

Langston Hughes Center Newsletter

February 2013

Hello Everyone,

This is the e-newsletter for the Langston Hughes Center (LHC). The Langston Hughes Center (formerly the Langston Hughes Resource Center, founded in 1998) is an academic research and educational center that is building upon the legacy and creative and intellectual insight of African American author, poet, playwright, folklorist and social critic, Langston Hughes. The Center coordinates, strengthens and develops teaching, research and outreach activities in African American Studies, and the study of race and culture in American society at the University of Kansas and throughout the region. Each month the LHC sends out an e-newsletter to inform you about upcoming events at KU and throughout the region, as well as provide you with any recent news of general interest to those concerned with the work of the Center.

See below for the latest LHC e-newsletter. More information about our events and programs can be found on our website at <http://www2.ku.edu/~lhcaas> . Please feel free to pass this information along to friends and colleagues.

In this newsletter:

1. **Upcoming Events:** Inspiring MLK; Lincoln and Race; Jesse B. Semple Brownbag; Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship Lecture; 50th Anniversary of March on Washington; The Long March
2. **In the News:** LHC Blog; African American Literary Blog; Rosa Parks; Black Israelites; Black Revolution on Campus; Job Discrimination; W. E. B. Du Bois; HBCU's; Emancipation Proclamation

Sincerely,

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

Upcoming Events

Inspiring MLK

What: *"Inspiring MLK: The Mentorship of Benjamin Elijah Mays"* – Randal Jelks, University of Kansas

When: February 5 @ 7:30 pm

Where: Dole Institute of Politics (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Dole Institute of Politics

About:

Benjamin Elijah Mays is the man Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called his "spiritual and intellectual father." In honor of Black History Month, author [Randal Jelks](#) will shed light on the profound impact this teacher had on the education of the leadership of the black church and of a generation of activists, policymakers, and educators that culminated with the civil rights movement. This program contains a book sale and signing of Jelks' book, [Benjamin Elijah Mays, Schoolmaster of the Movement](#).

Lincoln and Race

What: ***"Race and Equality in the Age of Lincoln"*** – Manisha Sinha, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

When: February 6 @ 7:00 pm

Where: Washburn Room, Washburn Memorial Union (Washburn University)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Washburn University

About:

The annual [Lincoln Lecture](#) will be on [Founders' Day](#), Wednesday, Feb. 6 at 7 p.m. in the Washburn Room of the Memorial Union. Author and professor Manisha Sinha will present **"Race and Equality in the Age of Lincoln."**

The Lincoln Lecture is one of several special events instituted in anticipation of Washburn University's sesquicentennial celebration in 2015. It is free and open to the public.

For more information visit the following link: <http://www.washburn.edu/about/150/special-events/lincoln-lecture.html>

Jesse B. Semple Brownbag Series

What: ***"Chosen People: The Rise of American Black Israelite Religions"*** – Jacob S. Dorman, University of Kansas

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

Where: Kansas Union, Alcove E (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.

Langston Hughes Visiting Professorship Lecture

What: ***"Occupy This: Political Representation, Prophetic Voices, Popular Culture and the Contested Rhetorical Legacies of the Civil Rights Movement"*** – David G. Holmes, Langston Hughes Visiting Professor, Pepperdine University

When: February 26 @3:30 pm

Where: Kansas Union, Kansas Room (University of Kansas, Lawrence Campus)

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sponsors of this Event: Office of Diversity and Equity & Department of English

For More Information see: <http://www.diversity.ku.edu/resources/langston-hughes>

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.

March on Washington

What: *"The 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington"* – Leon Litwack, University of California, Berkeley

When: February 28 @ 6:30 pm

Where: Kansas City Public Library, Plaza Branch [4801 Main St.]

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC with RSVP <<https://www.kclibrary.org/rsvp/19282>>

Sponsors of this Event: Kansas City Public Library

About:

In the summer of 1963 more than 200,000 demonstrators descended on the nation's capital to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The event was highlighted by Martin Luther King's memorable "I Have A Dream" speech and pressured the Kennedy administration into initiating a strong federal civil rights bill.

Historian Leon Litwack kicks off this year's Richard D. McKinzie Research Symposium with his talk on this seminal event in American history. Funded by the Bernardin Haskell Lecture Fund and co-sponsored by the UMKC Department of History, and the Organization of American Historians.

For more information click on the following link: <http://www.kclibrary.org/event/leon-litwack-50th-anniversary-march-washington>

Richard D. McKinzie Research Seminar

What: *"The Long March: America's Enduring Struggle for Civil Rights"* – Patricia Sullivan, University of South Carolina & Leslie Brown, Tufts University

When: March 1 @ 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Where: Kansas City Public Library, Plaza Branch [4801 Main St.]

Cost per person: FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC with RSVP <<https://www.kclibrary.org/rsvp/19283>>

Sponsors of this Event: DKansas City Public Library

About:

This year's symposium examines the history and legacy of the American Civil Rights movement. At 9 a.m. Tufts University's Leslie Brown examines the early years of civil rights activism. At 10 a.m. the University of South Carolina's Patricia Sullivan explores the pivotal year 1963 and the March on Washington. A Kansas City Civil Rights Roundtable convenes at 11:30 a.m., and a panel discussion begins at 12:30 p.m.

Symposium workshops are ideal for teachers in grades kindergarten through 12th, but the public is welcome to attend.

For more information click on the following link: <http://www.kclibrary.org/event/leon-litwack-50th-anniversary-march-washington>

In The News

Langston Hughes Center Blog

See news entries related to African American Studies at the following link: <http://afs.ku.edu/~lhcaas/The%20LHC%20Blog/The%20LHC%20Blog.html>

African American Literary Blog

See entries from various authors at the following link: <http://projecthbw.blogspot.com/>

Rosa Parks at 100

Amy Goodman | January 31, 2013 | *The Guardian*

On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama, thus launching the modern-day civil rights movement. Monday 4 February is the 100th anniversary of her birth. After she died at the age of 92, in 2005, much of the media described her as a tired seamstress, no troublemaker.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/31/rosa-parks-100-american-rebel-justice>

Book Explores rise of American black Israelite religions

Megan Schmidt | January 31, 2013 | *KU News*

Christianity was their own faith, but for some white slave owners, religion also served as a way to maintain order among their slaves.

"Most Black Israelites who believe that Jesus and the ancient Israelites were black have actually been Christians. But Christianity, in the black experience, has sometimes been seen as unsavory because of its ties to social control during slavery — it was something slave masters used to keep slaves quiet, to prevent them from rebelling," said Jacob Dorman, University of Kansas professor. "That connection has led a lot of African-Americans to want to experiment and try other religions — Judaism being one of them."

Read the full article at the following link: <http://news.ku.edu/2013/01/31/book-explores-race-identity-ancient-israelites>

The Black Revolution on Campus

| January 30, 2013 | *Can TV*

Scholar Martha Biondi examines the impact of the black power movement of the 1960's and 1970's on academia and colleges, including the establishment of Black Studies at universities. This program was recorded by Chicago Access Network Television (CAN TV).

Watch the lecture at the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTRYZyj00OI>

Job Discrimination Lives On

Margaret Kimberly | January 30, 2013 | *Black Agenda Report*

Black people lag in their ability to get and keep good jobs in the private sector because of racial discrimination. That racial animus is the same reason we are more likely to be arrested, receive inferior health care, or live in substandard housing. It is why we may have incomes but in all likelihood no real wealth. These obvious and easily provable statements are too rarely spoken aloud. As a consequence most discussion of the state of affairs in the black community is needlessly muddled. History tells us that black people as a group thrive the most when these truths are expressed and without hesitation or apology.

A recently published book on the subject of employment discrimination, [*Documenting Desegregation*](#), is much needed and important, but it tells most thinking people what they have already figured out for themselves. Workplace discrimination continues because the people with the power to end it refuse to do so, and they refuse because they and their friends and their relatives all benefit from the status quo. Black people can only escape this bleak picture during times of active popular pressure which includes demands for justice and enforcement of the law. Conversely we are worse off when that pressure diminishes or political winds begin to shift.

The high water mark for progress on this issue took place during the 1960s. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 brought clear and almost immediate improvement in private sector employment. Opportunities for black people at first improved but had stalled by 1980. Then the Reagan administration severely curtailed enforcement of civil rights laws and any progress was dead on arrival and never recovered.

Read the full article at the following link: <http://blackagendareport.com/content/freedom-rider-job-discrimination-lives>

W. E. B. Du Bois Legacy Project

| January 24, 2013 | *Clark Atlanta University*

The year 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of the passing of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois. On his birthday in February of that year, it is fitting that Clark Atlanta University (CAU) celebrate his life and scholarship: Dr. Du Bois wrote his most influential works in the 23 years he spent as a professor at Atlanta University.

Serving as faculty of the Departments of History and Economics, he taught at Atlanta University from 1897 to 1910, then returned from 1934 to 1944 as chair of the Department of Sociology. Dr. Du Bois also had impact in the area of social work and as a novelist, poet and short story writer.

In 2012, Clark Atlanta University hosted a year-long reading seminar on the major works of W.E.B. Du Bois. The CAU President, Provost, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, and Chair of the Department of History engaged in a sustained consideration of Du Boisian texts in preparation for the 2013 Conference. Over 50 faculty from CAU, Atlanta University Center, Metro-Atlanta Universities and alumni from several institutions (including Morgan State University) participated.

The 2013 W. E. B. Du Bois and *the Wings of Atlanta* 50th Anniversary Commemorative Conference will serve as a meeting at the crossroads of various paths of Du Bois's work. Conference participants will engage in an interdisciplinary and international introspection of the life, scholarship and activism of one of the most influential intellectuals of the 20th century.

We encourage scholars of all levels to join in our sustained Sankofa sojourn. The Clark Atlanta University Du Bois Legacy Project brings recognition of the most profound, relevant and complex scholar of our generation home to the HBCU where he spent his academic career.

The Du Bois Legacy Project was initiated and organized by [Dr. Stephanie Y. Evans](#), chair of the Department of African American Studies, Africana Women's Studies and History (AWH).

Watch the seminar lectures at the following link: http://cauduboislegacy.net/2012_Seminar_Series.html

Do We Still Need HBCU's

| January 24, 2013 | NPR: Tell Me More

John Silvanus Wilson is the new president of Morehouse, the famed historically black college in Atlanta. Host Michel Martin speaks with Wilson about the challenges facing the only all-male HBCU.

Listen to the program or read the transcript at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/22/169980243/do-we-still-need-hbcus>

What the Emancipation Proclamation Didn't Do

| January 14, 2013 | NPR: Tell Me More

The Emancipation Proclamation celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. But not everyone knows the real story behind the document. Host Michel Martin speaks with historian Lonnie Bunch, about what the Emancipation Proclamation did - and didn't do.

Listen to the program or read the transcript at the following link: <http://www.npr.org/2013/01/09/168957092/what-the-emancipation-proclamation-didnt-do>

Emancipation of Abe Lincoln

Eric Foner | January 13, 2013 | *NYT*

ONE hundred and fifty years ago, on Jan. 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln presided over the annual White House New Year's reception. Late that afternoon, he retired to his study to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. When he took up his pen, his hand was shaking from exhaustion. Briefly, he paused — "I do not want it to appear as if I hesitated," he remarked. Then Lincoln affixed a firm signature to the document.

Like all great historical transformations, emancipation was a process, not a single event. It arose from many causes and was the work of many individuals. It began at the outset of the Civil War, when slaves sought refuge behind Union lines. It did not end until December 1865, with the ratification of the 13th Amendment, which irrevocably abolished slavery throughout the nation.

But the Emancipation Proclamation was the crucial turning point in this story. In a sense, it embodied a double emancipation: for the slaves, since it ensured that if the Union emerged victorious, slavery would perish, and for Lincoln himself, for whom it marked the abandonment of his previous assumptions about how to abolish slavery and the role blacks would play in post-emancipation American life.

Read the full article at the following link: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/01/opinion/the-emancipation-of-abe-lincoln.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

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