

*Under the Tulip Tree* by Michelle Shocklee

Lorena Leland's sixteenth birthday is a big deal, and about to be celebrated with the most important people in Nashville, Tennessee. The date is Tuesday, October 29, 1929, and Lorena's father runs one of the largest banks in the state. As the day unfolds, and the reports from New York City roll out about uncertain markets, Lorena continues to thrill over her dress and her party. Until the late afternoon announcement that Wall Street has crashed, and the Leland family's entire world collapses around them.

Seven years later, Lorena's father still locks himself in his study to spend his days drinking, unable to function. Her mother works part-time as a seamstress, and through the generosity of Lorena's grandmother, they have continued to stay in their home (which originally belonged to Grandmother). Lorena had worked for the newspaper, but was laid off months ago. Her previous employer takes pity on Lorena and tell her about a new program called The Federal Writer's Program, which is part of President Roosevelt's WPA. Lorena will be sent to interview former slaves and record their stories to share as part of a larger collection. Uncertain at first, Lorena soon finds herself totally immersed in the story of Frankie Washington, a 101-year-old former slave.

This story is incredibly touching at times as it tells of Frankie's experiences beginning as a house companion at the age of 6, through years that include serving as a hospital aide during Civil War battles. Eureka Public Library District owns both the audio version on CD and print copies of *Under the Tulip Tree*, and a print copy of Shocklee's newest book, *Count the Nights by the Stars*, historical fiction again set in Nashville Tennessee.