

Newsletter

The Family Tree: A Lynching in Georgia

6/20/2016

Latest News

Simon & Schuster has nominated *The Family Tree* for a Pulitzer Prize.

Upcoming Events

July 23 I conduct an all-day writers' workshop in Minneapolis.

July 26, 7-8, East City Books, Capitol Hill's (DC) new bookstore. I'll be joined by representatives of groups working for racial justice who'll discuss their work.

I've been invited to present my book at the Decatur Book Festival, the nation's largest, Sept. 2-4.

On Sept. 27, I'll be interviewed along with Edward Ball, author of *Slaves in the Family*, by *NYTimes* reporter Rachel Swarns at the Brooklyn Historical Society.

I'll participate on a panel at George Mason University's Fall for the Book festival sometime during the week of Sept. 26 with Susan Tichy, author of *Trafficke*, and Tony Cohen, an African American historian.

Of Special Interest

On May 28, *The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer* published my op-ed revealing the identity of the man who led the 1896 lynch mob in that city and calling for a public apology and memorial marker. (See karenbranan.com/news) The mayor responded to me personally that she was willing to cooperate with residents in having a memorial placed. She is not willing to apologize. A group is meeting to put the marker process in motion.

See my latest blog "One morning in Lagrange, Ga." on karenbranan.com for a description of how I met the descendants of Henry "Peg" Gilbert, murdered in 1947, by the Hamilton police chief. Some of this story appears in my book. I am providing FBI documents to the descendants as they seek to understand what happened and, perhaps, to re-open the case. I will be writing more about it as this new development unfolds.

Through two events in Lagrange, Ga., June 4, I discovered a wealth of interest and activity around racial justice. I was joined by my friend and "sister," Deborah Dawson, whose ancestors were enslaved by mine, and who did a great job talking about her genealogical research. Lagrange is just over the county line from Harris County but worlds away in attitude. I have been invited to continue my work there. What joy.

Several white Georgia librarians have invited me to help them start Racial Reconciliation groups in their libraries. I am definitely on-board for this.

I am working with residents of a Capitol Hill neighborhood next to mine to create a Race Dialogue series, using the Coming to the Table model to explore history, build connections, find healing, and take action toward racial justice. We begin a once-monthly, six-months' series July 27.

I spent an amazing June 9-12 in the beautiful Shenandoah Mountains at the National Gathering of Coming to the Table at Eastern Mennonite University, meeting and re-uniting with dozens of folks dedicated to uncovering the hard history of this country and their families and connecting with black descendants of people their ancestors enslaved or with white descendants of the enslavers of their ancestors. It's an incredible movement which will not solve the mammoth crisis created by racism in this country but will surely push things forward. Here I facilitated a break-out session on lynching memorials.

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