

About the Author

Ann Weisgarber



Ann Weisgarber is the author of **The Promise** and **The Personal History of Rachel DuPree** (which was nominated for England's 2009 Orange Prize and for the 2009 Orange Award for New Writers). In the United States, **The Personal History of Rachel DuPree** won the Stephen Turner Award for New Fiction and the Langum Prize for American Historical Fiction. It was shortlisted for the Ohioana Book Award for Fiction and was a Barnes and Noble Discover New Writers selection.

The Promise was shortlisted for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction, was the first finalist for the Spur Award for Best Western Historical Fiction, and was a finalist for the Ohioana Book Award for Fiction.

The Promise was inspired by a dilapidated house and by an interview Ann conducted when she was writing articles for a Galveston magazine. She wrote much of the novel in Galveston where pelicans glide along the surf and cows graze in pastures. Her debut novel, **The Personal History of Rachel DuPree** was inspired by a photograph of an unknown woman sitting in front of a sod dugout. It was published in England and France before being published in the United States.

Ann was born and raised in Kettering, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton. She graduated from Wright State University in Dayton with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and earned a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Houston. She has been a social worker in psychiatric and nursing home facilities, and taught sociology at Wharton County Junior College in Texas.

In addition to Ohio and Texas, Ann has lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Des Moines, Iowa. She now splits her time between Sugar Land, Texas, (home to Imperial Sugar Company) and Galveston, Texas. She and her husband, Rob, are fans of America's national parks and visit at least one park a year.

Ann serves on the selection committee for the Langum Prize in American Historical Fiction. She is currently working on her next novel that takes place in Capitol Reef National Park, Utah, during the winter of 1888.

BIO COURTESY OF ANNWEISGARBER.COM



ROSENBERG LIBRARY
MUSEUM BOOK CLUB

PROGRAM AGENDA

Fall 2015

Sep 9 · Oct 15

12:00 noon Welcome & Introductions

12:00-12:15 Historical Presentation

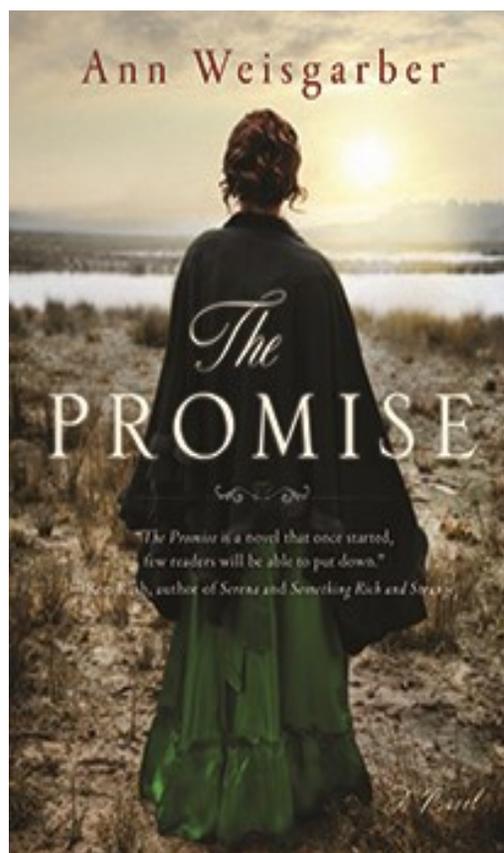
12:15-1:00 Book Discussion

SAVE THE DATE! October 21 / Gulf Coast Reads Special Event

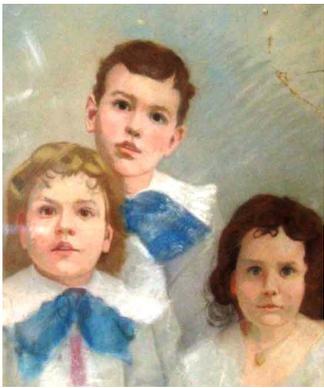
Researching the Promise with Ann Weisgarber

2 p.m. in Wortham Auditorium, Rosenberg Library

online registration required



Rosenberg
Library's
Museum Book
Club provides
a forum for
discovery and
discussion,
linking literary
selections with
artworks and
historical
objects from
the permanent
collection.



THE FISHER CHILDREN
unknown artist
Gift of Mrs. W. Fisher III, 81.026

"She said that like wounds could heal. Wounds stayed wounds. A person just got so they knew that; they just got to where they put one foot in front of the other. But I figured Mrs. Williams didn't know much about sorrow."

-Chapter 8, p. 137

Discussion...

In what ways does the author bring the era to life? What details did she use that create vivid images of Galveston and the island for you? How does she make the hurricane feel real for the reader?

How would the story be different if there was only one point-of-view? If you had to choose only one main character, would you choose Catherine or Nan? Why?

What might be the reasons Bernadette forced Nan to make the promise? Did Oscar encourage Nan to make the promise because he truly wanted Nan to care for Andre after his wife's death or because he wanted Bernadette to stop worrying about it?

"He was testing me, I understood. I could walk into the water and become part of this place. Or I could stay behind and the silence between us would only deepen."

-Chapter 10, p. 180

Discussion...

What does Catherine want out of life? Why did she start a relationship with Edward and what did she get out of that relationship that makes it so important to her?

Oscar says he married Catherine because he wanted Andre to have access to culture. Is this the whole truth? What might be other reasons he wanted to marry her?

Nan believes she is cursed when it comes to men. If she didn't believe that, might her relationship with Oscar have been different? Do you think Oscar would have married Nan eventually had Catherine not written him? Would Nan have made a good wife for Oscar?



T.J. GALLAGHER'S DAIRY
Julius Stockfleth (1857-1935)
Library Purchase, 76.147

"Fiction can never be superior to truth; the latter is a source of inspiration to us, richer and more fruitful than the former."

-Chapter 11, p. 191



ANTIQUe CARVING SET
Gift of the Estate of Clarence R. Taylor
and Etta Rose Cox Taylor
2014.016

Discussion...

Why do you think Oscar wanted to marry Catherine even though he knew she was not being truthful? Why would Oscar be willing to forgive that trait in Catherine?

Will Nan keep Andre? Why should she give the boy to Oscar's relatives and why should she keep the boy herself? Why does the story leave the question of what will happen to Andre unanswered?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS COURTESY OF WENDY WILKINSON AND HOUSTON GREAT BOOKS. WWW.HOUSTONGREATBOOKS.NET