ARNABONTEMPS


AFRICAN-AMERICAN
MUSEUM
AND CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

1327 THIRD STREET
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Alexandria, Louisiana
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Arna Wendell Bontemps

Arna Wendell Bontemps, noted Black author-poet, scholar and librarian, was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on October 12, 1902. He was baptized at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Arna, son of Paul Bismark and Marie Pembrooke Bontemps, lived in this turn-of-the century middle class home which has been relocated from the corner of Ninth and Winn Streets to 1327 Third Street in the downtown historic district.

As a youth, Bontemps' family moved to California as part of the great migration of that period. He received his B.A. degree from Pacific Union College in 1923 and his Masters degree in Library Science from the University of Chicago in 1943.

Bontemps, one of the most prolific writers of the 20th Century, is perhaps best known for the Harlem Renaissance Period, when a group of young Black writers went to Harlem to examine and to relate to mainstream America the Black cultural experience.

His writings include adult novels, histories, plays, collections of folklore and poetry, and biographical works of famous Black athletes, authors and social activists. Bontemps was a trailblazer in the writing of children’s literature.

In addition to writing, he spent much of his career as a teacher and librarian. He died June 4, 1973 in his home in Nashville, Tennessee.
Arna Bontemps Museum

The Arna Bontemps African-American Museum and Cultural Arts Center symbolizes a more inclusive perspective of our multicultural history. The rich African-American heritage, complemented by the literary legacy of Arna Bontemps, is reflected in designated rooms:

**LE BONTEMPS** - Artifacts and memorabilia - inclusive of books, letters, pictures, etc. of Bontemps - will be on exhibit.

**HUMANITIES** - Literary work-shops, conferences and lectures will be held in this room.

**CULINARY ARTS** - African-American Cuisine - dating back to the African past - will be taught.

**LIBRARY** - Selected books by and about African-Americans will be housed in this mini-library.

**BLACK HALL OF FAME** - Recognition plaques and biographical data on outstanding people of color who have made significant contributions in such fields as the humanities, science, education, politics, and sports will be displayed in this room.

**FOYER** - Works of Black area artists as well as special traveling exhibits will be shown.

Arna Bontemps Foundation, Inc.

The Arna Bontemps Foundation, Incorporated, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization, was formed in May 1988 through the Division of Community Affairs, Office of the Mayor, City of Alexandria. The Foundation’s membership consists primarily of supporting individual and organizational members from the Alexandria/Pineville Community.

With community support and a City of Alexandria Community Development Block Grant, the Foundation was successful in relocating and restoring the historic Bontemps childhood home. The restoration process was completed in April 1992.

The main purpose of the Bontemps Foundation is to preserve and to share the literary legacy of Arna Bontemps, Alexandria’s native son. This will be accomplished through activities designed to attract youth, especially those who show particular interest and talent in literary and dramatic arts. These activities will be directed primarily, though not exclusively, to low and moderate income youth.

The Arna Bontemps Foundation, Incorporated is a 1992 recipient of a special award from the Louisiana Preservation Alliance, an affiliate of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The award, presented at the LPA Fourteenth Annual Conference, was in recognition of the Foundation’s successful preservation efforts.
Programs And Activities

JUNIOR WRITERS GUILD - A professional writer will work with students to promote their awareness and appreciation of literature and to guide them in developing their own creative talents.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM - With an introduction to the African path, this mini-course will focus on the role of the African-American in mainstream American history.

ARNA BONTEMPS: ALEXANDRIA'S NATIVE SON LITERARY SYMPOSIUM - A two-day symposium will be held at which scholars will focus on the literary legacy of Arna Bontemps.

ARNA BONTEMPS AND THE NIGHT OF A THOUSAND STARS: NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK OBSERVATION - In celebration of National Library Week, Rapides Parish School children will read selections from Bontemps' works.

BONTEMPS HOLIDAYFEST: CHRISTMAS MEMORIES AND TRADITIONS - Traditional carols, favorite Christmas poems, stories and memories of Christmas past will be shared by adults and children. Traditional food and crafts will be sold to benefit the Foundation.

ARNA BONTEMPS JAZZFEST - Jazz bands will perform in concert featuring music of the 1930's.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE QUIZ BOWL

LOUISIANA BLACK HALL OF FAME

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Hours
Tuesdays - Fridays 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Handicapped Accessible
Donation/Admission
Adults-$2.00, Children-$1.00, under age 6 free
Contact the Museum at 473-4692 or 449-5000 for information on special group tours and reservations for civic organization meetings.