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HARLEM SLANGUAGE

1. SUGAR HILL, the northwest corner of Harlem near Washington Heights where most of the newest-occupied large apartment houses for Negroes. Mostly occupied by professional Negroes. Walter White, and others of his financial standing live at 409 Edgecombe.

NOTE: It is interesting to note that many expression that come from the South as this one does, has been distorted. In numerous southern towns, the Negro red light district is called "Sugar Hill." The term was probably overheard without understanding its original meaning.

2. Pilch, house or apartment. Residence
3. SCOOTER-POOKER, a professional at sex,
4. SCOOTER-POOKING, practising, or the act of sex.
5. JELLY, sex
6. JELLY BEAN, a man who lives by sex, a pimp.
7. P.I., a pimp.
8. SWEET-BACK, a pimp
9. BULL-DIKER, a flatter, a Lesbian
10. FLATTER, Lesbian
11. SCRAP IRON, cheap likker
12. CONK BUSTER, cheap likker
13. REEFER, marijuana cigarette
14. DRAG, a reefer
15. MONKEY CHASER, a West Indian
16. MISS ANNE, a white woman
17. MISTER CHARLIE, white man
18. OFAY, white person
19. A PAN-CAKE, humble type of Negro
20. HANDKERCHIEF-HEAD, sycophant type of Negro
21. UNCLE TOM, same as above
22. JAR HEAD, Negro man
23. ZIGABOO, Negro
24. JIG, Negro, a corrupted shortening of zigaboo
25. AUNT HAGAR, Negro race
26. AUNT HAGAR'S CHILLUN, Negro race
27. OLD CUFFEE, Negro (genuine African word for the same thing)
28. SMOKING, OR SMOKING OVER, looking someone over
29. GUT-BUCKET, low dive, type of music or expression from same.
30. SOLID, perfect.
31. CUT, doing something well.
32. STROLL, doing something well
33. COLD, exceeding, well, etc. "Yeah man! He was cold strolling on that trumpet!"
34. PALMER HOUSE, walking flat-footed as from fallen arches.
35. BOOGIE WOOGIE, type of dancing and rhythm. For years in the South it meant secondary syphilis.
36. Park APE, an ugly under-privileged Negro.
37. CAN, rump.
38. STUFF, sex, or excretion, according to how used.
39. BUTT SPRUNG, a suit or a skirt out of shape in the rear.
40. BATTLE-HAMMED, badly formed about the hips.
41. GATOR-FACED, long black face with big mouth.
42. GUT-FOOT, bad case of falled arches
43. LIVER-LIP, pendulous, thick, purple lips.
44. THE WAGON, police patrol.
45. THE MAN, the law, or powerful boss.
46. GET YOU TO GO, power, physical or otherwise to force the opponent to run.
47. SELL OUT, run in fear.
48. GO WHEN THE WAGON COMES, another way of saying, "You may be talking or acting biggity now, but you will cool down when enough power gets behind you THEY ALL GO WHEN THE WAGON COMES."
49. SENDER, he or she who can get you to go, i.e. got what it takes. It is used often as a compliment. "Solid sender!!"
50. JOOK, a pleasure house in the class of gut-bucket. The houses originated in the lumber, turpentine and railroad camps of Florida. Now common all over the south, even in the towns. They are the cradle of the Blues, and most of the dance steps that finally migrate north.
51. JOOKING, playing the piano, guitar, or any musical instrument in the manner of the Jooks. (Pronounced like 'took') 2. Dancing and "schranching" in the manner. A player may be "getting low-down" at the piano and his listeners may yell out in admiration, "Jook it, pap! Jook!"
52. SOONER, anything cheap and mongrel. Once applied to mongrel dog who would eat anything, even excretion, "HE 'd sooner eat stuff as pork chops." Now it applies to cheap clothes, shabby man or woman, etc.
53. DARK BLACK, a casually black person
54. LOW BLACK, a blacker person
55. LAM BLACK, still blacker person
56. DAMN BLACK, blackest, "Why, lightning bugs follows him at twelve oclock in the day, thinking its midnight."
57. BALLING, having fun.
58. JULY JAM, something very hot. "HOT AS JULY JAM."
59. LITTLE SISTER, measure of hotness, "HOT AS LITTLE SISTER!"
60. PEEPING THROUGH MY LIKKERS, carrying on even though drunk
61. YOUR LIKKER TOLD YOU, misguided behavior. Dutch courage.
62. GINNY GALL, a suburb of Hell, long way off. "Way off in Ginny Gall
Where you have to eat cow cunt, skin and all."
63. WEST HELL, another suburb of Hell, worse than the original.
64. BELUTHAHATCHE, next station beyond Hell.
65. DIDDY-WAH-DIDDY, a far place, measure of distance. (2) Another
suburb of Hell, built on since way before Hell wasn't no
bigger than Baltimore. Where the folks in Hell go for a
big time. All the good joking, barbecues, fish-frys, etc
are held.
66. FREE SCHOOLS, a shortened expression of depreciation. When something
particularly stupid is done, a sad shake of the head,
"Free schools, and dumb Negroes." Sometimes it is em-
bellished with, "Free schools, PRETTY YELLOW teachers,
and dumb Negroes."
67. I'M CRACKING BUT I'M PACKING, "I am wise cracking, (supposedly
joking) but I'm telling the truth."
68. NOTHING TO THE BEAR BUT HIS CURLY HAIR, "I call your bluff." Or
"Don't be afraid of him. He won't fight."
69. DUMB TO THIS FACT, "You don't know what you're talking about."
70. LIGHTLY, SLIGHTLY, AND POLITELY, doing things perfectly.
71. I SHOT HIM LIGHTLY AND HE DIED POLITELY, "I completely cut did him."
72. GEORGIA JUMPING-ROOT, male sex organ.
73. I DONT DEAL IN COAL, "I don't keep company with black women. I prefer
the mulatto kind."
74. JUICE, another name for likker
75. MY PEOPLE! MY PEOPLE!, the saddest and the funniest expression in the Negro language. It is a sad sigh when a progressive Negro observes the backwardness of some members, and realizes that there is nothing that he or she can do about it. For instance, seeing and hearing some loud-mouthed Negroes making themselves thoroughly disgusting in places common to both white and black. At other times it is used with hilarious effect. One story built around it goes like this:

A monkey was sitting in the middle of the highway playing with his tail and toes, when a Cadillac full of white people came along. Seeing the happy little monkey, they carefully drove off on the shoulder of the road to pass him without disturbing him. The monkey kept on playing. A Buick full of some more white folks came by and did the same. The monkey kept on playing. Then a T Model Ford came rattling down the road full of Negroes. Instead of trying not to disturb the monkey, they tried to run over him, and almost succeeded. The Monkey leaped to the side of the road just in time to save his life. He watched the Ford rattling off with the driver cursing at him, and shook his head sadly and sighed, "MY PEOPLE! MY PEOPLE!!!" Some say that the monkey has stopped saying 'my people, my people!' They say that he is now saying, "Those people! Those people!!"

76. BIG BOY, stout fellow. But in the South in means fool and is a prime insult. Here again, it took up in the north without being understood. It is a fighting word in the South. If you call a Negro Big Boy, he will tell you something like this: "Dont you call me no Big Boy. Elephant is bigger
than me, and he got a name. Taint no more Big Boy. (There are no more fools) They kilt Big Boy shooting at Fat Sam."

72. ZOOT SUIT WITH THE REET PLEAT, Harlem style suit, padded shoulders, 43 inch trousers at the knee with cuff so small it isx needs a zipper to get into, high waist line, fancy lapels, bushels of buttons, etc.

78. DRAPES, same thing as Zoot.
79. Shags, same as above.
80. DRAPE DOWN, dressed in the height of Harlem mood.
81. TOGGED DOWN, same as above.
82. RIGHTEOUS RAGS, Shags, zoots, drapes, etc.
83. YOUNG SUIT, ill fitting, too small. You are supposed to be breaking in your little brother's suit for him. That is what the observers pretend to believe on seeing it.
84. CABBAGE, female sex organ. "Oh, she cooks good cabbage."
85. BREAD, female sex "Good bread!"
86. DAT THING, sex of either sex.
87. GROUND RATIONS, sex.
88. UNDER RATIONS, sex.
89. POONTANG, booby.
90. BOODY, female sex organ

"I hold my dress up to my knees, and I give my poontang to who I please. I hold my dress up in the back and I give my boody to white and black. Oh Poootang!!"

91. HUG-CUTTER, person who frequents house-rent parties, cutting up the rugs of the host with his feet. Now means a good dancer. Originally meant a person too cheap or too poor to patronize regular dance halls.

92. STANCH, OR STANCH OUT, to begin, commence, step out.
93. AIR OUT, leave, flee, stroll.
RUSSIAN, a southern Negro up north, "Rushed up here from Georgy" hence a russion.

THE BEAR, confession of poverty:

Just like de bear, I aint nowhere (brokes)
Like de bear's brother, I aint no further
Like de bear's daughter, aint got a quarter

FUNCTION, from FUNK, a small unventilated dance full of people too casually bathed.

PECKERWOOD, poor, and unloved class of southern whites.

FIRST THING SMOKING, a train. "Yeah man! I'm through with this town.
I mean to grab the first thing smoking."

HAULING, fleeing on foot. "Man! He cold hauled it!"

KITCHEN MECHANIC, domestic

BROAD, girl or woman

FRAIL EEL, pretty girl

RED NECK, poor southern white man

MACK, a P.I., a jelly bean.

PERCOLATING, parading down the Avenue

CRUISING, same as above

OOZING, same as above

FREE-WHEELING?, same as above but more briskness is implied.

GIT UP OFF OF ME!, quit talking about me, leave me alone.

NOW YOU COOKING WITH GAS!, now you're talking!, in the groove, etc.

GETTING ON SOME STIFF TIME, really laying your racket

SPREADING YOUR JENK, same as above.

JUMP SALTY, get angry

KNOCK YOURSELF OUT, have a good time

DIG, understand. "Dig me?" means do you get me? Do you collar the jive?"

COLLAR A NOD, sleep
115. A. I'll do like the farmer, plant you now and dig you later.
117. COLLAR A HOT, eat a meal.
118. GUM BEATER, a blow-hard, a braggart, idle talker in general.
119. BEATING UP YOUR GUMS, talking to no purpose.
120. TRUCKING, strolling; (2) dance step from the strolling motif.
121. DUSTY BUTT, cheap whore.
122. STORM BUZZARD, shiftless, homeless character.
123. V AND X, Ten Cent store
124. GOOD HAIR, Caucasian-type hair
125. BAD HAIR, Negro type hair
126. RIGHTEOUS MOSS OR GRASS, good hair.
127. NEARER MY GOD TO THEE, good hair
128. NAPS, kinky hair
129. MADE HAIR, hair that has been straightened.
130. TIGHT HEAD, one with kinky hair
131. EVERY POSTMAN ON HIS BEAT, kinky hair
132. COAL SCUTTLE BLONDE, black woman
132. PINK TOES, yellow girl
133. PIG MEAT, young girl
134. COLOR SCALE:
   a. High yaller
   b. Yaller
   c. High brown
   d. Vaseline brown
   e. Seal brown
   f. Low brown
   g. Dark black (See blacks)
135. KNOCKING THE PAD, committing sex
136. GRANNY GRUNT, a mythical character to whom moot questions may be referred.
137. BABY, HOW IS THE DRAWBRIDGE? ANY BOATS PASSING?, suggestion for moral turpitude.
138. WHAT'S ON THE RAIL FOR THE LIZARD, same as above.
139. BROTHER IN BLACK, Negro
140. HAMBONE, male sex organ.
141. GETTING MY HAMBONE BOILED, committing sex.
142. STOMP, low dance, but hit man!
143. 8- rock, very black person
144. INKY DINK, same as above.
145. THE BIG APPLE, THE BIG RED APPLE, New York City
146. RAM, DOWN IN RAM, down south.
147. WHIP IT TO THE RED, beat your head until it is bloody.
148. PLAYING THE DOZENS, low-rating the ancestors of your opponent, most unsafe game unless you are well armed.
149. DATS YOUR MAMMY, playing the dozens, same as "So is your old man."
150. MAMMY, a term of insult. Never used by Negroes in any other way.
151. (GIRLS AS COMMENTED ON IN HARLEMSE)
   If she is white, she's all right.
   If she is yellow, she's mellow
   If she is brown, she can stick around
   If she's black, she better get 'way back!

Respectfully submitted,

Zora Neale Hurston
C/o General Delivery
St. Augustine, Florida