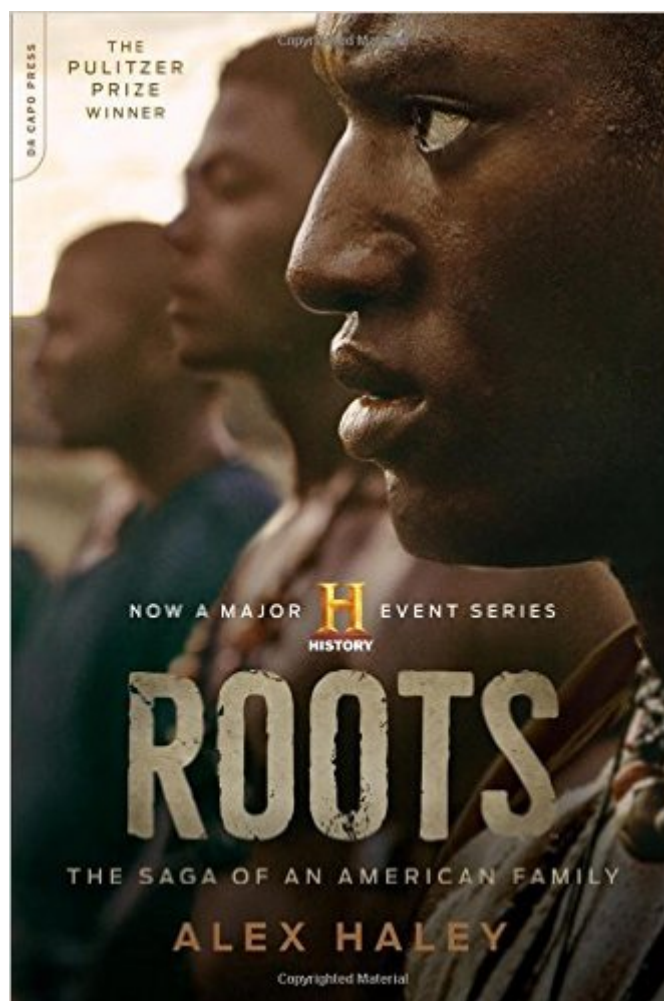


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Roots: The Saga Of An American Family



Synopsis

A new eight-hour event series based on *Roots* will be simulcast on the History Channel, Lifetime, and A&E over four consecutive nights beginning Memorial Day, May 30, 2016. "Early in the spring of 1750, in the village of Juffure, four days upriver from the coast of The Gambia, West Africa, a man-child was born to Omoro and Binta Kinte." So begins *Roots*, one of the most extraordinary and influential books of our time. Through the story of one family's; his family's; Alex Haley unforgettably brings to life the monumental two-century drama of Kunta Kinte and the six generations who came after him: slaves and freedmen, farmers and blacksmiths, lumber mill workmen and Pullman porters, lawyers and architects...and one author. A national and international phenomenon at the time of its original publication, *Roots* continues to enthrall readers with its masterful narrative drive and exceptional emotional power, speaking to us all with an undiminished resonance and relevance. "In all of us there is a hunger, marrow deep, to know our heritage.... Without this enriching knowledge, there is a hollow yearning no matter what our attainments in life." Alex Haley With an introduction by Michael Eric Dyson RootsTheBook.com

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 688 pages, Alex Haley has captured in his history of one family, the history of an entire race of people whose names and identities were stolen from them. It's hard to say if this book is fiction, history or biography, since it reads so much like all three. Haley found sizeable gaps in his efforts to trace his family roots, and of necessity had to fill in the blanks from his own imagination, but it reads

so convincingly that none of the fictionalized parts detract from the overall story. Probably millions of American blacks, I among them, have wondered where we came from and tried to trace our family lines, only to inevitably run up against a brick wall. (I managed to trace my own family reliably back to my great-great-great-grandmother, who arrived here at the end of the 18th century on a slave ship, but I'll never know her tribe or her nationality.) Haley begins his story fittingly in a small African village, where a 17 year old boy named Kunta Kinte is abducted by slave traders after venturing out of his village alone. His harrowing voyage to America is told in some 50 of the most gut-wrenching pages ever written. It's been reliably estimated that the death rate on the slave ships was between 35 and 40%; translated into numbers, that means that besides the 14 million Africans who were dragged, more dead than alive, onto the shores of the Americas, another 11 million died en route. Sold into slavery to a Virginia planter, Kunta lives out his life in bondage, struggling to hold onto the few remnant of his African identity. Haley is a great storyteller and the narrative sweeps through succeeding five generations, bringing his subjects vividly to life, and it all reads like a great novel until we are brought up short by his own arrival on the scene a century and a half after his ancestor's birth, and then it hits us like a knockout punch: forget the novel, this is real. This is Haley's family and every black family in America that has struggled to survive and has not only survived, but has succeeded despite enormous odds. The most mind-blowing part of the book, for this reader, was when Haley returned to his ancestor's native Gambian village of Juffure and heard his own family history narrated by the Griot. Haley has written, in his history of one family, the story of every family in America that traces its roots back to Africa from the 16th through the early 19th centuries. In the words of old African-American saying, which has relevance for everyone, you can't know where you're going, if you don't know where you've been. Haley shows us, in vivid and at times excruciating detail, where we've been, and what we've come through to be who we are.

Roots is one of the best books I've ever read, but after reading this newly released edition, I'd recommend readers find an older copy. The first section is riddled with typos and grammatical errors and so is the last section, obviously the book was edited by more than one editor because the rest of the book is perfect. It's a disgrace that such a great book was allowed to be reprinted in such a sloppy fashion. Readers, shop around for a copy from the '70's if you want to enjoy this book as it deserves to be.

I am surprised that I have not read this book sooner ~~ considering how much I love biography/family histories. This is one book that will definitely go on my top 50 books. Alex Haley

writes of his seven generations of family life ~~ beginning with "The African" ~ Kunta Kinte ~ who was abducted from his village in The Gambia and ending with a brief biography of himself. From a proud African captured and forced to become a slave to freedmen and farmers, business owners and the women who prayed for the families while keeping the stories alive ... this is one book to cherish. You struggle with Kinte's disappointments, fears, sorrow, bitterness and joy as he watches his freedom disappears into slavery. You begin to understand his anguish at losing his family, self-respect, pride and honor. You begin to understand the stoicness behind each slave's demeanor as he or she serve their masters/mistresses and their secret longings for a home they can call theirs or even live their lives without fear of being sold off to another family plantation. And you begin to understand their relief when the Civil War ended. I have to confess, Haley's family are among the fortunate ~~ they managed to stay together through two slave-holding families ~~ though I don't understand how the Murray family can say slavery is ok. They may be more lenient than other slaveholding families ~~ but it is still wrong to hold another human being against their will simply because of their skin color. Haley demonstrates how the intelligence of his family helped them survive the years during slavery, after Civil War and during the Reconstruction period. And I have to confess, my favorite scene in this whole book is when Tom, shortly after being freed, comes upon a white man who had whipped him after accusing him of stealing food while working for him during the war, gives him a drink. The captain then demanded that Tom gives him a drink and Tom just looks at him steadily before walking away. He knew then that he was free and un beholden to any white man. And Tom is my favorite character ~~ he finds a way to work around working for white men and still retaining his independence. He has the strength of The African running in his veins. This is one book that will be sticking with me for a long time. It is rich in heritage. It is rich in dialect. It is rich in every human emotion possible, and dreams. It is rich in hope as well. This is one book that should be deemed as a classic ~~ it portrays American history in a way that we don't get to hear in classes in school. It is one dimension of a time that seeps in history ~~ and it is an African-American history. It is one that I highly recommend for everyone to read. The voices of Haley's ancestors aren't so easily forgotten. They will haunt you the next time you hear of a Civil Rights movement happening ~~ or a story about a slave ancestor. These are a people who have not forgotten their roots and where they came from. They hung onto their dreams and dignity as best as they could throughout some of the harshest times in the matters of history. And Haley captures their voices beautifully. This is one book you won't regret picking up.

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