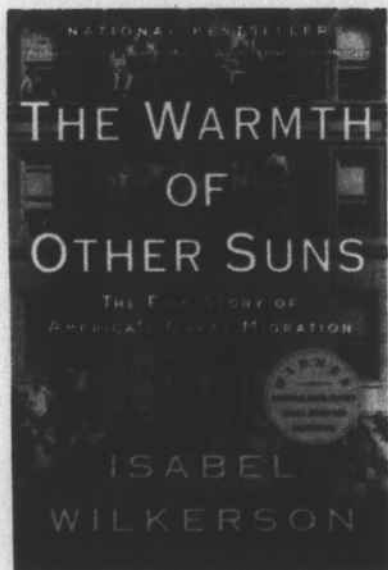


LISTS BY CRYSTAL HOLLAND, CONTINUED

Black History / Other Nonfiction

- "The Souls of Black Folk" by W. E. B. Du Bois
- "Up from Slavery" by Booker T. Washington
- "(modern classic) The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration," by Isabel Wilkerson



"The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration," by Isabel Wilkerson

In this epic, beautifully written masterwork, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson chronicles one of the great untold stories of American history: the decades-long migration of black citizens who fled the South for northern and western cities, in search of a better life. From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. This title was the Forsyth County Public Library's On the Same Page community read selection in 2012.



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Black migration author draws large crowd



Elnora Gore

By Layla Garms,
The Chronicle

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Isabel Wilkerson came to town this week.

She addressed audiences at Reynolda House on Sunday and at the Central Library on Monday. Her book, "The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great

Migration," was the featured book for Forsyth County Public Library's popular On the Same Page community reading program. Her talk before a packed house of more than 150 in the library auditorium Monday served as the culmination for the program, which began in September.

Wilkerson, a former bureau chief for The New York Times, spent 15 years conducting interviews with more than 1,200 Americans about the 55-year period known as the Great Migration, when millions of African Americans fled abhorrent racial conditions in the South to start new lives in the North and West. A critically acclaimed national bestseller, "The Warmth of Other Suns" is said to be the most comprehensive work on the movement, which extended from 1915-1970.

"This is a story that had not fully been told in part because the people themselves did not feel safe to tell it, because the people themselves had endured such

pain that they did not want to burden their children or anyone else with it," she said. "I just view it as a healing experience. This is a way of allowing their voices to be heard."

Wilkerson, a Washington, D.C. native who serves as a journalism professor and director of Narrative Nonfiction at Boston University, said she was inspired to write the book because her own parents were part of the Great Migration, but were closed-lipped about their experiences.

"My parents never talked about it," she related. "Wherever it would come up, my mother would just say, 'I left that place a long time ago. I didn't look back.'"

The experience of writing the book and sharing what she learned from others who were a part of the movement with her mother allowed her to establish a closer connection with her family's story, Wilkerson revealed.

"I learned things that I didn't know about my own family through the process," she explained. "It was a way that she (my mother) could begin to process what she had been through ... it made it safe for her to talk about, and it kind of validated it. That's the value of being able to create a safe space for discussion, which is the goal of all of this."

The self-described "southerner once removed" likened the hardships African Americans experienced in that time, and the heinous acts they often witnessed in the South, which was rampant with lynchings at the time,

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On the Same Page co-coordinators (from left): Michael Ackerman, Crystal Holland and Terri Bonow.



Isabel Wilkerson (center) poses with fans Robert Smith and Carol Vogler.

ALL PHOTOS BY LAYLA GARMS