



Emanuel School

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Friday 18th October 2024

BLACK HISTORY MONTH IN THE LIBRARY

Ms Wakeford

With over 27,000 books, the library has an incredible range of resources, not only in senior and junior fiction, but also covering everything from Shakespeare plays and biographies of political figures, to books on the history of computer games. With so many different books available sometimes it can be hard to narrow down what to read next. That's why we use Quick Lists, which can be accessed from the navigation bar on the library catalogue page.

For Black History Month, there are two quick lists - [Black History Month](#) and [Diverse Voices and Black Characters](#) - which cover a brilliant array of titles to celebrate black lives and black voices. Here are our top picks:

Graphic Novels: [Long Way Down – Jayson Reynolds](#)

This is a graphic novel version of the award-winning, bestselling verse novel by Jayson Reynolds with illustrations by Danica Novgorodoff. After Will's brother is shot in a gang crime, Will knows the rules – don't snitch and get revenge. But when he gets stuck in a lift with the gun and people from his past turn up it makes Will question the choices he's about to make.

YA Fiction: [Clap When You Land – Elizabeth Acevedo](#)

Carnegie award-winning author Elizabeth Acevedo follows up her acclaimed novel The Poet X with the story of two sisters, unknown to each other, who are brought together when their father dies in a plane crash. Clap When

You Land is a dual narrative verse novel with themes of love and grief and family and, for those taking part, is also part of our Year 9 100 book challenge.

Junior Fiction: [High Rise Mystery – Sharna Jackson](#)

A middle-grade murder mystery set in a London tower block, High Rise Mystery by Sharna Jackson is a popular one for library loan outs. Set during the hottest summer on record, Nik and Norva take it upon themselves to solve the murder of their friend and art club teacher, Hugo.

Fiction: [The Nickel Boys – Colston Whitehead](#)

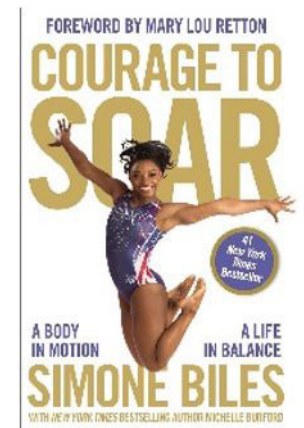
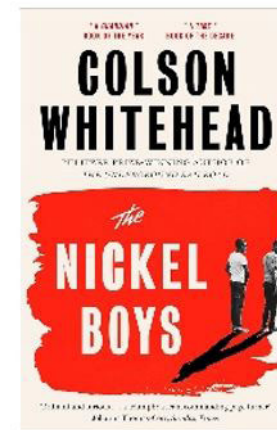
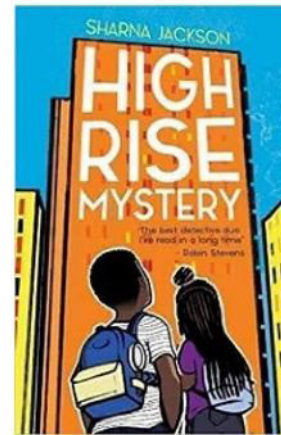
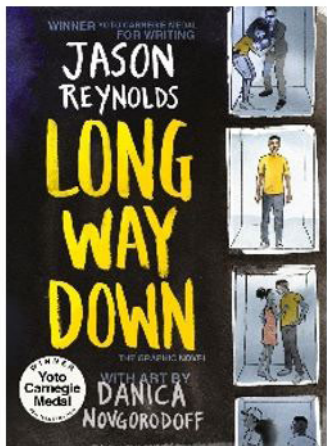
Winner of the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Colston Whitehead's The Nickel Boys is the story of two boys, Elwood and Turner, sentenced to a hellish reform school in 1960s Florida where abuse is rife and decisions can have life-long repercussions. Based on a real-life reform school, this book is a searing account of brutality in the not-too-distant-past.

Autobiography: [Courage To Soar: A Body in Motion, A Life in Balance – Simone Biles](#)

Olympic gold medallist and the most decorated U.S. gymnast of all time, Simone Biles charts her early years in and out of foster homes and subsequent adoption by her grandparents, to balancing school and gymnastics commitments through to her world champion titles and 2016 Olympic Gold medal.

Non-Fiction: [Black and British – David Olusoga](#)

Available in both an adult non-fiction version and a shorter children's non-fiction version, Olusoga gives an essential introduction to Black British history spanning 1800 years. The children's version includes maps, photos and portraits, and answers questions such as when did Africans first come to Britain and who are the well-dressed black children in Georgian paintings?



POETRY FROM THE HARLEM RENNAISSANCE

Esme (L6SMD)

In the 1920s, African American communities in the North and Midwest regions of the United States underwent a defining cultural shift which involved the rapid growth and development of intellectual and artistic societal spheres. The area most affected by this was Harlem, a New York city neighborhood which covered only three square miles. This area was the epicentre of African American culture at the time, producing some of the era's most influential artistic and literary figures such as Jessie R. Faucet.

The Harlem Renaissance was a critical era for black empowerment through the reclaiming of identity and rebuking of widespread discrimination and bigotry by African American artists, intellectuals, writers, musicians, and entrepreneurs embracing and showing pride in their culture. Poetry from this era is diverse and takes many forms and rhythms. From sonnets to ragtime and jazz, poets who wrote in the Harlem Renaissance explored both the woes and joys of black life as they sought to dismantle white stereotypes and empower their communities.

One poet from this time, Georgia Douglas Johnson, often explored the experiences of African American women, seeking to give them voices and challenge societal norms:

Smothered Fires
By Georgia Douglas Johnson

**A woman with a burning flame
Deep covered through the years
With ashes. Ah! she hid it deep,
And smothered it with tears.
Sometimes a baleful light would rise
From out the dusky bed,
And then the woman hushed it quick
To slumber on, as dead.
At last the weary war was done
The tapers were alight,
And with a sigh of victory
She breathed a soft—good-night!**

This poem speaks for those who could not, when the voices of many black women were muted by rigid gender roles and societal constraints. The 'weary war' references the ongoing battle often internalized by African American women of the time: the need to conform to the expectations placed upon them against a longing to truly be free in their passion and creativity. The flames in the poem are a symbol of this passion, a passion that women like Douglas Johnson were made to believe they should shroud and dampen, hence the title of 'Smothered Fires'.

The poignant poem ends with the subject's long-awaited liberation from her oppressive restraints, the tapers 'alight'. She bids the world 'good-night', quietly contented with her newfound freedom.



ALICE BALL

Elriza (10VCO)

Imagine saving more than eight thousand people and having your treatment to help Hansen's disease (also known as Leprosy) patients still being used in some parts of the world a whole century after it was invented. Alice Augusta Ball was born on the 24th of July 1892 in Seattle, Washington.

She lived in Hawaii before moving to Washington to earn her bachelor's degree at the University of Washington in pharmaceutical chemistry. For her master's degree, she received a scholarship from the University of Hawaii, in 1915, and was the first woman

and African American to graduate from the University of Hawaii.

During this time, the cases of Hansen's Disease were rapidly increasing, and at that time the police were "arresting" sufferers and isolating them in Kalaupapa on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. At the time there was only one treatment to help Hansen's disease, and it was chaulmoogra oil: a remedy which wasn't too effective. Moreover, it caused a lot of pain, and it had a lot of side effects such as getting a fever.

In 1916, Alice Ball developed the first working leprosy treatment experimenting with the composition of the oil to make it water soluble and to create the treatment which was named

after her as the "Ball Method".

Despite only being 23 and shortly after inventing the Ball Method, Alice Ball sadly died in a lab while she was teaching.

However, she died before she could publish her treatment by herself. It was only when Dr Harry Hallmann published an article on the Ball Method, she got the credit she deserved.

After the invention of the Ball Method, people who had Hansen's disease were not isolated anymore. The University of Hawaii planted a Chaulmoogra tree in honour of Alice Ball.



ANNA MURRAY AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS' ROLES IN THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms Aitken-Burt

The first lines of the US Declaration of Independence in 1776 are perhaps some of the most ironic in the history of the world: *"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."*

This sentence tells us so much about pervasive attitudes of ruling elites in the 18th century - 'all men' was not a synonym for 'mankind' or 'humanity' but the arbitrary construct of limiting rights by race and gender was entrenched without even needing to be explicitly stated. Over in France during the

Revolution in 1789, the Declaration on the Rights of Man makes the same assumptions.

Slavery had been established in Britain's Thirteen Colonies from their inception with the first recorded enslaved Africans kidnapped from the Kingdom of Ngongo (modern Angola) arriving in Virginia in 1619. Vermont had outlawed slavery in 1777 as it declared its independence from Britain. But whilst they may have been legally free, this did not mean that ex-slaves were treated well, many being forced to work as indentured servants without pay. As the United States was established and began to expand, new states had to declare if they would be 'free' or 'slave' states.

In the early 19th century, Anna Murray and Frederick Douglass were born in Maryland, the state on the Mason-Dixon line that separated 'free' and 'slave' states. Anna had actually escaped being born into slavery as just one month before her birth her parents were freed by their enslaver. She gained a paid job

as a laundress and housekeeper. Frederick was born from the sexual violence against enslaved women by their masters and was separated from his mother as an infant. From the age of eight, Frederick was taken away from plantation life to the city of Baltimore, enslaved by Sophia Auld. Whilst he was working as her housekeeper, she taught him how to read for Bible studies, though soon began to confiscate materials realising that Frederick could now read political documents too.

Anna met Frederick whilst working on the docks and instigated a plan for his escape to freedom, giving him clothes for a disguise and money from her savings to make it to New York. They married in 1838 and Frederick started to use his skills in writing and speaking to change people's minds about the definition of freedom that the Declaration of Independence had entrenched. He was one of the founding male feminist signatories at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848 and established The North Star newspaper with the motto "Right is of no

sex—Truth is of no colour—God is the Father of us all, and we are brethren."

However, for all of his important work in the fight for female suffrage as well as abolition, Frederick hardly mentioned Anna in the three autobiographies he wrote of his life. It was she who supported the family financially with her laundry work as Frederick's income was sporadic from his speeches and writing. Her importance for Frederick's escape from slavery was overlooked though she established a hub for the Underground Railroad for decades to continue the dangerous work of helping fugitives. Their daughter Rosetta always told those who admired her father that his "was a story made possible by the unwavering loyalty of Anna Murray." We should remember them both as important people fighting for justice on the dual fronts of race and gender – intersectional issues that must be tackled in conjunction for as a revised Declaration should state, 'all **humans** are created equal'.