



Image from: [Jacob Lawrence. \(Library of Congress.\)](#) in [Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance](#)

Summary Article: **Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)**

From *African American Almanac*

Painter



Born on September 7, 1917, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Jacob Lawrence received his early training at the Harlem Art School and the American Artist School. His rise to prominence was ushered in by his series of biographical panels commemorating important episodes in African American history. Capturing the essential meaning behind a historical moment or personality, Lawrence created several series, each consisting of dozens of small paintings that depict a particular event in American history, such as *The Migration Series* (“... and the Migrants keep coming”), which traces the migration of the African American from the South to the North, or the events of a person's life (e.g., Toussaint L'Ouverture and John Brown). A narrative painter, Lawrence related the “philosophy of Impressionism” in his work.

Lawrence was a visual American historian. His paintings record the African American in trade, theater, mental hospitals, neighborhoods, or running in the Olympic races. Lawrence's works are found in such collections as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the National Museum of American Art, and the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut.

Lawrence's notable works include *The Life of Toussaint LOuverture* (forty-one panels; 1937); *The Life of Harriet Tubman* (forty panels; 1939); and *The Negro Migration Northward in World War* (sixty panels; 1942). His commissioned work in later years include a print for the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial, an invitation to paint the presidential inauguration of Jimmy Carter, illustrations for John Hersey's special edition book *Hiroshima* in 1983, and a poster for the National Urban League in 1984.

Lawrence was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1990. He died on June 9, 2000.

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Jacob Lawrence (1917--2000). (2012). In L. Bracks, *African American almanac : 400 years of triumph, courage and excellence* . Canton, MI: Visible Ink Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/lawrence_jacob_1917_2000



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"Jacob Lawrence (1917–2000)." *African American Almanac*, Lean'tin Bracks, Visible Ink Press, 1st edition, 2012. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/lawrence_jacob_1917_2000. Accessed 14 Oct. 2019.