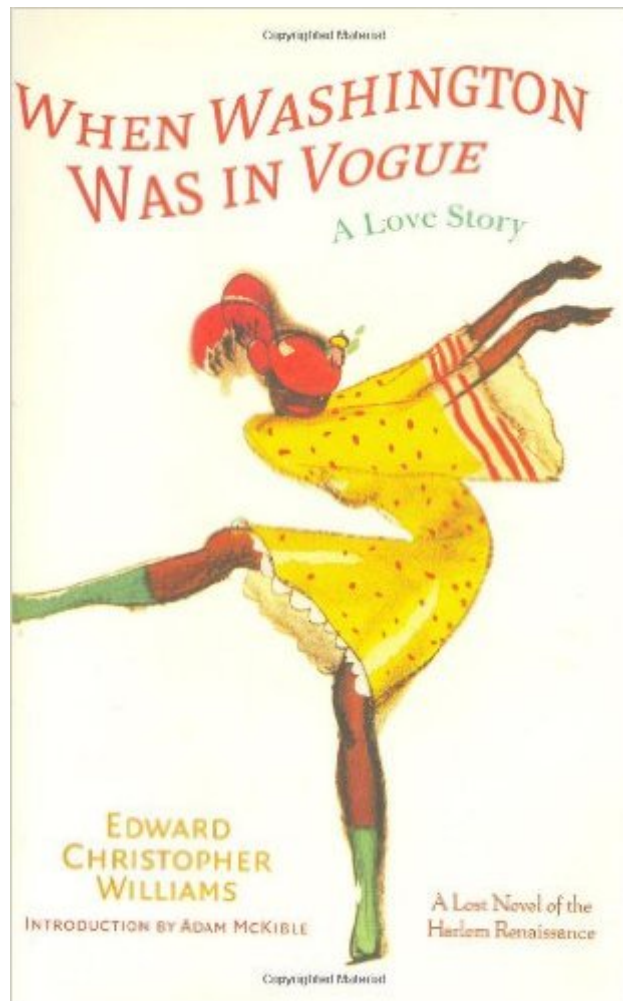


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# When Washington Was In Vogue: A Love Story



## Synopsis

A literary event, this love story was written and set in the 1920s during the Harlem Renaissance and is being published in book form for the very first time. In the tradition of Dorothy West's *The Wedding* and Nella Larsen's *Passing*, *When Washington Was in Vogue* casts a loving but critical eye on Black high society of 1920s Washington, D.C. A novel told in letters, this sly, humorous story was first published anonymously in the Black journal *The Messenger* from 1925 to 1926. This is the first time *When Washington Was in Vogue* is being published as a book. In *When Washington Was in Vogue*, protagonist Davy Carr has just moved to Washington, D.C., and is a member of its Black bourgeoisie. In his letters to his friend Bob in Harlem, Davy recounts his growing romance with Caroline, a beautiful, sharp-witted flapper who tries any number of ways to get Davy's attention. *When Washington Was in Vogue* details Caroline's earnest but coquettish efforts to woo Davy; it also chronicles Davy's wavering stoicism as he struggles to admit he's attracted to -- and moved by -- this much younger, darker-skinned woman. Along the way, Davy writes his impressions of race, politics, social mores, and the state of Black America. At its heart, however, *When Washington Was in Vogue* is an old-fashioned love story. A look into African-American aristocracy in the early part of the twentieth century, this Victorianesque novel about modern romance is filled with the drama and style of one of the most hopeful cultural moments in African-American history. Together with Professor Adam McKible's introduction and Professor Emily Bernard's commentary, this undiscovered story offers a fascinating and memorable reading experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What a wonderful find! I was drawn in from the first page, and enjoyed it thoroughly. The writing style was, fittingly, of another era, and I was amused by the creative use of language. (Thanks to Mr. Williams, I am now trying to find ways to slip phrases like "osculatory pyrotechnics" into conversation.) Maybe I'm just reading the wrong books, but it also seems to me I don't often see a love story written from the perspective of a very anxious, and very proper, young man. The characters are entertaining and the love story is sweet, but the historical backdrop and our hero's musings on the social scene around him are what I found most compelling. All in all, a good read, and a really fascinating insider's look at a time, place and social setting that I know little about.

Romance is undeniable and powerful as Davy Carr and Caroline Rhodes finds out in *When Washington Was in Vogue*. While at times it is difficult for me to find precise rules for a charming lover represented in most books, I found in this one a chivalrous lover. Amidst all the black high society mores and exploitation of racial passing in Washington, DC in the 1920s here is a love story that blossoms between a black man white in appearance and a lovely dark-skinned young woman. Through a series of letters to a friend in NYC Davy Carr slowly awakens to a point obvious to everyone he encounters, he's falling in love and doesn't know it. Between the lines of these letters is the poetic background of Black social and political events of that time that gives incite to today's African American community. In this book you'll only visit Black Washington, DC with its own kind of people, doing its own kind of thing, in its own kind of way! So be prepared. Anyone who loves writing letters (even e-mail letters) will also love and understand this book. This is one of the most charming and funniest books I've ever read. I enjoy romance novels and this is a good one.

I found the story fun to read and very interesting.. It tells the story of the middle and upper class Afro-american community in Washington DC during the 1920's. It is very well written and tells the story of a community that experienced a great deal of prejudice, but was able to endure and celebrate life and maintain a strong sense of community. that perhaps spent a great deal of time going to parties. It is interesting also in that all of characters in the book at Afro-American. It shows that Harlam was not the only place that had a rich cultural life during the 1920's..

Originally published anonymously at the height of the Harlem Renaissance, *WHEN WASHINGTON WAS IN VOGUE* is a great example of literature of that time period. The story is told with letters composed by Davvy Carr, a former army soldier, to his friend Bob in New York. Davvy, a recent transplant to Washington, DC becomes a student of the life and times of high society there. Davvy

takes up residence in the boarding house of Margaret Rhodes and there he makes the acquaintance of many interesting people, including Caroline Rhodes. She is feisty and demanding, her very presence screams for attention. Caroline does her best to try to capture Davvy's interest by forceably inviting herself into his room and perusing his personal belongings. Unbeknownst to Davvy, Caroline is interested in him, however he does not consider her as a love interest because she is many years his junior. Through the letters, the story is revealed. Much to his surprise, Davvy develops feelings for Caroline. At this time of realization Davvy must discover whether it is too late for or will Davvy and Caroline be able to overcome their difference and succumb to the possibility that love holds for them? This novel is unique in its portrayal of boy meets girl. It provides an interesting glimpse into the 1920's. The book speaks to inter-race and societal issues. It captured my attention through its use of vivid details and genuineness, yet it was not a major page-turner that compelled me to want to read on. I think it is a decent read that offered a refreshing twist on the unfolding of a relationship. Reviewed by Nedine of The RAWSISTAZ Reviewers

Reading *WHEN WASHINGTON WAS IN VOGUE* you will feel young again, even if the protagonist, Davy Carr, isn't as young as he used to be before the Great War, in which he served honorably. His letters to his friend Bob reveal, step by step, how he entered an uppermiddle class world of black society in Washington during the days of the 1920s, during Prohibition, and how he found acceptance in the household of a beautiful widow and her two exquisite daughters--one of them, Genevieve, ladylike and stunning, the other, Caroline, a true product of the Jazz Age, flirtatious, fun, and slightly scandalous. Davy's growing interest in Caroline is concealed even from himself, he seems like he's the last person in DC who can figure it out. Is it because she is so much younger than he is? The editor, Adam McKible Ph.D., hints that this state of affairs parallels Williams' own interests in much younger women, coeds in the great universities in which he served as a librarian, and he quotes from Zora Neale Hurston's memoirs of him flirting like crazy back and forth with young girls. McKible seems a little too taken with his own discovery of this novel, which is no masterpiece by any means, but let him pat himself on the back if he feels like he deserves it, he certainly has given us all some amusing moments and some poignant ones too. I'd like to see a movie version of this book, perhaps with Beyonce as the flirty Caroline and with Angela Bassett as the older and more dignified sister, Genevieve, and to play Captain Davy, who else but Samuel Jackson?

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