Artists in Philadelphia, 1920s–1970s*. His works remain on display at many prominent art institutions nationwide.

3.32.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Thrash presented 17 pieces of various mediums at the Fort Huachuca exhibition. Most of his featured works were prints, including *Catfishin’!* (c. 1930), *Surface Mining* (c. 1930), *Deacon Jones’ Well* (c. 1935), *Old Barns* (c. 1935), *Boats at Night* (c. 1935), *Happy Journey* (c. 1938), *Monday Morning*

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Wash (c. 1938), Cabin Days (c. 1938–1939), Ebony Joe (c. 1939), Octoroon (1939), Coal Yard (c. 1940), Demolition (c. 1940), and Life (1941). In his 13 prints, Thrash used lithography (Figure 92–Figure 94), drypoint (Figure 95), aquatinting (Figure 85, Figure 87, and Figure 88), carborundum relief etching (Figure 89), and his signature carborundum mezzotint (Figure 84, Figure 86, Figure 90, Figure 91, and Figure 96). The nature of Thrash’s three paintings is unknown (no attributable images for Work at Last, While Philly Sleeps, Landscape, or Portrait of R.W.). The selection is representative of the range of subject matter Thrash depicted throughout his career, including portraiture, Southern landscapes, and Northern industrial scenes.

Figure 84. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), Deacon Jones’ Well, c. 1935, carborundum mezzotint, 10 3/4 in. × 14 in., St. Louis Art Museum, exhibit number 77. (Unable to trace original source of image below. Cataloged at the St. Louis Art Museum; used with permission. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 85. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Cat Fishin’*, c. 1930, aquatint and etching on wove paper, 8 1/16 in. × 10 1/4 in., Free Library of Philadelphia, exhibit number 82. (Image from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 86. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Surface Mining*, c. 1930, carborundum mezzotint, 16 in. × 20 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 79. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
Figure 87. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Old Barns*, c. 1935, etching and aquatint on wove paper, 11 1/8 in. × 13 3/4 in., Indiana State University, exhibit number 78. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 88. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Boats at Night*, c. 1935, aquatint, 7 3/8 in. × 11 7/16 in., Free Library of Philadelphia, exhibit number 81. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 89. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), Happy Journey, c. 1938, color carborundum relief etching, 9 15/16 in. × 7 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 55. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 90. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Monday Morning Wash*, c. 1938, color carborundum mezzotint, 11 in. × 14 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 75. (Used with permission from Philadelphia Museum of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 91. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Cabin Days*, c. 1938–1939, carborundum mezzotint, 20 in. × 16 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 76. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
Figure 92. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Ebony Joe*, c. 1939, lithograph, 10 5/8 in. × 8 7/8 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 56. (Used with permission from St. Louis Art Museum. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 93. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Octoroon*, 1939, lithograph, 15 3/4 in. × 13 1/4 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 57. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
Figure 94. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), Coal Yard, c. 1940, lithograph, 10 3/4 in. × 13 1/2 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 74. (Used with permission from Free Library of Philadelphia. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 95. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Demolition*, c. 1940, drypoint, 12 in. × 9 1/2 in., St. Louis Art Museum, exhibit number 80. (Unable to trace original source of image below; cataloged at St. Louis Art Museum, Used with permission. Applicable rights reserved.)

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Figure 96. Dox Thrash (1893–1965), *Life*, 1941, carborundum mezzotint, 18 in. × 16 in., Philadelphia Museum of Art, exhibit number 50. (Used with permission from Howard University Gallery of Art. Applicable rights reserved.)
3.33 Adrian Troy (1901–1977)

3.33.1 Biography

Adrian Troy (born Jean Adrien Troye) was born to an English father and a French mother in Bordeaux, France, 1901. He received his high school and university education in France before attending the École des Beaux-arts de Bordeaux. Troy had ample travel opportunities in his young life, indicating that his family was wealthy. He spent a year in both the West Indies and West Africa and lived in East Africa for six months each year between 1917 and 1921. It is unclear why Troy spent so much time in Africa, though it may be related to his later career as a semanticist. Regardless, this interest in African life and culture helps explain this White immigrant’s involvement in a Black art exhibition.

Troy arrived in the United States in 1922 and settled in Chicago. There are no records documenting Troy’s activity in the city until the mid-1930s, when he began working for the WPA Easel and Graphics Division. Troy remembers this period as the most influential in his artistic career, during which he exhibited at the SAIC and the 1939–1940 New York World’s Fair. Sponsored by the WPA, he made several woodcut illustrations for Federal Writers’ Project books, including *Cavalcade of the American Negro*, published to accompany the 1940 American Negro Exposition. This project was likely an extension of Troy’s involvement with the SSCAC.

Troy remained in Chicago for much of his later life, working as a professor and linguist. Through the 1950s and 1960s, he taught wood engraving courses at the SAIC. Troy was also a famous semanticist, specializing in ancient French, Chinese, Hindu, and several African languages. He acted as a consultant for the National Geographic Society and the Chicago Field Museum and was recognized in *Time* magazine for his linguistic contribution to art history. Troy died of cancer in Memphis, Tennessee,

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653 Scanlan, n.d. “Adrian Troy.”


655 Scanlan, n.d. “Adrian Troy.”

656 Scanlan, n.d. “Adrian Troy.”

in 1977. His WPA art is now held in several notable collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art.\textsuperscript{658}

### 3.33.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Troy likely became involved with the Fort Huachuca exhibition due to his association with the WPA. Though a majority of Troy’s WPA works were woodcuts, he produced a few brightly colored oil city scenes. *Salt Works*, Troy’s oil painting presented at Fort Huachuca, was likely inspired by Chicago’s Morton Salt Company, but it is unknown whether it reflected the vibrancy of his other oils or the solemn Social Realist style of his woodcuts (no image attribution).\textsuperscript{659}

### 3.34 Joseph Vavak (1891–1969)

#### 3.34.1 Biography

Joseph Vavak was a White artist born on 4 May 1891, in Vienna, Austria. The Vavak family arrived in the United States in 1904, taking up residence in Chicago.\textsuperscript{660} Joseph began attending summer classes at the SAIC in 1908. He spent the rest of the year playing piano in various bands and orchestras to help support his family. Life continued as such until 1916, when Vavak completed his studies at the SAIC.\textsuperscript{661} He was then employed as an artist and musician at the Rhodes Café until he enlisted in the US Navy in 1917.\textsuperscript{662} By 1920, Vavak had completed his period of military service and returned to Chicago to continue painting and performing. His involvement in the bohemian music scene introduced him to many leftist individuals, and Vavak’s works regularly appeared in the American Communist Party newspaper.\textsuperscript{663}

Intending to continue his artistic training, Vavak traveled to Paris in 1929; however, financial woes forced him back to the newly Depression-stricken Chicago. He gained employment with the Illinois FAP shortly after its

\textsuperscript{658} Scanlan. n.d. “Adrian Troy.”
\textsuperscript{659} Scanlan. n.d. “Adrian Troy.”
\textsuperscript{663} Schulman. n.d. “Joseph Vavak.”
inception in the mid-1930s. As a part of the Mural and Easel Divisions, Vavak focused his art on the Chicago landscape and the experience of the American laborer.\textsuperscript{664} Though Vavak was a White person, his association with the Chicago WPA and labor-centric subject matter likely established a connection with the city’s Black art scene. This connection may have enabled Vavak’s involvement with the Fort Huachuca exhibit.

By the 1950s, Joseph and his wife Lucille moved to the Chicago suburbs, where he continued painting and working various other jobs. He was employed as a clerk and typist for a letter shop for a time.\textsuperscript{665} Additionally, he offered piano lessons to the local Roselle community. In 1963, the pair retired to Florida.\textsuperscript{666} Vavak’s paintings grew gentler as he aged, evolving to feature light watercolors and abstraction.\textsuperscript{667} He died in 1969.\textsuperscript{668}

3.34.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

Journalist Roger Hurlburt described Vavak as an Expressionist whose early works were “thick and textural, with deep colors enforcing the firm contours of architecture and heavy equipment.”\textsuperscript{669} At Work, featured at Fort Huachuca, likely exhibits this signature style and subject matter (no image attribution).

3.35 Earl Walker (1912–unknown)

3.35.1 Biography

Earl Walker was born on 10 March 1912, in Brownville, Tennessee.\textsuperscript{670} At some point in his early adulthood, Walker relocated to the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago. There, he trained under George Neal. It is unclear whether he was affiliated with the Chicago Arts and Crafts Guild, where Neal

\textsuperscript{664} Schulman. n.d. “Joseph Vavak.”
\textsuperscript{666} Schulman. n.d. “Joseph Vavak.”
\textsuperscript{669} Hurlburt. 1980. “New Works in Good Taste.”
taught for some time, though Walker was known to work in the same circle as other guild members, including Cortor, Davis, White, and Sebree.\footnote{Porter. 1943. *Modern Negro Art*, 132.}

At the height of the WPA era, Walker found employment with the Illinois FAP Easel Department.\footnote{World War II Draft Cards, “Earl Walker.”} He was active in the SSCAC and presented paintings alongside many of the other Chicago-based artists featured at the Fort Huachuca exhibition. He is recorded as a presenter in a Black art show at a public library in Evanston, Illinois, and may have been included in SSCAC-sponsored showings at the Library of Congress and the Howard University Gallery of Art.\footnote{Chicago Tribune. 1941. “Negro Artists Have Show in Suburb Library” *Chicago Tribune*, March 16, 1941. https://www.newspapers.com/image/372344134.} Walker was likely included in the Fort Huachuca exhibition due to his involvement with these organizations.

Walker’s draft registration card indicates that he served in some military capacity during WWII. A handwritten note on the card states that Walker was honorably discharged on 19 December 1943.\footnote{World War II Draft Cards, “Earl Walker.”} Additional information about Walker’s career and personal life could not be found.

### 3.35.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

There are very few records of Walker’s pieces, and his style, technique, and subject matter is entirely unknown. The title of his oil painting featured at Fort Huachuca, *Cornerstone*, offers little clarity (no image attribution).

### 3.36 Charles White (1918–1979)

#### 3.36.1 Biography

Charles White was born in the South Side of Chicago in 1918, where he was raised by his mother, Ethelene. White developed an interest in the arts from an early age, inspired in part by regular trips to the nearby Art Institute with his mother. He also spent a good deal of time at the public library, where he would stay while Ethelene was at work. There, White was introduced to the social and political power of the arts through works of the Harlem Renaissance.\footnote{Miller, M. H. 2018. “The Man Who Taught a Generation of Black Artists Gets His Own Retrospective.” *The New York Times Style Magazine*, September 28, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/28/t-magazine/art/charles-white-moma-retrospective.html.} As a teenager, White engaged in the political sphere, working
as an artist for the National Negro Congress in Chicago and befriending many literary contributors to the Black Chicago Renaissance.\(^\text{676}\)

White’s natural artistic inclinations developed further during his participation in the Chicago Arts and Crafts Guild. His talent was recognized by multiple art academies, two of which offered White full scholarships. Both academies, however, revoked their admission offers when they discovered he was Black. Undeterred, White was later accepted to the SAIC, where he completed the two-year program in a single year.\(^\text{677}\) He earned his degree in 1938, and soon after began his career in the WPA Mural Division at the SSCAC. His talents as a muralist were quickly recognized. In 1939, White was commissioned to create a mural for Howard University. The following year, his piece won first prize at the *Art of the American Negro* exhibition.\(^\text{678}\) During this time, White met fellow artist Elizabeth Catlett, whom he married in 1941.\(^\text{679}\)

As the WPA era ended, White turned his attention to teaching. He worked as an art instructor at George Washington Carver Community School in New York from 1943 to 1945 before becoming an artist in residence at Howard University. White took a long hiatus from teaching from the late 1940s through the 1950s, which he spent in New York. In the city, he forged ties with the politically active American Contemporary Art Galleries. White’s works of social commentary gained traction through this relationship as the gallery brought his pieces to more than a hundred exhibitions nationwide.\(^\text{680}\)

In the 1960s, White became a professor at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. White’s worsening health also contributed to this move. For most of his adult life, White suffered from tuberculosis, and California had an appropriate climate to mitigate the effects of the disease.\(^\text{681}\) However, challenges to White’s health did not hinder his creativity or activism in his later life. He continued to produce realist works commenting racial inequity, while also joining his students in conceptual art experimentation.

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The remainder of White’s career was spent sharing his artistic talents and social convictions with a new generation of artists. He died near Los Angeles, California, in 1979.682

White’s legacy as an artist survives through his works, which are preserved in the many collections worldwide. Notably, the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago collaborated to hold a Charles White retrospective exhibition from 2018 to 2019 to honor the 100th anniversary of his birth. White, called “one of the 20th century’s most important and dedicated teachers,” also maintains a living legacy through his students, which include prominent contemporary artists David Hammons and Kerry James Marshall.683 To memorialize his contribution to education, Charles White Elementary School was founded on the former campus of Otis Art Institute and remains in operation today.684

3.36.2 Art at 1943 Fort Huachuca exhibition

White produced the mural *Five Great Americans* during his time with the WPA (Figure 97). The piece, which features Sojourner Truth, Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carter, and Marian Anderson, is demonstrative of White’s typical style and artistic purpose. In *Five Great Americans* as in all his works, White intended to create “images of dignity” for his Black subjects.685 His prominent use of shadow creates a sense of foreboding, while his figures exude strength. White’s tendency to emphasize his subjects’ heads, arms, and hands “infuses these otherwise downtrodden figures with sublime grandeur.”686 *Five Great Americans* was prominently displayed above the entrance to the MVOC dance hall (Figure 98). However, *Five Great Americans* was probably not made specifically for the MVOC since the painting was created in 1939 and the MVOC was constructed in 1942.687

Figure 97. Charles White (1918–1979), Progress of the American Negro: Five Great Americans, 1939–1940, oil on canvas, 61 in. × 156 1/2 in., Howard University Gallery of Art, exhibit number 83. (Used with permission from Howard University School of Law. Applicable rights reserved.)

Figure 98. Charles White's Five Great Americans is seen on the back wall during the exhibit dedication. (Used with permission from Fort Huachuca Museum. Public domain.)
4 Conclusion and Recommendations

In response to anticipated plans to rehabilitate the MVOC at Fort Huachuca and to place reproductions of art from the 1943 Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists on the interior, the purpose of this report is to contextualize the exhibit and its participants. To accomplish this objective, the report examines the history of Black art in the early 20th century and the government-sponsored programs that empowered it, explores the history of the exhibit, and provides biographies of the artists who participated in it. Additionally, Appendix A itemizes the 86 works of art that were on display and provides information (where known) about repositories that have originals or reproductions of the art today. The 86 works included 38 paintings, 44 prints, one mural, and three sculptures. Of these, the locations of at least 56 pieces are known and 30 are unknown. It is believed that the entirety of the 1943 art exhibit went to Howard University in 1946; however, the current status of some of the pieces is unknown. Because artists who created prints made several copies of their work, many prints ended up in collections outside of Howard; therefore, it is possible to know what most pieces in the “Prints and Drawings” category look like. Paintings, on the other hand, are usually singular works, so a piece in this category will not be found in multiple collections. Those that are not cataloged with Howard University may be in private collections.

4.1 Conclusion

The exhibit was significant for assembling the works of some of the WPA’s most prominent artists into one venue, and the dedication ceremony itself was a major social event at Fort Huachuca. Although the exhibit did not generate much attention outside of regional sources in 1943, it should be considered one of the most significant events in the intersection of American art, military history, and segregation. One way to consider the significance of the Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists is to compare it to other WPA-FAP art projects and exhibitions. Using a framework established by art historian Mary Ann Calo, the importance of Fort Huachuca’s exhibit can be considered in terms of four criteria: Quantity, Content, Location, and Status. Applying these criteria, the Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists was unique because it contained a high percentage of art created by prominent Black artists from across the country and featured works from a variety of

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In addition, the exhibit represents an important moment in the Army’s preintegration era because the authors have found no sources indicating that the Army had hosted an event celebrating the artistic or cultural contributions of Black Americans before the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists*. Perhaps most importantly, since most Black art projects and exhibitions hosted by the WPA usually occurred in cosmopolitan urban centers, hosting the *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* at a remote military post exposed thousands of servicemen and women to the works of nationally prominent Black artists. Therefore, this exhibit represented a unique form of WPA-FAP outreach beyond the typical metropolitan context.

### 4.2 Recommendations

While this analysis of the 1943 *Exhibition of 37 Negro Artists* at Fort Huachuca has found that most of the artists’ work was likely created while under the employment of the WPA, most of the artwork titles do not appear in the *WPA Artwork in Non-Federal Repositories* lists. If the pieces of art from the Fort Huachuca exhibition are intended to be reproduced and placed in the MVOC, ownership and copyright need to be determined for each one.

In November 2022, the consulting parties for the rehabilitation of the MVOC agreed upon verbiage in the “SRM [Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization] Planning Charrette Report: Renovate Historic Building 66050 for Range Control Operations, Ft. Huachuca, AZ Project No. HUAC HI021001-1J” that “Digital imaging wallcovering provides opportunity to replicate the original art mural in the dance hall [Charles White’s *Five Great Americans* mural]. In addition, framed art with descriptive plaques can be located throughout the common spaces. Framed art is OMA [Operation and Maintenance, Army] funded. Wallcovering is MILCON [Military Construction] funded.”

It is highly recommended that GSA investigate the ownership of the pieces described in this report and if they are found to have been created under one of the New Deal art programs to add them to the GSA inventory. Charles White’s *Five Great Americans* mural is a key aspect of the rehabilitation of the MVOC. A formal request for this investigation may need to come from the Fort Huachuca Garrison Commander.

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It is recommended that further investigation be performed on the provenance and ownership of Lew Davis’s *The Negro in America’s Wars* mural. From the analysis of the timeline of when Davis enlisted and when he created the mural, it was created while he was a servicemember of the War Department. This fact would make the mural federal government property. The placement of Davis’s mural inside the MVOC is unknown, but having a reproduction placed either in the new workspace or the exhibit space is key to understanding the history of the MVOC.

It is recommended that through the Section 106 consultation process for the rehabilitation of the MVOC that the consulting parties agree upon the scope of the reproduction of the art from the 1943 exhibit, i.e., how many pieces should be reproduced and whether the exhibit will be replicated in its entirety or only selected works to represent the scope of the exhibit.

It is recommended that the Fort Huachuca Garrison Commander formally write a letter to the president of Howard University and the director of the Howard University Gallery of Art to request archival full reproductions of the pieces of art found in the collection of the Howard University Gallery of Art. Per the MVOC planning charrette report mentioned above, the reproductions of the artwork would be OMA funded.
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Colonel M.O. Bousfield to President Mordecai W. Johnson, September 15, 1944. RG 107: Box 207, Entry 91: Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 1940–1947, Fort Huachuca. College Park, MD: National Archives and Records Administration.


Marcus H. Ray to Commanding Officer, Fort Huachuca. March 16, 1946. RG 107: Box 208, Entry 188: Office of Assistant Secretary of War Civilian Aide to the Secretary, 1940–47, Fort Huachuca. NARA College Park.


MVOC Artwork. Private Collection of Colonel Edwin N. Hardy. Private Collection.


Appendix A: Works Included in the 1943 Art Exhibit

The following is a list of works included at the 1943 art exhibit, along with repository information, when known (Table A-1). The 86 works included 38 paintings, 44 prints, one mural, and three sculptures. Of these, the locations of at least 56 pieces are known and 30 are unknown. Important sources include a reference book entitled *WPA Artwork in Non-Federal Repositories, 2nd Edition* (1999) and the General Services Administration (GSA) online fine arts catalog.\(^{690}\) It is believed that the entirety of the 1943 art exhibit went to Howard University in 1946, however the current status of some of the pieces is unknown. Because artists who created prints made several copies of their work, many ended up in collections outside of Howard. Therefore, it is possible to know what most pieces in the “Prints and Drawings” category look like (no. 39—82). Paintings, on the other hand, are usually singular works, so a piece in this category will not be found in multiple collections (no. 1—39). Those that are not cataloged with Howard may be in private collections.

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<tr>
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Table A-1 (cont.). Works included in the 1943 art exhibit.

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### Mural

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### Sculpture

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<td>86.</td>
<td>Johnson, Sargent</td>
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Appendix B: Dedication Pamphlet from the 1943 Art Exhibit
EXHIBITION

of the work of

NEGRO ARTISTS

37

Officers Mountainview Club

Fort Huachuca, Arizona

May 16 to 22 1943
INTRODUCTION

In our search to find ways and means to decorate appropriately the Officers’ Mountainview Club, we considered the possibilities of obtaining some of the works of the Negro Artists which had been accomplished through the WPA program of recent years.

The generous cooperation of all those from whom we sought assistance has made possible the collection of these interesting and valuable pieces of art. Among the many, I wish to especially thank the following:

Mr. Lew Davis, former State Supervisor of the Arizona Art project
Mr. Ray Vynne, Acting State Administrator, WPA for State of Arizona.
Miss Nelle C. Dunn, Arizona State Director, Division of Service Projects, WPA
Mr. Holger Cahill, National Director of WPA Art Projects, Washington, D.C.
Mr. Clement Haupers, Art Consultant, WPA, Washington, D.C.
Mrs. Mildred T. Law, Director, Division of Program Operations, WPA, Washington, D.C.
Miss Mildred Holzbahr, Allocation Unit, WPA, Chicago, Illinois.
Mr. W. J. Trent, Jr., of the Federal Works Agency Inter-racial Relations Staff, Washington, D.C.
Lt. Col. C. E. Nelson, Chief of Special Services, Fort Huachuca.
Lt. Col. M. O. Bousfield, Commanding Officer, Station Hospital No. 1, Fort Huachuca.

Our efforts have resulted in one of the largest collections of works by Negro artists that has ever been assembled in this country. The collection includes 86 pieces and represents the works of 37 artists from 9 different states, namely: Ohio, New York, Delaware, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Illinois, California, and Massachusetts.

This collection of art will be exhibited as follows:

Mountainview Club - May 10 to 22 inclusive.
Service Club No. 1 - May 10 to 29 inclusive.
Service Club No. 2 - May 10 to June 5 inclusive.

After these exhibits, Mr. Lew Davis has kindly consented to arrange the works of Art in the Mountainview Club, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where they will find their permanent home.

This program will not only solve our original desire to attractively decorate the Club, but will serve a much broader and deeper purpose. It will provide an opportunity for every officer, soldier and civilian at this station to study this unique collection of American Negro Art. This collection will not only be a worthy cause of pride in the accomplishment and promise of Negro artists, but will serve as an inspiration to all of us in representing one of the steps in the development of a broader and better American citizenship.

EDWIN N. HARDY,
Colonel, Cavalry,
Commanding.
Program

DEDICATION - SUNDAY - MAY 16, 1943
2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Invocation ................................ Chaplain Grant Reynolds
Music ........................................ Pvt. Harold E. Brown and Orchestra
Colonel Edwin N. Hardy ................ Post Commander
Address of Welcome
Hale Woodruff ................................ Painter
"Art in Wartime"
Music ........................................ S. S. U. 17 Quartette
Vernon Winslow ............................. Designer
"The Negro in Art"
Dean Olaf A. Anderson .................. U. of Arizona College of Fine Arts
"Art and the Future"
Richmond Barthe ................................ Sculptor
"Public Sponsorship of Art"
Music ........................................ S. Sgt. Whitsonant - Songs
Colonel Edwin N. Hardy ................ Post Commander
Presentations of Collection
Lt. Col. M. O. Eousfield ............... Governor Officers Club
Acceptance of Art Collection
Music ........................................ S. Sgt. Whitsonant, Leader
Benediction ................................ Louis J. Beasley, Chaplain 92nd Division

Lt. Colonel C. F. E. Nelson
Master of Ceremonies

1. Henry Avery
2. Henry Avery
3. William Carter
4. Eldzier Cortor
5. Eldzier Cortor
6. Allen Crile
7. Charles Davis
8. Charles Davis
9. P. Dillard
10. Walter Ellison
11. Edward Loper
12. John C. Lutz
13. Lonnie Moore
14. Archibald Motley
15. Archibald Motley
16. Charles Sebree
17. Charles Sebree
18. Charles Davis
19. Humbert Howard
20. Elba Lightfoot
21. Archibald Motley
22. Earl Walker
23. J. Varak
24. A. Troy
25. Stuart Bruce
26. Eldzier Cortor
27. Theodore Gillien
28. Frank Neal
29. Samuel Brown
30. Samuel Brown
31. Samuel Brown
32. Doc Thrash
33. Doc Thrash
34. Samuel Brown
35. William Carter
36. Doc Thrash

OILS

Girl with Peaches
Big Apple
South Side Alley
Adjustment
She Didn't Forget
Shawmut Avenue
Benediction
Newbury
Aviator
The Story Book
McCasley Street
Early Snow
After School
Carnival
Arrival of the Slaves
Portrait of a Man
Sunflowers
Johnny Mae Sewing
The Gardner's House
Mural Panel
The Plotters
Cornerstone
At Work
Salt Works
Man Shoveling
Still Life Figure
Blues in Flood Time
Girl in Yellow Hat
Portrait Study
Child Smiling
Writing Lesson
While Philly Sleeps
Work at Last
Child Reading
Landscape
Landscape
Appendix C: Script for the Unveiling of Davis’s Mural, *The Negro in America’s Wars*
LUSCIO UP.

NARRATOR: In 1779, Sir Henry Clinton proclaimed—

VOICE: (British accent) His Majesty's government desires the military service of every able-bodied Negro male. To every Negro who will desert the Rebel Standard, His Majesty's government will grant him the security to follow within the British lines any occupation which he might think proper.

ROLL OF DRUMS UP.

NARRATOR: But the colonists persisted in their objection to the use of Negro soldiers, as incompatible with the principles for which they were fighting. "That all men were created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights" did not apply to Negroes—neither freedman nor slave. So, Negroes continued to swell the ranks of the British armies.

1ST VOICE: Between 1775 and 1783, the state of South Carolina lost 25,000 Negroes who went over to the British.

2D VOICE: Three-fourths of all Negroes in Georgia were lost to the Americans.

3D VOICE: One-third of the British soldiers garrisoned at Fort Cornwallis were Negroes.

NARRATOR: General George Washington, who had sternly prohibited the enlistment of Negroes, now filled his depleted ranks at Valley Forge with a battalion of black men. By giving three years of service to the Continental Army, the slave was in turn given his freedom. Maryland raised a contingent of 750 men of color. Crispus Attucks, a man of Negro descent, a giant in stature, who had seen service on a whaling ship, was one of the first martyrs of American liberty. He was in the front of those openly protesting against the quartering and billeting of British soldiers in Boston.

MUSIC: SLIGHTLY TUNE OF "YANKEE DOODLE." CARRY UNDER.

NARRATOR: Other Crispus Attucks served as Minute Man at Lexington and Concord and later as Regulars in the ranks. A young Negro woman named Deborah Shurtleff, masqueraded as a man and enlisted, and saw three years of military service. Peter Salem distinguished himself at Bunker Hill by killing
the celebrated British officer, Major Polkairn. Another
Negro soldier captured a major general of the British Army.
In every colony from Massachusetts to Georgia, as brave as
the bravest during those long bitter years, Negroes fought
and died by the side of Warren of Bunker Hill, Pulaski at
Savannah.

MUSIC: "CLIMAX AND UP."

NARRATOR: (A PAUSE) The first panel to be unveiled depicts a
scene from the Battle of Lowsouth, New Jersey, which oc-
curred on the 28th day of June, the year 1776. Of this
battle, the historian Bancroft wrote:

VOICE: "Nor may history omit to record that of the Revolutionary
patriots who on that day offered their lives for their
country more than 700 black men fought side by side with
the white."

MUSIC: "SCOTCHRY COUNTRY, TIS OF THEE." HOLD UP.

NARRATOR: (A PAUSE) What did he gain for himself—this Negro
soldier who fought in the Revolutionary War? They first
made him a free man and they apprenticed him to a trade,
and he was permitted to follow in the higher pursuits of
labor, and develop among his own kind a class of small
independent farmers and tradesmen. That was something.
THAT was a step forward—a mighty step forward for those
sons of Africa only recently transplanted upon the shores
of this brave new continent.

MUSIC: STIRRING INTRODUCTION TO "LA HABANILLA." HOLD UP.

NARRATOR: La Habanilla—the battle-cry of the French Revolution—
was now re-sound in America, as once again America recalled
the gallantry of her Negro soldiers. This was the year
1812, when faced with the necessity of gathering any and
every resource he could muster to drive the British out of
the French settlement of New Orleans. Andrew Jackson—
"Old Hickory"—made this dramatic appeal to the Negro
Americans along the shores of Mobile:
JACKSON: “Through a mistaken policy, you have been before been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights in which our country is engaged. This no longer exists. As sons of freedom, you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessing. As Americans, as fathers, husbands, and brothers, you are summoned to rally around the standard of the Eagle, to defend all which is dear in existence.”

NARRATOR: And to every noble-hearted, generous freeman of color volunteering to serve now paid the same bounty in money and land as the white soldiers received—$125.00 and 160 acres of land. When the Battle of New Orleans had been successfully fought, Andy Jackson could say:

MUSIC: APRIS CLIQUE.

A. JACKSON: To the men of color. Soldiers! from the shores of Mobile, I collected you to arms, I invited you to share in the perils and to divide the glory of your white countrymen.

MUSIC: Steal in and under softly the closing bars of “La Marsellesa.”

UNFOLDING OF PANEL, & 2 AS JACKSON CONTINUES ADDRESS—LIGHT CURTAIN—FOCUS ON PICTURE UNTIL CLOSE OF SPEECH.

A. JACKSON: (Continuous) I expected much from you. I know that you could endure hunger and thirst, and all the hardships of war. But you surpass my hopes; I have found in you that noble enthusiasm which impels to great deeds, for you have defended all that is most dear to man—OUR FOR MUSIC SUSTAIN—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!


CHORUS: Singing “John Brown’s Body.”

VERSE: John Brown’s body lies a-moulder in the grave

His truth goes marching on!

REFRAIN: Glory, glory, hallelujah

“ ” “ ” SOFTLY RIDE.

His truth goes marching on.

ENDING UP:

SOUND: CROWD EFFECT, CHEERING LOUDLY, THEN SOFTENING AS VOICE OF FRED DOUGLAS IS HEARD.
DOUGLAS: (FA DE IN) "The choice is now given to end in a day the bondage of centuries, and to rise in one bound from social degradation to the plane of common equality with all other varieties of men. Remember, that in a contest with oppression--"

NARRATOR: (ON MIX) (HE SPEAKS OVER THE HOUDSON OF DOUGLAS' VOICE)

Fred Douglas, ex-slave and spokesman for the Negro people, is delivering his great "Men of Color, to Arms" speech before a huge crowd of Negroes and white Abolitionists gathered on Boston Common before the State House. (FADE OUT - FADE IN)

DOUGLAS: (ON MIX, CONTINUING) "---the Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with oppressors. The case is before you. This is your golden opportunity. Let us accept it, and forever wipe out the dark reproaches unsparingly hurled against us by our enemies. Let us win for ourselves the gratitude of our country and the blessings of our posterity through all time."

SOUND: CHEERING CROWD EFFECT

INSIDE: "ALL HAIL+CLEO+HARVEY, JOSEPH HIAM'S BOY"

SOUND EFFECT UP.: MUSIC HELD UNDER, SORTYL.

NARRATOR: On Boston Common-----opposite the spot where Douglas stood and issued his memorable "Call to Arms"-----stands a monument in bronze, erected to commemorate to the heroism and patriotism of Col. Robert Gould Shaw and his black regiment, the 54th Massachusetts. There, day and night, through summer and winter, storm and shine, are to march forever those brave heroes of the Civil War by the side of their gallant young leader. Into the unknown, they are hurrying to front and to fight their enemies and the enemies of their country. The spirit and magic of Harriet Tubman, who served her country and the 54th Massachusetts as nurse, scout, and spy and was called the " Moses" of her people---her liberty-loving spirit and her words cry out to them---

HARRIET TUBMAN: I tell you, my children, they is a-saying that the colored man won't fight, and that he's a-going to run soon as the first shot is fired from yonder Fort Wagner. The eyes of the whole world is on you boys. Let's march on that Fort, Let's tear down that flag, and let's put up the Stars and Stripes of the UNION!
MINISTER: And, they did that Harriot Tubman exhorted them to do.

The flag-bearer, though struck down, in the first assault on the Confederate fort, never let his flag touch the ground. He clung to it, holding it high above his wounded body, till the flag was writhed from his grasp by another and raised atop the fort. Nearly 200,000 colored boys in blue left their blood and their bones in every state from Virginia to Louisiana. For the Union they fought at Fort Hudson, Petersburg, Henrici Hill, Clifton, Tillikim's Bend and Fort Wagner.

MINISTER: As on Boston Common, so now we here a monument to those men of the 54th Massachusetts. A high courage, looks from their grim faces, lives in the charged motion of their bodies, flashes from the barrels of their guns. On, and yet, over on they charge, grim bolts of war, pressing forward into the unknown, to Fort Wagner, and beyond, to immortal deeds, to death and an immortal crown.

MINISTER: (a pause) What gain from his participation in the War Between the States surpassed all preceding gains. The Negro Soldier won not alone a personal freedom, but a freedom for the entire Afro-American minority. The next time he was called on to fight, the Negro threw in his lot with his benefactors, and went to Cuba to free the Cubans from the yoke of Spain. He had a stake in this war other than to show that he was a patriotic American, and that, right or wrong, he was with his country one-hundred percent.

MINISTER: So, he marched on to Cuba with the 24th Infantry, the 25th, the 9th Cavalry, and the 10th Cavalry. There were volunteers from Massachusetts, Illinois, Kansas, Ohio, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. On July 1, 1898, in an attack at El Cane, a mile and a half from Santiago, the gallant work, the sturdy, gallant fighting of the men of the 10th Cavalry helped save the day for Colonel Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders.
HARRINGTON: Said the magazine “The Review of Reviews” in October, 1926:

VOICE: “One of the most gratifying incidents of the Spanish War has been the enthusiasm that the colored regiments of the regular Army have aroused throughout the whole country. Their fighting at Santiago was magnificent. Roosevelt’s Rough Riders have come back singing the praises of the colored troops.”

MUSIC: STILL AND UP.

HARRINGTON: Indeed, it was glory they gained in 1898 at El Caney and Santiago de Cuba in the Spanish-American War. With the spirit of Antonio Inclán, dark-skinned Cuban martyr, these Negro-Americans helped drive out the Spanish oppressors and make Cuba free and independent.

MUSIC: RISING MERRY: (1) “CAME TO TALK” (2) “GOOD-BYE, BROADWAY, HELLO FRANCE” (3) “GOOD-BYE, ALFRED TERRY, GOOD-BYE HORIZON”

SOUND: [TELEPHONE EFFECT ....HEAVY, AGITATED AND CONVERSATIONAL]

VOICE: DISCORDANT STRAINS OF “OVER THERE”. GARY W. COLEMAN’S SPEECH.

HARRINGTON: They were back again. This time, it wasn’t just America’s war.

The whole civilized world was in flames. A German Kaiser had unceasingly plunged the world into a blood bath. The cry went up in America, “DIE DEMOCRACY AND MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY!” So urgent was the need for black men to fight that America didn’t wait for volunteers. Negroes, along with the whites, were drafted. Into the jaws of hell, black men marched, fighting like devils in the Argonne forest, the Vosges mountains, in St. Mihiel Champagne, Lens. The 369th—formerly the New York National Guard—was under shell fire for 191 days without relief. They were the first unit of the Allies to reach the Rhine. They went down as an advance guard of the French Army of Occupation. Two of their men, HENRY JOHNSON and HERBERT ROBERTS, were the first men in the ranks of all the American Expeditionary Forces to receive the Croix de Guerre. Johnson and Roberts were credited with
the capture of 20 Germans who raided the post at which they were stationed. The entire regiment of the 369th were cited for valor and decorated with the Croix de Guerre.

(INSIDE THE MALL, "EVER THERE")

UNVEILING OF PANEL 5. LIGHT SAIL: WITH SANDING GROUNDS

COUR FOR LIGHTING MATCHES.

CHORUS:
SINGING OF THEE, "LET EVERY VOICE AND SING" WAVE, WAVE, THEN SOFTLY, AS HORNET SPEAKS.

TRANSMITTER:
It was a proud—a justly proud—terrorist American and World Citizen that emerged from World War I. He had grown into a larger world consciousness. He had fought and died for a universal principle. He had been a determining factor in a great world crisis. And he is not given as much for his country as any other American, or British, or Frenchman? He had earned his glory and no earthly power could take that away from him. (A PAUSE) TODAY, BLACK SOLDIERS ARE AGAIN RACING THROUGH AN EARTH LAY AT THE SUCCORS OF DUTY, FACE TO FACE WITH GREAT LIONS, GREAT BANDERS IN THE STORMS AND JUNGLES OF NEW GUINEA, THROUGH DESERTS AND AMID THE HEROICS OF NORWAY, AND THE FOUNDERING TERRAIN OF NORTHERN ITALY, TO FIGHT AGAIN, LONGER WITH FRIEND-LOVING MEN OF ALL RACES AND COLORS, THE FORCES OF EVIL——TO SIT DOWN THE FOUR HORSES OF THE APOLLOCONSE——AND, WITH GOD'S UPRIGHT HELP, THEY WILL CONQUER AND HELP ALL NIGHT GOD RAISE UP A NATION——TO BUILD ON A CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION OF HUMANITY THE FULLNESS OF ALL MEN IN GOD.

CHORUS:
SHELL "LET EVERY VOICE AND SING" FOLLOW INTO;
"STAND-UPRIGHT MEN!" AND "SAIL-SPARKLED BARKER" WITH CHORUS
 AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATING.

THE END
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAREG</td>
<td>African American Registry</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Civilian Conservation Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>CERL</td>
<td>Construction Engineering Research Laboratory</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMOS</td>
<td>Chicago Manual of Style</td>
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<td>CWA</td>
<td>Civil Works Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERDC</td>
<td>Engineer Research and Development Center</td>
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<td>FAP</td>
<td>Federal Arts Project</td>
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<td>GSA</td>
<td>General Services Administration</td>
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<td>MILCON</td>
<td>Military Construction</td>
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<tr>
<td>MVOC</td>
<td>Mountain View Officers’ Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARA</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRHP</td>
<td>National Register of Historic Places</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMA</td>
<td>Operation and Maintenance Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWAP</td>
<td>Public Works of Art Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAIC</td>
<td>School of the Art Institute of Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRM</td>
<td>Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSCAC</td>
<td>South Side Community Art Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>WPA</td>
<td>Works Progress Administration (1935–1939) \textit{and} Works Projects Administration (1939–1943)</td>
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A History and Analysis of the WPA Exhibit of Black Art at the Fort Huachuca Mountain View Officers’ Club, 1943–1946

The 1943 art exhibition at the Mountain View Officers’ Club (MVOC), Fort Huachuca, Arizona should be considered one of the most significant events in the intersection of American art, military history, and segregation. Organizers of the event, entitled Exhibition of the Work of 37 Negro Artists, anticipated it would boost soldiers’ morale because Fort Huachuca was a predominately Black duty station during WWII. This report provides a brief history of Black art in the early 20th century, biographies of the artists showcased, and provides information (where known) about repositories that have originals or reproductions of the art today.

The following is recommended: the General Services Administration (GSA) investigate the ownership of the pieces described in this report and if they are found to have been created under one of the New Deal art programs to add them to their inventory, further investigation be performed on the provenance and ownership of Lew Davis’s The Negro in America’s Wars mural, for the rehabilitation of the MVOC that the consulting parties agree upon the scope of the reproduction of the art, and request archival full reproductions of the pieces of art found in the collection of the Howard University Gallery of Art.