

# LHC Newsletter

## Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

Tuesday, February 1, 2011

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Sincerely,

Shawn Leigh Alexander  
Assistant Professor of African and African-American Studies  
Interim Director, Langston Hughes Center  
University of Kansas

### **Presidential Politics, Civil Rights, and the Road to *Brown* – Summer Seminar for Teachers**

July 24-30, 2011

University of Kansas

[http://www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar.php?seminar\\_id=144](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar.php?seminar_id=144)

We are pleased to announce a special summer seminar for teachers to be held at the University of Kansas. The Langston Hughes Center and the Kansas Collection at the Kenneth Spencer Research Library are collaborating with the *Brown v. Board of Education* National Park, the Brown Foundation, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to hold a seminar entitled "Presidential Politics, Civil Rights, and the Road to *Brown*." This seminar will explore the road to *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* and the fight for social and political equality in the years before the modern Civil Rights Movement. Participants will learn about this struggle at the *Brown v. Board of Education* National Park Service site, one of the five locations for the plaintiffs in the Supreme Court decision, and at the Presidential Libraries of both Eisenhower and Truman, who were uniquely involved in the road to *Brown*. Moreover, the participants will learn about the struggle from a number of experts, including plaintiffs from the Supreme Court case and Jack Greenberg, the former president and direct-counsel of the NAACP Legal and Defense and Educational Fund and a member of the legal team that prepared and argued the *Brown* case. Finally, the seminar will provide educational resources and professional training to teachers interested in exploring the struggle for civil rights in America.

The seminar will be held from July 24-30, 2011 on the University of Kansas campus in Lawrence, KS.

Secondary teachers and Community College Professors interested in participating in the seminar visit <[http://www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar.php?seminar\\_id=144](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/education/seminar.php?seminar_id=144)> for application information.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 15, 2011.**

## Upcoming Events

### *The Struggle for Freedom in Kansas*

**What:** "Commemorating the Struggle for Freedom in Kansas"

**When:** January 4 – February 6, 2011

**Where:** Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Topeka KS

**Cost per person:** FREE and Open to the Public

**About:** Kansas became a state on January 29, 1861. To commemorate the 150th anniversary of Kansas statehood, Topeka High School students will create an exhibit of art inspired by the theme "The Struggle for Freedom in Kansas."

When Kansas Territory opened for settlement in 1854, the concept of freedom stood front and center. Abolitionists and pro-slavery forces began clashing over the question of whether Kansas would enter the Union as a Slave State or a Free State. Episodes of violence earned the territory the nickname "Bloody Kansas." Little wonder that in 1861 Kansans chose as their state motto the Latin phrase "Ad Astra per Aspera," which means "To the stars through difficulties." A century later, the national spotlight again shone on Kansas concerning the long struggle to provide freedom and equality to all Americans. In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Brown v. Board of Education that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The ruling became a turning point in history and helped launch the civil rights movement.

Expressing stories through art is an ancient human tradition. These young Kansas artists will continue that tradition by depicting stories of sacrifice and achievement in the struggle to provide "liberty and justice for all." Don't miss this one-of-a-kind exhibit.

For more information see <http://brownvboard.org/content/struggle-freedom-kansas-jan-4-feb-6-2011>

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily  
1515 SE Monroe • Topeka, Kansas

### *Selected Works*

**What:** "Selected Works in Honor of African American History Month " - Spencer Museum of Art

**When:** January 25 – February 27, 2011

**Where:** Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence KS

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**For More Information see:** <http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/exhibitions/mlk-day.shtml>

**About:** As part of KU's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day and African American History Month, the Spencer Museum of Art will feature a special display of works in the Raymond White Teaching Gallery.

### ***Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series***

**What: "Terror in Tennessee: The Lynching of Elbert Williams and the Pursuit of Economic Justice in Brownsville"** - Zanice Bond de Perez, University of Kansas

**When:** Monday February 14 @11:30 am - 1:00 pm (11:30 -12:00 social period and brownbag lunch)

**Where:** Kansas Union, Alcove A (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** Langston Hughes Center

**About The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series:** The Jesse B. Semple Brownbag, every second Monday of each academic month, is an informal forum for the African Americanist community and those who are interested in the general study of race, culture, and American society. The forum discusses activities on campus, historical and current issues related to race, and culture and social relations in America. It offers opportunities for visiting scholars, KU faculty, and KU students to present their ongoing research.

Langston Hughes' character Jesse B. Semple, or Simple first appeared in the *Chicago Defender* on February 13, 1943. Semple became a voice, often in comic or satirical fashion, through which Hughes could comment on international relations, current events and the everyday concerns of the African American community.

### ***American Uprising***

**What: "American Uprising: Unearthing the Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt"** – Dan Rasmussen

**When:** Thursday, February 17 @7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

**Where:** Hall Center Conference Hall, Hall Center for the Humanities (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Sponsors of this Event:** Hall Center for the Humanities

**About:** " The relatively unexplored New Orleans slave revolt, which took place in January 1811, is the subject of Daniel Rasmussen's *American Uprising: The Untold Story of America's Largest Slave Revolt*. The revolt demonstrated sophisticated organization, and while it was the largest slave revolt in history, the revolutionaries were responsible only for the deaths of two men. Rasmussen's gripping account of the uprising has been hailed by critics as varied as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and *Garden & Gun Magazine*..

The book grew out of Rasmussen's thesis project at Harvard University, where he won the Kathryn Ann Huggins Prize, the Perry Miller Prize, and the Thomas Temple Hoopes Prize. The latter is Harvard's most prestigious undergraduate honor. Rasmussen traveled through New Orleans, Washington DC, and Massachusetts for two years, gathering testimonials, evidence, and forgotten pieces of history to shape his narrative.

Rasmussen graduated summa cum laud from Harvard University in 2009. He currently lives in

Boston, Massachusetts."

For more information see: <http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu/%7Ehallcenter/cgi-bin/index.php/calendar/event/dan-rasmussen-american-uprising-unearting-the-untold-story-of-americas-largest-slave-revolt>

## ***Toni Morrison***

**What: "Toni Morrison's 80th Birthday – 24-hour Reading"**

**When:** Thursday February 17 @12:00 pm – Friday February 18 @12:00 pm

**Where:** Anschutz Library (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – If you want to volunteer to read contact Giselle Anatol, Associate Professor of English, at [ganatol@ku.edu](mailto:ganatol@ku.edu) or (785) 864-2530.

**Sponsors of this Event:** English Department

**About:** Several KU faculty members are organizing an event in celebration of Toni Morrison's 80th birthday: a 24-hour reading of the Nobel Laureate's work. These types of shared-literature events have a history in the English Department: there have been 24-hour readings of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Participants can be professors, staff, graduate students, undergraduates, or community members--anyone who has an interest in the writing, either academic or personal.

The reading will take place in Anschutz Library, behind Budig Hall on the KU campus. We will begin with Morrison's first novel--*The Bluest Eye*--at noon on Thursday, February 17th, and conclude at noon on Friday, February 18th--Morrison's actual birthday--with birthday cake for all present. There will be pre-scheduled readers for 15- to 20-minute blocks of time, and spaces available for spur-of-the-moment volunteers.

## ***Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship Lecture***

**What: "At the Margins of Black Freedom Studies: Working-Class Representation and the Blues Idiom "** Clarence Lang, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and 2011 LHVP

**When:** Thursday February 24 @ 3:30 – 5:00 pm.

**Where:** Alderson Auditorium, the Kansas Union (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

**Cost per person:** FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**For More Information see:** <http://www.diversity.ku.edu//programs/langstonhughes.shtml>

**About The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship:** The Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship was established at the University of Kansas in 1977 in honor of the African American poet, playwright and fiction writer who lived in Lawrence from 1903 to 1916. Over the years, the visiting professorship has attracted prominent or emerging ethnic minority scholars to the university campus, involving a broad range of disciplines and academic departments/schools.

## ***Davis v. Prince Edward County***

**What: "Davis v. Prince Edward County School Board, Farmville, Virginia"** – Film and discussion with plaintiffs from the Virginia case

**When:** Sunday February 27 @3:00 pm

**Where:** Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site, Topeka KS

**Cost per person:** FREE and Open to the Public **with RSVP**  
(RSVP by February 25 to (785) 235-3939 or [rsvp@brownfoundationks.org](mailto:rsvp@brownfoundationks.org))

**About:** Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Topeka case in Brown v. Board of Education. This program will feature a film that highlights the issues surrounding the strike by Farmville, Virginia students who walked out of the all-black Moton High School to protest the conditions in the school, which was badly in need of repair and overcrowded, with the original building being supplemented with tar paper shacks. The efforts of the students that day were the first step toward desegregation of public schools in Virginia. Eventually, the Davis case would be joined with the other cases of Brown v. Board of Education which struck down legally-sanctioned segregation in public places. Prince Edward County closed its schools for five years rather than integrate.

In March of 1963, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy noted that:

"The only places on earth not to provide free public education are Communist China, North Vietnam, Sarawak, Singapore, British Honduras—and Prince Edward County, Virginia. Something must be done about Prince Edward County."

Ultimately, Prince Edward County was forced to open its schools by the courts. On September 8, 1964, about 1,500 students, all but eight of whom were black, returned to classes in the Prince Edward County public schools for the first time in five years.

For more information see <http://brownvboard.org/content/davis-v-prince-edward-county-feb-27-2011>

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. daily  
1515 SE Monroe • Topeka, Kansas

## In The News

### ***Solving A 1964 Cold Case: Mystery of Frank Morris***

David Ridgen | January 13, 2011 | *NPR*

In December 1964, Frank Morris' shoe shop was set ablaze in the middle of the night. Still inside at the time, Morris was severely injured; he died four days later at a nearby hospital in Ferriday, La. Like many Southern crimes against blacks in the 1960s — an era of racial strife dominated by criminal activities by the Ku Klux Klan — the incident went unsolved, despite an FBI investigation at the time.

Now, 46 years later, Stanley Nelson, the editor of the *Concordia Sentinel* newspaper, says he has found information that may implicate a man as a member of a Klan "wrecking crew," which is said by sources Nelson has interviewed to be responsible for burning down the shop.

Read and listen to the full story at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/2011/01/13/132806611/what-happened-to-frank-morris-solving-a-46-year-old-cold-case>

### ***A Tender Spot in Master-Slave Relations***

Lonnae O'Neal Parker | January 21, 2011 | *Washington Post*

Dolen Perkins-Valdez was reading a biography of W.E.B. Du Bois when she came across the

small aside. It was piece of history she hadn't known, and couldn't stop thinking about.

The land for Ohio's Wilberforce University, the nation's oldest private historically black college, where DuBois had once taught, at one time had been part of a resort - a place called Tawawa House, where wealthy Southern slaveholders would take their slave mistresses for open-air "vacations."

"I had never heard of anything like that," says Perkins-Valdez, then a writing professor at the University of Mary Washington. She knew of masters taking slaves north to attend to them, "but the thought of them taking women to a vacation resort was just stunning to me. I didn't know what to do with that."

What she did first was wonder: *How would they have gotten there? And what did the resort look like?* Then she asked: *Why would a slave taken to a Northern free state not run?*

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/21/AR2011012102960.html?hpid=artslot>

### ***The Thorny Path to a National Black Museum***

Kate Taylor | January 22, 2011 | *NYTimes*

In the late 1970s, when Lonnie G. Bunch III had his first job at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, veterans of the Tuskegee Airman, the all-black squadron, accused the museum of playing down their contributions during World War II. In response, the museum asked some of the African-Americans on staff to allow their faces to be used on mannequins, increasing the "black presence" in its exhibits.

"I didn't do it," Mr. Bunch said recently, who was among those asked. "That's not the way I wanted to be part of a museum."

Thirty years later Mr. Bunch, and African-American history itself, are part of a Smithsonian museum, but in a very different way. As the director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Mr. Bunch, 58, is charged with creating an institution that embodies the story of black life in America.

Read the full article at the following link: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/us/23smithsonian.html?\\_r=2&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/23/us/23smithsonian.html?_r=2&hp)

### ***Keeping Memories of Zora Neale Hurston Alive***

Joseph Freeman | January 30, 2011 | *The Los Angeles Times*

Annie Peters, 91, has a vivid memory from her childhood of helping Zora Neale Hurston wash dishes.

Eatonville's paved streets and sidewalks were little more than dirt roads and paths when Peters was about 10. She would leave school in the afternoon and head for Hurston's house. Hurston, then a burgeoning writer visiting the town now and then, loved children, and Peters joined a throng who played and mingled in her yard.

Peters, who still drives and runs a beauty salon from her house, is among a dwindling number of Eatonville's older residents who can share firsthand accounts about Hurston, the author of

"Their Eyes Were Watching God."

"Most of them are all gone; it's a great loss," Peters said. "Then really all they can do is read about her."

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-hometown-eatonville-20110130,0,7220532.story>

## **Samuel F. Yette**

T. Rees Shapiro | January 24, 2011 | *Washington Post*

Samuel F. Yette, 81, a journalist, author and educator who became an influential and sometimes incendiary voice on civil rights, died Jan. 21 at the Morningside House assisted-living facility in Laurel. He had Alzheimer's disease.

In a career spanning six decades, Mr. Yette (pronounced "Yet") worked for many news organizations and government agencies and held positions in academia, including as a journalism professor at Howard University.

As a young reporter, he covered the civil rights movement for black publications including the Afro-American newspaper and Ebony magazine. In the mid-1960s, he served as executive secretary of the Peace Corps and special assistant for civil rights to the director of the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, which administered anti-poverty programs.

Read the full obituary at the following link: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/24/AR2011012406321.html>

See also: <http://theblackbottom.com/?p=10390>

## **General Information**

**Call For Papers – ASWAD "AFRICAN LIBERATION AND BLACK POWER: THE CHALLENGES OF DIASPORIC ENCOUNTERS ACROSS TIME, SPACE, AND IMAGINATION" Pittsburgh, PA November 3-6, 2011**

In 1954, novelist and intellectual Richard Wright published *Black Power*, a provocative book in which Wright offered his reflections on his travels to the Gold Coast as it was in the process of becoming the independent nation of Ghana. The term "Black Power" that Wright used to signify the possibilities of freedom and development for Africans, as well as Pan-African cultural connections, would become a familiar notion to people of African descent around the world, who identified with its potent message for liberation and cultural revitalization. In so doing, Wright opened a new chapter in the long history of political and intellectual dialogue across the African Diaspora—one that revealed both the convergences and ruptures between people of African descent on the continent and in Diaspora.

For its sixth biennial conference, to be held in Pittsburgh, ASWAD explores the theme "African Liberation and Black Power: The Challenges of Diasporic Encounters Across Time, Space and Imagination." This conference intends to appreciate the Diasporic dimensions and articulations of Black Power, with special emphasis on Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia by tracing the genealogies of the concept and challenging localized limitations of Black Power scholarship.

Though the term "Black Power" is most frequently associated with the political and cultural movement of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, the drive to valorize blackness and Africanity/Africanité was broadly shared throughout Africa and the African Diaspora. Black Power was a transnational phenomenon; in addition to the U.S., organizations, activists, artists, and politicians in Canada, Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, Bermuda, UK, South Africa, Zaire, and

and politicians in Canada, Trinidad, Guyana, Jamaica, Bermuda, UK, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere explicitly identified themselves as adhering to Black Power. Each of these local movements responded in unique ways, but remained in dialogue with peoples of African descent and other peoples seeking creative responses to oppressive regimes. At the same time, 1970s black feminist organizations such as the Combahee River Collective (USA) and the Southall Black Sisters (UK), as well as writers such as Claudia Jones, Audre Lorde and Bessie Head, openly contested the masculinist, heteronormative tendencies within Black Power. Indeed, Diasporic feminists often imagined freedom in far more expansive political and aesthetic terms than their male counterparts.

In exploring Black Power as a global phenomenon, ASWAD encourages the submission of papers that interrogate the elements that define Black Power, its multiple locations, and articulations, its gendered and sexual contours, the transnational connections that informed and nurtured it as well as global and local cultural and political projects that revitalize it in the twenty-first century. In addition, we seek to identify the antecedents of Black Power, and historicize it within the trajectories of African and African Diasporic literature, culture, media, philosophy, politics, and the academy itself, as well as its relationship to health and environmental issues. The cultural and ideological foundations of Black Power had deep roots in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries and, as such, ASWAD encourages papers that excavate the origins of the cultural, intellectual, and political expressions that gave birth to the liberation struggles of the 20th century. All geographic areas will be represented, including Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. Paper and panel proposals that incorporate women, gender, and sexuality as categories of analysis are encouraged.

Please send a two-page abstract (for either a single presentation or a panel) and a one-page CV (or multiple one-page CV's) by **MARCH 15, 2011**. They can be sent prior to submitting the registration fee, and are to be sent electronically via email attachment to: [aswad2011@osu.edu](mailto:aswad2011@osu.edu)

For more information see [http://www.aswadiaspora.org/ASWAD\\_2011\\_CFP\\_01.html#registration](http://www.aswadiaspora.org/ASWAD_2011_CFP_01.html#registration)

### **Call For Papers – ASALH 96th Annual Conference Richmond, VA October 5-9, 2011**

The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) is soliciting papers and panels for its upcoming 96th Annual Convention. This year's conference theme is: "African Americans and the U.S. Civil War." Although the program committee welcomes papers and panels on any aspect of African and African American history and culture, special preference will be given to submissions directly related to this year's theme.

Using a wide variety of disciplines, this year's conference seeks to explore many aspects of African American involvement in the Civil War, 1861-1865. Important topics include: African Americans and the abolitionist movement; African American women and life on the homefront during the war years; African American participation in the military; and African American life and politics during the Reconstruction Era, 1865-1877. Recent popular and scholarly debates over causes of the Civil War will also be explored.

In 1861 as the United States stood at the brink of civil war, people of African descent, both slave and free, waited with a watchful eye. They understood that a war between the Union military and the Confederacy might bring about the "day of jubilee" and the destruction of slavery. When the Confederate troops fired upon Fort Sumter on 12 April 1861 and hostilities began, President Abraham Lincoln maintained that the paramount cause was to preserve the Union, not to end the practice of slavery. Frederick Douglass, the most prominent African American leader, declared that regardless of Union intentions, the war would bring an end to the South's "peculiar institution."

Over the next four years, the four million people of African descent in the United States sought to prove Frederick Douglass right. Free and enslaved African Americans rallied around the Union flag and the cause of freedom. From the cotton and tobacco fields of the South to the small



towns and big cities of the North, nearly 200,000 black men joined the Grand Army of the Republic and took up arms to destroy slavery and the Confederacy. The ASALH convention theme for 2011 honors the role of people of African descent in ending slavery and preserving the Union.

Given the recent political and academic debates about the legacy of the Civil War, papers and panels offering interdisciplinary analyses and perspectives of the continuing legacy of the Civil War in American and African American life are particularly welcome.

**Deadline for Submission of Panel and Paper Proposals: 30 April 2011.** All proposals must be submitted electronically to ASALH through the All Academic online system at <http://www.asalh.org/callforpapers.html>.

Proposals should include title of the paper or panel, author(s) and affiliation(s), an abstract of paper or panel of 200-250 words, and all contact information. Only panel proposal submitters will receive complimentary audio/visual equipment on a first come first serve basis.

**If you would like to unsubscribe send an email to [lhcaas@ku.edu](mailto:lhcaas@ku.edu) to let us know, and we'll remove you immediately.**

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