

OBHS BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPEAKER SERIES FEB 9, 18, 23, 2021

During February 2021 join us virtually for our speaker series that will include three evenings of dynamic conversations with a phenomenal range of speakers including film maker Cheryl Foggo, author Lawrence Hill, a panel with Black Heritage sites, and storyteller Sandra Whiting.

February 9th, 2021 at 7pm

Register here: <https://obhsblackhistorymonthspeakerseries.eventbrite.ca>



Cheryl Foggo

Photo: Mike Tan

Cheryl Foggo is a multiple award winning playwright, author and filmmaker, whose work over the last 30 years has focused on the lives of Western Canadians of African descent.

In 2020 the World Premiere of her **NFB feature documentary *John Ware Reclaimed*** took place at the Calgary International Film Festival, where it received the Alberta Feature Audience Choice Award. The film is now screening at festivals across the country. Additionally in 2020, the 30th anniversary edition of her book *Pourin' Down Rain: A Black Woman Claims Her Place in the Canadian West*, was released by Brush Education Press and is also available as an audiobook read by acclaimed actor Karen Robinson through ECW Press. In 2019 she wrote and directed the short film *Kicking Up a Fuss: The Charles Daniels Story*, which received its Festival Launch in 2020, screening alongside her John Ware film. Her play, *John Ware Reimagined*, won the 2015 Writers Guild of Alberta Award for Drama and was produced most recently at Workshop West Theatre Company in November, 2017. Also in 2017 she was recognized by the YWCA as one of 150 outstanding Calgary women. She is a past recipient of the Sondra Kelly Screenplay Award from the Writers Guild of Canada. She is working on a number of new projects for 2021, including a short play included in Obsidian Theatre Company's *21 Black Futures* and a production of her play *Heaven* at the Citadel Theatre.



Lawrence Hill

Photo: Lisa Sakulensky

Lawrence Hill is a writer whose novels and works of non-fiction have been widely read in Canada, translated into many languages and published around the world. He is a professor of creative writing at the University of Guelph, and has served as a mentor to Canadian writers for more than twenty years.

The manuscript for his new children's novel, *Beatrice and Croc Harry*, is with his publisher. He has recently written a play, *Sensitivity*, commissioned by Obsidian Theatre in Toronto. He is the author of ten books, including the novels *The Illegal*, *The Book of Negroes*, *Any Known Blood*, and the memoir

Black Berry, Sweet Juice: On Being Black and White in Canada. He is writing a new novel for adults about the African-American soldiers who helped build the Alaska Highway in northern BC and Yukon in 1942-43.

Hill is the son of American civil rights activists – an African-American father and white mother – who married in the South and moved the next day to Canada, where they spent the rest of their lives, raised a family, wrote books about Black history in Canada, and continued their civil rights activism. Lawrence Hill's grandfather and father were African-American soldiers in the US Army in World Wars I and II, respectively. Hill's father, Daniel G. Hill, served as the first director and later was the Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. He also served as Ombudsman of Ontario. With his wife Donna Hill, he co-founded the Ontario Black History Society, for which Lawrence Hill volunteered.

Lawrence Hill is the winner of various awards including the National Magazine Award for best feature article ("Is Africa's Pain Black American's Burden?"), The Commonwealth Writers' Prize and the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for his novel *The Book of Negroes*, and twice has won CBC Radio's Canada Reads. Hill delivered the 2013 Massey Lectures, based on his non-fiction book *Blood: The Stuff of Life*. He co-wrote the adaptation for the six-part television miniseries *The Book of Negroes*, which won eleven Canadian Screen Awards. His volunteer activities include serving as an honorary patron of Crossroads International, whose work in community economic development in sub-Saharan Africa he has actively supported for 40 years.

His essay about his mother, "Act of Love: The Life and Death of Donna Mae Hill" appeared in the *Globe and Mail* in 2018 and enriched a national conversation about medically assisted dying.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-act-of-love-the-life-and-death-of-donna-mae-hill/>

Formerly a reporter with *The Globe and Mail* and parliamentary correspondent for *The Winnipeg Free Press*, Hill speaks fluent French and some Spanish. He has lived and worked across Canada, in Baltimore, and in Spain and France. He is an honorary patron of Crossroads International, for which he travelled as a volunteer to the West African countries Niger, Cameroon and Mali, and to which he lends the name of his best-known character for the Aminata Fund, which supports programs for girls and women in Africa.

Hill sits on the advisory committee of the Centre for Community–Engaged Narrative Arts in Hamilton, Ontario. His earlier volunteer work has included serving The Black Loyalist Heritage Society, Book Clubs for Inmates, Project Bookmark Canada, and The Ontario Black History Society. He continues to support and serve as a volunteer for The Writers' Trust of Canada and the Writers' Union of Canada.

Hill graduated from the University of Toronto Schools in 1975. He served as school captain in his final year at the high school. He has a B.A. in economics from Laval University in Quebec City and an M.A. in writing from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He has received honorary doctorates from ten Canadian universities.

A Member of the Order of Canada, he lives with his wife Miranda Hill, also a writer, in Hamilton ON

February 18th, 2021 at 7pm

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/part-2-obhs-black-history-month-speaker-series-tickets-138308332947>

The **Amherstburg Freedom Museum** tells the story of African-Canadians' journey and contributions, by preserving stories and presenting artifacts that educate and inspire. The museum was founded by Amherstburg resident Melvin "Mac" Simpson, on the belief that social, economic and educational issues would be better addressed by a society with greater knowledge and pride in its own history.

After over 40 years of service, and with generous support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government sources, the Amherstburg Freedom Museum continues to be a national symbol of courage, determination and freedom.



Crossing reenactment, Amherstburg.



Buxton National Historic Site and Museum - The Raleigh Township Centennial Museum was officially opened in 1967 as part of the township's Centennial celebrations. The Museum's main purpose is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret historical artifacts related to the Elgin (Buxton) Settlement from its founding in 1849 to the late 19th century. A related purpose is to provide the personal histories and genealogies of the

original settlers and their descendants through on-going historical research.

The Museum, renamed Buxton National Historic Site & Museum in 1998, is currently owned by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. The Museum serves the inhabitants of Kent County and Southwestern Ontario, and also attracts visitors and researchers from across Canada and the United States. This Statement of Purpose may not be altered without the consent of the Board of Directors of the Buxton National Historic site & Museum. <http://buxtonmuseum.com>



Guelph Black Heritage Society -The Guelph BME (British Methodist Episcopal) Church has stood at 83 Essex Street since 1880. The Guelph BME was built by formerly enslaved Black individuals and their descendants who arrived in the area via the Underground Railroad.

The Guelph Black Heritage Society (GBHS) was formed after the BME Church was listed for sale in November 2011. The purpose of the GBHS is to preserve the historical significance of the BME Church by creating a cultural, historical and social centre within Guelph and Wellington County. The GBHS's offer to purchase the BME Church was accepted and the sale was finalized in Dec. 2012. The Guelph BME Church building

has been renamed Heritage Hall. <https://www.guelphblackheritage.ca/about-gbhs/>



Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site -

The property containing Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site is part of 200 acres of land purchased in 1841 to establish the Dawn Settlement - a refuge for the many fugitives from slavery who escaped to Canada from the United States. The Josiah Henson Interpretive Centre, located on the site, houses a collection of 19th-century artifacts and rare books pertinent to the abolitionist era, as well as displays highlighting Reverend Josiah Henson's life. The collection includes a rare early edition of Josiah's autobiography and a signed portrait of Queen Victoria presented to him in 1877.

At the Interpretive Centre, visitors are ushered into The North Star Theatre for a screening of the 30-minute video "Father Henson: His Spirit Lives On." The Underground Railroad Freedom Gallery recounts the history of freedom seekers - from being taken from Africa and enslaved in the United States to finding freedom in Canada. The Central Station Gift Shop offers a wide selection of unique African and Canadian art and souvenirs as well as an extensive selection of books.

February 18th, 2021 at 7pm

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/part-3-obhs-black-history-month-speaker-series-tickets-138321143263>



Sandra Whiting has been at the epicentre of activity and change in Toronto's African Canadian community for many years. She has worked with among others, The Black Business & Professional Association, as President and Board member; Chaired the Walk Good Walkathon at the Jamaican Canadian Association, Chaired the Women of Distinction Awards at the YWCA, Chaired the Fundraising Committee at Factory Theatre, Chaired the Obsidian Theatre Board, was a board member of The Caribbean Cultural Committee, Board member of the Metro Convention Centre and many more organizations over the years as Board member and/or Volunteer for the JCA & OBHS among others.

She is the Past President of PACE Canada, an organization supporting Early Childhood Education projects in Jamaica and Canada and V.P of Culchaworks (an arts organization).

She is also a well known M.C and storyteller, and uses the arts as a vehicle for change.

Sandra has told her tales on radio and television, spoken at hundreds of schools to thousands of children, at libraries, events and prisons.

She is also a talented MC for local events spanning from brunches to larger special events and has used her talents in the Arts to make contributions as a writer for Share, Contrast and Excellence magazine, a performance artist, actor, storyteller, inspirational speaker, and most recently as an Event Programmer at Toronto's Harbourfront Centre. She for example conceived Kuumba, the longest running Black History (African Heritage) programme at a major cultural institution in the city.

She was awarded the Harry Jerome Award for Community Leadership, has received the JCA Community Award, Pace Canada Pacesetter Award; Community Service awards from JN & the Gleaner Company and was featured on the 2016 Black History Month Legacy poster as well as being named as one of the 100 ABC Women (Accomplished Black Canadian Women of 2016).

She also has her name on a Bench of prominent African Canadian at Harbourfront Centre for her work in the Cultural arts sector.

Sandra is also a court interpreter for Jamaican Patois/Creole and got her credentials from the Ministry of Attorney General in 2017. Whiting's success can be attributed to her strong desire to work for her community and her willingness to motivate others to give back as well.



Kesha Christie is an animated storyteller and passionate motivational speaker. She ignites the imagination and weaves tales that carry listeners on a captivating journey. Kesha is proudly sharing, Caribbean folklore, West African tales, and original stories. She has worked with school boards, community organizations and storytelling events such as world storytelling day. Kesha is also the founder of an annual storyteller event celebrating oral traditions and showcasing local entrepreneurs in the community. Kesha also hosts a weekly storytelling podcast called Walk Good available on most podcast platforms including, iheartradio, Google podcast, apple podcast and more. For more information about Kesha, workshops, performances and more visit www.talkintales.ca or follow on IG @talkin_tales.

Other events: The Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) hosts its annual Black History Month Kick-Off on Sunday, January 31, 2021 virtually
Registration is required: <https://obhsblackhistorymonthkickoff.eventbrite.ca>

Contact: admin@blackhistorysociety.ca

About The Ontario Black History Society

The Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) is a registered Canadian charity, dedicated to the study, preservation and promotion of Black History and heritage. The Society aims to encourage public interest in Black history through various initiatives and programs. Founded in 1978, the OBHS is also the only Ontario Provincial Heritage Organization of the Ministry of Culture devoted to Black history and heritage. To learn more, visit: <http://blackhistorysociety.ca/> or follow along on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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