



# Chalk Talk

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

The passing of Rosa Parks last year and the recent death of Coretta Scott King, wife of slain civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, on the eve of Black History Month, remind us of the turbulent and defining moments of the past half century. As the first lady of the civil rights movement, Ms. King's life-long dedication to achieving nonviolent social change, initially for African Americans, evolved and broadened to include the struggle for freedom and equality for all minority groups suffering discrimination.

The challenge in trying to observe this month-long tribute in a meaningful way is that, while it is a celebration of the accomplishments and contributions of Black Canadian, it is, as significantly, a commemoration of a tumultuous past marked by struggles, discrimination and ultimately, hard-fought victories.

While early Canadian and American Black histories are linked in many significant ways, we need to embrace Black Canadian history from a uniquely Canadian perspective. Many of us are still largely unaware of the existence of slavery in Canada which was a reality for more than a hundred years starting in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. We are proud of our country's role in the Underground Railroad which afforded freedom to tens of thousands of slaves in the mid-1800's but are not as informed about the social, political and historical events underway at the time that shifted our destiny away from that of our southern neighbour.

Knowing, understanding, and honouring the past are signposts along the road to freedom. A notable example is the remarkable story of Africville, Canada's oldest Black community, dating back to 1848, which was demolished in 1962 to make way for new development. It is ironic that the expropriation of the lands and eventual destruction of the community caused its original residents and descendants to organize and lobby our government to recognize the importance of its history so as to ensure that the memory of Africville would live on for future generations of Canadians. It is in the 'remembering' that future progress in civil rights will take root.

## Road to Freedom — Black History in Canada



Black History Month is an opportunity for Canadians to recognize the significant contributions Blacks have made to the life of Canada in education, medicine, art, culture, public service, economic development, politics, and human rights.

Above all, this is an opportunity for Canadians to understand the role the Black community has played in our history, a role that has been too often forgotten in our history books. This awareness can be raised by learning about some aspect of Black history through the themes outlined on the [Black History Canada](#) web site, which offers links to dozens of teacher resource rich sites.

You won't want to miss, [Some Missing Pages: The Black Community in the History of Québec and Ontario](#), a comprehensive resource that involved educator Gordon Blackman, finalist for the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

For older students, grades 9 to 12, you may want to check out [Early Black Canadian History](#) which offers teaching tips for comparing Canadian and American Black History.



For more information on Africville, CBC Archive online resources features [Africville – Expropriating Nova Scotia's Blacks](#), an in-depth look at the remarkable history and controversial fate of Canada's oldest Black community.

[Education Resource links provided by Black History Canada and CBC Archive Online]

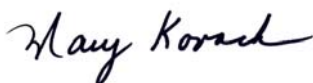


rights will take root.

In this issue of Chalk Talk, we applaud the critical role played by teachers in the classroom to champion tolerance, build consensus on civil rights issues and inform our students' understanding of Black History in Canada. This month's feature looks at some of the free educational resources and background that may be of use educators throughout February and beyond.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

Your feedback is important to us. Let us know what you think!



Mary Kovack



#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"I began looking deeper into the community and realized its resilience in the face of what was done to destroy it ... We need to preserve our past and not be glib about it, so that it's not so easily disposed of."*

— Joe Sealy, Juno award winning jazz musician and songwriter of the [Africville Suite](#), speaking about why he wrote this moving musical tribute to the memory of his father

**Tell us how you and your students celebrated Black History Month. Your submission could be featured in an upcoming issue of Chalk Talk! Just email us a description of about 150 words — include a photo if you have one — to [maryk@coedcomm.com](mailto:maryk@coedcomm.com).**

#### More about Black History Month

[Heritage is a Click Away](#) — Harold Levy, The Toronto Star, January 30, 2006

"A new website will allow students to explore black Canadian history in an organized way over the Internet without having to rely on vast American cyber-sources that may distort the Canadian experience."

[Hidden part of history](#) — Nicholas Keung, The Toronto Star, February 1, 2006

"That often hidden part of black history is unveiled in Francis Jeffers' International African Inventors Museum, an evolving exhibit that showcases the inventive genius of black scientists."

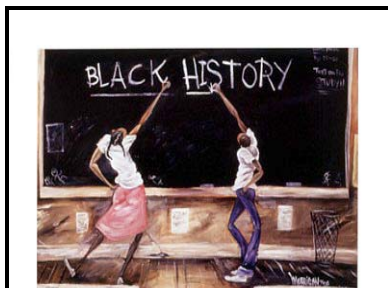
[Burned into Canada's Memory](#) — Juanita L. De Barros, The Globe & Mail, January 28, 2006

"In *The Hanging of Angélique*, University of Toronto historian Afua Cooper uses the transcripts of a slave woman's trial for arson in 18th-century Montreal to uncover something of the history of slavery in Canada."

[Black History Month](#) — Canadian Heritage — Multiculturalism — website

"Every Year Canadians are invited to take part in the [festivities and events](#) that honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present, during Black History Month."

#### Facts & Figures



- According to [Black History Canada](#), the February celebration was officially proclaimed by the City of Toronto in 1979, largely due to the efforts of the Ontario Black History Society.
- It is now recognized nationally following a unanimously adopted motion in the House of Commons by Jean Augustine, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, in 1995.
- Although slavery was present in Canada as early as the mid-17th century, slavery expanded following the British conquest of New France in 1763 when as a British colony, Canada was home to 1,500 black slaves (about 3 percent of the total population).\*
- Under legislative attack from the last decade of the 18th century, the system gradually declined in Canada and was legally abolished in 1834,



Under legislative attack from the last decade of the 16th century, the system gradually declined in Canada and was legally abolished in 1834, making slavery unlawful in the British empire.\*

• For a list of accomplished Black Canadians, see [Notable individuals and accomplishments as we mark Black History Month](#) — Toronto Star, February 2, 2006.

[\[Source: Globe & Mail, 28/10/06 -- "The Hanging of Angélique" by Afua Cooper\]](#)

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