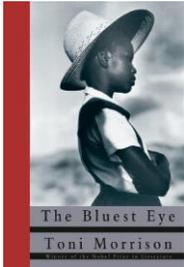
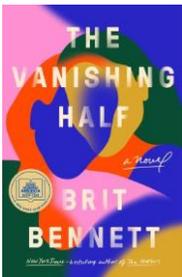


Carver County Library Suggests *African American Historical Fiction*



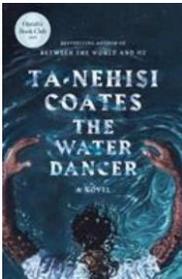
Toni Morrison - [*The Bluest Eye*](#) (MOR 2000)

The Bluest Eye, published in 1970, is the first novel written by Toni Morrison, winner of the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. It is the story of eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove -- a black girl in an America whose love for its blond, blue-eyed children can devastate all others -- who prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment.



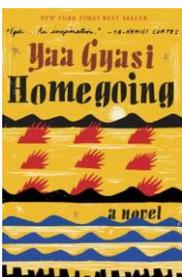
Britt Bennett - [*The Vanishing Half: A Novel*](#) (BEN 2020)

Bennett explores a Louisiana family's navigation of race, from the Jim Crow era through the 1980s, in this impressive work. The story features identical twin sisters, who at age 16 run away from their small, black, 1950s Southern town and take different paths, one passing for white. In 1968, Desiree Vignes returns to her Louisiana hometown more than a decade later and relationship between the twin's daughters becomes key to the story. This is a highly anticipated second novel after Bennett's breakout debut of her novel *The Mothers*.



Ta-Nehisi Coates - [*The Water Dancer*](#) (COA 2019)

This ambitious fiction debut by social critic Coates (*Between the World and Me*) features a protagonist with what might be called superpowers. Son of an enslaved African American woman and her owner, Hiram grew up with conditional freedom. Hiram becomes involved with the Virginia Underground Railroad, discovering that he has a skill called conduction that allows him to transport runaway slaves, as well as his loved ones, to safety in the free states.



Yaa Gyasi - [*Homegoing*](#) (GYA 2016)

In this sweeping family saga that begins in 18th-century Ghana, two half-sisters and their families lead drastically different lives: one marries well, and the other is sold into slavery. An ambitious lyrical debut about the ramifications of slavery and our entangled histories.



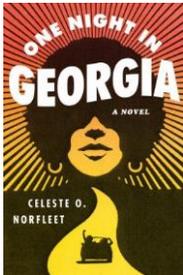
Ravi Howard - [*Driving the King*](#) (HOW 2015)

Award-winning writer Ravi Howard explores race and class in 1950s America, witnessed through the experiences of Nat King Cole and his driver, Nat Weary. The story is taken from a real-life incident of an assault on singer Nat King Cole by white men during a concert in Alabama. In this fictionalized account, the paths of the singer and a returning soldier-childhood friends from Montgomery, both named Nat, both African American-had diverged widely, and then came together in a life-changing moment that sent Nat Weary to prison for a decade. This story is a poignant portrayal of how the lives of African Americans could be so easily derailed by racial inequality under the law.



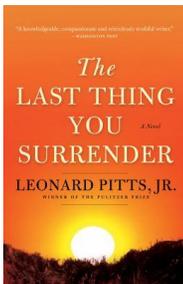
Ayana Mathis - [The Twelve Tribes of Hattie](#) (MAT 2012)

Smart and lovely Hattie expected a good life after fleeing Jim Crow Georgia in 1923 and settling in Philadelphia. Two years later, married (at 16) to an irresponsible man, she is poor, cold, hungry, and desperate as her twin babies sicken with pneumonia. Writing with stunning authority, clarity, and courage, debut novelist Mathis pivots forward in time, spotlighting intensely dramatic episodes in the lives of Hattie's nine subsequent children (and one grandchild to make the twelve tribes), galvanizing crises that expose the crushed dreams and anguished legacy of the Great Migration.



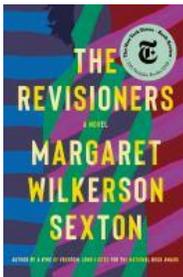
Celeste O. Norfleet - [One Night in Georgia](#) (NOR 2019)

Set against the tumultuous summer of 1968, Norfleet's novel is a rich, devastating story of lives trapped in a violent period of history. Three black girl friends drive from New York City to Spelman College in Atlanta to begin their senior year using the Motorist Green Book, a guide for black motorists to hotels, cafes, and restrooms that will serve them. When their car breaks down in rural Georgia, the novel takes a dark turn. Norfleet brilliantly depicts what it means to be a black female in a tempestuous period of American history and provides a gripping narrative.



Leonard Pitts, Jr - [The Last Thing You Surrender](#) (PIT 2019)

Pulitzer-winning journalist and bestselling novelist Leonard Pitts, Jr.'s new historical page-turner is a great American tale of race and war, following three characters from the Jim Crow South as they face the enormous changes World War II triggers in the United States. The author seamlessly integrates impressive research into a compelling tale of America at war overseas, and at home.



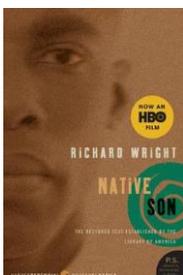
Margaret Wilkerson Sexton - [The Revisioners](#) (SEX 2019)

When Ava and her son, King, move in with Ava's white grandmother, Ava brings a picture of Josephine, her enslaved ancestor who purchased her own farm in 1925. Sexton's (*A Kind of Freedom*, 2017) powerful, deeply personal second novel alternates between Ava's and Josephine's stories as each woman learns the boundaries of what she can endure amidst racial injustice.



Colson Whitehead - [The Nickel Boys](#) (WHI 2019)

Colson Whitehead brilliantly explores another facet of America's racist legacy in this powerful novel about a serious student who dreams that college might lead him out of the Jim Crow South. Instead, he's wrongly arrested and sent to a brutal reform school. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and devastatingly changed the lives of thousands of children.



Richard Wright - [Native Son](#) (WRI 2005)

Right from the start, Bigger Thomas had been headed for jail. It could have been for assault or petty larceny; by chance, it was for murder and rape. *Native Son* tells the story of this young black man caught in a downward spiral after he kills a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. Set in Chicago in the 1930s, Richard Wright's powerful novel is an unsparing reflection on the poverty and feelings of hopelessness experienced by people in inner cities across the country and of what it means to be black in America.