

Black History Month

Black History Month celebrates the achievements of African Americans, and certainly there have been many successes in the field of literature in recent years. Below is some recent acclaimed fiction and nonfiction that capture the heart and spirit of African American culture. Following that is a database and a web site that might be fun to check out.

Fiction

[The Twelve Tribes of Hattie](#) by Ayana Mathis

Oprah's latest Book Club pick, this novel is a powerful debut from Mathis, depicting the early 20th century's Great Migration of black families from the south to the north. Focusing on 15-year old Hattie's move to Philadelphia in 1923, Mathis ably demonstrates that, for many Great Migration African-Americans, life didn't get any easier as they moved north.

[The Kid](#) by Sapphire

A sequel of sorts to [Push](#) (known as [Precious](#) in the movies), [The Kid](#) follows Precious' son, Abdul, in the years after her death as he deals with physical and sexual abuse in his foster home and Catholic school.

[Silver Sparrow](#) by Tayari Jones

This "adult book for young adults" tells the story of a bigamist through the eyes of one of his daughters. She knows the truth about his bigamy, but her friend (and sister) does not. A melodramatic coming-of-age story.

[Salvage the Bones](#) by Jesman Wyrld

Four siblings from a coastal Mississippi town struggle with their family's poverty and alcoholism. Despite this, they maintain their love for each other and manage to make life work. However, unknown to them, Hurricane Katrina is twelve days away...

[Sag Harbor](#) by Colson Whitehead

The year is 1985 and 15-year old Benji Cooper has to deal with the pressures of being one of the few African American kids in a posh New York City private school. Picked as one of 2009's best works of fiction by Publishers Weekly, this novel offers a fascinating look at an unorthodox New York City life.

Nonfiction

[Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008](#) by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Gates' latest is a history of Africans in the Americas from the days of the conquistador's right through Barack Obama.

[Black Against Empire: the history and politics of the Black Panther movement](#) by Joshua Bloom

Amazingly this is the first comprehensive history of the Black Panthers, a movement shrouded in mystery and little understood. An important history.

[How To Be Black](#) by Baratunde Thurston

A funny take on how to be black in America, Thurston grew up during Washington D.C.'s difficult 1980s to a strong pro-black mother who kept him out of danger. After graduating from Harvard, Thurston worked at The Onion and became a stand-up comedian, so you know this is one funny book.

[Black Firsts: 4,000 ground-breaking and pioneering historical events](#)

A terrific reference book, 2013's 3rd edition is available on our circulating shelves so you can take this fun-filled fact book home to enjoy.

Database

Gale's [Biography in Context](#) database celebrates Black History Month with hundreds of biographies on famous African Americans, including many audio and video files such as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march on Washington.

Website

Visit the U.S. Government's official [Black History Month](#) page. There are lots of photographs, articles, audio, and video for you to enjoy, brought to you by the Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, et al. 2012's theme was Black Women in American Culture and History – what will 2013's be?