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Issue 2

Promised Land Chronicle

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Symposium Reflections

The 2009 Promised Land Symposium is now over and is being hailed as a great success. For the first time the event was open to the general public, and it was well attended by individuals and representatives from community groups, interested in the latest findings and new direction of the Project. It therefore represents a great step forward in integrating the PLP into the local community, building many new contacts and connections that will hopefully bear fruit over the coming years.

Held during the weekend of March 13-15, the schedule of events was filled with knowledgeable speakers and talented minds, not all of whom it should be noted are affiliated with the PLP. Instead, the overall roster represented a broader range of fields and groups, transforming the symposium into a venue for like minded researchers to network and share ideas in parallel collaboration to our own endeavours. Hopefully this environment of open dialogue will germinate new seeds and lead to new partnership opportunities for all participants and community members including the PLP, however, our own success does not hinge upon such an outcome alone. Any increased public visibility for African-Canadian academic study and receives is of valuable benefit all players in the field.

Some of the highlights from this year's speakers include:

- Dr. Roy Finkenbine of the University of Detroit Mercy, a leading expert in the "Black Abolitionist Papers" collection (a microfilm copy of which was recently acquired by the PLP and donated to the Chatham-Kent Library as a community resource), discussed the microfilm for the benefit of the community, its

contents and resource value to researchers, and demonstrated how to use and access the collection.

- Mr. Glenn McGinnis is a school teacher from Fergus, Ontario, and a member of the History and Social Science Teacher's Association. He was on-hand to discuss how he makes black history both relevant and interesting in his classroom activities. His wonderfully entertaining presentation was well received by the audience in particular with those who work in creating classroom activities and curriculum.
- Mrs. Marie Carter, community researcher and co-applicant of the PLP, presented her reinterpretation of the Dawn Settlement. Ultimately challenging the predominant public perception of the success and work of Rev. Josiah Henson and the British American Institute.

This of course just scratches the surface, and does not do justice to the many valued presentations. For more information on the weekend a summary, with published presentations and photographs and video footage is available on the Promised Land Website <http://lamacs.arts.uottawa.ca> and a broadcast of select presentations will be aired on local cable access Cogeco Cable 11 in the coming month.

Plans are already underway for the next Promised Land Symposium in early 2010, we hope that you can join us. Public announcements to follow later this year.

“Henson’s Dream of Freedom at Dawn, Canada, Began”

Adrian Torrington and Marcel Gelinás are a musical duo from London, Ontario. Their latest project, Kuhleborn: Riversongs, is a collecting of original tracks inspired by a canoe trip down the Thames River from London to Lighthouse Cove on Lake St. Clair, sponsored by the Philip Aziz Foundation for the Arts. The canoe trip was to retrace the path of William Lees Judson and Paul Peel in 1800 on a path of exploration along the river. Today’s journey by artists and ecologists was meant to bring attention to the fragility, beauty and culture

of this region and the need to strike a balance between city and environment. Torrington and Gelinás’ Kuhleborn project is a montage of stories from the Thames River Valley set to song.

The Kuhleborn Riversongs is but one part of a larger project which also includes the Story Book Tree. Carved from a 5-ton trunk of an ash tree, this massive sculpture is covered with images corresponding to the Kuhleborn songs and other stories of the Thames River Valley area. Both the songs and the carving will be in Ottawa in June 2009 for the 25th anniversary of

the Canadian Heritage River Systems. The songs are set to be played before an audience of 300 expected international delegates.

Included among the songs on the album is “Dawn, Canada” a lively piano ballad telling the story of Rev. Josiah Henson, his struggle for freedom and the birth of the Dawn Settlement for refugees fleeing slavery in the United States. The Promised Land Project has participated in the creation of this song by consulting on historical accuracies and partially financing the costs of recording time at Emac

Studios and fees for back-up musicians. All of the songs on Kuhleborn: Riversongs were sponsored by individuals and organizations, while proceeds from the sales of the album and concert tour go to charity or are reinvested in the promotions and touring fees associated with the Kuhleborn project.

The Promised Land is delighted to be involved in this artistic endeavour and look forward to hearing the song played on the radio, taking the story of Reverend Henson and the Dawn Settlement to a wider audience.

Anglican Mission Celebrates 150 Years

“We require a church to give character to the work; and the fact that a wicked and senseless prejudice has thrown obstacles in our way, renders the necessity for one all the more evident. May the Lord raise us up friends to enable us to erect an humble temple in which to proclaim to all, who will hear without distinction of color, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to which all will be equally invited and equally welcome. And then if the white man, in his pride and prejudice, refuses to listen to the common salvation in company with his black brother, the very building will testify against him.” – Rev. Thomas Hughes

calling in his heart to found an Anglican ministry for both the community’s black and white settlers. After reading Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” he knew such a ministry was to be his life’s great purpose. Although the church he speaks of in the passage above was not completed until the fall of 1868, 2009 marks the 150th anniversary of his mission. The Promised Land Project is pleased to be helping the Anglican Diocese of Huron and Christ Church commemorate this milestone while celebrating the man, the Reverend Thomas Hughes, missionary, and ardent abolitionist.

place at the church to educate the congregation and the community about the rich legacy of Hughes his church. This schedule will culminate in a special service Sunday October 4, 2009. Planned activities include a theatrical presentation where Rev. Hughes will speak in his own voice to today’s congregation, a collection of historical and archival displays and mass to be delivered by the current Suffragan Bishop Terry Dance. This is a public event, and not limited to the congregation of Christ Church, all those interested in learning more about the role and history of Rev. Hughes and Christ Church in Dresden and the Dawn settlement are welcome. Let there be no separate pew among us!



Rev. Thos. Hughes
Tent 13.

Thomas Hughes arrived in Dresden in 1859 with a

Throughout the year a series of events will take

The Freedom Experience Competition

The Chatham-Kent Writer's Guild is teaming up with the Promised Land Project to sponsor a youth writing competition on the subject of Chatham-Kent's rich African Canadian history. Open to high school-aged writers, this competition is aimed at making local youth think about the events and legacy of the past while becoming more familiar with the region's historical sites. Entries will be accepted in both fiction and non-fiction categories, with applicants further divided

between writers in grades 9- 10 and 11-12. Each category and age range will have a cash reward for the top prize contributed by the Promised Land Project. Runner up prizes will be provided by the Guild. The top entries will also be published on the Promised Land Projects website hosted by the University of Ottawa (<http://lamacs.arts.uottawa.ca/plp>).

The competition's official kick-off will take place at the end of summer break and it is hoped, will

encourage active participation within local classrooms. Winners will be announced in January with the winners receiving their cash awards at the 2010 Promised Land Symposium, hosted by the University of Windsor. For more information regarding the competition, inquiries can be sent to either Devin Andrews, Promised Land Community Coordinator 519.360.1998 x4601 or Kathy Jordan, Chatham-Kent Writer's Guild President 519.352.2613.

Message from the Community Coordinator

Ask yourself this question: **What can the Promised Land Project do for you?** Do you have an answer? If you are in the world of academia it is an easy question. The PLP accepts research papers for publication and provides dollars for summer research positions so students can gain valuable learning opportunities. However, if you are a community based organization, business or not-for-profit, the answer doesn't always come so easily. What are we about and is there a role for you?

YES THERE IS!

The PLP is here to assist any group with shared interests. You have the opportunity to build tangible products for the community and there is no single answer for what we are searching. The best way to find out is to contact me, the Community Coordinator. Read the surrounding articles for a hint of what we can do together. We've been funded to create artistic endeavours, academic or research initiatives; we've been funded to outline and celebrate our common history. The PLP is dedicated to building up community capacity in arts and culture, history and knowledge, tourism and opportunity. You will never know if your idea is one for us until you ask. For more information, or to schedule a presentation on the PLP contact Devin: 519-360-1998 x4601 or dandrewsplp@gmail.com

Seeking Additional Advisory Committee Members

The Promised Land Project wants you! As a means of generating greater community input into the goals and directions of the research, the Project is looking to revitalize the Advisory Committee. Could you be the right person for the job?

This committee is to be filled by six volunteers representing individuals and local community, for one year terms (July to June) corresponding to the project's fiscal years. During each term, the Advisory Committee will receive monthly update on the

activities of the PLP from the Community Coordinator and have an open forum to discuss issues of mutual interest to partner agencies. The committee is primarily responsible for offering advice to the permanent Project Management Team (formerly Board of Directors) on new projects and the direction of research conducted by the Four Key Theme Research Committees. Advisory Committee members can from time to time be asked by the Community Coordinator and the Project Management Team to assist in public

awareness campaigns, fundraising and partnership efforts as we create tangible spin-offs from our research to benefit the local community, particularly in the area of art and culture.

Candidates interested in serving in this integral role are encouraged to contact the Community Coordinator, Devin Andrews, by Friday, June 19th; with the inaugural meeting to take place in late July. We thank everyone who applies for their dedication to Chatham-Kent's history and culture.

The Promised Land Symposium 2009

