

Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

I grew up in a small border town in Southern Ontario. As a young girl, on my way to play in our local park and I would pass a neat little yellow corner house with brown trim. I recall that a very old man lived there who I'd always heard the neighbours refer to as having arrived to Canada on the 'railroad'. As newly-arrived immigrants, my parents, who barely spoke any English, were unaware of North American history, and therefore, I naturally assumed that this man had crossed into Canada via the CN railway bridge which connected the American side of the Niagara River to the Canadian side. He was distinctive in his broad-brimmed straw hat with a frayed edge. But what I remember the most about him was that he loved to sit in the middle of his vegetable garden that comprised more than half of his yard. He would sit on a stool holding a bare tree branch that he used for planting seeds and tilling some of the soil around the individual plants. Sometimes he would just sit and whittle the wood with a small pocket knife.



I have since realized that when he was a very small boy, his

family must have escaped slavery and settled in our town during the latter stages of the 'Underground Railroad' era. How I now wish that I had been aware of this important chapter in history. What a missed opportunity to connect with the past! This week's issue of *Chalk Talk* features resources available through the National Film Board that document many aspects of Canada's Black History on film. As well, you will find information about an upcoming event in June commemorating the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing classroom resources on a range of topics. We invite you to visit our website at www.4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[As always, your feedback is important to us.](#)

Mary Kovach

NFB — Introducing 'Across Cultures'



Since its inception, defining our nation and telling our stories is what the [National Film Board of Canada \(NFB\)](#) does best. Always innovative, creative and socially relevant, the NFB has become one of the most respected and award-winning public producers of many of the world's best documentaries, animated features and short films.

COMING SOON! This summer, the NFB will launch its new educational website **Across Cultures/D'une culture à l'autre** designed to celebrate cultural diversity in Canada from a cinematic and historical perspective. 60 films in English, 60 films in French and 5 films in other languages, spanning over 60 years of the NFB collection, will be available for free access online in short clips and in their entirety. The **Across Cultures** site will also offer teachers' guides and lesson plans to facilitate use in grade 9-12 classrooms.

Across Cultures is supported by the Department of Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Memory Fund program (Canadian Culture Online). The Web site will be online in summer 2007. The site will feature a number of films produced by the NFB about **Black Canadian History**. Educators will find a treasure trove of colour and black and white documentaries and animated short features, including some in the sampling listing, **featured below**.

The NFB also offers wonderful classroom resources for students of all ages. Students from ages 3 to 12 can check out [NFBKids.ca](#), the portal for fun, safe entertainment and educational activities including online animation lessons. To order a free 2006-2007 NFB Learning Resources catalogue, go to www.nfb.ca/store.



"I didn't know I was a slave until I found out I couldn't do the things I wanted."

— Frederick Douglass, American abolitionist, lecturer, author and slave,

Forging Freedom — Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade

"On March 25th, 1807 Britain legally ended its trade in African human beings and brought to a close its 270 year participation in one of the most horrific experiences in human history: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The profits from this ignoble trade enabled Britain to build the strongest economy in the world, dominate global commerce and conquer most of the known world. In short, British's might and power rested on the slave trade. It has been estimated that the slave trade by various European countries brutally and forcibly removed some 50 million Africans from their home land.



In keeping with the United Nation's general assembly's adaptation of a resolution to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the British abolition of the slave trade, various nations are set to commemorate this significant turning point in world history. According to Toronto, historian, poet, and author, Dr. Afua Cooper, a number of events are planned in order to disseminate knowledge, "designed to raise public awareness about the slave trade, its impact and legacies". According to Cooper, "Canada participated in the slave trade and also practiced institutional enslavement of African people". In 1793 Governor Simcoe introduced the first anti-slavery Act in the British Empire making Toronto an important link in the Underground Railroad." [\[Source: The Committee to Commemorate and Memorialize the Abolition of the Slave Trade \(CMAST\)\]](#)

EVENT NOTICE! The Ontario Historical Society, in partnership with the Ontario Black History Society, and the Central Ontario Network for Black History invites educators to attend a conference in honour of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade which will take place on **Friday, June 22 & Saturday, June 23, 2007** at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.



Speakers will include **Rosemary Sadlier**, President of the Ontario Black History Society, **Dr. Afua Cooper**, Director, CMAST, and **Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost**, Executive Director, Ontario Historical Society, with a keynote address by **Dr. Kate Clifford Larson**, Simmons College, Massachusetts, author of *Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero*.

For complete event details and registration information, please visit ontariohistoricalsociety.ca.

Canada's Black History — NFB Films — Suggested viewing list



Loyalties (1999) — A documentary about two women whose meeting brought together two halves of a whole story: that of slave owner and slave.



Black Soul/Âme noire (2000) — This animated film is an exhilarating immersion into the heart of Black culture via a whirlwind voyage through the defining moments of Black History.

Speakers for the Dead (2000) — This documentary examines a small town in rural Ontario and its quest to restore the history and dignity of its Black descendants.

Fields of Endless Day (1978) — In a series of dramatic and documentary episodes, this film outlines the presence of Black people in Canada, from the 17th century to the wartime participation and activist groups of the first half of the 20th century.

Older Stronger Wiser (1989) — Five Black women talk about their lives in rural and urban Canada between the 1920s and 1950s. What emerges is a unique history of Canada's Black people and the legacy of their community elders.

King of the Hill (1974) — By 1972, only a handful of major league players had come from Canada, and none had risen as high as Cy Young award winning star pitcher, Ferguson Jenkins, from Chatham, Ontario. This film follows Jenkins and the Cubs through the trials and frustrations of the 1972-73 season, in their bid to win the pennant race.



(from top)

"Loyalties"; *Black Soul/Âme noire*;
"Speakers for the Dead"

(from top)

"Fields of Endless Day";
"Older Stronger Wiser"; "King of the Hill"

Education News & Links

[The invisible history of the slave trade; Afua Cooper notes that for many years, the idea that Africans were not fully human circulated in the Western psyche, muting discussions about a crime against humanity](#) — Dr. Afua Cooper, Opinion, *TheStar.com*, Mar 25, 2007

“In our everyday lives, we invoke the metaphors of slavery. For example, if you feel you are being exploited you might say, “I am being treated like a slave.” Yet few people actually know about the slavery that they constantly refer to – the transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans. The slave trade and slavery in Western society, life, and culture is still by and large an invisible history. This is the perfect time for all of us to learn more about this ignoble past. The United Nations has declared 2007 as the year to recognize and commemorate the slave trade and today we mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade throughout the British Empire.”

[Slavery’s Long Destructive Legacy](#) — Gary Pieters, M.Ed., “Canadian Black Heritage in the Third Millenium; Bicentenary of the Abolition of the British Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans”, OISE, March 24, 2007

“It is a fact of history that African people were enslaved, sold and brought to North America, Europe and the Caribbean through the exploitative and brutal economic enterprise of slavery, slave-trading and empire-building. Slavery coincided with the rise of European empire-building, with many European powers, notably Britain, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal, participating in the slave trade in their empires up to the 1800s. Denmark and Sweden also had colonial possessions and slaves, while the Americans and Brazilians, who did not have colonial possessions, also had significant populations of enslaved Africans. These empires participated in the exploitative practices of plantation slavery, chattel slavery, domestic slavery, and the use of the resources, raw materials and coerced unpaid labour of Africans to better the economic well-being of Europe and the Americas.”

[A Lesson In Education; Ontario Institute in Education hits century mark](#) — Kristin Rushowy, Education Reporter, *TheStar.com*, May 3, 2007

“Celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, the renowned education and research hub at the University of Toronto is hoping to teach the broader community what it’s all about. [Back in 1907] it had 215 teacher candidates. Today, more than 10,000 study at OISE each year, including teacher candidates and graduate students. Its team of researchers feed information on the latest learning strategies and best practices to the teaching curriculum, so the most up-to-date knowledge is being transferred to the classroom.”

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