

MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD



Olaudah Equiano wrote one of the best-known firsthand accounts of surviving the Middle Passage journey on a slave ship.

PORTRAIT OF OLAUDAH
 EQUIANO PUBLISHED
 IN *THE INTERESTING
 NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE
 OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO*,
 LONDON, 1814.
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If you haven't visited our "Products of a Creative Mind" exhibit yet, now's your last chance before it closes in just two months! But as one exhibit closes, another one opens. Our curatorial staff is hard at work preparing our next exhibit, "Mightier Than the Sword." The exhibit, opening to the public on August 27, examines the history and evolution of African American literature from the 18th century to the present – from autobiographical slave narratives to the creative explosion of the Harlem Renaissance and from the Black Arts Movement to modern-day authors, poets, and playwrights. In addition to profiling black authors, the exhibit will explore the role literature has played in shaping public opinion on political and cultural issues related to African Americans. Children's literature and illustrations will also be included.

The exhibit will be organized chronologically, with each section exploring a variety of genres. The first section (pre-1865) will feature America's earliest black poets and novelists, abolitionists, and slave narratives. Highlights of the second section (1865-1940) include the opposing philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois and the Harlem Renaissance. The cultural explosion of the early 20th century included the rise of authors such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Countee Cullen. The third section (1940-1980) includes the Black Art Movement, the Chicago Black Renaissance, and works of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements. The final section (1980-present) includes authors in genres ranging from science fiction to poetry and autobiography to crime fiction. The representation of political and cultural issues in contemporary literature will also be discussed.

Langston Hughes was a leading author of the Harlem Renaissance. His extensive works include poetry, non-fiction, novels, plays, and children's books. This portrait was taken by Cedar Rapids native Carl Van Vechten.

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Uncle Tom's Cabin was a hugely successful anti-slavery novel but has also been criticized for perpetuating African American stereotypes.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE
 CHARACTER TOPSY
 COURTESY OF THE
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Visitors will have the opportunity to experience this history hands-on through a variety of interactive elements including:

- A reconstruction of a garret, the attic crawl space where Harriet Jacobs wrote her memoirs and hid for seven years as a runaway slave.
- Tablets with complete digitized slave narratives, including one by escaped slave Samuel Hall, who settled in Washington, Iowa
- An interactive poetry wall
- Illustration prompts to demonstrate how image can shape perception of a story and characters

Reading nooks throughout the exhibit will be set up to resemble an average living room from various time periods. Visitors can sit back, relax, and get lost in a good book.

The work doesn't stop after the exhibit opens. Our education department is planning an exciting series of events related to the themes of the exhibit such as book discussions and author talks. Stay tuned for more information!

Toni Morrison is the only black woman to have received a Nobel Prize.

TONI MORRISON, 2008. PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGELA RADULESCU VIA FLICKR. FEBRUARY 26, 2008. CC-BY-SA 2.0



Rita Dove is a Pulitzer Prize recipient, former Poet Laureate of the United States, and graduate of the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop.

STILL FROM THE DOCUMENTARY "RITA DOVE: AN AMERICAN POET" BY EDUARDO MONTES-BRADLEY. CC-BY-SA 3.0



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If you have chest pain don't ignore it.

Get it checked at Cedar Rapids' only Top 50 heart hospital. All of our ER doctors are board-certified and backed by the area's most experienced heart care team.

When every minute counts, call 911 and tell the first responders to, "Go to St. Luke's."

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