

# BOOK OF THE WEEK

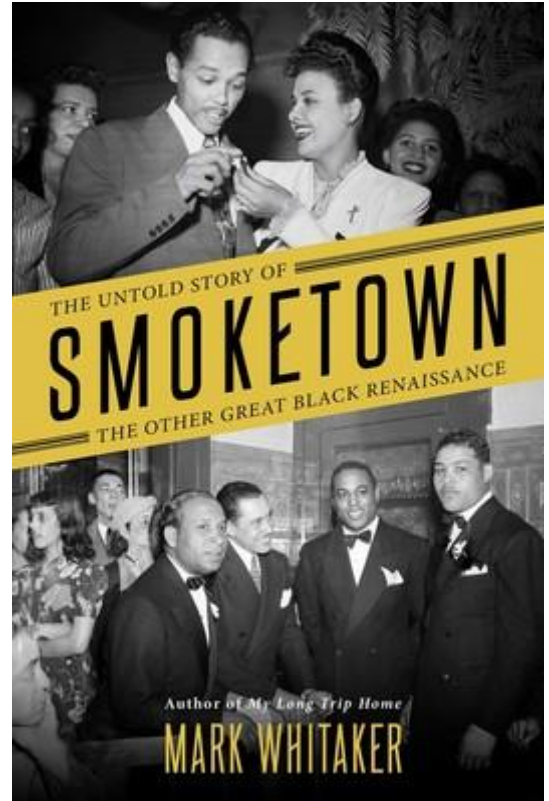
## Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance

by Mark Whitaker

“... an informative and illuminating account of Smoketown, an African-American community in Pittsburgh. Centered in the city's Hill District, Smoketown thrived from the 1920s to the '50s. Though Smoketown was smaller than New York's Harlem or Chicago's South Side, Whitaker compares the flourishing enclave where his grandparents lived to "fifteenth-century Florence and early-twentieth-century Vienna: a miraculous flowering of social and cultural achievement." Smoketown's culture was made possible, Whitaker writes, by the great migration from the South and the city's exceptional educational opportunities. Whitaker writes of such prominent Smoketown figures as Robert L. Vann, publisher of the Pittsburgh Courier, the most widely read black newspaper in America; playwright August Wilson, who celebrated the power of community "whether in the ordinary life of rooming houses and jitney stations, or in the grandest accomplishments of the Hill District in its heyday." He also acknowledges Smoketown's contributions to the sports world, including boxer Joe Louis and baseball stars Josh Gibson and Satchel Paige, and profiles musical icons Billy Eckstine, Duke Ellington, Lena Home, and Billy Strayhorn, as well as photographer Charles "Teenie" Harris. Whitaker shines a well-deserved and long-overdue spotlight on this city within a city.”

"Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance." *Publishers Weekly*, 18 Dec. 2017, p. 119.

*Academic OneFile*, [http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A520578924/AONE?u=cuny\\_laguardia&sid=AONE&xid=6ecf2d35](http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/A520578924/AONE?u=cuny_laguardia&sid=AONE&xid=6ecf2d35).



Ask a librarian to help you find more resources on this and related topics.