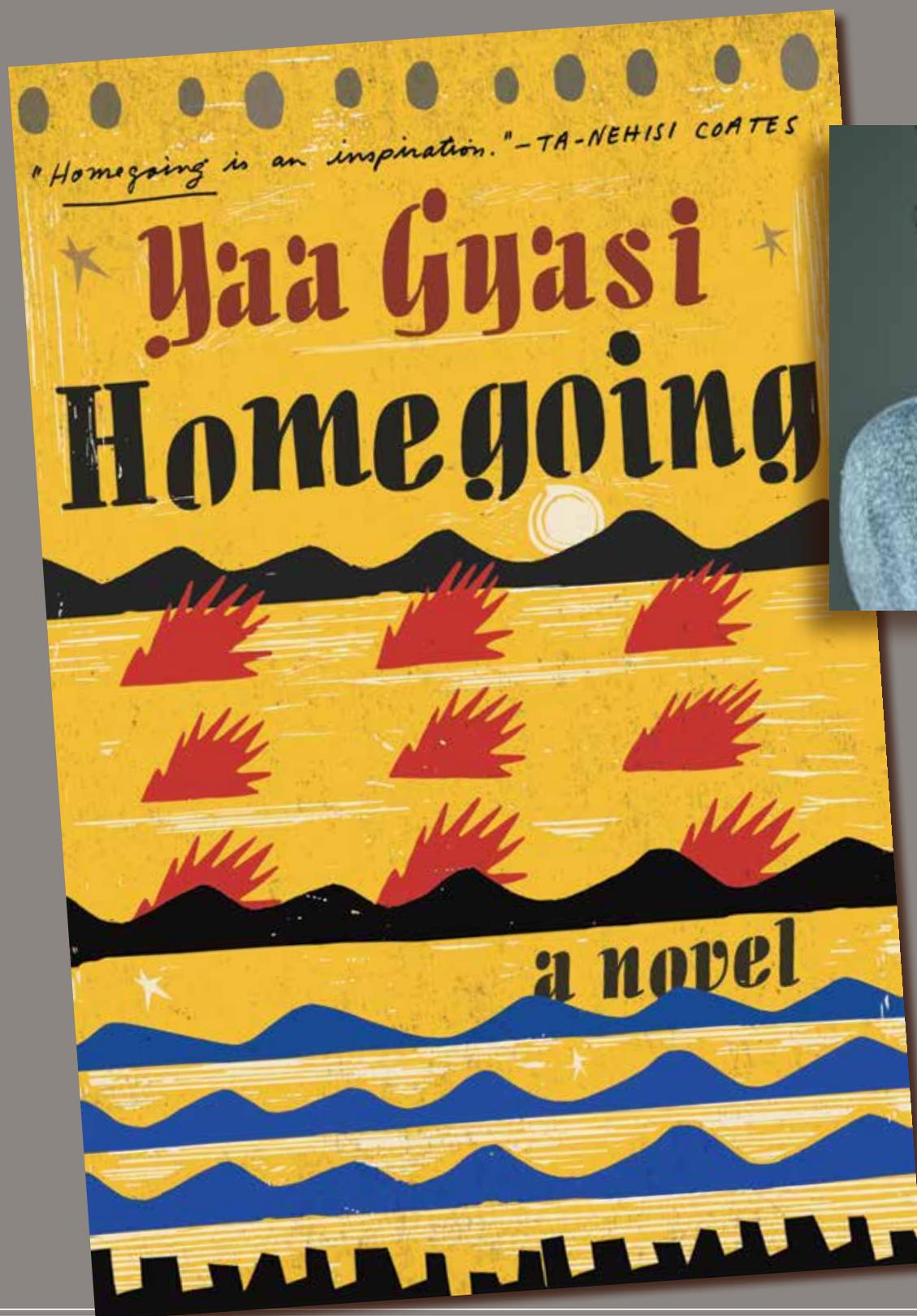


Deschutes Public Library Foundation presents

# 2017 A Novel Idea ...READ TOGETHER



MICHAEL LONSTAR

AUTHOR

## Yaa Gyasi

Sunday, May 7, 2017 • 4:00 p.m.  
Bend High Auditorium

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# Yaa Gyasi Interview

Hope Wabuke of *The Root*, June 2016



## Hope Wabuke: What inspired you to write *Homegoing*?

Yaa Gyasi: *Homegoing* was really very much inspired by a trip to a Cape Coast Castle I took in 2009. The tour guide talked to us about how the British soldiers would sometimes marry the local women, which was something I had never heard before. I was immediately struck by the idea that there could be Gold Coast women walking the upper level of this castle. Free. And then from there, the tour guide took us down into the dungeons.

First of all, I couldn't even imagine what it would be like for people to live in those spaces. They were so dark, and they still smelled. I was horrified—not just by the dungeons, but that there were people walking above them, sometimes Ghanaian-Gold Coast women. And so I started this book with those two women juxtaposed: the free wife of a British person and a person who was kept in the dungeons. It took seven years to complete.

## HW: What inspired you to become a writer?

YG: I started writing when I was very young, actually. Very quickly, for me, reading and writing went hand in hand. I always wanted to see if I could do the thing that I was reading. The first story that I remember writing I wrote at age seven for the Reading Rainbow Young Writers and Illustrators Competition. It was called "Just Me and My Dog." LeVar Burton signed my certificate and sent it back and it was a huge deal for me. I was pretty much hooked after that. I was always writing little stories for myself and tucking them away. I still, to this day, consider writing as an extension of reading.

## HW: As a young African American girl, did you see yourself in the books you were reading when you were younger? Were you aware of that level of representation?

YG: I didn't see myself in most of the books I was reading when I was younger. It wasn't until I was 17 and I read *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison that I first felt that flash of recognition: Here was a woman—a black woman—writing books about

black people. It really struck me. And I felt seen in that way. I really loved Morrison's portrayal of the character Ruth.

Before that, I had been reading books that were mostly by and about and, in a lot of ways, for white people. And I loved those books. I loved *Jane Eyre*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *David Copperfield*. I think in a lot of ways they taught me some fundamental truths about empathy and all of those things that you want your children to learn. But it really made a difference to me to read books by black people and which had black characters. And yet, it wasn't until I was a little older that I first encountered that and realized that was something that I did want—that I could want.

## HW: It's interesting that you mention character, because the characters you write are so rich and well-drawn. How do you write such compelling, complex characters?

YG: Character is really important to me. For me, it is the thing that makes or breaks a book. What makes me feel as though I'm inside of the book or pushed out of the book is whether or not I can believe a character can exist in the real world. Because of the subject matter, I didn't want this to be the kind of book where people could feel as though there are villains and heroes. I wanted each character to be really nuanced and complex and show a range of possibilities, a range of moral complexity.

## HW: What was your childhood like?

YG: I was born in Ghana, and I left when I was two years old for my father to get his Ph.D. in French. I don't have any memory of my time in Ghana. We only went back once as a family when I was 11, and then I didn't go back again until that trip in 2009 that I took by myself. I think my parents really wanted to foster a sense of Ghanaian community when we came to America. When we lived in Columbus, Ohio, it was easier because there was a large Ghanaian population there and we were members of the African Christian Church, which was half Ghanaian, half Nigerian at the time. We were very much plugged into the Ghanaian community there.

It got harder when we moved to Alabama because there were fewer Ghanaian families around, but I think it was really important to my parents that we feel like a Ghanaian household and not completely blend into America. They made the food—my mother is a great cook who still mostly cooks Ghanaian food. We didn't speak the language—my older brother and I understand the language: As we grew up, our parents would say something in Twi and we would answer back in English.

## HW: What was it like being an African growing up in America?

YG: By the time we moved to Alabama, I was nine and we lived in predominantly white areas, and my school was predominately white. It was very difficult. I think it would be difficult for anyone feeling the daily microaggressions of racism. You started to really feel different. Racism was more subtle, less overt. It wasn't like I was called the n-word. It was comments like I only got into Stanford because I was black. Or that I would never find a boyfriend because black men are this way or that way. Things like that.

We never had a lot of community with other black Americans in the beginning, either. We experienced a kind of distancing from that community—both in terms of the way we were raised and being called names like "Africa" or being told that, "You talk like a white person." It wasn't until I got to college that I began to seek out connection instead of separation. I started thinking about things like Diaspora broadly and to feel more connected to blackness across the board, not just as an African immigrant but as a black person in America.

## HW: What do you want readers to take away after reading your book?

YG: I hope that the thing that this novel contributes is the sense that all of these horrific things that happen in these traumatic moments in our history happened to people, and not to a faceless mass. I hope that this book makes these kinds of moments more intimate and helps us feel empathetic toward people.

# Discussion

1. Evaluate the title of the book. Why do you think that the author chose the word *Homegoing*? What is a homegoing and where does it appear in the novel? In addition to the term's literal meaning, discuss what symbolic meanings or associations the title might have in terms of a connection with our place of birth, our ancestors, our heritage, and our personal and cultural histories.

2. Evaluate the treatment and role of women in the novel. What role does marriage play within the cultures represented in the novel and how are the women treated as a result? Likewise, what significance does fertility and motherhood have for the women and how does it influence their treatment? In the chapter entitled "Effia," what does Adwoa tell Effia that her coupling with James is really about? In its depiction of the collective experiences of the female characters, what does the book seem to reveal about womanhood? How different would you say the treatment and role of women is today?

illuminated via these particular choices? How does the extensive scope of the book help to unify these themes and create a cohesive treatment of the subjects therein?

5. Why does Akosua Mensah insist to James, "I will be my own nation" (99)? What role do patriotism, heritage, and tradition play in contributing to the injustices, prejudices, and violence depicted in the book? Which other characters seem to share Akosua's point of view?

6. Explore the theme of complicity. What are some examples of complicity found in the novel? Who is complicit in the slave trade? Where do most of the slaves come from and who trades them? Who does Abena's father say is ultimately responsible (142)? Do you agree with him?

7. Examine the relationships between parents and children in the book. How would you characterize these relationships? Do the children seem to

9. Explore the motif of storytelling. Who are the storytellers in the book and what kinds of stories do they tell? Who is their audience? What might these examples suggest about the purpose and significance of a storytelling tradition?

10. What is history according to Yaw? What does he tell his students is "the problem of history" (226)? Who does Yaw say we believe when reading historical texts and what does he say is the question we must ask when studying history?

11. Sonny says that the problem in America "wasn't segregation but the fact that you could not, in fact, segregate" (244)? What does he mean by this? What does Sonny say that he is forced to feel because of segregation? Which of the other characters experience these same feelings and hardships? Does there seem to be any progress as the story goes on? If so, how is progress achieved? Alternatively, what stymies and slows progress in this area?

12. What is Marcus studying and why isn't his research going well? What feeling does he indicate that he hopes to capture with his project? Why does Marcus go to Ghana and what does he learn from his experiences there? Marcus believes that "most people lived their lives on upper levels, not stopping to peer underneath" (298). What does he mean by this? Where do we find examples of this elsewhere in the book? Are there any characters in the novel who defy this characterization?

13. Consider the book's treatment of colonialism and imperialism. In the chapter entitled "Esi" at the start of the book, what does Esi's mother tell her daughter that weakness and strength really are? How does her definition of weakness and strength correspond to the dialogue about colonialism and imperialism that runs throughout the book? Discuss how this dialogue expands into a deeper conversation about freedom and human rights. Have the issues surrounding colonialism, imperialism, freedom, and human rights featured in the book been resolved today or do they linger? If they remain, does the book ultimately offer any suggestions or advice as to how this might be remedied?

3. Analyze the structure of the book. Why do you think the author assigned a chapter to each of the major characters? What points of view are represented therein? Does any single point of view seem to stand out among the rest or do you believe that the author presented a balanced point of view? Although each chapter is distinct, what do the stories have in common when considered collectively? How might your interpretation of the book differ if the author had chosen to tell the story from a single point of view?

4. Consider the setting of the book. What time periods are represented and what places are adopted as settings? Why do you think that the author chose these particular settings? What subjects and themes are

understand their parents and have good relationships with them and vice versa? Do the characters' views of their parents change or evolve as they grow up? How do the characters' relationships with their parents influence the way that they raise their own children?

8. What significance does naming have in the book? Why do some of the characters have to change or give up their names? Likewise, what do the characters' nicknames reveal both about them and about those who give or repeat these names? What does this dialogue ultimately suggest about the power of language and naming?

For additional discussion questions visit [www.penguinrandomhouse.com](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com)



**"I will be my own nation."**  
**—Akosua Mensah (page 99)**

# The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Capitalist Enterprise

Dr. Carmen P. Thompson



Cape Coast Slave Castle, Ghana. Photo: JULIUS CRUICKSHANK

The transatlantic slave trade spanned the 15th through 19th centuries. It was a vital part of world commerce. The first mass consumer goods (sugar, rice, coffee, tobacco) in international trade were produced by enslaved people. Fueled by merging of public and private capital, the transatlantic slave trade provided European settlers of the Americas (including the Caribbean) with the labor and agricultural expertise needed to produce and sell sugar, coffee, tobacco, and rice to world markets. The rising demand for these products in part helped to spur the growth of the slave trade, pressing governments to finance ventures in slaves like the English did in 1666 when it established the Royal African Company for the express purpose of overthrowing the Dutch's monopoly on the slave trade, which it held until 1698.

## In 1502, the first enslaved Africans reached the Americas on a Spanish ship.

Almost every European nation participated in the transatlantic slave trade. The Portuguese were the first European nation to reach the coast of Western Africa to capture and enslave Africans. In 1446, the Portuguese used slave labor to grow cotton and indigo in the previously uninhabited Cape Verde islands off the west coast of Africa. They then traded these goods for captured slaves in local African wars and raids. These enslaved persons were sold in Europe and, from the 16th century, in the Americas.

In 1502, the first enslaved Africans reached the Americas on a Spanish ship. The first documented African persons in North America via the

transatlantic slave trade arrived in Virginia in 1619 on a Dutch ship called the Treasurer. That said, more than half the enslaved Africans shipped to the New World were carried on British vessels. Every English colony utilized slave labor. Most enslaved and captured Africans came to Virginia by three routes: directly from West Africa, from the West Indies by way of West Africa, or from England by way of West Africa. In 1649, there were approximately 300 Africans in Virginia out of a population of about 18,000. Most all were held in some form of bondage.

Prior to 1640, nearly all enslaved women and men were born in Africa. By 1720 about half were born in Africa. Most were from different regions of West Africa, with different ethnicities and different cultural ways. These women and men carried to

Virginia and other North American colonies the ideals, culture, values, and ways of knowing unique to their region and ethnic group and used them to survive in the New World. We will never know the exact number of African women, men, and children that were captured and transported across the Atlantic in the period known as The Middle Passage. Nor will we ever know the number who died during captivity or in resisting captivity. The best estimates range as high as 25 million.

In the 1740s and 1750s New World colonists imported more than 50,000 captives per decade. Enslaved labor produced the raw materials that

Northern businesses in the U.S. used to produce textiles. Likewise, in the Southern United States agricultural products produced by enslaved Africans were the primary source of its economic development. For example, by 1850, the South produced 75% of world's cotton as a result of the technological advancement of the cotton gin, which, ironically, increased the number of enslaved women, men, and children rather than decreasing their numbers. As a result of the cotton gin, slavery and enslavers' wealth grew exponentially in states like Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas, revolutionizing internal slave trading markets and solidifying cotton as the most important crop to U.S. businesses leading up to the Civil War.

Today, the social and political implications of the transatlantic slave trade are still highly visible and impactful to understanding the problems of race, class, and gender in American society into the 21st century.

*Dr. Carmen P. Thompson is an Oregon native and a professor of African American history and Black Studies at Portland State University and at Portland Community College. Dr. Thompson holds a Master's degree in African American Studies from Columbia University in New York and a Ph.D. in U.S. History from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Thompson's research interests include the history of slavery and the slave trade in the early America and pre-colonial West Africa, early African American history, race and racism in America, and the Great Migration.*

# Connecting Points: Tracing the History of African American Literature through *Homegoing*

Dr. Annemarie Hamlin

Readers of Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* may be surprised to learn of the many parallels the novel has with literary works by African American writers. While references to other works are not explicit in the novel, overlaying the history of African American literature with Gyasi's narrative provides the opportunity for further reading into this rich aspect of American history and literary culture.

Americans will be more familiar with texts that feature the stories of mid-19th century slaves such as Frederick Douglass in his *Narrative* and Solomon Northup from *Twelve Years a Slave*. And perhaps many will know Toni Morrison's 1986 novel *Beloved*, which explores the experience and psychology of enslavement through the eyes of a former slave, Sethe.

Less familiar, but among the earliest works of published literature by people of African origin in the North American colonies, Olaudah Equiano's narrative of his enslavement and journey through The Middle Passage provides glimpses into the impact of the slave trade on western African peoples. Beginning with his early life—in a family that also held slaves—much of his story coincides with those of the characters we meet in *Homegoing*. He describes the enslavement of

Africans and their collusion with Europeans, and his own kidnapping and slave ship journey details the conditions under which slaves were shipped, sold, and treated by traders and slave owners.

Slave narratives published a century later told of the hierarchies of field and house slaves as well as the separation of families that are so vividly presented in *Homegoing*. These autobiographies record the material and social conditions of enslaved people as well as stories of their escape in the United States. Frederick Douglass' narrative relates his experience of being sold from one family to another, each one worse than the last. His self-education and his tenacity and cleverness, as well as some well-placed allies, helped him to carry out his escape to the north. Similarly, Harriet Jacobs masterminded her escape from a master intent on

drama, and essays. Zora Neale Hurston featured the lives of ordinary rural Americans in her short stories and contributed greatly to the collection of African American folklore by transcribing stories from storytellers throughout the south. Nella Larsen's novella *Passing* offers a dramatic portrayal of the promise and peril of passing through the characters of three women who move between the black and white worlds with ease but also at some risk. Their story will remind some readers of Gyasi's light-skinned Robert, newly arrived in New York and struggling with the tension of skin color and opportunity.

Late 20th and 21st century writers such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker mark what many have called a second renaissance of African American writers. Their work offers fictional narratives of the lives of

## The roots of African American writing are deeply woven into the fabric of American literature.

**FIRST ROW** Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup, Olaudah Equiano, Harriet Jacobs

**SECOND ROW** Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles Chesnutt, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Booker T. Washington

**THIRD ROW** W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen

**FOURTH ROW** Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Colson Whitehead



raping her. Separated from her children for more than seven years, she eventually settled in the north and reunited with her children.

In the post-Civil War era, many works of African American literature illustrate how newly emancipated African Americans struggled under continued social and political discrimination and psychological oppression. Writers such as Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles Chesnutt wrote poems and stories about blacks who sought to create lives and families under conditions that had prevented their success for centuries. Activist and writer Ida B. Wells-Barnett brought to light the extent of the problem of lynching in the period the nation called (formally and informally) Reconstruction. And in a famous philosophical dispute over what actions would most benefit formerly enslaved peoples, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois presented competing opinions about what would ultimately improve the lives of African Americans.

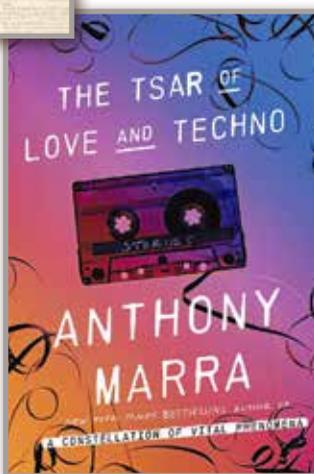
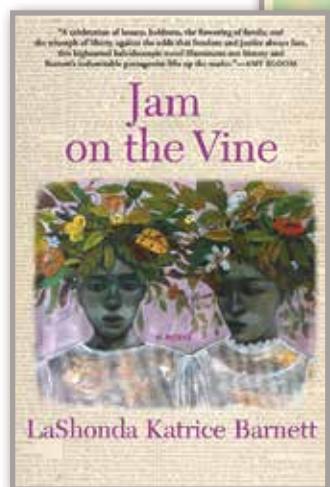
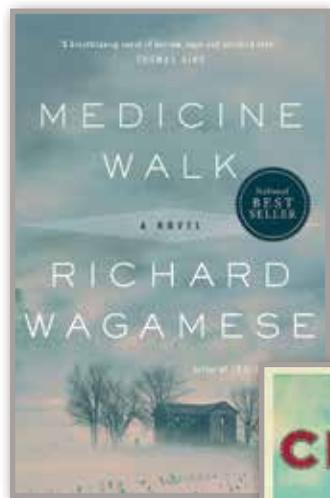
In the 1920s and '30s, writers of the Harlem Renaissance portrayed the vibrant culture of artists, musicians, and authors, especially in northern urban settings to which many blacks had moved during the Great Migration in search of work and improved living conditions. Writer Langston Hughes blended musical and poetic sensibilities in his poetry, fiction,

African Americans during and after the Civil Rights era. The science fiction of Octavia Butler transports readers to worlds and times and grapples with questions of equity and justice that have woven thematically through centuries of African American literature. Some contemporary writers such as Colson Whitehead are revisiting antebellum stories and settings.

Clearly, the roots of African American writing are deeply woven into the fabric of American literature. Once marginalized as representing a small portion of the American tradition, these texts are now included in most contemporary college-level surveys of American literature. The texts of African American writers work thematically alongside and in tension with writers of European, Latin American, and Asian origin to create the tapestry of work that makes up American literary culture.

*Dr. Annemarie Hamlin is a faculty member and the chair of humanities at Central Oregon Community College. She holds a Ph.D. in English and is a specialist in 19th century American literature. Her teaching areas include African American literature, Asian American literature, women's literature, and literature and medicine. She is the vice president of the Pacific Western Division of the Community College Humanities Association, and an active member of the Modern Language Association.*

# The Short of The Big List



The “A Novel Idea ... Read Together” selection committee starts meeting as a group as soon as the current project wraps up. And although the months between May and August are when the group meets to discuss books, committee members read with an eye towards “A Novel Idea” all year long. The first meeting generates what has become known as “The Big List.” It is comprised of books recommended by community and committee members as well as library staff. Last year’s Big List started out with 35 titles. Over the course of four months the committee considered and discussed at least the first 50 pages of each book. One by one, titles are eliminated until we

arrive at the final five. Committee members read the five remaining titles. This is the point in the process that can get tricky. The committee starts to consider technical issues including vetting the authors, checking with publishers regarding available formats, and considers programming opportunities. Two more titles are eliminated and the final three books are put before the library director for consideration. The committee ranks the titles and authors are contacted regarding availability and interest in participating in “A Novel Idea.” It is an intense process but the results have always been worth it. We hope you enjoy this year’s selection.

Here is the list of the four books that rounded out the final five.

## *Medicine Walk* by Richard Wagamese

Franklin Starlight and his dying father Eldon undertake a difficult journey into the mountainous backcountry in search of a place for Eldon to die and be buried in the warrior way. As they travel, Eldon tells his son the story of his own life and through the fog of pain, Eldon relates to his son the desolate moments, as well as his life’s fleeting moments of happiness and hope and the sacrifices made in the name of love.

*Milkweed Editions, publisher*

## *Jam on the Vine* by LaShonda Katrice Barnett

In this debut novel, Ivoe Williams, the child of emancipated slaves, gets a degree in journalism in Austin. But no newspapers will hire her because she is an African American woman. Her frustration with the Jim Crow South causes her to uproot and move to Kansas City to start a newspaper, the first female-run African American newspaper. She uses this platform to examine segregation and the American prison system of the day.

*Publisher’s Weekly*

## *Chicago* by Brian Doyle

Pursuing a dream, a young man takes a magazine job in Chicago and spends a year exploring the city and its people with an insatiable curiosity and an open heart. Through the lens of one man’s first foray into adulthood, Doyle pens a moving ode to the city of Chicago and the singular nature of its people.

*Booklist*

## *The Tsar of Love and Techno* by Anthony Marra

This powerful collection of interconnected short stories spans the gamut of the Russian experience, covering the years 1937 to the present. Marra, in between bursts of acidic humor, summons the terror, polluted landscapes, and diminished hopes of generations of Russians in a tragic and haunting collection.

*Booklist*

### A Novel Idea ... Read Together Selection Committee

Ruth Burliegh, Jo Caisse,  
Tina Walker Davis, Stacey Donohue,  
Liz Goodrich, Kim Jackson,  
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# Events

## Art Show

Submit art inspired by *Homegoing* on April 12.  
On display April 12–July 11  
Downtown Bend

## Book Discussions

Wednesday, March 22 • 5:30 p.m.  
Sisters Library

Monday, March 27 • 6:00 p.m.  
Herringbone Books  
422 SW 6th Street, Redmond

Wednesday, April 5 • 6:00 p.m.  
Roundabout Books  
900 NW Mtn. Washington Drive #110

Thursday, April 13 • 12:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library

Thursday, April 13 • 12:00 p.m.  
Redmond Library

Monday, April 17 • 6:00 p.m.  
Sunriver Books and Music  
57100 Beaver Drive #25C, Sunriver Village

Tuesday, April 18 • 12:00 p.m.  
East Bend Library

Thursday, April 20 • 12:00 p.m.  
La Pine Library

## Appropriation vs. Appreciation

Join artist and educator **Jason Graham**, a slam poetry champion and speaker who performs hip hop as **MOsley Wotta**, for a conversation exploring cultural appropriation. Jason shares some of his own spoken word poetry as well as other examples of artists who may or may not have crossed the line.



Saturday, April 8 • 2:00 p.m.  
East Bend Library

Tuesday, April 18 • 6:00 p.m.  
Redmond Library

Thursday, April 27 • 12:00 p.m.  
Sisters Library

## Second Sunday

### Inheriting the Trade Author Thomas DeWolf

**DeWolf** is the author of *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History* (Beacon Press). In 2001 he traveled with nine distant relatives on a life-altering journey through New England, Ghana, and Cuba to film the Emmy-nominated documentary film, *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North*.



DeWolf reads excerpts from his book, shares images from his family's journey, and shows film clips from the documentary.

Sunday, April 9 • 2:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library

## Tracing the History of African American Literature

From slave narratives to contemporary novels, **Dr. Annemarie Hamlin** explores the roots of African American literature. Once marginalized as representing a small portion of the American tradition, African American writers are now included in most contemporary college-level surveys of American literature.



Wednesday, April 12 • 12:00 p.m.  
Sunriver Library

Wednesday, April 19 • 6:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library

## Ancestral Wisdom

### The Role of Storytelling, Music, and Dance in Traditional Ghanaian Cultures

Discover the role storytelling, music, and dance plays in Ghanaian culture with **Dr. Habib Iddrisu** from the University of Oregon.

Friday, April 14 • 12:00 p.m.  
Redmond Library

Saturday, April 15 • 2:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library



## Blacks in Early Oregon

**Gwen Carr**, current board secretary of the Oregon Black Pioneers, presents an overview of black history in Oregon beginning in 1788. Primarily focused on the 1800s, Carr's presentation includes a couple of surprises that involve Central Oregon black pioneers.

Tuesday, April 18 • 6:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library

Wednesday, April 19 • 12:00 p.m.  
La Pine Library



## Pendant Making

Half-sisters Effia and Esi are both given pendants from their mother, Maame in *Homegoing*. **Chandra vanEijnsbergen**, Community Librarian and jewelry maker leads a pendant-making workshop. Craft your own based on the pendant worn by Effia and her descendants and lost by Esi in the dungeon at Cape Coast Castle. Space limited; registration required at [www.deschuteslibrary.org/calendar](http://www.deschuteslibrary.org/calendar) or call (541) 312-1032.

Thursday, April 20 • 6:00 p.m.  
East Bend Library

Friday, April 28 • 12:00 p.m.  
Sisters Library

main  
event



## Holmes vs Ford 1852

### Oregon's Only Slavery Trial

**R. Gregory Nokes**, author of *Breaking Chains: Slavery on Trial in the Oregon Territory*, shares the story of Missouri slaves Robin and Polly Holmes and their children. The couple was freed but their children remained in bondage. In 1852 Holmes took his former master to court in an attempt to get his children back in what is the only slavery trial in Oregon history.



Tuesday, April 25 • 6:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library

Wednesday, April 26 • 12:00 p.m.  
Redmond Library

## The Transatlantic Slave Trade A Capitalist Enterprise

**Dr. Carmen Thompson** of Portland State University discusses how the exploitation of African labor through transatlantic and internal slave trading led to the development of an early capitalist Europe, bolstering it and ultimately the United States into world superpowers.

Saturday, April 29 • 3:00 p.m.  
Redmond Library

Sunday, April 30 • 1:00 p.m.  
Downtown Bend Library



## Screen Birth of a Movement

Based on Dick Lehr's book *The Birth of a Movement: How 'Birth of a Nation' Ignited the Battle for Civil Rights*, the documentary *Birth of a Movement* tells the story of William M. Trotter, Boston-based African American newspaper editor and activist. In 1915 Trotter waged a crusade against D.W. Griffith's technically groundbreaking but notoriously Ku Klux Klan-friendly *The Birth of a Nation*, igniting a battle still raging today about race relations, media representation, and the power and influence of Hollywood. Sponsored by COCC Multicultural Activities.

Wednesday, May 3 • 4:00 p.m.  
Willie Hall, COCC, Bend Campus

## Screen Traces of the Trade A Story from the Deep North

The documentary follows the descendants of their slaveholding family as they retrace the steps of the Triangle Slave Trade. Long-time Central Oregon resident **Tom DeWolf** is featured in the film and facilitates the post-screening discussion.

Saturday, May 6 • 2:00 p.m.  
Sisters Library

## Author Yaa Gyasi

Deschutes Public Library welcomes **Yaa Gyasi**, author of *Homegoing*, to Central Oregon for the final event of "A Novel Idea... Read Together."

Sunday, May 7 • 4:00 p.m.

Bend High Auditorium

230 NE 6th Street

Free tickets at [www.dplfoundation.org](http://www.dplfoundation.org) and Deschutes Public Library beginning April 15.

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# Understanding Our Shared History Through Powerful Stories

Every year, "A Novel Idea" sweeps us away to new places and cultures. This year's selected novel, *Homegoing*, by author Yaa Gyasi transports us back and forth between Ghana and America. The book leads us from the Cape Coast Castle in Ghana to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act to the Harlem Renaissance and into America's heroin epidemic. *Homegoing* illuminates the lingering effects of slavery and institutionalized racism.

The library has created more than 25 free cultural programs that explore the themes of the book, deepen understanding, and encourage community dialogue. "A Novel Idea" provides Deschutes County residents a common forum to discuss ideas, discover culture, create art, and explore similarities and differences in a safe and neutral environment. Author Yaa Gyasi culminates the four weeks of programs with a free presentation at Bend High on Sunday, May 7, at 4:00 p.m. We are grateful to our sponsors and donors who make it possible for the library to offer "A Novel Idea" programs that are free and accessible for all.

Thank you for reading with us during the last 14 years. We look forward to many more years of community readings, discussions, and cultural experiences that bridge differences and build community. As we look to the future, we seek to further expand our audiences and deepen the dialogue. We love to hear from you, our faithful readers, and hope you continue to share your thoughts and ideas with us.

Happy reading!

Chantal Strobel, Project Director



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The Bulletin

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