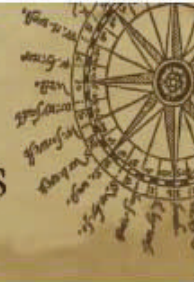




The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples



HARRIET TUBMAN NEWSLETTER

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Letter from the Director

Edited by Vanessa S. Oliveira

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This past summer was a time of innovation at the Tubman Institute. As reported in this *Newsletter*, a vibrant summer programme for students aged 14-18 was initiated, with great intensity and delight. The result will be an expanded programme for summer 2011, the UN designated Year of People of African Descent. Our thanks to Abubakar Fofana and his team for mounting this pilot project, now confirmed as an annual activity.

The Summer was also important for the Tubman Institute because two new members of staff were appointed, Diane Lee to develop the Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora and its digital holdings, and Dr. Frank Luce LLB as Coordinator, with the task of responding to the ever expanding activities and commitments of the Tubman Institute. In addition, Rafael Slobodian arrived in Toronto to take up his post as Information Technology Administrator. Two post-graduate fellows were also appointed, Dr. Yvonne Browne and Dr. Yacine Daddi Addoun, whose profiles are include herein.

During August, I traveled to Sierra Leone, along with Dr. Suzanne Schwarz, associated with WISE, to continue work at archival preservation at the Sierra Leone Public Archives, with Acting Director, Albert Moore. As will be clear in forthcoming Newsletters, the Tubman is very active in highlighting the pivotal role of Sierra Leone in understanding the historic enslavement of people for transport to the Americas, to significance in terms of abolition and reflection of the African diaspora but also what can be learned from conditions of contemporary slavery during war.

Subsequently, I attended a meeting of the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO “Slave Route” Project, which was held in association with an international conference at the Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding and the annual Osun Festival in Osogbo, Nigeria.

As noted in this *Newsletter*, Meley Mulugetta is undertaking a pilot project to preserve the manuscript holdings of churches in the Gojam and Tigray regions of northern Ethiopia, where there are an estimated 400,000 manuscripts, some dating back to the 12th century.

This *Newsletter* also highlights the publication of three books by associates of the Tubman Institute.

For those reading this *Newsletter*, it will also be apparent that the Harriet Tubman website has a new look and new features. We hope that the site is easier to navigate and more informative.

Paul E. Lovejoy

New Members

1. Administrative staff



Diane Lee: Resource Center Librarian

Diane Lee completed a B.A. in Political Science at McGill University and a Master of Library and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia. Before moving to Toronto, Diane lived in Banff and New York where she worked as a librarian at the New York Public Library. Prior to joining the Harriet Tubman Institute, Diane worked as a sessional librarian at the Scott Library (York University) for two years. Her interests include information literacy, emerging technologies and metadata.



Dr. Frank Luce: Coordinator

Dr. Luce received his Ph.D. from Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, in 2009. His area of specialization is contemporary slavery in Brazil and Angola.

Frank brings to the position of Coordinator past experiences as a Research Fellow at the Tubman Institute, Adjunct Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, Teaching Assistant York University and Instructor for the Canadian Auto Workers in Staff Education and Training. In addition to Frank's considerable experience as a lawyer, political activist, and researcher, he speaks French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English and will therefore be of great assistance in the international networking of the Tubman Institute.



Rafael Slobodian: I.T. Administrator

Rafael Slobodian has collaborated with the Harriet Tubman Institute since 2009 when he developed the structure of the intranet system and the Tubman website. He recently completed a B.Sc. in Computer Science at Universidade Federal Fluminense, in Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2. Post Doctoral Fellows

The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples is pleased to announce the appointment of two Post-Doctoral Fellows:



Dr. Yvonne Brown

Yvonne Brown (Doctor of Education, The University of British Columbia, 2005) was appointed as Post-Doctoral Fellow (2010-2011) for the project “Slavery, Memory, Citizenship” (Major Collaborative Research Initiative, SSHRC).

Dr. Brown's interests and understanding of the links among slavery, memory and citizenship are grounded in her lived experiences, pedagogical practices, social policy analyses and social justice advocacy. Over the course of her life, she has been a citizen of three jurisdictions at three historical junctures: in colonial Jamaica, as a British subject and citizen of the United Kingdom and its Colonies; as a citizen of independent Jamaica, a former slave society; and as a naturalized citizen of Canada. Her insights on memory and citizenship will advance Tubman's efforts to influence the formulation of public policies for social justice.

Dr. Brown joins the research team supporting the Tubman Institute's program to increase understanding of contemporary problems inhibiting the achievement of a multicultural world. As is clear from her life's work, Dr. Brown is committed to values of peace and justice and to confronting the issues that need to be addressed to combat the persistence of slavery in the 21st century.



Dr. Yacine Daddi Addoun

Yacine Daddi Addoun received his PhD on March 26th, 2010 at York University when he successfully defended the dissertation “*L'abolition de l'esclavage en Algérie: 1816-1871*”. Dr. Addoun is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Harriet Tubman Institute for the “Equiano's World” Project .

Events

The Harriet Tubman Student Summer Programme 2010

Abubacar Fofana*

The Harriet Tubman Student Summer Programme focused on guiding thirty students between 14-18 years old through an “Introduction to African and African Diaspora Studies”. The Summer Programme helped students to evaluate, collectively, the contributions of African peoples and cultures to the historical development of the Americas and their influence on new generations of youth.

To achieve those objectives professors, teachers, facilitators and students focused on topics which related to:

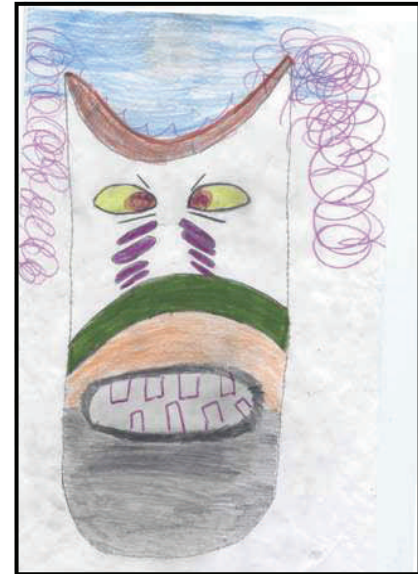
- Africa and African Diaspora histories
- The trade in enslaved Africans and slave resistance
- African and African-descendent identities
- Memory in Africa, African Diaspora and specifically the African Canadian contexts
- Museums, archives and popular culture
- Contemporary issues of histories of migrations, race, slavery and education.

The daily activities were run under the auspices of the Harriet Tubman Institute with the collaboration of professors and trained facilitators.



Drumming class with Janelle Belgrave

At the end of the programme, many of the students joined Toronto-based artist Vanessa Barnett and Elena Soni, a board member of the Institute for Contemporary Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum, to create art pieces as part of a large exhibition in the ROM called “Walls and Barriers”, which opened in October 2010. The exhibition was in connection with an exhibit celebrating the art of the Ghanaian artist El Anatsui.



Drawings made by students at the Summer Programme 2010

This inaugural summer programme was an important initiative for the Harriet Tubman Institute and especially for the Tubman Institute’s SPACE programme which has community outreach as one of its primary foci. By bringing together children, most of whom were themselves of African descent, to focus on Africa and its diasporas in the Americas, the programme provided an opportunity for disseminating new and additional information to these young people. Through its utilization of an innovative mix of “content” and “cultural activities”, the programme delivered an introductory curriculum, the impact of which led the students to request a longer experience along similar lines the following year. The Harriet Tubman Student Summer Programme has the potential of serving as a model for the delivery of intensive programmes focused on the African diaspora in Canada, where Africa and its diasporas are not normally considered for inclusion in school curricula.

* Abubacar Fofana is a first year Ph. D Student in History at York University.

Events

Caribbean History Research Group



Dr. Juanita De Barros

New Research on Colonial Health Care and the Reproduction of the 'Race' in the Post-emancipation British Caribbean"

On June 11, 2010 Dr. Juanita de Barros (McMaster University) presented the paper "New Research on Colonial Health Care and the Reproduction of the 'Race' in the Post-emancipation British Caribbean". Barros' paper explored the evolution of an intertwined discourse about population growth and marriage in the British Caribbean, from the late slave period to the early twentieth century. It examined the way in which moral judgements rooted in long-standing ideas about race and gender informed British Caribbean medical policies and their impact on the construction and operation of post-emancipation health care systems, particularly in the realm of infant health.

The Other Side of The Pancake: Reading Cuba's Literary Discourse on Slavery in a Post-modern Mode

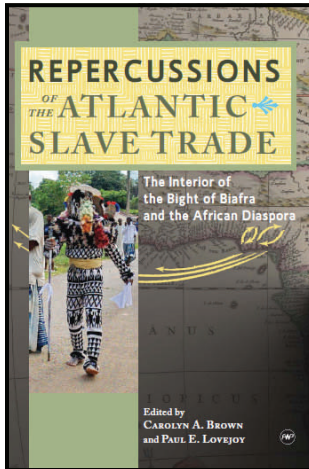


Dr. Claudette May Williams

On July 15, 2010 CERLAC and The Tubman Institute presented Claudette May Williams, Professor of Hispanic Caribbean Literature at The University of the West Indies. Dr. Williams presented "The Other Side of The Pancake: Reading Cuba's Literary Discourse on Slavery in a Postmodern Mode".

Dr. Williams is a professor in Modern Languages & Literatures in the Faculty of Humanities & Education of the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. She holds a PhD from Stanford University as well as a Bachelor and a Master degree of Arts from UWI Mona. She is the author of various titles, including *Charcoal and cinnamon: The politics of color in Spanish Caribbean literature*.

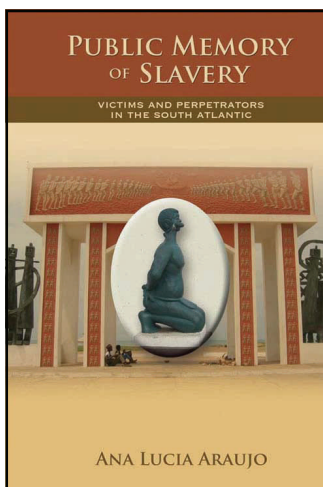
Publications



Carolyn A. Brown and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., *Repercussions of the Atlantic Slave Trade: The Interior of the Bight of Biafra and the African Diaspora* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2010).

The collection of 20 essays is published in honour of Adiele Afigbo (1937-2009) on the tenth anniversary of the Nike Lake Conference, "Repercussions of the Slave Trade: The African Diaspora and the Hinterland of the Bight of Biafra."

The book is published in the Harriet Tubman Series on the African Diaspora.

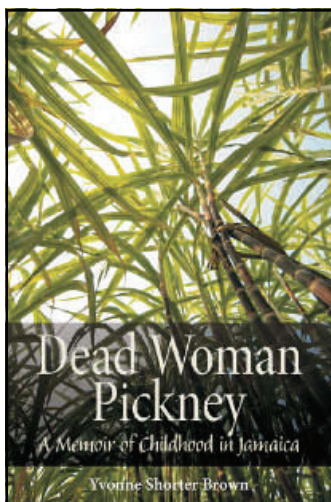


Public Memory of Slavery

Ana Lucia Araujo

Ana Lucia Araujo is an assistant professor of history at Howard University. She holds a joint PhD in history and social and historical anthropology from Université Laval (Québec, Canada) and École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris, France). She also received a PhD in art history from Université Laval (Québec, Canada).

In this book, Ana Lucia examines the public memory of the Atlantic slave trade and slavery encompassing what is modern-day Brazil and the Republic of Benin. She argues that despite the rupture provoked by the slave trade, the Atlantic Ocean was a corridor that allowed the production of continuous relations between the two countries.



Dead Women Pickney: A memoir of Childhood in Jamaica Yvonne Brown

Dr. Brown is a retired public school teacher, university lecturer, researcher, writer, and social justice advocate. She is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Harriet Tubman Institute.

Dead Woman Pickney tells of growing up in Jamaica from 1943 to 1965 and contains both personal experience and history, told with stridency and humour. The author's coming of age parallels the political stages of Jamaica's moving from the richest Crown colony of Great Britain to an independent nation within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Tubman News



Asif Mohammed, who collaborated with the Tubman Institute as Project Manager for MCRI during the past academic year, is leaving Canada soon. His motherland call was stronger and he decided to go back to Trinidad, where his family lives. We wish Asif all the best!

Tubman's **Jennifer Lofkrantz** was appointed as Visiting Assistant Professor at Saint Thomas University, Fredericton, for the 2010-2011 academic year. We congratulate Jennifer for her achievement.



Meley Mulugetta and her research assistants in Ethiopia

Endangered Archive Programme

Meley Mulugetta spent the summer of 2010 in Ethiopia with the Endangered Archive Programme support. Her project titled "Survey and Digitization of Christian Manuscripts in the Gojam and Tigray regions of Northern Ethiopia" intends to identify and digitize valuable manuscript collections in the Gojan and Tigray regions of Northern Ethiopia.

These regions are home to over 6000 churches and monasteries. Until recently, the area was heavily absorbed in a civil war. Tigray in particular, was affected, making any kind of study or survey of monastic libraries

difficult. The region has of recent times experienced some measure of calm and political stability, opening a widow of opportunity to explore and identify key and endangered collections. There are over 400,000 manuscripts in these two regions alone.

The accumulated digital data will be deposited both at the Theological College in Addis Abada, Ethiopia and in the premises of the Harriet Tubman Institute, where they will be accessible to a wide range of international scholars and students of Ethiopian Studies, African Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.

Tubman News

Tubman's New Website



Since August 19, 2010, the Tubman website (www.yorku.ca/tubman) has a new face. Under the leadership of Rafael Slobodian and with the assistance of Usman Mahmood, Yacine Daddi Addoun, Katrina Keefer, and Vanessa Oliveira, a new structure and presentation was developed during the past several months.

It was developed in Drupal, a sophisticated content management system, over a time frame of six months with the main goals of providing easier access, a modern look and support for growth. The launch of the new website marked also the adoption of a whole new visual identity by the institute, including a renewed banner and logo. The new website has many improvements from its predecessor including a scrolling highlights section, which brings to the attention of the audience the most relevant activities of the institute, a search engine, better organized categories and content, standardized styling for the pages, improved screen space usage, the adoption of new technologies like RSS feeds and animation effects, and it supports the construction of spin off websites for research projects and events. In the near future the Tubman Institute also aim for integration with social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Interview

This interview* was conducted on August 9, 2010, on the occasion of Dr. Yvonne Brown's appointment as Post-Doctoral fellow for the Project *Slavery, Memory, Citizenship*. During the interview, we discussed her experiences in Jamaica and Canada, the publication of *Dead Woman Pickney*, and her plans as a member of Tubman team. It ended up as a wonderful and emotional talk about her life, memories and activism.

Vanessa S. Oliveira: *You were born in Jamaica. What was the importance of this early experience in Jamaica for your professional life?*

Yvonne Brown: I came of age in Jamaica when the colony was moving from the status of a Crown Colony to independence. During that time there were many country-wide discussions of what it means to move from a society that was mainly colonized and peopled by enslaved people to be an independent nation. There were many, many, many discussions about class, about colour prejudice, about the economy, about labour, especially as it pertained to domestic servants and unskilled labour and what these meant for education of the nation, for independent citizenship. At the same time too, beamed into the country were pictures in *The Daily Gleaner* and later by television about activities of the United Nations. We were able for the first time, in the late 1960s to see pictures of Black, African people from the continent at the United Nations giving learned speeches and presentations. They were dressed in their African regalias and, that for me as a young person, really turned my head from the stereotypical and negative and pejorative accounts that were given about who Africans are. That consciousness then fed into discussions about the status of Africa and the enslavement of Black people and about the horrors of the Middle Passage, and the legacy of slavery as we were living it in Jamaica. There were (and still are) so many people who were disenfranchised and poor and at the time. There were also discussions about a West Indies Federation where the English-speaking islands, which experienced a shared history of slavery and visions for full citizenship, would pull themselves together economically, culturally, politically to begin to take charge of their lives and to chart a course to independence, with a shared destiny. However, that was not to be. In retrospect, I was fortunate to be among the beneficiaries of all these intellectual currents - from slavery to independence to federation to the United Nations and its work. Being exposed and being awakened to these anti-colonial debates created lasting memories which have informed my critical social consciousness around inequalities and racial injustices.

VSO: *And we can read about these experiences in your new book, *Dead women Pickney*, which is based on your dissertation. How did the idea of writing about your own experiences emerged?*

YB: Yes, my new book, which is called *Dead Woman Pickney*, a Jamaican term meaning motherless child, was, in part, my own response to living in Canada and experiencing a pervasive disrespect for Black people and a marginalization of Black people generally, and to witnessing in schools and in higher education, the erasure and absence of scholars from Africa or from the African Diaspora dealing with the aftermath of slavery and how that affects the contemporary condition of Black people globally. I was particularly outraged by discussions in higher education about internationalization; where in every instance, when one looked at the strategic plans for internationalization across the country in higher education, Africa was generally absent, except in a few universities that had an African Studies program, such as at York, which also has a Latin American and Caribbean Studies program. York is unique in that sense. So that when I came later in my career to do a doctorate, all I wanted to do was to tell stories about the history of internationalization and globalization and how the exploitation of Africa, the trans-Atlantic trade in enslaved African bodies, and their enslaved labour in the New World plantation systems were fundamental to what is currently termed the global economy (...) And I thought "why not select some themes from your observations, from all your lived experiences in Jamaica and Canada and through your travels? Select three themes that strike you that pertain to Black people and Africa and globalization". And I came up with one theme as 'bodies', and I should have

called it 'enslaved bodies' at the time, but I was doing the doctorate in an atmosphere that does not regard slavery as a topic for scholarly inquiry (...) So I chose 'bodies' as one theme – specifically, the Black body or the enslaved body – the *captive* body. I chose 'memories' because it struck me that memory as a cognitive capacity and the foundation for our ability to function in the world is undervalued as a source of primary data from which to carry out scholarly research. I regard memory like any other primary source; you have to cross-check for accuracy and authenticity. And for me – I was having so many overwhelming memories of my childhood in Jamaica that I wanted to put in the written record because I saw connections with the present debate on globalization. In my memories of growing up in Jamaica, I saw hints at the bases of why Africa, the slave trade, and slavery are omitted. I had hunches of why that might be from my experiences in Jamaica.

So to me, when I experience my own body as someone of partly African descent, born in Jamaica out of enslavement- when I experience the pain of this history in my own body and I look and see the suffering of Black people all around me, I could not help but to include in my thesis the business of bodies.

The memories ... And so memory I think is often neglected; it is a complex and multilayered phenomena and so in my work I realized that if I define memory as a record of things that have happened then not only is this record stored within human memory but it is recorded in the genes of the descendants of certain historical experiences; so that, people can actually read a person and say "Oh that person has some African in them" or "that person has some indigenous blood in them". So genes do have memory. And when you look at us in the Caribbean, you know that Ghana was there. You know that Nigeria was there. Then there is autobiographical memory - how this history has influenced what we are born into and how we experience our family, our childhood, the social institutions that influence us. It is recorded in the language, in the attitudes – all of this I regard as memory. So then we have the archives. ... There is that memory that we find in the archives – letters, diaries, policies, official photographs and paintings, comments from bureaucrats and so on. Then there is the memory that is recorded in the topography – the altered landscape so that if you go to any place in the west where Africans were enslaved, and if you are aware at all, you can begin to read the topography for memory traces...

I wanted to tell a story, I wanted to construct a narrative (...) And I was going to re-visit the land of my birth and answer questions about "Who am I?" "Why am I the way I am?" "Why is it that topics that other people gloss over give me a visceral reaction?" and come to think about it "Why is it that I do not know who my mother is?" – And her origins and so on. So, my dissertation was entitled "Bodies, Memories and Empire: Life Stories about Growing up in Jamaica, 1943 to 1965". The dates encompass my birth date to when I graduated from teachers' college. And then I had to find a supervisor who would supervise this work, because ... memory?! ... In *Academia*?! ... No ...we don't deal with memories (...) and I decided it was going to be a tribute to my mother, and it is about my personal struggle to be who I am and it's about honouring all those people who perished during the slave trade (...) It used to pain me so much when people dismiss that whole thing about enslavement of Africans in the west that "it's no longer a big deal" ... Part of my research and writing my book and my dissertation was to find the answer. And the answer is that for the first time in history – to put it in a nutshell – there was chattel slavery where human beings were reduced to cattle because their skin colour was made the badge of slavery.

VSO: *How does living in a multicultural country like Canada influence your career?*

YB: Living in a multicultural society, at least in Canada, alerted me to investigate the history of Canada. And I have benefitted from going to conferences, meeting people, looking at the curricula in high schools, looking at how you can make it more multicultural. Of course I focussed on Africa and the Diaspora because that was what was always absent. That multicultural policy has left me with an open mind to be curious about the history of Canada, the US, Australia... and to broaden my lenses to look at the various imperial histories of colonization. So I look at the Portuguese, I look at the Spanish, I look at the French. And I look at them in contemporary locations within the Canadian mosaic, and to me there are many hidden texts in this public discourse about multiculturalism and if you are curious and if you are conscious as many people have begun to be since the inception of the policy – they have begun to criticize the policy for its inclusions and exclusions – one of these is that it does not deal with racism... In many locations in Canada you can go and see different nation-

alities and ethnic groups dancing and singing and putting out ethnic foods – and all that has its place. But let us not forget the very important agenda of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that came in to effect after the Multicultural Policy, that many are still struggling to have their rights and freedoms recognized. (...) And one of the exciting things of being a citizen here – living and working and participating – is to see Canada's evolution from what was essentially conceived of as a white man's country – because that's how Canada was conceived of - to be inclusive beyond the English and French colonial duality. So to me to read the history of Canada and to live here for forty years, and be part of the public discourses in the development and implementation of various social policies, I think it is a process in growth and transformation. And I am very excited about Canada's growth and transformation and I promote that, even as I am very critical of how some people are treated - in particular the First Nations and Africa/Black people and people of differing sexual orientation. ...

VSO: *You were a teacher, a lecturer, a researcher, an educational administrator and one time a politician; and now you are a post-doctoral fellow in the Tubman Institute. How can Tubman contribute to your project and how can you contribute to Tubman?*

YB: Well... for one, I followed the development of Tubman since 1998, I believe, when the *Slave Route Project* was proposed and Tubman was launched. That was about the same time I began very seriously to study slavery on my own (...) I took a great interest in the work that Paul Lovejoy and company were doing here and it was kind of a fantasy ... "God! Would I love to be in a setting where we talk about slavery legitimately in a scholarly manner and I thought about York too because it had Latin American and Caribbean studies (...) And so when I moved to Toronto I started to attend a few events at York and in time I met Michele Johnson and Don Simpson and I later met Paul Lovejoy. I kind of just hung around for a while just as an interested person and I came to the Caribbean history group presentations and so on. And then ... and I got on the listserv here and one day I saw this ad come through for a doctoral fellowship to work on this MCRI project called ... Slavery, Memory, Citizenship!

So I come as you can see with a lot of research questions relating to slavery and memory and citizenship... Some of which I have addressed in my dissertation and in my readings and in my activism. I am also very interested in the Summer Youth Program for African-Canadian students. I observed this last summer and it is a very very important outreach program. And I have extensive experience in this, in my activism – and I call it my academic activism – from BC where I developed and offered in-service programs to teachers in literature – in language arts and social studies- about incorporating slavery and the history of African peoples. Part of my academic activism was to develop a course on Black women in the Americas from slavery to the present and that was a wonderful course to teach because the Women's Studies Programme gave me complete freedom to experiment with my teaching style and methods. I grew with the students and the course over a ten-year period. (...) I bring to Tubman an awareness of a broad cross-section of what Black people are doing in academia and in curricula in public schools. I have a good grasp of what has been happening because I have prided myself upon finding out what has been happening in other places and incorporate those in my work. It is really important for Tubman to have an overview of what has been happening in the ten provinces and territories, who are the key people - both Africanists and Africa-descended people doing work to promote knowledge about Africa.

(...) I am delighted to discover all the work the UNESCO people have been doing on developing teaching approaches for African history in both the continent and in the diaspora– the enslavement of African peoples. That is an exciting area that opened up to me in terms of pedagogy and research, so the relationship that I see over the next year with Tubman is mutual and reciprocal. I will give as much as I get. The other part of Tubman which I hope more people will discover is that it has an ethical commitment to supporting students in their work. I know how very difficult it is to study the enslavement of African peoples, both on the continent and here and how difficult it can be emotionally to do this work. That is an important part of what I discovered in doing my own work.

* The full version of Yvonne Brown's interview is available at the Harriet Tubman Institute. I would like to thank Shiemara Hogarth for her work on transcribing this interview.



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The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples at York University is proud to be part of an international network of research centres committed to overcoming injustice and inequity as a result of slavery. Our leading-edge research focuses on the forced and voluntary movement of African peoples around the world. As a social innovator, the Institute's mandate is to promote a greater understanding of the history of slavery and its legacy. The Institute fosters debate, informs public policy and strives to resolve current social injustices. Digital archiving technology enables the preservation of documents and other materials for easy access to historical records. The Institute is named for the spirit of Harriet Tubman, liberator of her people, feminist, and humanist (c.1820-1913).

www.yorku.ca/tubman