

FEBRUARY 2009 E-RESOURCE NOTICE

Greetings and Welcome to the Year of the Ox! How fitting to celebrate February as Black History Month with the news that more than a thousand Americans and Canadians celebrated the inauguration of President Barack Obama at the Embassy of Canada on Pennsylvania Avenue. As the photos attest at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/connect2canada>, the Canadian Embassy offered one of the best viewing spots on the parade route. An interesting set of photos are posted, including the requisite shots of the Canadian Ambassador and Royal Canadian Mounted Police saluting President Obama as his car passes by as well as images of the Marine One helicopter carrying away former President Bush and the media "camp" established by CNN, CTV and CBC on the roof of the Embassy.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's statement to Americans that day not only offered heartfelt congratulations on behalf of all Canadians but also expressed his delight that "the President has accepted our invitation to make Canada the destination of his first international visit. The United States remains Canada's most important ally, closest friend and largest trading partner and I look forward to working with President Obama and his administration as we build on this special relationship." Canada is excited that President Obama will arrive in Ottawa on February 19 as his first official foreign visit.

To promote multiculturalism, I have included an important announcement from the USDOE that I received that offers funding for students across the country interested in foreign language learning (least commonly taught languages, in particular).. Following that is a series of ten additional resource tips that focus on teaching and appreciating Black history from a Canadian perspective. They will hopefully help you build on our special relationship with Canada in your classrooms, too! Best wishes. Tina Storer

Please ensure your server accepts group messages and notify me if you are receiving duplicate notices or wish to be removed from the Canada Listserv.

Western Washington University and University of Washington jointly perform K-12 STUDY CANADA outreach as a US Department of Education-funded National Resource Center for Canada in the US. Annual Embassy of Canada grants also provide support.

1) USDOE NEWS: FUNDING FOR US HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTERESTED IN LESS-COMMONLY-TAUGHT LANGUAGES **FROM Lisa Wishman at the U.S. Department of State:**

"We are pleased to bring to your attention an excellent opportunity for American high school students (ages 15-18) to receive support to study less commonly taught languages. NSLI-Y is an exciting, new merit-based US Government overseas language program for American high school students that will fund approximately 550 students to study and master languages not traditionally taught in U.S. high schools but which are critical for our country's future. The program is funded by the Department of State's Educational and Cultural Affairs Youth Programs Division and is being implemented by a consortium of organizations led by the American Councils for International Education. The program has already sent 350 American high schools students to summer language programs in China, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco during the summers of 2006, 2007 and 2008.

In 2009/2010, NSLI-Y is expanding the language offerings as well as the length of time for the programs. There will be programs in Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Turkish. There will be summer programs in each of the seven languages. There will also be semester and academic year programs for Arabic, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Turkish. For more information and to apply online, visit www.NSLIforYouth.org. The application deadline is February 2, 2009.

Lastly, I would like to direct your attention to two other websites. <http://exchanges.state.gov/youth/programs/nsli.html> provides more information about the NSLI-Y program. If you'd like to join the conversation about exchanges in general and become a part of the growing network of individuals interested in NSLI-Y, visit <http://connect.state.gov/> and register for the NSLI-Y group.

Please do not hesitate to be in touch the Program Manager at American Councils, Loren Kupferschmid, at lkupferschmid@americancouncils.org for further assistance.”

2) [GET ON BOARD: THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TO CANADA](#)

This 80-page curriculum unit, written by Tom Morton (1998) was selected by the British Columbia Teachers' Federation as the #1 classroom teaching aid. It was written to help students understand one of the most shameful and significant episodes in history—the slave trade and chattel slavery during the 19th Century, when approximately 50,000 African American slaves escaped to freedom in Canada on the underground railroad. At the same time, the unit teaches about the humane acts of people who tried to stop slavery, a story of hope, co-operation, bravery, and intelligence and connects this important part of North American history to Canada. Co-operative group activities are outlined for students to interpret primary source documents. The unit also includes lessons that encourage historical thinking and lessons that help students to extend their thinking to contemporary cases of exploitation and how they can make a difference as agents of change. Grade 10.

3) [DOWNLOADABLE GR. 10 LESSON PLAN ON HARRIET TUBMAN](#)

Go to www.docstoc.com/docs/1081312/Harriet-Tubman to download a single lesson by Tom Morton, the BC educator who wrote the classroom aid above. The curricula called "Harriet Tubman: Recognizing the Human Agency" centers on the critical question ***to what extent did Harriet Tubman change history?*** Visit the website to learn more!

4) [MORE LESSON PLANS ON AFRICAN-CANADIAN HISTORY](#)

The Government of Ontario provides several lesson plans on the history of Black Canadians for a wide range of subjects and grade levels. All lesson plans come with online exhibits that include primary documents. Topics include slavery in Canada, Africville, and the Underground Railroad. Be sure to visit www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/education/index.html.

5) [THIRD GRADE ACTIVITY PLAN – AFRICAN-CANADIAN ABC's](#)

Create an African-Canadian ABC's book while learning the history of prominent African-Canadians at www.ocdsb.ca/Secondary_Websites/Teacher_Res/AREE/blackhistorymonth/pdf/02_ABCBOOK_primary.pdf.

6) [AFRICAN-CANADIAN LITERATURE AND ARTS FOR CHILDREN](#)

The www.yorku.ca/aonline/literature/children.html is chock-full of resources about African-Canadians for children, including; literature, film, dance, visual arts, music and more! Most of the material includes reviews, and short descriptions that offer shortcuts to teachers.

7) [VIRTUAL ART: PORTRAITS OF CANADIAN WOMEN OF AFRICAN DESCENT](#)

The Canadian Museum of Civilization offers many online exhibits, which can be toured virtually online at www.civilization.ca/cmcc/exhibitions/cultur/citoyennes/citoyennese.shtml. This tour takes the viewer into the lives of modern-day Canadian women of African descent through photography by Canadian artist Marie-Louise Deruaz. The tour gives an intimate look into their living history.

8) [CBC INTERVIEW OF AUTHOR LAWRENCE HILL](#)

Excerpt from article by Rachel Giese (February 15, 2007).

The original **Book of Negroes** measures about a foot-and-a-half by a foot-and-a-half and runs just over 150 pages. Though known to just a handful of scholars, this remarkable hand-written ledger is a historical treasure. Detailing names, ages, backgrounds and often degrading physical descriptions (“stout wench”), it’s the first public documentation of black people in North America — specifically, the 3,000 freedom-seekers who left New York for Nova Scotia and other British colonies near the end of the American Revolutionary War. In exchange for their service to the empire, Black Loyalists were promised liberty and land. What they received was little better than the circumstances they left behind: poverty, hunger, disease and servitude.

Everyone has heard of Canada’s involvement in the Underground Railroad; less known is this country’s own history of slavery and its dubious distinction as the site of North America’s first race riot. In 1784, gangs of unemployed white men attacked the black settlement of Birchtown, N.S., destroying 20 homes. Angry at their betrayal by the British, 1,000 Black Loyalists sailed for Sierra Leone just ten years after arriving in Canada, embarking on the world’s first return-to-Africa journey.

This story of the migration from Africa to the Americas and back was an irresistible one for Lawrence Hill, who borrowed the title for his new novel, **The Book of Negroes**. The Burlington, Ont. author has long been drawn to issues of black history and identity. Hill’s many books include the 2001 novel **Any Known Blood**, which follows an African-American family from slavery to the present day, as well as the 2002 part-memoir, part-polemic **Black Berry, Sweet Juice: On Being Black and White in Canada**. His civil-rights activist parents founded the Ontario Black History society in the family’s suburban basement in 1978.

“My parents were great storytellers,” Hill says over the phone from a hotel room in Halifax, where he is promoting the book. “And they always interwove the most painful, oppressive stories with rollicking, raucous humour. It’s a very common survival strategy for oppressed people, whether they’re black, Jewish, Russian – that combination of horror and humour. My parents taught me the emotional saving grace of humour.”

Written over five years – “an exciting, daunting, endless and thrilling process,” he says – Hill’s masterful and affecting epic tells the story of Aminata Diallo. A skilled midwife and able to read and write – thanks to covert tutoring by a fellow slave – Aminata survives kidnapping by slave traders at the age of 11, the horrors of the Middle Passage and, later, an exodus to Nova Scotia, then Sierra Leone and finally England. CBC Arts Online spoke with Hill about storytelling, his favourite research discoveries and Canada’s history of slavery.

[To read the complete interview, go to www.cbc.ca/arts/books/book_of_negroes.html. The **Book of Negroes** is published by HarperCollins Canada and is available in online bookstores in both Canada and the US. Highly recommended!]

9) **CANADA POST HONORS BLACK CANADIANS** [Thanks to Paulette Thompson (Seattle, WA) for this tip!]

In February, Canada Post will issue a stamp of **Rosemary Brown**, who was an NDP MLA for Vancouver-Burrard from 1972 to 1986 and the first woman of African descent elected in Canada. In 1975, she came second to Ed Broadbent in the federal NDP leadership race. Brown was also a chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and a professor of women’s studies at Simon Fraser University. She died at the age of 72 in 2003. The stamp will be made available during Black History Month. At the same time, Canada Post will also issue a stamp of **Abraham Shadd**, an abolitionist who helped develop the Underground Railway to free slaves, and who was the first person of African descent to hold political office in Canada.

10) **CANADIAN RECIPE OF THE MONTH**

Black-Eyed Peas [From **Soul Food: A History and Recipes** by Guysborough Academy (Nova Scotia) students]

Using the **Histor!ca** resources shared last month, my quest for an African-Canadian recipe to share was solved when I discovered this wonderful student project at www.histori.ca/fairs/studentProject.do;jsessionid=ADBB95138E9D36B6A1802224056A661C.tomcat?id=10959. Besides recipes, Guysborough Academy students in Nova Scotia also posted an interesting *History of African Canadian Cooking* that looks briefly at the African experience in Canada. It serves well as a project model for other classrooms, too! Here’s a peek at one of the actual recipes....

"Black-eyed peas came from Africa. They are a healthy food that people ate to become strong. Some African Canadians believe that if you eat black-eyed peas on New Year's Day, you will have good luck for the new year." [Better a late start in February than not at all!]

Ingredients:

1 pound black-eyed peas
4 cups water
1 medium onion
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 cup cubed ham or 2 polish sausages or
2 hot sausage links or
bacon
Optional: 1/4 teaspoon dried red pepper

Directions:

- Pick and wash the black-eyed peas.
- Place in slow cooker or, if you wish to cook them on the top of the stove in a large dutch oven.
- Combine with salt, pepper, onion, water, and ham (or other meat, if preferred).
- You can add crushed red pepper if you like spicy food.
- Simmer on the top of the stove or turn slow cooker to high and allow peas to cook 3 to 4 hours.
- Serves 6 to 8 people.

11) RUTH WRITER'S REVIEW OF CANADIAN LITERATURE (AND NON-FICTION)

The Blacks of Canada: A History by Robin Winks. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997). ISBN 0-7735-1632-8

Once again February rolls around and thus Black History Month. In celebration of this, I call attention to ***The Blacks of Canada: A History*** as a vital and quintessential work on African Canadian history by Robin Winks. Although Africans first visited the coastal region of Canada during early exploration, the first slavery in New France occurred in 1628. Slavery continued in New France beyond the Conquest. Winks' history spans over 350 years of the rich history of these African Canadians. The first great migration followed our American Revolution when Loyalists fled to the northern colony with their servants. Many of these servants found their new homes in Nova Scotia especially in the Halifax area known as *Africville*.

Slavery ended in Canada, in part, as a result of the efforts of Lord Simcoe. Shortly thereafter Canada became a safe haven for refugees from American slavery (and home base—in St. Catharine's, Ontario—for Harriet Tubman's running of the Underground Railroad). Winks writes vivid accounts of the fugitive communities in southwestern Ontario, in regions such as Dresden, Puce, and Elgin [North Buxton] and the numerous other small villages. While these self-sustaining communities dotted the wilderness and countryside, the new residents did not always find welcoming committees among their neighbors.

Readers learn of the role Canada played in the abolitionist movement and the post Civil War era. Some who had fled to the "Canadian Canaan" found themselves thrust into the limelight (like Josiah Henson, reputed to be the original Uncle Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe fame). Others returned to areas south of the border to actively support the Union armies in some cases as spies or aides. After the war, still others assisted in Reconstruction. All of this is chronicled in this history.

Winks devotes three chapters to the three pillars of African-Canadian strength—the church, the educational institutions and the press. He did not end this history at the turn of the century but continued until his original work was published in the early 1970s. If an educator wants to better understand the history of Black North America, this classic work on African-Canadians is a must-have. Other works of history tend to focus on small facets of this story while ***The Blacks of Canada: A History*** covers the full scope of an important cultural and ethnic group in Canada within a North American historical context.