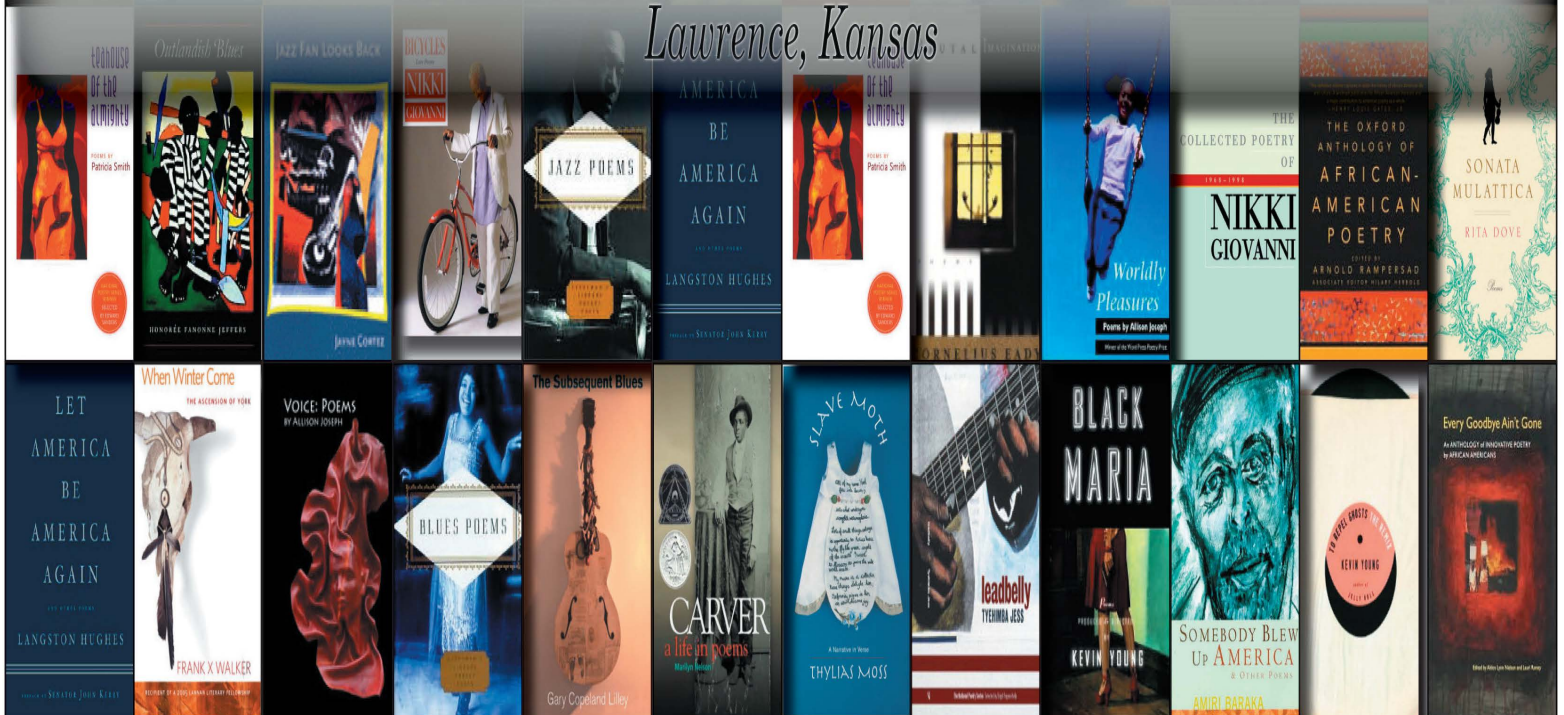


# The Project on the History of Black Writing

2004 - 2008 Report

University of Kansas

Lawrence, Kansas



# **PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF BLACK WRITING**

**2004-2008 REPORT**

**UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS**

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## **VISION**

To become the premiere enterprise for the reclamation of literary contributions by people of African descent in the United States to world culture. It also seeks to keep before the public the works of African American authors and encourage scholarship in little explored or unexplored areas.

## **MISSION**

To identify “fugitive texts” that have been lost to history, and advocate for their return; to promote the awareness of the works produced by African American authors, and create opportunities for learning about and engaging them.

## **GOALS**

To create by 2015 a robust database of published fiction by African Americans; to secure permanent support for the Project; to promote an awareness of African American authors through teacher institutes, online and print publications, and presentations at conferences, book clubs and other venues.

Adopted at 2009 Meeting of the Advisory Board

## FOREWORD (SUMMER 2009)

The present document is a progress report from the Project on the History of Black Writing (HBW or Project). This report serves to present the ongoing activities of the Project for funding agencies, university officials, advisory board members, faculty, graduate students and staff at the University of Kansas (KU) and other interested parties.

The last HBW report covered Project activities for 2001-2003. The present document covers Project activities for the fiscal years 2004-2008, beginning with our October 2004 meeting, the occasion of our 20th anniversary. The years 2003-2007 were very active for HBW, with a major publication, two nationally funded programs and the partnerships in which we engaged. In 2007, HBW joined its host, KU's Department of English, in a series of moves to accommodate extensive building renovations. This "transition" period lasted approximately two years and left the Project without permanent office or storage space while the majority of the Project's collection and files remained inaccessible in remote storage. HBW moved into its new, Wescoe Hall office space in summer 2009 and began the process of unpacking, reorganizing and rebuilding. Outreach and research project have slowly resumed.

We would like to thank the Project staff, especially Sarah Arbuthnot, board members Jerry W. Ward and Alisha Knight, and Language Matters lead teacher Tonya Wells-Abari for their contributions to this report. Thanks also to photographs provided by University Relations, Spencer Art Museum, Howard Ramsby, C. B. Claiborne, and Marona Graham-Bailey. Our cover page was designed by our newest HBW staff member, Kenton Ramsby.

Portions of the report for the Richard Wright Centennial appeared in *The Southern Register: The Newsletter of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture* (Fall 2007 and Fall 2008).

*Project on the History of Black Writing*  
*Presents ...*

**Tracking a Slave:  
The Harriet Jacobs Story**

Harriet Jacobs  
A Life  
OF THE WOMAN WHO WROTE  
INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE  
OF A SLAVE GIRL

A lecture and book signing  
**Jean Fagan Yellin**

Friday  
October 1, 2004 at 7:00 p.m.  
Reception at 6:00 p.m.  
Alderson Auditorium

Co-sponsored by:  
Department of English  
Hall Center for the Humanities  
Office of the Chancellor

<http://www.ku.edu/~phbw>  
785-864-2561

Jean Fagan Yellin  
*Celebrating 20 Years of HBW*

## REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Project on the History of Black Writing began as a simple idea at a time when the number of scholars dedicated to the study of African American literature had outstripped the resources available. We created one of those much-needed resources, turning into literary detectives, bent on unearthing the legacy of black writing and reconstructing the lives of writers themselves. Our goal was to identify and return to circulation those “fugitive texts” that had been lost to history and unaccounted for in the literary canon. It was intended to be a five-year project, resulting in a comprehensive database, one others might build on and contribute to. While that reality has changed – given the research and scholarship on African American literature today – what remains is the gap between the knowledge produced within the academy and that which is understood among broader publics. It was here where HBW found a niche that has sustained us for more than a quarter of a century: connecting scholars and everyday folk, putting literature in the hands of people who routinely have less access and often more need for it, and ensuring that the historical records on black writing not only are as complete as possible, but also make a difference in the way we think, read, and talk about all written expression as a human activity. Ours is a worthy mission, one that makes us extremely proud.

The two National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants, funded in 2003 and 2004, enabled the Project to grow in exciting ways. Both the Langston Hughes National Poetry Project (see pg. 11) and the Language Matters initiative (see pg. 12), which developed in conjunction with the Toni Morrison Society, saw the Project working at sites across the nation, bringing the works of Hughes and Morrison to new and diverse audiences. As this report went to press, we were notified that NEH had funded: “Making the [Richard] Wright Connection: Reading *Native Son*, *Black Boy* and *Uncle Tom’s Children*”. These much needed funds will make Wright available again to a new generation of teachers and students, and it will also help us think more about the role of reading and writing in the lives of our youth. The grant will help us continue to make connections between scholars and teachers, between writers and readers, and between old and new ways of processing information. Not unlike Abe Lincoln, whose bicentennial we celebrated in 2009 (and whose Bible was most appropriately used by our first African American President for his swearing in), Richard Wright was born to a hard life of poverty, but refused to allow his past to dictate his future. He also reminded us that the nation’s commitment to all its citizens was unfinished. For Wright, reading was liberating; writing was a weapon. The words are still powerful; his message still rings true.

These four years, however, have had a downside, especially as HBW became one of the casualties of KU’s earlier budget crisis. Reduced operational funds made it harder to keep several core staff, to prepare competitive grant applications, and to convene our Advisory Board on 2006 or 2008. Then in 2007, just as we began to outline a new Project Digital Initiative (PDI) to make our sizeable archive more user-friendly and accessible, KU’s Deferred Maintenance Project shut down our offices. Our files were placed in storage and we were displaced for nearly two years without any web presence.

Although we were in between funding cycles, we nonetheless maintained key project activities and our outreach work through conference participation and several partnerships. First was our involvement in the Richard Wright Centennial, which resulted in an impressive number of US and international events (see pg. 21). A first round of Wright grant proposals which aims to do more public and educational programs was unsuccessful, but the lessons learned from the centennial year allowed us to turn a successful corner in grant support. The literacy initiatives with local schools, universities, and community groups, and teaching/



learning workshops and presentations in Jackson, MS, Salt Lake City, Japan, Houston and Paris continued to raise HBW's profile. More advanced seminars were given for graduate students at the University of Bielefeld (Germany). Locally, we worked closely with the Visual Voices Alliance (founded by textile artist Marla Jackson), a program that uses quilt-making to teach social and literacy skills to at-risk junior high girls in East Lawrence.

Early in January 2009, HBW presented its new "face" on the web, and while still under construction, the site has helped us to claim a presence in the digital world: <http://www.hbw.ku.edu>. The Project Digital Initiative (PDI) is being reconceptualized since our expectations and plans two years ago are already outdated.

While our lean times have forced us to do many things differently – this report is three years behind schedule, for example – HBW remains even more committed to its future. We have renewed our focus on documenting the legacy of and access to black writing. Our emphasis on outreach – promoted by many universities now as "service learning" – remains equally strong, actively involving our staff, and specifically targeting various publics: academic and non-academic, at-risk youth and the elderly, and those physically and otherwise challenged.



Maryemma Graham (HBW founder/Director) lectures at graduate student conference on Ethnic Literature at Bielefeld University (Germany) in June 2008.

We owe our success to the consistency and excellence of the HBW "team": dedicated graduate and undergraduate students, a visionary advisory board, engaged community educators, US and international scholars and other supportive individuals. All share our goals and have helped to make HBW a recognized research unit with high visibility and meaningful programs that attract significant funding. We have made "literary archaeology" (a term borrowed from Toni Morrison) part of the American lexicon as we share our archive in productive ways that impact the classroom and the larger world.

KU funding is crucial, and we hope, with increased KU support, to leverage more external funding. HBW is one of the oldest and most distinctive public humanities projects that have emerged in the last three decades and will continue its original archival work. Advancing knowledge through public awareness of important and often under recognized aspects of our literary and cultural heritage remains our goal. Twenty-six years and no end in sight. Look for HBW updates and web-based projects at [www.hbw.ku.edu](http://www.hbw.ku.edu). Should you elect to direct your support to HBW – and we hope you will – be assured that it will bring much needed resources to the important work that lies ahead. Joining the HBW family will be something you will never regret.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maryemma Graham".

Maryemma Graham  
Founder and Director



Young artists in textile artist Marla Jackson's Visual Voices Alliance display their handmade quilt.

## 25 YEARS OF THE PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF BLACK WRITING: A BRIEF HISTORY

In 2008, the Project on the History of Black Writing (HBW) celebrated its 25th year. Originally known as the Afro-American Novel Project (AANP), it began in 1983 at the University of Mississippi, Oxford. AANP's goal was to compile a comprehensive bibliographic history of largely neglected and out-of-print novels published by African American writers, which would result in a study guide for both teachers and students and facilitate the use of African American texts in the classroom for traditional, comparative and interdisciplinary study. *The Afro-American Novel: A Guide for Teachers and Students*, was self-published, appeared in 1986, and was later revised and expanded with a two-year grant from the Ford Foundation. The guide included a bibliography of novels published between 1853 and 1980, compiled by the Project. The significant number of titles listed between the Reconstruction and Urban Migration periods (1865-1910) did much to challenge assumptions about the cultural and intellectual life of African Americans throughout the 19th century, especially the idea that they left only oral records as a result of widespread illiteracy.

Before leaving Mississippi, AANP received a three-year grant from the NEH. With a full time staff, we were able to identify locations and acquire most of the current holdings in our collection and conduct interviews with major writers. In 1989, AANP relocated to Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts. The Project also benefited from its affiliation with the W. E. B. Du Bois Institute at Harvard University, where the Black Periodical Fiction Project, founded by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., was based. The Project continued to expand its holdings to create *A Checklist of the Afro-American Novel, 1853-1990* (1990). During the Project's first year, we also made our first appearance at the annual meeting of the College Language Association [[www.clascholars.org](http://www.clascholars.org)]. This began our annual scholarly panels, and lively presentations by established and new writers at CLAS's April conference. The popularity and visibility of the Project grew over the years especially since our sessions almost always attracted large audiences. We introduced many undergraduate and graduate students to the larger community of leading scholars of African American literature, mentors and supporters for their work. Our students not only helped to recruit new graduate students for our home institution (we routinely take a large group of students from each university where the project has been located), but also took some of the top Creative Writing awards given by CLA.

During the Northeastern years, under its new name, the Project on the History of Black Writing, the Project inaugurated its first professional development workshops for teachers and assisted younger scholars in securing summer research opportunities. Two NEH-funded grants provided support for a group of educators to become mentor teachers, training others to teach African American fiction, autobiography, poetry and drama. That project, "Developing Mentor Teachers for African American Literature," continued over a four-year period, two of which were spent preparing the collaborative publication from the institutes: *Teaching African American Literature, Theory and Practice* (Routledge 1998), a collection of essays by participating teachers and scholars that became a staple in the field.

Gaining an affiliation with the Smithsonian's Museum of American History and the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH), HBW secured additional funding from NEH to conduct a second series of professional development institutes, "The Middle Passage:



The Making of the Atlantic World,” based at Howard University in Washington, DC, in 1997 and the summer of 1998. Presenters included well known artist Tom Feelings in one of his last public appearances. Feelings had recently published his highly acclaimed art-memoir, *The Middle Passage*.

During the same period, HBW received a two-year grant from the Lemelson Foundation of Hampshire College to expand its technology component; we spent two years developing a prototype for a CD-ROM. The result was “Neither Bond Nor Free: An Anthology of Rare African-American Texts,” one completely novel was digitized novel, with information about the author and the period. It was our intention to continue digitizing all the novels in the collection to make them available as a full CD-ROM set. With the technology still developing, funds were not sufficient at that time to move the entire database to the digital platform. “Neither Bond Nor Free,” however, provided the model for the later PDI.

In 1999, the Project moved to the University of Kansas, Lawrence. With funds from Microsoft and the Kansas Endowment Association, HBW took a second step in expanding digital access. We accepted an invitation to join the team, headed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., that produced *Encarta Africana: Library of Black America*. Full texts of seventy-five African American novels from our collection, therefore, became available as a CD-ROM.

We remained entrenched in print culture as well. In 2002, the Project initiated a long term partnership with Cambridge University Press. *The Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel*, released in early 2004, and the *Cambridge History of African American Literature* expected in late 2010, add significantly to the Project’s reputation not only as a leading archival collection in African American literature, but as a major producer of scholarly works that aid the study and interpretation of African American literature for all academic levels.

NEH continues to be the most important base of external support. Five grants were awarded between 2001 and 2009. In 2001 and 2003, respectively, HBW received funds for The Langston Hughes National Poetry Project to both plan and implement “Speaking of Rivers: Taking Poetry to the People.” In 2002, working with the Toni Morrison Society, HBW’s professional development work continued with “Language Matters I” (a humanities focus grant for Washington, DC area teachers) and in 2004, “Language Matters II: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison,” a national workshop for teachers. Directed and coordinated out of the HBW office, these programs were highly successful in promoting the reading and study of major African American authors to a diverse national audience. The professional development work continues with a national institute, “Making the Wright Connection: Reading *Native Son*, *Black Boy*, and *Uncle Tom’s Children*” (July 2010), and “Language Matters IV: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison in Translation” (November 2010).

Since its inception, the bulk of the Project’s work has been concerned with the study of the African American novel. As part of that, the Project has emphasized the importance of knowledge dissemination, while retaining its primary emphasis upon recovery and documentation of an African American narrative tradition. Poetry, as a major genre that brings the oral tradition together with performance and narrative, has also been a critical component of our work allowing us to form important alliances with other centers and projects. The 21st century continues to bring new dimensions to the Project. In addition to efforts on the digital front, the Project has surged ahead, riding the pulse of trends created in the community of black literature. In many cases the Project has created those trends itself. Linking the concept of literature with literacy as we have begun to do, HBW is fully prepared to meet the challenges presented by the global study of African American literature.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

**A**lthough this four year report reflects HBW's ongoing progress, with new developments along the way, there are a number of budget indicators that reflect a dramatic shift for this period. Like most academic units, HBW receives its basic operational budget from the University of Kansas, an agreement that enabled the project to move to KU. In order to sustain our work, however, we must aggressively pursue external funding. Our most significant external support has come from NEH, and we have been extremely fortunate to have received their support for eight of the twelve years at KU, including two of the years covered in this report. These constitute six and one half to ten times that of our annual KU allocation. The support of Research and Graduate Studies has been invaluable in supplementing our over-all budget, and we wish to thank vice-Provost George Wilson (now retired) for his consistent support of our work. We wish him well in his retirement. In addition, we must thank Chancellor Emeritus Robert Hemenway for bailing us out on more than one occasion, especially during very lean periods.

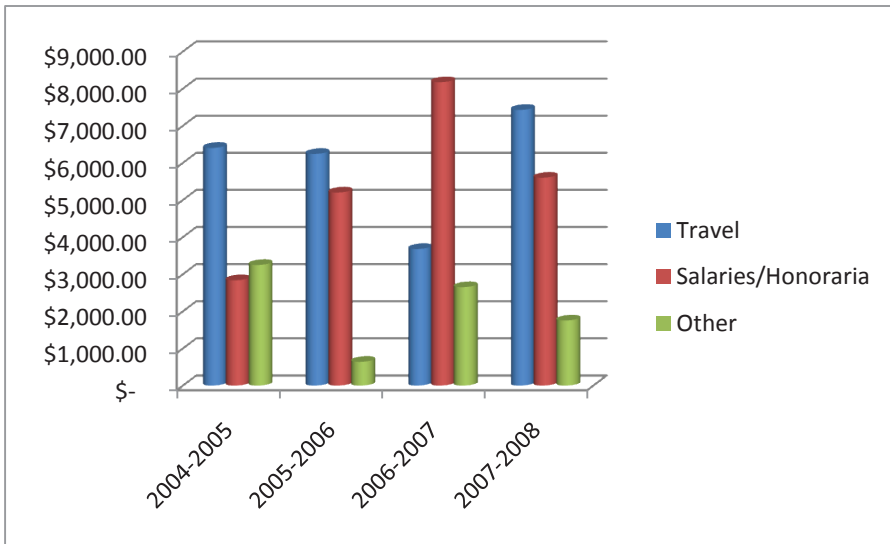
Numerous challenges remain as we plan for the future. Some follow us from the past. KU continues to fund the project, but has not increased the annual amount since 1999. In addition, for three of the four years covered in this report, the KU allocation was reduced by fifty percent. This kind of volatility provides little stimulus for sustainability and growth and indeed has a domino effect. Although our original agreement was reestablished in 2007 and funding went back to the original amount, it is barely adequate. Loss of staff as a result of reduced funding disables the project. On the other hand, having a stable staff allows us to prepare competitive grant applications that are successful. External funding, in turn, provides full graduate research assistantships for the support staff. Our project has been especially enriched when we are able to hire graduate students with interests that directly relate to the field of African American literature and culture.

We are thoroughly optimistic that better days are ahead. There is much robust activity in the field of African American literature, especially in increasing digital access to various collections devoted to the works of lesser known authors, many of which are still in the preservation stage. Black writing and authorship is at an all time high as well. There is no better time for HBW to escalate its efforts to do the work for which it is best known: identifying, preserving, and promoting works and unknown writers, going beyond the academy in building and expanding diverse reading audiences, and modeling collaboration as a fundamental tenet of scholarly practice. Guided by our visionary Advisory Board and an excellent staff, we see a horizon full of hope and confidence.

## Expenses

	<u>2004-2005</u>	<u>2005-2006</u>	<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
<b>Travel</b>	\$ 6,406.52	\$ 6,245.57	\$ 3,683.93	\$ 7,431.31
<b>Salaries/Honoraria</b>	\$ 2,840.05	\$ 5,206.00	\$ 8,177.85	\$ 5,604.60
<b>Other</b>	\$ 3,253.25	\$ 643.42	\$ 2,656.15	\$ 1,756.86

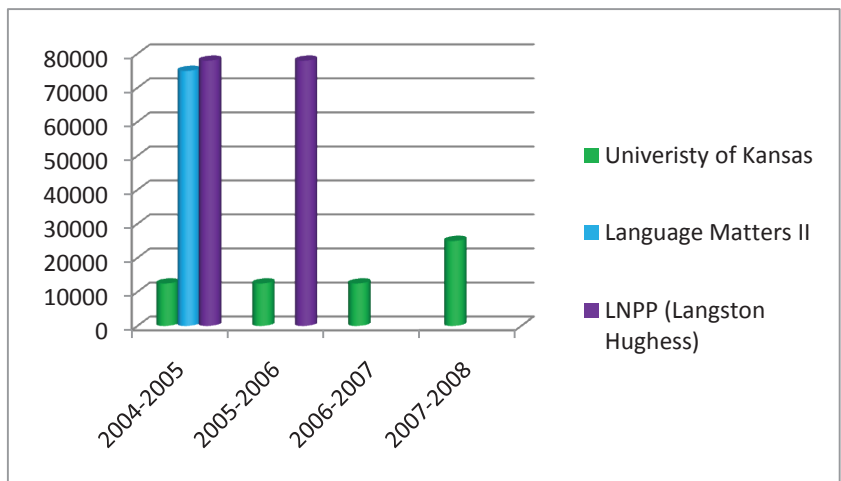
\*Other includes regular operating expenses



## Funding

	<u>2004-2005</u>	<u>2005-2006</u>	<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
<b>Univeristy of Kansas</b>	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$12,500.00	\$ 25,000.00
<b>Language Matters II</b>	\$ 75,000.00			
<b>LNPP (Langston Hughess)</b>	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 78,000.00		

\*A Total of \$234, 000 was received in 2003 for the **LNPP** and distributed over the course of 3 years, until 2006; Average annual spending reported



# THE COLLECTION

## NOVELS

### SCOPE AND CONTENT

The principal component of HBW is its manuscript collection. There are photographic copies of 480 texts dating from 1861 to the present, a growing archive of over 60 rare books and more than one hundred rare and out-of-print journals. In addition, the Project has collected bibliographic information for more than 1,500 items of literature written by African Americans to serve as the foundation for collection development. Bibliographic information acquired by the Project has been published and distributed a number of times, thus serving in conjunction with the texts as a means of providing a strong research base for the study of lesser-known African American literature through the last two centuries.

Although the majority of the hard copies “in-hand” date from 1950-1970, a time span encompassing the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, significant acquisitions exist from other periods in African American literary history. Copies of the texts in the Project’s collection of major importance include Albert Coleman’s *Rosy, the Octoroon* (1929), Lucretia Coleman’s *Poor Ben: A Story of Real Life* (1890), T.G. Steward’s *A Charleston Life Story* (1899), G. Langhorne Pryor’s *Neither Bond Nor Free* (1892) and (Kansas born) filmmaker Oscar Micheaux’s novel *The Conquest* (1913).

### ORGANIZATION

Despite the fact that no definitive literary timetable can be comfortably applied to history, we have always operated with a general scheme for African American literature. A periodization of African American literature for collection development was adopted by the HBW Advisory Board at its 2001 meeting; this schema was revised, however, to provide the organizational structure of the *Cambridge History of African American Literature*, which follows:

- 1600 – 1820
- 1820 – 1865
- 1865 – 1910
- 1910 – 1950
- 1950 – 1976
- 1976 – present

This provides the intellectual framework by which the manuscripts are organized, and serves as a means of interpreting the general trends of African American literature. Each series is accompanied by a description and a sub-series description when necessary.

The following series have been included to indicate the expanding interest of HBW. Because the Project began with a primary interest in fiction, this organization is skeletal only. Over the last decade there has been a concerted effort to expand these holdings, which over time may provide further opportunities for inquiry and research.

- Series I (Fiction)  
Slavery Pre-1865

- Series II (Fiction)  
Reconstruction and Rural Life  
1866-1885
- Series III (Fiction)  
Urban Migration  
1886-1910
- Series IV (Fiction)  
Urban Life  
1911-1970
- Series V (Fiction)  
Postmodern Literature  
1971-2000

The chronology is repeated for Series VI-X: Poetry, and Series XI-XV: Autobiography

## **PRINT / VIDEO / AUDIO / VISUAL**

In addition to the novels and other published materials, HBW has collected, over its twenty-seven year history, an abundance of print and non-print materials. These resources include single-author and multi-author bibliographies; working papers on special topics; conference proceedings and monographs; personal papers, correspondence and photographs of 20th century writers; unsolicited manuscripts; professional films and recordings; as well as Project-initiated audio and video recordings. Additionally, an unpublished manuscript and personal papers of Vicky Garvin (1916-2007), political activist and personal friend of Paul Robeson, are housed in the collection.

## **DIGITIZING**

HBW was an early pioneer in what has become routine in research access – the digital archive – having secured funds from the Lemelson Foundation as early as 1996. The grant provided a model, but the rapid change in technologies and the project's need to design a comprehensive plan to shift from print to digital mode has been one of our major challenges. Beginning in 2008 a technology consultant was formally retained to guide the Project's development in this area. For a summary of our current plan, please see the section on the Project Digital Initiative (PDI) on page 15. We see the PDI as the most underdeveloped aspect of the Project at the present time and are aggressively pursuing funding to support to move it forward. It is clearly the most critical for sustaining HBW's future.

## PROJECTS 2004-2008

### LANGSTON HUGHES NATIONAL POETRY PROJECT PRESENTS “SPEAKING OF RIVERS: TAKING POETRY TO THE PEOPLE”

The Langston Hughes National Poetry Project (LHNPP) was a dynamic, multifaceted program that began as part of the Langston Hughes centennial (1902 – 2002) held at the University of Kansas in February 2002. After securing a 2001 planning grant from NEH, LHNPP created a series of public poetry and book discussion programs. This was followed by a two year grant, entitled “Speaking of Rivers: Taking Poetry to the People” intended to increase interest in and exposure to poetry as a spoken and written art, a form of participatory democratic activity and to provide an opportunity to share ideas across boundaries in hopes of advancing human understanding.

With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities secured in fall 2003, the LHNPP confirmed participation of 20 poetry circle sites that would create and implement activities that examined the life, work and art of Langston Hughes. The list of sites included community libraries, cultural centers, neighborhood churches, youth outreach programs, county jails, educational institutions and writers’ groups. The program encouraged each site to explore Hughes’s work in its own unique way and especially invited participatory events through the visual arts, music, poetry and theatre. For its unique approach, the LHNPP was honored to receive the National Endowment for the Humanities “We the People” award for promoting community outreach and involvement.



Poet-in-residence Jessica Care More at Van Go Jams LHNPP poetry circle in Lawrence.



Following Jessica Moore’s lead, Van Go Jams apprentice artists and poets published *No Write to Remain Silent* in 2004.

The LHNPP created an impressive Speakers Bureau and a web of collaborative partnerships among poetry circle sites, Hughes scholars, KU and others that will continue to develop and strengthen in the years to come. The Speakers Bureau supported the visits by established and younger poets—like Jessica Care Moore, Tony Medina, Kevin Powell, and veteran Amiri Baraka—to many new communities.

Though the funding period has ended, HBW still works directly with many of the poetry circle sites as they continue their outreach work. Many of the programs are now vital projects in local communities and are maintained and supported by local funding. HBW continues to provide books (through the generosity of multiple Hughes book publishers), guidance and non-monetary support to poetry circles engaged in post-grant activities and spin-off programs.

Especially significant are the spin-off programs that have continued to expand, the most notable of which is the network developed through the National Council of Teachers of English. LHNPP Advisory Board member Dr. Sandra Gibbs managed a growing number of poetry circle units. Newly established groups were directed to the LHNPP website to download project documents and implement their own projects. An artist’s residency resulted in the publication of a handmade





CHNPP poetry circle site directors from across the nation learn about the program from Director Maryemma Graham at the University of Kansas.

book of poetry and photographs of at-risk, high-needs young people. *No Write to Remain Silent*, by the Van Go Mobile Arts. The LHNPP has also stimulated the teaching of Hughes in classrooms from secondary education schools to college English courses, aided by Carmaletta Williams, the Johnson County Community College educator, who was another favorite from the project's Speaker's Bureau. Her book *Do Nothing Til You Hear from Me: Langston Hughes in the Classroom* (NCTE, 2007) was based on the materials originally developed for the project.

Though it is no longer regularly updated, the LHNPP website is still live [[www.kuce.org/Hughes](http://www.kuce.org/Hughes)], and all of the resources are available to a national and international audience seeking information on Hughes, LHNPP and poetry circles in general. A copy of the LHNPP final report is included in the Appendix.

## LANGUAGE MATTERS II: READING AND TEACHING TONI MORRISON

"Language Matters II: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison, The Cardozo Project Model" (LMII) has been one of our most engaging teaching initiatives that began with the Cardozo Project, a 2002 school-wide project of teaching Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* at Washington DC's Cardozo High School. With a National Endowment for the Humanities focus grant, the first phase of the program, "Language Matters: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison," took place in fall, 2003. Twelve secondary school teachers met once a month with one facilitator and one Morrison scholar for an evening to discuss each of the author's (then) seven novels and any supplemental critical material or resource selected by the attending Morrison scholar.

Because of high demand, the project was expanded. "Language Matters II" created a series of teacher in-service workshops at schools across the country, culminating in a week-long summer workshop at Northern Kentucky University in July 2005. LMII argued that Morrison's works, when taught with rigor, understanding and sensitivity, allow students to develop new ways of thinking about, using and appreciating language. We did not want to be presumptuous, however. We wanted to bring those teachers with more experience together with those who had questions about what was appropriate to teach regarding Morrison, and we wanted to learn together how better to confront the often loaded discussions—about America's racial past, for example—that inevitably emerge when teaching Morrison.



Language Matters II: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison participants with Toni Morrison at Northern Kentucky University.

To this end, LMII sought to expand its network through rigorous intellectual discussions in which teachers could read and closely examine Morrison's works, accompanied by critical material, guided by scholars and assisted by other teachers who had already blazed a trail in their teaching of Morrison. The summer workshop provided a representative group of teachers with substantive content and lively discussion of all eight Morrison novels, children's books, selected essays and critical materials; and dealt with pedagogical issues that emerged as teachers organized instruction and delivery systems, adapted national content standards and integrated new materials to bring content and skill acquisition together. The summer seminar coincided in time and location with the Toni Morrison Society's 4th Biennial Conference, allowing teachers to attend all conference sessions, interact with an international community of Morrison scholars as well as with Toni Morrison, who began her career as a teacher. The 4th Biennial also coincided with the Cincinnati premiere of *Margaret Garner*, the opera based on the story of an enslaved woman who had inspired Morrison's prize-winning novel *Beloved*; all conference attendees, including the teachers, were able to attend this moving tribute to a part of the American past that is too easily forgotten.

We concluded in "Language Matters: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison" that we need more and routine dialogue between college and university teachers, and to pay far more attention to the "packaging of knowledge" that scholars create for its broader dissemination and use. It was clear to us also that exposing students to good literature—no matter the fall-out—engages them in a way that is well worth the risk. Today, more teachers teach Morrison enthusiastically and confidently and are training others to do the same, as they more readily prepare and adopt a curriculum more inclusive of influential literature by writers of color.

Additionally, KU's Continuing Education created the online credit course ENGL 324 *Contemporary Authors: Toni Morrison* based on LMII. Giselle Anatol, KU associate professor of English and LMII scholar, serves as the course instructor. This robust course, which opened in fall 2006, incorporates streaming audio and text versions in the course lessons. These lessons replicate sessions held at the summer 2005 workshop. Many of the lessons include transcripts of national Morrison experts who presented at the summer workshop, including Herman Beavers, Angelyn Mitchell, Marilyn Mobley, Carolyn Denard, and Keith Byerman.

The LMII website is archived, but materials are still available for those interested in teaching resources and other information.

A copy of the LMII Final Report is included in the Appendix.

## LANGUAGE MATTERS CONTINUES...

Although funding for “Language Matters II” officially ended in December 2006, the work of the participating teachers continues in new and exciting ways. In July 2008, LMII participants Tonya Wells-Abari and Marjorie Lancaster conducted the workshop “Talking Back to Morrison’s Text: From Reader to Writer” at the Fifth Biennial Toni Morrison Conference (Toni Morrison and Modernism), held in Charleston, South Carolina. The primary purpose was to demonstrate ways to teach students how to analyze and write about Morrison’s work using new and innovative technologies. The session, which attracted educators from the local area and throughout the US, included a discussion of many topics: why we teach Morrison to secondary students, challenges faced by students and teachers, and lesson plans for teaching students to write about the literature. Wells-Abari prepared a model PowerPoint as part of the workshop. The hour-long session was designed to mimic the structure of a high school teacher’s lesson plan. According to state and national standards in English/Reading, the lesson included the following necessary components: activator (warm-up), lecture, teacher modeling, guided practice, and independent student practice. Twelve conference participants attended the workshop.



Language Matters II teachers Tonya Wells-Abari and Marjorie Lancaster

### Details of the Lesson



Tonya Wells-Abari and Marjorie Lancaster, LMII participants, continue the Language Matters program with a workshop for teachers at the Fifth Biennial Toni Morrison Conference in Charleston, SC.

An activator (warm-up activity) was administered to the workshop participants. They were given an exercise in a different language and asked to respond critically to the information. The overall purpose of the activator was to get educators to understand that sometimes our students do not completely understand the literature that they read – especially complex texts with multiple layers like the works of Toni Morrison. This activity segued into a discussion about teaching literacy before writing. The next part of the lesson involved a brief lecture (see PowerPoint in Appendix) on strategies for teaching writing and using

technology when teaching students to write about Morrison texts. In addition to guided practice and independent practice, the workshop included a Socratic Seminar discussion on best practices used for all of Toni Morrison’s works in the secondary classroom.

## Participant Follow-up

The workshop survey received a 100% satisfaction rating. Most teachers loved the portion of the lecture providing instruction in creating blogs and having students design semester-long blog projects. All attendees enjoyed the workshop and found it useful. Workshop teachers received a copy of Jami L. Carlacio's, *The Fiction of Toni Morrison: Reading and Writing on Race, Culture, and Identity* (NCTE, 2008). Each participant also received a Language Matters certificate for their contribution in the "Talking Back to the Text: From Reader to Writer" workshop at the Toni Morrison Fifth Biennial Conference in Charleston, South Carolina.

## BOOK PROJECT

One of the ways in which HBW's professional development institutes have had the largest impact is through the teachers themselves. From our first set of institutes, the book *Teaching African American Literature, Theory and Practice* was born. Growing out of "Language Matters II," participants Tonya Wells-Abari and Marjorie Lancaster are teaming up to author *Language Matters: Teaching Toni Morrison, A Book for Teachers, by Teachers*. This teaching resource will build on the Language Matters programs and follow-up activities and utilize the network of teachers and scholars brought together by the programs. The book will include graphic organizers, tables, web site links, illustrations and other teacher-friendly documents that instructors use regularly in the secondary classroom. Additionally, the resource will include a brief introduction to Morrison's children's book series *Who's Got Game*, with the goal of eventually creating a companion text specifically dedicated to teaching that series in both the primary and secondary classrooms.

The teaching resource will utilize the Toni Morrison Society scholars; critical texts, articles and supplemental materials that can help educators better understand and work with the Morrison texts; and it will include valuable lesson plans and educational pedagogy contributed by Language Matters participants and other teachers across the country.

The book project is currently in the proposal stage and actively seeking a publisher.

## WEBSITE

[www.hbw.ku.edu](http://www.hbw.ku.edu)



Homepage

Early in 2009, the HBW's web presence was brought back to life, as the project has made several strides in the reconception of its web site. Developed and maintained by KLV Webworks, the website will continue to grow and evolve to best suit the needs of the Project.

The HBW site, currently online at [www.hbw.ku.edu](http://www.hbw.ku.edu), is divided into five major areas: Home, Scholars, Educators, Graduate Students, and Youth.

## HOME

The home page contains a “feature box” where different images can appear every few seconds or a single image can be placed in the box to give prominence to an event or announcement. Along the right-hand side of the page, there are links to an events calendar, digital novel database, and remembrances of and tributes to Black writers.

## SCHOLARS

The Scholars page also highlights the events and novel database pages, which has been a key feature of HBW since its inception.

## EDUCATORS

The groundwork has been laid for the Educators section to become a page where educators can seek out and find curriculum plans, help with procuring books, and obtaining grants and details on programs for educators. The site currently contains the digital novel database and extensive bibliographies of works by and related to Langston Hughes. We are excited for the future of the page as it becomes filled with content and grows into a dynamic destination for educators.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

The page for Graduate Students is also ripe for growth. As the page is developed, it will become a place for graduate students to look for grants and scholarships, and to submit works for review, find a mentor, and for the discussion of scholarly matters.

## YOUTH

The Youth page is still being developed and has not yet gone live. We look forward to providing an area where youth can go for resources and view model projects.



Resources for Scholars



Resources for Graduate Students

## ***MOVING FORWARD***

HBW is excited about the website-building progress made in the past year and eagerly looks to building on that progress in the coming year.

The template that has been implemented on the new site offers visual media prominence as well as attractive navigations. As content continues to be placed on the site and pages continue

to mature, the vision of the HBW website as a vibrant, dynamic place, rich with resources for educators and students alike, will be further realized.

## THE PDI-PROJECT DIGITAL INITIATIVE

In order to fully grasp the importance of operating in a digital environment, we felt it important to see this shift for the Project as a new way of conceiving our relationship to information and its production and distribution to those expanding communities within which we operate. It is within this context that the Project Digital Initiative was born in the summer of 2007 to guide HBW's transformation and to lay out a blueprint for its actual work. The PDI established the goals and objectives and the process that will lead to the creation of a digital library of information and materials accessible to colleges and universities, students and teachers, scholars and interested community educators. The PDI has five specific goals:

**Collaboration** is the first goal. We will collaborate with area libraries, including the University of Kansas Libraries System. As we expand, we will work more closely with other projects, for example, The Furious Flower Poetry Center at James Madison University, which is developing its own poetry database. Every HBW project activity will incorporate a digital component. For example, developing a Digital Sourcebook is a major part of the current NEH grant ("Making the Wright Connection") which allows increased access to the materials and resources developed by the summer institute.

**Teaching and Learning Communities** will be our second objective as we work to provide teachers and students with the tools to analyze African American literature in the classroom and beyond. Using the contacts and communities established through the models developed previously (Langston Hughes National Poetry Project and the Language Matters series), we will continue to build on our network of teachers interested in introducing African American literature to their students. Patrons will access work tools that will explain how to solicit books for their students, what grants are available, where there might be a reading circle close by, and how to apply for professional development opportunities.

**Documentation** will be built into all project activities so that any future resources developed by HBW can become immediately available to various publics.

**Dissemination** of information about the development of African American literature will be key to this project's success. We hope to be a clearinghouse of information on recent publications, national and international conferences, scholarly thought, grants and fellowships, and daily discussions. The website's portals will allow for better screening and organizing of information as well as access to it.

**Research** activity continues to be focused on digitizing the complete print collection and the audio archives. Key to this component is the development of rules of access and process of scanning and preservation. Research also means keeping current with all best practices in digital archiving and instructional technology (including social networking), which will be reflected in regular updates and revisions of the HBW website. Finally, it means building a contemporary novels collection (novels published since 1980) that allows us to map the trends in the reading and writing of African American literature.

## CONFERENCES

Between 2004 and 2008, HBW continued to sponsor sessions at the annual Meeting of the College Language Association. In 2005, HBW held two panels. The first, “Histories of African American Literature: Remembering Blyden Jackson,” focused on the continuing existence of cultural divides in the writing of literary and critical histories of African American literature. The second panel, “Bringing Poetry to the Youth in American Cities: Case Studies in Atlanta, GA, San Diego, CA and Lawrence, KS,” introduced the Langston Hughes National Poetry Project to the CLA community and emphasized the development and implementation of youth-oriented poetry. In 2007, we sponsored “Writing Lives from the Twentieth Century: Literature, Art, and the Spiritual Self,” which featured a panel of scholars focusing on the role of biography. In 2008, the centennial of Richard Wright’s birth and a celebration of the Wright reading circles, HBW presented “Richard Wright at 100: The Legacy of an American Icon,” at CLA’s annual conference. For 2009, we proposed “Lenses of Liberation: New Voices of Personal and Political Protest,” incorporating themes of liberation in the creative writing—poetry, spoken word and fiction—by new and recent voices in African American literature.

In May 2008, we were invited to present at the Digital Humanities and African American/African Diaspora Studies Conference hosted by the University of Maryland-College Park, funded by the Ford Foundation. Our PowerPoint poster session presentation explained how digitizing HBW files addressed three crucial issues facing archival based collections: access, usage, and preservation. The presentation included a brief introduction to our existing digital collection, a demonstration of our new prototype internet service, which is a collaboration with University of Kansas Information Gateway Services, and a PowerPoint presentation highlighting our three-point objective and its three phases.

Our digital initiative moved forward when board member Dr. Alisha Knight delivered a presentation on behalf of HBW at the 15th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference for the Society for Textual Scholarship, held at New York University on May 20, 2009. The Society for Textual Scholarship is “an international organization of scholars working in textual studies, editing and editorial theory, electronic textualities, and issues of textual culture across a wide variety of disciplines.” Dr. Knight’s presentation, “‘Prolific in the Production of Black Literature’: Looking at the History of Black Writing and African American Book Publishing, 1859-1930,” consisted of a PowerPoint slide show that explained the history of the HBW and summarized the archival issues (preservation, access and usage) that the digitized HBW files address. Dr. Knight exhibited screen captures of the HBW’s updated website and summarized the HBW resources that are available for scholars, educators and graduate students, namely the Digital Novel Database. She also discussed her own work with the bibliographic information that she and HBW have collected. Close analysis of this data has enabled her to uncover an unintentional yet pervasive devaluing of the bound book’s presence in turn-of-the-century black communities. Fortunately, the work of the HBW is facilitating further study of how African Americans chose to use the book trade as a vehicle for sociopolitical change.

# PARTNERSHIPS / COLLABORATIONS 2004-2008

## RICHARD WRIGHT CENTENNIAL

The 2008 Richard Wright Centennial was the occasion for many activities, some of them beginning as early as 2006 and others continuing in 2009. Centennial and post-centennial activities are expected to continue through November 2010, the fiftieth anniversary of his death. Nationwide reading circles devoted to his works, symposia and conferences designed as inquiries about how Wright's life and legacy resonate in the 21st century, the ongoing publication of articles and books that reexamine the power of his imagination, literacy initiatives based on his classic autobiography *Black Boy* and other works – all these events draw attention to Wright's presence in the reorientations of the Barack Obama Era. For Americans, the centennial did much to reawaken historical consciousness and conscience. An HBW sponsored website [www.richardwrightat100.ku.edu](http://www.richardwrightat100.ku.edu) served as a clearing house for centennial activities and continues to be updated.

Both the Richard Wright Estate in Paris, for which Wright's eldest daughter, Julia, serves as executrix, and scholars who hold Wright in esteem worked assiduously to promote the importance of 2008. While Julia Wright vigorously promoted global pre-Centennial activities and negotiated to reissue editions of her father's works and to publish his unfinished novel, *A Father's Law* (Harper-Collins 2008), American scholars and artists began their activities in 2006. Among the key events for Wright scholars and students was the release of the *Richard Wright Encyclopedia* (2008) by Greenwood Press, edited by board member Jerry W. Ward, Jr. and Robert Butler.

One signal that studies of Wright will continue to flourish was the publication of David A. Taylor's *Soul of a People: The WPA Writers' Project Uncovers Depression America* (John Wiley & Sons, 2009), which alerts us to the importance of Wright's 1930s ethnography as did Rosemary Hathaway's "Native Geography: Richard Wright's Work for the Federal Writers' Project in Chicago." *African American Review* 42.1 (Spring 2008): 91-108, and Brian Dolinar's "The Illinois Writers' Project Essays: Introduction." *The Southern Quarterly* 46.2 (Winter 2009): 84-128. Selected essays from the American University of Paris Conference appeared in a special issue of *Black Scholar* (39: 1, 2 [Spring/Summer, 2009]). We may also anticipate the publication of a book of essays from the AUP conference as well as *Richard Wright's Fictions of the Exile Years, 1947-1960*, edited by Virginia Whatley Smith.

Reassured by the success of the Richard Wright Centennial, the analytic power of Wright's legacy shall assist us in the hard task of establishing, in his words from the lecture "The Literature of the Negro in the United States," "one more proof of the oneness of man, of the basic unity of human life on this earth." (For a complete list of Richard Wright Centennial activities. see Appendix)

## ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS: LEARNING TO HEAR THE STORIES

In spring 2000, the Project introduced the Oral History Workshop (OHW), after securing a small grant from KU's Hall Center for the Humanities. The program was so successful that the workshop has been repeated each year since. In 2003 the workshop officially became part of the Hall Center's programming. HBW staff remain actively involved and





March 9, 2001  
Alderson Auditorium,  
Kansas Union  
Lawrence, Kansas  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

2nd Annual

## Learning to Hear the Stories II: "Made in Kansas"

A Workshop on Oral History and Traditions

Anna Ancil - Natural History Museum, University of Kansas

Polly Bales - co-author, *Kate Hansen: The Grandest Mission on Earth - From Kansas to Japan, 1907*

Angela Bates-Tompkins - Nicodemus Historical Society

DeVere Blomberg - Lindsborg, Kansas resident and Swedish immigrant

Deborah Dandridge - Field Archivist with the Spencer Library

Conrad Froehlich - Director, Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum

Tom Holmquist - author of *Pioneer Cross: Swedish Settlement Along the Smoky Hill Bluffs*

William Keel - Chair, Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Kansas

Martin J. Keenan - scholar of Oscar Micheaux, America's first African-American filmmaker

Isela Lerma - community worker and immigration specialist, Garden City United Methodist Mexican American Ministries

Thomas Lewin - Acting Chairman of History, University of Kansas

Juan Velasco - specialist in Mexican American history and culture, University of Santa Clara

Kevin Willmott - Theatre and Film, University of Kansas

**Moderators:**

Thomas Fox Averill  
Maryemma Graham  
Dorothy Pennington  
Elizabeth Schultz  
William Tuttle

The Workshop is free and open to the public. Lunch break from 12:30 - 1:00pm. Box lunch provided for those registering by March 2.

TO REGISTER PLEASE  
ORE-MAIL  
785-864-4798  
hallcenter@ukans.edu  
Registrations must include your address, and phone number

Sponsored by The Univer  
Hall Center for t  
Project on the History of  
College of Liberal A  
Department of African and African An  
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Project on the History of Black  
www.ui

**WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**

Opening Overviews: Methods of Oral History and Oral History Archives in Spencer

"Kate Hansen: From Kansas to Japan"

"Martin and Osa Johnson: From Kansas to Africa"

"Pioneer Black Filmmaker Oscar Micheaux and His Family of Exodusters"

Migration Workshops

Concurrent Sessions:

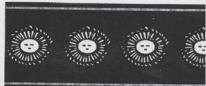
"Black Migration to Kansas"

"Swedish Immigration to Kansas"

"German Immigration to Kansas"

"Mexican Immigration to Kansas"

Wrap-up: Where do we go from here?



March 29, 2002  
Ballroom,  
Kansas Union  
Lawrence, Kansas  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

3rd Annual

## Learning to Hear the Stories III: The Borders of Memory A Workshop on Oral History and Traditions

Mary Marshall Clark - Director of the oral history project on the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, Columbia University

Doris Saunders - Journalist and author of *Ancessor Hunting*, Chicago, IL.

Alhaji Papa Susso - Director of Koriya Musa Center for Research in Oral Tradition, Republic of Gambia, West Africa

Ross Talarico - Poet and author of *Spreading the Word* and *The Journey Home*, California

Deborah Dandridge - Field Archivist with the Spencer Library, University of Kansas

Thomas Lewin - Department of History, University of Kansas

Elizabeth MacGonagle - Department of History, University of Kansas

Mike Tosee - American Indian Studies, Haskell Indian Nations University

The Workshop is free and open to the public. Lunch break from 12:00 - 1:00pm. Box lunch provided for those registering by March 15.

TO REGISTER PLEASE CALL  
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785-864-4798  
hallcenter@ku.edu  
Registrations must include your name, address, and phone number

For more information please visit our website at [www.hallcenter.ku.edu](http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu)

**WORKSHOP SESSIONS**

Narratives of Tragedy: Immigrant Communities of New York - Mary Marshall Clark

Oral History as Journeys Home - Ross Talarico

Firat Peoples, Third World - Alhaji Papa Susso & Elizabeth MacGonagle

Ancessor Hunting - Doris Saunders & Deborah Dandridge

Methods of Oral History - Mary Marshall Clark & Tom Lewin

Starting a Community Project - Ross Talarico & Mike Tosee

Performance on the kora, a 21 string harp-lute by Alhaji Papa Susso

Co-sponsored by The University of Kansas  
Office of the Chancellor  
Kansas University Center for Research  
Project on the History of Black Writing  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences  
Department of African and African American Studies  
Department of English

The Hall  
Center

FOR THE HUMANITIES

Hip Hop Culture

Free & open to the public.

## ORAL HISTORY AT WORK

Monday, March 26 • Ballroom, Kansas Union, T

Presenters include:

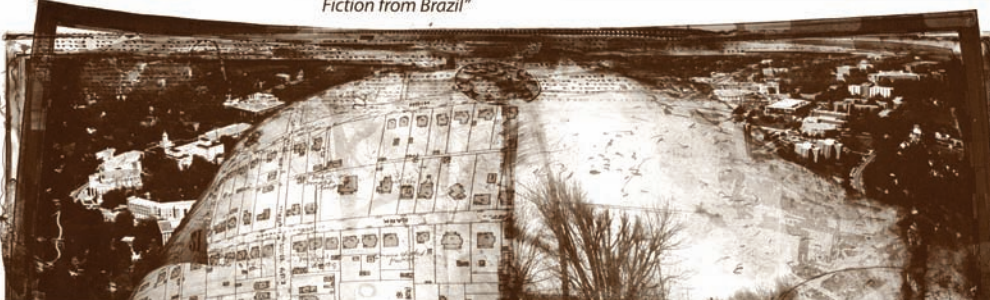
**Carol Ann Carter**

Professor of Art and Design  
"Connecting the Dots: The  
Western Kentucky University  
Centennial Project"

**Tobias Hecht**

Anthropologist and  
independent scholar  
"In Search of a Reliable  
Narrator: An Ethnographic  
Fiction from Brazil"

"Mapping the Perspectives" by Carol Ann Carter

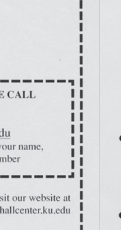


Registration required by March 12. To register call 785-864-4798 or visit [www.hallcenter.ku.edu](http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu)

ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP: LEARNING TO HEAR THE STORIES VIII

ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Learning to Hear the Stories  
HEALING NATION  
UNDYING



# AL ORY SHOP

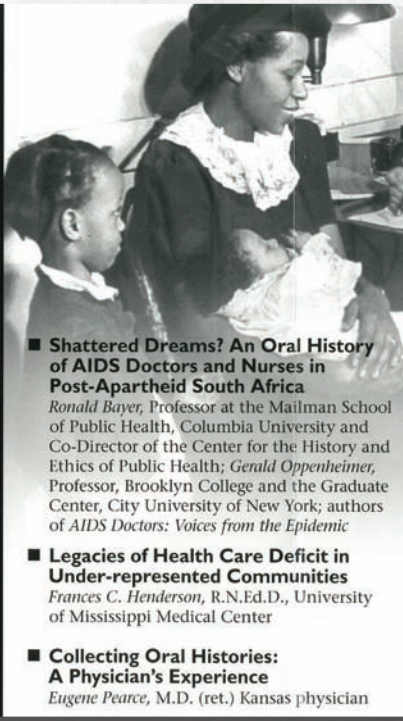
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6:00 pm

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MARCH 24.  
is free and  
public.

Hall Center  
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.edu/programs



- **Shattered Dreams? An Oral History of AIDS Doctors and Nurses in Post-Apartheid South Africa**  
*Ronald Bayer*, Professor at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University and Co-Director of the Center for the History and Ethics of Public Health; *Gerald Oppenheimer*, Professor, Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York; authors of *AIDS Doctors: Voices from the Epidemic*
- **Legacies of Health Care Deficit in Under-represented Communities**  
*Frances C. Henderson*, R.N.Ed.D., University of Mississippi Medical Center
- **Collecting Oral Histories: A Physician's Experience**  
*Eugene Pearce*, M.D. (ret.) Kansas physician

## LEARNING TO HEAR THE STORIES IV: WAR AND MODERN MEMORY A WORKSHOP ON ORAL HISTORY AND TRADITION

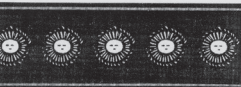
**8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**Friday, February 28, 2003**  
**Kansas Union, Ballroom**  
**The University of Kansas**

- **William Tuttle**, American Studies, "Pearl Harbor and 9-11: Flashbulb Memories,' Oral History, and American Children's Lives in Wartime"
- **Mike Tosee**, American Indian Studies, Haskell Indian Nations University, "Native Americans in U.S. Wars"
- **Richard Norton Smith**, Dole Institute, "War Stories and the Political Battlefield"
- **Sam Haskins & Glen Kappelman**, "Visualizing the War"
- **John Musgrave**, "Vietnam and Its Aftermath"
- **Black Women's Oral History Group**, "Langston's Lawrence: Remembering the Stories"
- **Audrey Gale**, "Sadat's Return from Camp David"

A box lunch will be provided, therefore, **pre-registration is required**. Please contact The Hall Center for the Humanities at 785.864.4798 or hallcenter@ku.edu to **register by February 14th**.

For more information please visit our website at [www.hallcenter.ku.edu/oralhistory](http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu/oralhistory)

Co-sponsored by Kansas University Center for Research College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Chancellor's Office



For more information on this and other Hall Center events log on to our website [www.hallcenter.ku.edu](http://www.hallcenter.ku.edu)



MARCH 6, 2000  
JAYHAWK ROOM, KANSAS UNION  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS  
9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.

## "Learning to Hear the Stories" A Workshop on Oral History and Traditions

- Leonard Bruquier**—Director, American Indian Studies Program & South Dakota Oral History Center and Professor of History, University of South Dakota
- Deborah Dandridge**—Field Archivist with the Spencer Library, University of Kansas
- Don Fixico**—Director of the Indigenous Nations Studies Program and Professor of History, University of Kansas
- Charles J. Haddix**—Director of Marr Sound Archives, UMKC and Producer of Jazz & Blues Programming KCUR -PM
- Kim Lacy Rogers**—Fellow at the National Humanities Center, Professor of History, and Director, Community Studies Center, Dickinson College, Pennsylvania
- James Stevens**—Professor of English, Haskell Indian Nations University
- Rowena Stewart**—Executive Director, 18th & Vine Authority/American Jazz Museum, Kansas City, Missouri
- William Tuttle**—Professor of History and American Studies, University of Kansas
- Jerry W. Ward, Jr.**—Fellow at the National Humanities Center and Lawrence Durgin Professor of Literature, Tougaloo College, Mississippi

**Moderators:**  
MaryEmma Graham  
Bud Hirsch  
Tom Lewin

TO REGISTER PLEASE  
CALL OR E-MAIL  
785-864-4798  
[hallctr@ukans.edu](mailto:hallctr@ukans.edu)  
Registrations must include your name,  
address, and phone number

### WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

- Opening Panel:** The Theory and Practice of Oral History and Oral Traditions
  - Reclaiming Traditions:** Native American Oral History
  - How to get the Real Story I:** Civil Rights and the South
  - How to get the Real Story II:** Kansas and Midwest
  - Wrap-up:** Where do we go from here?
- The Workshop is free and open to the public. A complimentary lunch will be provided to those registering by February 28.

Sponsored by The University of Kansas  
Hall Center for the Humanities  
Project on the History of Black Writing  
Office of the Chancellor  
Indigenous Nations Program  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences  
Department of English

Project on the History of Black Writing Website:  
[www.ukans.edu/~phbw/](http://www.ukans.edu/~phbw/)



## ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Learning to Hear  
the Stories IX:  
Beyond These Hallowed  
Halls—Educating America

Friday, March 28  
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Ballroom, Kansas Union  
The University of Kansas, Lawrence

Photo: University of Arkansas at all Goodrich school building, Coffey County, Arkansas, circa 1918. Photo courtesy of the Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas. Museum purchase, 1980.

have played a key role in the development of oral history at the University of Kansas. Further plans are being made by the Hall Center to expand the workshop to a summer institute.

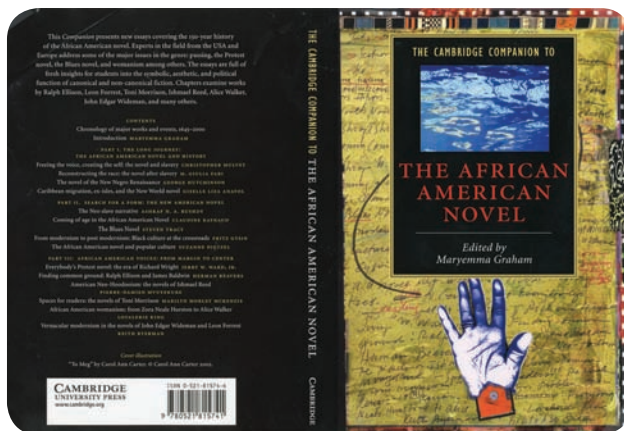
The community has taken the lessons from the workshop to heart and in 2002, a group of women founded the Black Women's Oral History Group, whose mission is to record the history of the African American experience in Lawrence. The idea has spread to other communities and regular meetings are held of the original women's group and the expanded group, representing both the Native American and Mexican American communities. Oral history at KU and Lawrence is here to stay.

As HBW continues to expand its database of oral history sources, this workshop showcases the "best practices" in this growing field by bringing together historians, genealogists, sociologists, museum educators, school administrators, teachers and individual family members. As the importance of oral history becomes more recognized, the Oral History Workshop is seen as the ONLY place at KU where the local researcher and the academic scholar can have a common learning experience. This workshop demonstrates the extraordinary intersections of various traditions and values, aesthetics and voices. The OHW celebrated its tenth anniversary in March 2009, inviting Alessandro Portelli from the University of Rome, a celebrated scholar in the field, and long time friend of HBW.

## PUBLICATIONS

### *THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE AFRICAN AMERICAN NOVEL*

The *Cambridge Companion to the African American Novel* (Cambridge UP, 2004) presents new essays covering the one hundred and fifty year history of the African American novel. Experts in the field from the United States and Europe address some of the major issues in the genre: passing, the Protest novel, the Blues novel, and womanism among others. This *Companion* is full of fresh insights into the symbolic, aesthetic, and political function of canonical and non-canonical fiction. Chapters examine works by Ralph Ellison, Leon Forrest, Toni Morrison, Ishmael Reed, Alice Walker, John Edgar Wideman, and many others. They reflect a range of critical methods intended to prompt new and experienced readers to consider the African American novel as a cultural and literary act of extraordinary significance. This volume, edited by Maryemma Graham, includes a chronology and guide to further reading, and is an important resource for students and teachers alike. The Table of Contents for the volume appears in the Appendix.



## ***THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE***

As we enter our twenty-seventh year, HBW's reputation as one of the most important independent media and information archives housed in a US university is solid. The work over these years has enabled us to complete our most important research and writing project to date, the *Cambridge History of African American Literature*, a two volume work that is scheduled to appear in December 2010. Maryemma Graham and Jerry W. Ward, founding member of the HBW Advisory Board, are the project editors. The volume contains 26 chapters and is over 1000 pages in manuscript. It identifies the New Negro or Harlem Renaissance, the Black Arts/Black Aesthetic Movement and the Black Women's Literary Renaissance as watershed moments of creativity, experimentation with genre, and ideological debates regarding representation, modernism, and post-modernism. The Table of Contents for the volume appears in the Appendix.

The following is the blurb for the book jacket :

"The first major twenty-first century history of four hundred years of black writing. The *Cambridge History of African American Literature* presents a comprehensive overview of the literary traditions, oral and in print, of African-descended peoples in the United States. The expert contributors, drawn from the United States and beyond, emphasize the dual nature of each text discussed as a work of art created by an individual and as a response to unfolding events in American cultural, political, and social history. Unprecedented in scope, sophistication and accessibility, the volume synthesizes the current state of scholarship in the field and looks ahead to suggest new approaches, new areas of study, and as yet undervalued writers and works. The *Cambridge History of African American Literature* is a major achievement both as a work of reference and as a compelling narrative and will remain essential reading for scholars and students in years to come."

## **OUTLOOK – PROJECTIONS AND PLANS**

**H**BW is always looking to the future so as to be in a better position to preserve and promote the past.

We believe our outlook is brighter and more progressive than ever. Now that we completed a merry-go-round of office changes, the Project has a permanent site on campus that is accessible to students and spacious enough to hold all of our material. Located in Wescoe Hall, one of the busiest academic buildings on campus, we will soon welcome students to browse and use our collections. We have a reading room large enough to accommodate both people and books. Our rare book collection is safely housed in display cabinets and our project books are readily available to ship to grant participants. We have new and returning staff members who are ready to work. There is an ease about the operation of this office that has been missing for some time and we are all excited about it.

In the next year, as we implement the "Making the Wright Connection" grant, return to the business of cataloging novels, and build on our PDI—Project Digital Initiative, we look forward to a full return to our project operations.

## NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD 2004-2008

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Suzanne Dietzel and Jean Fagan Yellin at HBW 20th anniversary in 2004

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Back row: Edgar Tidwell, Richard Yarborough, Maryemma Graham, Trudier Harris, Joyce Hope Scott, Howard Ramsby  
Front row: Cheryal Ragar, Kavya Kouchik, Doretha Williams, Jean Fagan Yellin (honorary Board Member), Suzanne B. Dietzel

## PROJECT STAFF

Maryemma Graham, Director / Founder

Doretha Williams, Project Coordinator / Office Manager, 1998-2000; 2003-present

Sarah Arbutnot, Special Projects, 2003-2007

Kavya Koushik, Technology Specialist, 2003-2006

Cynthia Lynn, Special Events Manager / Grant Development, 2006-2008

Jeffrey Mack, Logistical Technician, 2005-2008

Jonathan Shorman, Technology Assistant, 2008-present

## REPORT FROM THE OFFICE MANAGER

My time with the Project began in late fall of 1998. After a whirlwind semester of teaching, I approached the English department chair to help me find a graduate research position. Dr. Graham, who had served as Langston Hughes Visiting Professor during KU's spring 1998 semester, permanently joined the KU faculty in January 1999, bringing the Project on the History of Black Writing with her. At the time, anchoring the Project at KU became our most important goal. We worked to strengthen our African American literature databases and share our archives of rare novels through the Encarta Africana Microsoft CD-ROM project. The Oral History Workshop introduced HBW to the local community, connecting university scholars with Lawrence citizens. During my second tenure as Office Manager, our literacy programs funded in part by NEH, took center stage. The Langston Hughes National Poetry Project and the Language Matters series strengthened HBW's communal outreach across the nation, introducing literature to a diverse collection of institutions.

As I come to the conclusion of my graduate school career, I am proud to be a member of the HBW staff. I will leave KU with a PhD in American studies, but I will also have earned an education through my work with the Project and gained a host of friends and colleagues.



Doretha K. Williams

Office Manager

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to CLAS Digital Media Services for assistance with the preparation of this report.



# **PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF BLACK WRITING**

**2004-2008 REPORT**

**Appendices**

**UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
LAWRENCE, KANSAS**



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# **FINAL REPORT: GP -50042-03**

**LANGSTON HUGHES NATIONAL POETRY PROJECT PRESENTS “SPEAKING  
OF RIVERS: TAKING POETRY TO THE PEOPLE”**

**PROJECT DIRECTORS  
MARYEMMA GRAHAM  
BARBARA WATKINS**

**COORDINATOR  
DORETHA WILLIAMS**

**UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS**



## **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Langston Hughes National Poetry Project “Speaking of Rivers: Taking Poetry to the People,” (LHNPP) was a highly dynamic, multifaceted program that began as part of the Langston Hughes centennial (1902-2002) held at the University of Kansas in February 2002. Significantly developed by the LHNPP as a series of public poetry and book discussion programs, “Speaking of Rivers” proposed to increase interest in and exposure to poetry as a spoken and written art, as a form of participatory democratic activity, and as a means of advancing human understanding.

When notified of funding in the fall of 2003, the LHNPP confirmed participation of 20 poetry circle sites that would create and implement activities that examined the life, work and art of Langston Hughes. The list of sites included community libraries, cultural centers, neighborhood churches, youth outreach programs, county jails, educational institutions, and writers’ groups. (see appendix) The program encouraged each site to explore Hughes’s work in its own unique way, and especially invited participatory events through the visual arts, music, poetry, and theatre.

This final report details the events, programs and outcomes supported by the NEH funds. All of the events and individuals referenced in the final report, selected materials from individual sites, and media coverage, appear in the appendices that follow.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

The first activity conducted for the project was the Poetry Circle (PC) Fall Orientation held October 30-November 1, 2003 at KU, with the support of KU Continuing Education. We anticipated full participation in the fall orientation. We hosted 22 site facilitators and associates, and six members of the University of Kansas faculty and administration personnel, including our evaluator Nona Tollefson, the Director of The Hall Center, Victor Bailey, and Edgar Tidwell, co-director of the initial Kansas Langston Hughes Poetry program. We also invited members of the speakers’ bureau, some of whom were also in attendance as site facilitators, including Jessica Care Moore, Carmaletta Williams, and Kalamu Ya Salaam. Those who were not in attendance were those site facilitators who joined the project as replacement sites. In all, we hosted 38 individuals who played important roles in this project. (see attendance list in appendix)

As outlined in the original grant proposal, the Fall Orientation served as a preparatory tutorial for the PC site coordinators. Designed to help facilitators develop and conduct creative and productive poetry circle events, the orientation sessions included panel discussions targeting specific audiences. Since the collective sites were diverse in nature and outreach, it was necessary to discuss how to create site activities appropriate for each venue, including anticipated obstacles. Panelists discussed how to appeal to and promote events for library patrons, teenaged youth groups, incarcerated individuals, church parishioners, and community educators.

During this orientation, each poetry circle coordinator who was present received *A Poetry Circle For All Seasons* resource kit, a set of the selected Hughes texts, relevant accounting forms, budget instruction, evaluation forms, and the book, *Spreading the Word: Poetry and the Survival of Community in America*. Site facilitators had the opportunity to interact with several members of the speakers’ bureau, and a model PC session was held. Orientation attendees were also instructed on how to request funds, books, and other support from the KU home office.

## **POETRY CIRCLE SITE ACTIVITIES**

The PC site activities were quite diverse. Most sites recruited a core group of participants for the smaller events such as reading circles, discussion sessions, and youth groups. The larger events like poetry readings, panel discussions, and theatre productions, were open to the general community. The first event was conducted by the African American Studies Department of University of Florida on February 7, 2004. The poetry reading program included an appearance by renowned poet Ntozake Shange. One the final events was hosted by the Harlem Remembrance Foundation in Prince George's County, Maryland where local panelists discussed the parallels between Langston Hughes and Tupac Shukar. In all, there were over 50 poetry circle events conducted throughout the nation. At the more intimate discussion session settings, we estimate around 15 people were in attendance. For the larger sessions that were open to the public or held in conjunction with another event, we have calculated approximately 50 people at each event. Other events were incorporated in to annual community programs were said to host around 100 people. In all we estimate that this project directly reached around 850 people throughout the nation. Due to the fact that books and materials re-circulated, we indirectly reached over 1000 people. We base these figures on the number if books and other materials requested by site facilitators for each event as well as the evaluation reports submitted by each site.

## **ALTERATIONS OF ORIGINAL GRANT ACTIVITIES**

For the most part, the LHNPP grant activities followed the outline presented in the original grant proposal. The project called for 20 poetry circle sites, with 17 of the partners completing the program. Six cancelled sites were all replaced, allowing us to continue through the period of the grant without much interruption. One of the terminated sites, the Humanities Council of Washington D.C., found it had overcommitted and thus unable to conduct a LHNPP program. The replacement site was Prince George's County, Maryland, where the Harlem Remembrance Foundation had a large following of young people and adults who involved in regular programming Another site termination was the African American Studies Department at the University of Florida, Gainesville. Although they were one of the first to plan and present a successful Langston Hughes event in a community setting in February 2004, due to the restructuring of the program, the site coordinator had to withdraw from further. The only site that was cancelled and not replaced was Haskell University, which was most unfortunate, as this was the only Native American site. Fiscal and administrative changes made it impossible to organize a site there, despite repeated efforts. A summary and a set of evaluations of the University of Florida's February 2004 event, however, are part of this final report. Below is a listing of the other cancelled and replacement sites:

### **TERMINATED SITES**

Central District Forum Arts, Seattle  
City Lore, New York

Gillard Institute, Chicago  
Pierian Literary Society, Jackson

### **REPLACEMENT SITES**

Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center, Seattle, WA  
Detroit Public School System/Marygrove College,  
Detroit, MI

St. Ignatius College Prep High School, Chicago, IL  
Eugene B. Redmond Writer's Club, East St. Louis, IL

Colorado College, Colorado Springs  
University of Florida, African American  
Studies Program, Gainesville, FL

Point Loma High School, San Diego, CA  
St. Luke AME, Lawrence

Incorporating the additional sites was not the only major alteration of the original grant proposal. Because the replacement sites required additional preparation and implementation time, we found it extremely beneficial to extend the grant by two years.

## **PERSONNEL CHANGES**

Due to the untimely death of our original evaluator Nona Tollefson, in the spring of 2004, another evaluator was hired. Tollefson had participate in the orientation and provided a framework for the evaluation process. Gladys Sanders, who had worked with Tollefson, was hired to administer complete the evaluation and assessment segment of the program. Sanders had served as evaluator for other NEH grants that have been funded through KU. Therefore, the performance of this aspect of the grant was not negatively affected by the change in personnel. Ms. Sanders, in fact, had additional background and training that enabled her to connect with project staff members and to enhance the evaluation system that was already in progress.

## **PUBLICITY**

Both the home office and the individual sites made consistent efforts to publicize each event. Because of the appeal of the LHNPP website, which was being continuously updated and already contained a wealth of resources from the 2002 Hughes centennial, we consider it our most successful promotional tool. Site events also appeared in the NEH newsletter. KU's University Relations Office announced the initial grant acceptance, the fall orientation, and selected local events. Locally, sites were allotted funds to print flyers and send out mailings. Most sites had their own websites and often posted notices for their events. Site coordinators often used local newspapers to print press releases announcing LHNPP programs. Locally operated radio stations collaborated with some of the sites, including the Harlem Remembrance Foundation in Prince George's County, Maryland. Newspaper articles, press releases, and other publicity material are included in the appendix.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Since the heart of LHNPP is its collection of poetry circle sites in multiple geographical areas with widely varying populations and individualized programs, one of the most important accomplishments was the success of the logistical process. Headquarters was located in the Project on the History of Black Writing office at the University of Kansas. Even with replacements sites and personnel changes, the project supported nineteen sites for more than three years. The home office authorized payments for speaker honoraria, arranged travel and lodging, shipped books and other materials, and covered advertising and publicity expenses. We regularly shipped each site an allotment of Hughes books and evaluation material as proposed in the original grant. The grant staff was also responsible for soliciting reports, completed material, and event products from each site. Maintaining a clear line of communication between the poetry circle coordinators,

the home office, and the funds administrators of KUCE was an important task. In the end, communication was key to the success of the project.

As far as the qualitative accomplishments, the LHNPP met the majority of its goals. One of the goals, as outlined in the initial grant, was to expand the public's interest in and knowledge of the life and work of Langston Hughes in diverse communities and settings. With nineteen sites approaching his work in different contexts and through multiple genres, Hughes's work was interpreted and presented to various audiences, ranging from young children in grade school to the elders of the local communities. Two important goals referenced in the grant proposal, state that this "project would extend the reach of the academic community through distance learning, service learning and on-site professional involvement." Several of the sites, located in the academic institutions had strong outreach projects in local communities. The Marygrove College/Detroit Public School System, Grossmont College/Malcolm X Public Library, and the Eugene Redmond Writer's Group/Southern Illinois University Edwardsville designed their events to appeal to the surrounding communities. The educators affiliated with the academic institutions led community oriented discussions and programs. Coordinators understood the urgency of the necessity to reach a greater and broader audience.

Another goal stated in the grant was to "create greater opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between local schools, communities, and businesses for supporting projects in lifelong learning." Several of the sites created and nurtured relationships with each other as well as with other local groups. The Harlem Remembrance Foundation teamed up with Andrew Jackson, coordinator of the Langston Hughes Community Library in New York for its LHNPP event. Jessica Care Moore, poet and coordinator of the MoorEpics: Poetry Planet site of Atlanta, Georgia, was able to do a short term residency with Van GO Mobile Arts Center in Lawrence, Kansas as a result of one such collaboration. Speaker bureau members Jerry Ward, Jr. and Kalamu Salaam, both poets, not only led their own sites, but often participated in projects and events created by other site coordinators. Not only were these collaborations beneficial to the grant, these relationships between sites and groups helped to build support, financially and programmatically, for future projects.

On the other hand, the project goals were sometimes challenged. The one issue that showed be revisited is the creation, use, and sustainability of the speakers' bureau. Although the grant funded travel, lodging and honoraria for listed speakers, several of them highly acclaimed, oftentimes poetry circle site coordinators selected from their own list of contacts. At other times, speakers who had agreed to serve on the bureau were not available for specific dates and engagements. The grant staff members remedied the situation by creating a rolling speakers' bureau, adding or removing names as needed. In the future, a similar project may need to have a rotating list maintained by the home office. Also, once the participating groups have been selected, site coordinators should be required to offer a short list, four of five individuals, to appear on the speakers' bureau. Although the problem with the bureau persisted, participants did have the opportunity to utilize nine members of the bureau. Among the more well known members on the bureau Joy Harjo did make an engagement at the Eugene Redmond Writer's Group. Carmaletta Williams seemed to be especially popular with libraries because of her ability to bring Hughes alive through first person presentation. Over all, the most popular was Jessica Care Moore because her appeal to young people and her visibility in hip hop poetry movement.

## **AUDIENCES**

Considering the LHNPP consisted of 20 poetry circle sites at one time, the audiences for the project were necessarily quite diverse. There were five true youth-oriented groups that serviced local communities. The ArtsCorp Wichita program, Point Loma High School, Van Go Mobile Arts program, MoorEpic Poetry Planet, St. Ignatius College Prep High School, and the Marygrove Detroit School system were projects that targeted youth. Sites such as the St. Luke AME church, Sankofa Bird, Inc., and the Enoch Pratt Public Library attracted a more mature group of participants. While some sites, like the Eugene Redmond Writer's Group and Ninth Street Baptist Church had distinct and consistent attendees, other sites such as the community libraries had evolving audiences. Each site developed activities to appeal to its audience.

Two sites were created for previously underserved audiences. The Douglas County Jail site was established to promote Langston Hughes to especially male inmates. Although books were not allowed in the jail, a lively core of speakers found a very receptive audience. Participants were encouraged to use Hughes as an influence to produce their own works of poetry and fiction. The Audio-Reader Network site was developed to create an audio library of Hughes's work for the sight-impaired. Both programs dedicated funding and materials from the grant to serve members of the community who are often forgotten and marginalized.

## **EVALUATION**

The evaluation section of the final report is located in the appendix.

## **CONTINUATION & LONG-TERM IMPACT**

Although the funded period of the grant has ended, the Project on the History of Black Writing staff continues to work with the poetry circle sites. The LHNPP created a web of collaborative partnerships that will continue to strengthen and the ability to communicate through the home office is crucial. The home office is committed to offering non-financial support to the original poetry project sites. Due to the generosity of the multiple book publishers, the office houses extra copies of selected Hughes books and will make available copies of texts to former sites. Additional materials such as bibliographies, reports, evaluation forms, budget aides, and research materials filed at the home office will be available for the poetry circle sites for future programs. Many of the programs are now vital projects in local communities and must be maintained and supported. To this end, the home office will continuously be involved with the poetry circle sites.

Several of the sites have planned to continue their programs using local funding possibilities and the materials received through the grant. The coordinators of the Enoch Pratt Public Library site used their allotment of books to create a rotating project library to be used for future discussion groups. Reginald Harris is currently promoting and conducting LHNPP groups at the other public library branches in Baltimore, Maryland. Another site, the Eugene Redmond Writer's Group in East St. Louis, Illinois continues to recycle books and other project materials to support supplementary project with a local high school. A full list of post-grant activities is available in the appendix.

Especially significant are the spin-off programs that have continued to expand, the most notable of which is the network developed through the National Council of Teachers of English.

LHNPP Advisory Board member Dr. Sandra Gibbs managed a growing number of poetry project units. Newly established groups were directed to the website to download project documents and implement their own projects. The LHNPP grant has stimulated the teaching of Hughes in classrooms from secondary education schools to college English courses. It is noteworthy that grant funds were not allotted or used for this group. A listing of NCTE sites is included in the appendix.

The LHNPP had a tremendous effect on how the public, local and national, views the University of Kansas and the Project on the History of Black Writing. Locally, this program has publicized the university's commitment to and active involvement in a wide range of community events. The local organizations involved with the grant appreciate the fact that this office is available for community projects and fundraising. For example, the St. Luke AME Church in Lawrence, Kansas received funding from a private foundation to develop a Langston Hughes Interpretive Center and has tapped staff members for support. Nationally, the LHNPP website attracts browsers searching for information on Langston Hughes. Since the implementation of the project, individuals looking to create similar programs have contacted the home office for assistance. Because of the LHNPP, the University of Kansas has become *the* place to consult regarding everything Langston Hughes.

## **GRANT PRODUCTS**

The products generated through this grant were inspired by the poetry, fiction and life of Hughes. His work reflects the numerous ways in which art, literature, and music can be utilized to advance intellectual and social discovery and promote human connections. Each poetry circle site was encouraged to create products to enhance their individual programs. Our youth oriented sites often used artwork to interpret Hughes's poetry. Van GO Mobile Arts site produced hand-painted volumes of Hughes-inspired poetry and photography written by the young participants. The students produced fifty copies of *No Write to Remain Silent* and sold them to members of the community as a fundraising event for their center. Similarly, the Point Loma High School students created "walls of poetry" using Hughes's poetry and poster board and placed their work around the school for National Poetry Month. The students employed their imaginations to reflect how Hughes's poetry influenced them artistically.

Our speakers bureau members also developed projects that were encouraged through LHNPP. Carmaletta Williams, one of our most popular speakers, recently published *Langston Hughes in the Classroom: "Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me,"* a textbook designed to aid high school teachers using Hughes's work in their classrooms. Her knowledge of Hughes, his life and work, was identified by the National Council of Teachers of English. Her text was became the latest volume in the NCTE High School Literature Series.

As evident from the site appendix, there are several video and audio recordings of specific events. For instance the Audio Reader Network of the University of Kansas created a library of Hughes recordings. The final product is not only a valuable tool for the LHNPP, but a tremendous addition to the network's library. The Harlem Remembrance Foundation site coordinator created a video recording of the projects that will serve as fundraising material for the future. The St. Luke AME Church recorded a panel session that will be used to solicit financial support for the Langston Hughes Interpretive Center. As with all of the products generated through the sites, the lasting outcome is the multiple ways in which Hughes's life and works become interpreted and

reinterpreted with new audiences. The LHNPP has made Hughes a permanent fixture in the lives of those who were discovering him for the first time and sustain the connections they can make through his work

The LHNPP has been an extremely vital national program. It is important to continue to support endeavors that strengthen the humanities. As Project Coordinator and on the behalf of the Co-Directors, I thank the National Endowment for the Humanities for its generous support for this project.

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- III. Evaluation
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- VII. Site Listing & Activities
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- IX. Alphabetical Catalog of Sites and Activities
- X. Additional Material

**FINAL REPORT  
EZ 50069-04  
FED 37780**

**LANGUAGE MATTERS II:  
READING AND TEACHING TONI MORRISON  
THE CARDOZO PROJECT MODEL  
(LMII)**

**DIRECTOR – MARYEMMA GRAHAM, PH.D.  
CO-DIRECTOR – CAROLYN DENARD, PH.D.  
COORDINATOR – SARAH ARBUTHNOT**

**UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS**

**DECEMBER 23, 2006**



## **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

Language Matters II: Reading and Teaching Toni Morrison, The Cardozo Project Model (LMII) was a highly dynamic and multifaceted program that began with the Cardozo Project, a 2002 school-wide teaching of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* at Washington DC's Cardozo High School. Developed as a series of local teacher in-services culminating in a week-long Summer Workshop at Northern Kentucky University in July 2005, LMII proposed that when Morrison's works are taught with rigor, understanding, and sensitivity, students can develop new ways of thinking about, using, and appreciating language. To this end, LMII sought to expand its network through rigorous intellectual discussions where teachers could read and closely examine Morrison's works, accompanied by critical material, guided by scholars, and assisted by other teachers who have already blazed a trail in teaching Morrison's works. The Summer Workshop provided a representative group of teachers with rigorous intellectual content and lively discussion of all eight Morrison novels, children's books, selected essays, and critical materials; and supported intellectual and pedagogical issues that emerged as teachers organized instruction and delivery systems, adapted national content standards, and integrated new materials to bring content and skill acquisition together.

This final report details the events, programs, and outcomes supported by NEH funds. All of the events, individuals, and materials referenced in the final report appear in the appendices that follow.

## **PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

### **STAFF AND STRUCTURE**

Language Matters II (LMII) Staff included Director Maryemma Graham, Project Coordinator Sarah Arbuthnot, Project Evaluator Mrs. Gladys Sanders, and Website Administrator Kavya Koushik, with additional assistance provided by Doretha Williams and Jaime Whitt. Graham, Arbuthnot, Koushik, and Williams met regularly, generally weekly, from August 2004-May 2006. Staff meetings included progress reports and handled trouble-shooting issues. Additional support from the University of Kansas (KU) provided financial assistance in the employment of Arbuthnot, Koushik, Williams, and Whitt. Office space was provided in KU's Wescoe Hall and KU's English Department, which also absorbed all copying and mailing costs for LMII, provided computers, printers, and other office equipment.

### **ONE-DAY TEACHER IN-SERVICE**

Four one-day teacher in-services were held at schools across the country. Sites were selected based on location and prior discussion regarding their interest in the Cardozo Project model. Each site selected one or more Morrison texts. Language Matters II information packets, including books and introductory critical readings were sent to the participating districts and schools. The schools and districts encouraged and promoted participation in the in-service. In some cases, districts offered a stipend for participating on a Saturday. Some districts awarded Continuing Education units. Focusing on only one or two novels at these in-services provided teacher-participants with manageable work and practical strategies. Each in-service was led by several members of the LMII Development Team that included at least one leading Morrison

scholar and at least one Master Teacher (a secondary school teacher who participated in Language Matters I and had considerable experience successfully teaching Morrison in his/her classroom). The in-service day was spent in LMII Development Team-led sessions that focused both on the scholarly reading of the individual text(s), as well as the pedagogical issues in teaching it to students. There was ample time for discussion, as well as question and answer sessions. The following table details the information for each in-service.

<b>Date of In-Service</b>	<b>Location of In-Service</b>	<b>School(s)/ Teachers Participating</b>	<b>Book(s) to be Studied</b>	<b>LMII Development Team Members that Lead In-Service</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
April 2, 2005	University of Kansas Lawrence, KS	Middle & secondary school teachers from Lawrence Public Schools & surrounding area	<i>Song of Solomon</i>	Dr. Giselle Anatol, Dr. Maryemma Graham, and Marceline Rogers	9 teachers
April 16, 2005	Georgia State University Atlanta, GA	Secondary school teachers, GTAs, & student teachers from Atlanta area	<i>Jazz</i>	Dr. Carolyn Denard and Tina Grayson	40 participants
April 18, 2005	Gar-Field Senior High School Woodbridge, VA	Secondary school teachers from Prince William County Public Schools	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> <i>Jazz</i>	Dr. Marilyn Mobley McKenzie, Tina Grayson, Kenyatta Graves, Ruth Evans, and Robyn Jackson	28 teachers & language arts curriculum staff members
April 25, 2005	Rookwood Shopping Center Norwood, OH	Secondary school teachers from Cincinnati School for Creative & Performing Arts & surrounding area	<i>Beloved</i>	Dr. Kristine Yohe, Frazier O'Leary, and Anne Cohen	9 teachers

The April 16 event held at Georgia State University (GSU) was added to the original three in-services proposed. It was sponsored by the GSU English Department and was part of their Conversations Among Partners in Learning: Teachers from the Schools and Colleges in Dialogue program. LMII provided the program with Dr. Denard and Ms. Grayson as leaders, but all other organizational and promotional details were handled by GSU.

Audio recordings were made of both the April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in-services. Participants were required to complete evaluations of each in-service. LMII provided copies of the book(s) to be studied for up to thirty participants at each site (except GSU), as well as the travel and accommodation costs for the LMII Development Team Members that led each in-service. LMII also provided lunch to the participants at the Lawrence in-service. Lunch was provided at the other sites by the host schools. Participants for each workshop were recruited with LMII-created flyers sent to the sponsoring school, as well as other schools in the area. The flyers provided the details for the in-service and instructed interested parties on how to register and obtain their free

copy of the book(s) to be studied at the in-service.

## **BOOKS AND RESOURCES**

Books for the one-day teacher in-services and the Summer Workshop were obtained for free or at significant discount from the publishers. Books were distributed to Summer Workshop participants as they were accepted. The Toni Morrison Society and Ms. Morrison requested that a session on Ms. Morrison's children's books be added to the Summer Workshop, so that change was made. Dr. Giselle Anatol agreed to teach that session and copies of Ms. Morrison's children's books were obtained. LMII staff also solicited book donations to create an on-site reference library for the teachers at the Summer Workshop.

A Teacher Sourcebook was prepared by LMII staff and distributed to Summer Workshop participants. This Sourcebook contains scholarly articles and book chapters on reading and teaching Toni Morrison in general and all of the individual novels in particular (a copy of the Teacher Sourcebook was included in the May 2006 Interim Report). Upon their arrival at Northern Kentucky University, participants received a Workshop Handbook and Guide containing a wealth of relevant information regarding the Workshop, including the summary and project narrative from the LMII NEH grant proposal; specific information regarding LMII including a Workshop schedule, participant contact information, and evaluations; and Toni Morrison Society 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference information and materials (a copy of the Workshop Handbook and Guide is included in this Final Report).

## **PUBLICITY AND RECRUITMENT**

LMII made a consistent effort to publicize each event and aspect of the project. The official Toni Morrison Society website ([www.tonimorrisonssociety.org](http://www.tonimorrisonssociety.org)) provided the greatest access to a wide audience. Information on the teacher in-services and Summer Workshop was posted on the TMS website, including a downloadable application form for the Summer Workshop. The teacher in-services provided another excellent way to reach a broad audience. The host schools and LMII Development Team members promoted the Summer Workshop to in-service participants. KU's University Relations Office announced the initial grant acceptance, the local teacher in-service, and the Summer Workshop. Many of the host schools used local newspapers to print press releases announcing their LMII teacher in-service. An article describing LMII and its accomplishments was published in the Fall 2006 edition of the Toni Morrison Society newsletter, as well. Copies of many of the LMII promotional materials can be found in Appendix A.

Through promotional flyers sent to schools and groups across the country, in-service participation, Toni Morrison Society website, and word of mouth, LMII recruited a diverse group of twenty teacher-participants and two graduate students to take part in the Summer Workshop. The following table details the demographic information of the participants, including home state and city, school name, and grades and courses taught.

<b>State</b>	<b>School and City</b>	<b>Participant's Name</b>	<b>Grades/Courses Taught.</b>
Georgia	Duluth HS, Duluth	Nikki Smith	9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> grade American Literature
Illinois	Northwestern University, Chicago	Janaka Bowman	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Illinois	Highland Park HS, Highland Park	Paul Lusson	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade American Literature, Composition, Exploring Diversity
Illinois	Highland Park HS, Highland Park	Faisal Mohyuddin	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade American Literature, Composition, Ethical Issues in Science & Literature
Kansas	Shawnee Mission West HS, Overland Park	Joy Bunch	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade American Literature, British/World Literature
Kansas	Alternative HS, Lawrence (now Lawrence HS, Lawrence)	Kim Grinnell	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade US History, US Government, AP US History
Kansas	Lawrence HS, Lawrence	Art Sloan	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade World Literature, 20 <sup>th</sup> c. Literature, Humanities, Grammar & Composition
Kansas	Alternative HS, Lawrence (now Free State HS, Lawrence)	Lori Stussie	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade Appreciation of Literature, Publications, Creative Writing I & II, Diverse Voices in Literature, Writing & Communications
Kansas	West Junior HS, Lawrence	Vicki Tucker	8 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade AP English, Creative Writing, Shakespeare
Kentucky	Highlands High School, Ft. Thomas	Lisa Birkley (unable to attend due to illness)	Journalism I, II, III; Photojournalism; Advanced English III; English III
Maryland	Parkdale HS, Riverdale	Yvonne Brown	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English
Maryland	John F. Kennedy HS, Silver Spring	Tonya Wells	9 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> grade English, Honors English, Principles of Telecommunications
New York	Wells College, Aurora	Ethel King-McKenzie (unable to attend for personal reasons)	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English, Social Studies
New York	Lockport HS, Lockport	Debbie Martin	10 <sup>th</sup> grade English (Regents)
New York	Manhattan Center for Science & Mathematics, New York	Emel Topbas	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade Honors English, Ramp Up class for struggling readers, Woman's Literature, American Literature

North Carolina	East Chapel Hill HS, Chapel Hill	Marjorie Lancaster	9 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> grade English
Ohio	Clark Montessori School, Cincinnati	Dean Blase	11 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English (Heterogeneous grouping, college- preparatory)
Ohio	School for Creative & Performing Arts, Cincinnati	Beth Morgan	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English, Creative Writing
Ohio	School for Creative & Performing Arts, Cincinnati	Ann Marie Pirchner	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English
Ohio	Withrow University HS, Cincinnati	Amanda Schear	11 <sup>th</sup> grade English, Yearbook
Oklahoma	University of Central Oklahoma, Oklahoma City	Mikeiya Morrow	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Oregon	Central Linn HS, Halsey	Emily Robbins	10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade English, AP Literature & Composition

## SUMMER WORKSHOP

The LMII Summer Workshop was held at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) one week in advance of the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Toni Morrison Society Conference. The Conference was directed by Kristine Yohe, a Morrison scholar and host committee chair of this conference. The Summer Workshop's location and time were purposefully chosen to be able to feature the scholars that convened at NKU for the TMS Conference, as well as the Cincinnati Opera's premiere performance of *Margaret Garner*; the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; NKU's Institute of Freedom Studies, an academic unit that works in conjunction with the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; and, of course, attendance at the TMS 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference itself.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

As a result of the excellent negotiations of Conference Director and LMII Coordinator Kristine Yohe, a very favorable contract with Northern Kentucky University provided housing and dining for thirty-five people for the duration of the Summer Workshop. NKU agreed to waive several fees and provide discounted rates that enabled LMII to stay within its limited budget.

## TRANSPORTATION

LMII provided transportation for all LMII participants, Development Team leaders, and staff to and from Northern Kentucky University. In Kentucky, LMII was able to rent a 15-seat passenger van from NKU at the discounted staff rate through the negotiations of Ms. Yohe. This van, along with participant and staff vehicles, provided all of the ground transportation in and around Cincinnati.

## WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

LMII participants arrived at NKU on Saturday, July 9, 2005. That evening was devoted to Workshop Orientation, which included a visit to the NKU Institute for Freedom Studies, dinner, and an introductory overview Toni Morrison's works and critical reception by Dr. Carolyn Denard. The following four days of the Workshop were devoted to intensive and in-depth study of the books. The format included a two-hour lecture and discussion by a leading Morrison scholar, followed by a ninety-minute session by a Master Teacher provided the basis of study for each book. We covered two books a day in this fashion. (A copy of the daily schedule can be found in Appendix B.) Time was devoted to curriculum and resource planning and development. Towards the end of the Workshop, participants were divided into implementation teams where they created a lesson plan for one of Morrison's books (each team had a different book). Though time and resources were limited, all of the teams produced classroom activities/resources that were entirely different from any that had been presented during the week. They demonstrated great attention to detail, content knowledge, student-friendly works, and professionalism.

Additional Summer Workshop events and activities included a trip to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center; the premiere performance of the opera *Margaret Garner* by the Cincinnati Opera; a public conversation between Toni Morrison, the opera's librettist, and Richard Danielpour, the composer; a bus tour of Underground Railroad sites in and around Cincinnati; a visit to Margaret Garner's home; and attendance at many of the 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Toni Morrison Society Conference sessions and events. The participants also joined Ms. Morrison herself for a private LMII question and answer session.

## FINANCES

We realized early that the \$75,000 grant was not sufficient to cover all the expenses for the weeklong Summer Workshop. We were able to significantly reduce the cost of our expenses in the followings ways:

- 1) Negotiating a flat rate for lodging, dining, and facility use with NKU, who were also hosting the Toni Morrison Society 4<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference during the same week.
- 2) Negotiating a bundle package at a reduced rate for the teacher-participants to attend multiple ticketed events, such as the *Margaret Garner* opera.
- 3) Taking advantage of the Kansas University Center for Research graduate assistance support by hiring a graduate student as project coordinator.
- 4) Relying extensively upon in-kind support and donated services of Toni Morrison scholars, the Toni Morrison Society, the University of Kansas, and Northern Kentucky University.

The level of LMII's efficiency and availability of resources was a constant source of amazement to both onlookers and participants.

## WEBSITE

The LMII website was created to promote and enhance LMII; announce the project events; showcase success stories and case studies; and provide a discussion forum and other useful resources on Morrison and her work for both K-12 and post-secondary-level teachers and researchers. In order to reach more viewers, the LMII website was appended and linked to

the Toni Morrison Society website. The URL is [www.tonimorrisonssociety.org/lm2](http://www.tonimorrisonssociety.org/lm2). The website includes a discussion board for the exchange of ideas between both participants and site visitors, a description of in-service and Workshop events, grant information, press releases, and a number of other resources. Perhaps the most important aspect of the website is a link to the KU Continuing Education's credit course on Morrison's work (detailed in Accomplishments, etc. below). Many of the teacher in-service sessions and most of the Summer Workshop sessions were audiotaped, transcribed, and many are now available online as both downloadable audio files and written transcripts. This is an outstanding free resource for any teacher or student visiting the LMII website. Unfortunately, the grant money ran out before the website could be fully completed. Despite the lack of funding, the LMII staff intends to finish the uploading of all of the audio files and the written transcripts in the near future. Limited staff and resources make progress slow, however.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CONTINUATION, AND LONG TERM IMPACT**

The success of LMII was facilitated by the excellent cooperation of Northern Kentucky University who agreed to financially "take what we had" and allowed the Summer Workshop itself to be accommodated in ease and comfort. Also significant was the funding from Kansas University Center for Research to develop and implement the credit course derived from the Workshop.

A major accomplishment of LMII was the success of its logistical processes. Headquarters was located in the Project on the History of Black Writing office at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, KS. The only "local" LMII event was the teacher in-service in Lawrence, KS. All of the other in-services, as well as the Summer Workshop, took place at schools across the country. The LMII staff was responsible for shipping books and evaluative materials to the host schools, in addition to arranging for the travel, lodging, and honoraria of the Development Team members. The host schools for the teacher in-services used their experience with these types of events to put the LMII activities into action relatively easily.

To plan the Summer Workshop, however, to be held at another school in another state proved to be logistically challenging. The LMII staff arranged for the travel, lodging, food, and honoraria of all Workshop participants, scholars, master teachers, and staff in Highland Heights, KY, the location of Northern Kentucky University. Local transportation, as well as admission to various events and activities was arranged, as well. Before the Summer Workshop, LMII staff shipped a set of Morrison's books, the Sourcebook of Readings, and additional materials to all of the participants. Maintaining clear lines of communication between the host schools, Workshop participants, and the funds administrators of Kansas University Center for Research was an important task.

Following the Summer Workshop, at the request of Ms. Morrison, Simon & Schuster, the publisher of her new children's book, solicited the LMII teacher-participants for letters on the usefulness of the children's books from which to harvest quotes for use in promotional materials. Many of the LMII teachers were able to submit letters about both reading and teaching the books, and several of their comments will be used by Simon & Schuster. In addition, a teacher's perspective is to be included in Dr. Carolyn Denard's new resource book on Morrison published by Cambridge University Press.

Although many teachers doubted if they could implement a school-wide reading of a single text following the Cardozo Project Model, several alternatives were proposed such as grade-wide reading, a single book per grade level, and team teaching.

In fall 2006, LMII staff solicited follow-up comments from the Summer Workshop participants describing their use of Morrison in their classrooms since the Workshop in summer 2005. Many participants eagerly responded with not only detailed accounts, but also materials. The teachers have had great success teaching Morrison in their high school classrooms to a variety of age groups and reading levels and their letters attest to that. A sample of these accounts can be found in Appendix C.

One of the greatest accomplishments of LMII was the creation of an expanded network of resource teachers. In the time since the Summer Workshop, the teacher-participants have exchanged e-mails, letters, and undoubtedly phone calls expressing the very close bond that was formed in 2005. Through these mediums, as well as the message board on the LMII website, participants exchange ideas, problems, successes, and struggles. The LMII participants formed a community during their week together that they strive to maintain today. Requests for the next workshop began even before LMII concluded and continue now.

## **CREDIT COURSE**

Another major accomplishment of LMII and one that will continue to influence and impact students and teachers nationwide was working with KU's Continuing Education to create an online credit course. The course is described in the paragraphs below by Dr. Barbara Watkins, Academic Outreach and Distance Education at KU:

The University of Kansas course ENGL 324 *Contemporary Authors: Toni Morrison* is based on the Language Matters II workshop held at the Northern Kentucky University in August 2005. Giselle Anatol, KU associate professor of English, is the course instructor and has served as the primary author. This robust course, which opened in fall 2006, incorporates streaming audio and text version in the course lessons. These lessons replicate sessions held at the Kentucky workshop.

Many of the lessons include transcripts of national Morrison experts who presented at the Kentucky workshop, for example, Herman Beavers, Angelyn Mitchell, and Keith Byerman. The course also includes links to the Language Matters II website, where students can listen to streaming audio of the master teachers from around the country who presented at the Language Matters II workshop.

Each course lesson focuses on a Morrison novel and typically includes access to useful secondary materials—as background for information on Morrison's life and her stature as a Nobel Prize winner, for issues presented in the novels and helpful literary criticism from major journals—all of which are accessible in e-reserve through the KU library system. In addition, each lesson includes links to other websites that enrich the lesson presentations and course discussions.

We anticipate that the course will attract a national audience of teachers, English majors, and others who wish to read Toni Morrison's novels both for pleasure and to enhance their understand of majors issues in our nation, our cultural history, and all of our lives.



## **EVALUATION**

The evaluation of LMII was completed by an independent evaluator, Mrs. Gladys Sanders. Ms. Sanders created the evaluations for both the one-day teacher in-service sessions and for each session of the Summer Workshop. She also created the applications for the teachers interested in participating in the Summer Workshop. Mrs. Sanders personally attended the one-day teacher in-service in Lawrence, KS on April 2, 2005 and traveled to Northern Kentucky University to attend all of the Summer Workshop. As a resident of Lawrence, KS, Mrs. Sanders was also able to occasionally join the core LMII staff at the University of Kansas for meetings. Mrs. Sanders' evaluation report can be found in Appendix D.

# RICHARD WRIGHT CENTENNIAL EVENTS TIMELINE 2006-2009

## PREPARED BY JERRY W. WARD

### 2006

- July 25. The Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration held its first planning meeting for Wright activities.
- November 2. The late Dr. Julius E. Thompson, a historian and native Mississippian, hosted a conference on Wright and Zora Neale Hurston at the University of Missouri-Columbia.
- November 2. The Intiman Theatre in Seattle, Washington, presented a week-long production of Kent Gash's dramatization of *Native Son*.
- December 15. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History selected Wright for inclusion in the Mississippi Hall of Fame.

### 2007

- January. A year-long discussion series began in Natchez under the title "Celebrating Richard Wright on the Eve of His 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday." These discussions, led each month by Professor Jerry Ward, Jr. (Dillard University), proved to be a successful effort in involve an entire city in recognizing Wright's global importance. [abbreviate this]
- April 12. Jackson State University presented the Richard Wright Forum.,
- April 20. The South Hills branch of the Jackson Public Library was renamed for Richard Wright on April 20.
- June 5-7. Mississippi Valley State University was the site for a three-day National Endowment for the Humanities workshop, "Richard Wright: A Mississippi Writer"
- During 2007, two books having identical titles were published: Andrew Warnes's *Richard Wright's Native Son* (Routledge) and *Richard Wright's Native Son*, edited by Ana Maria Fraile (Editions Rodopi B. V, Amsterdam).

### 2008

The MISSISSIPPI READS project selected *Uncle Tom's Children* as the book to be read by all Mississippians in 2008 and commissioned Jerry Ward's "*Uncle Tom's Children: A Guide for Readers and Teachers* (see [www.mississippireads.org](http://www.mississippireads.org) )

- January 31. Rust College (Holly Springs, MS) presented "Richard Wright: A Centennial Celebration of A Native Son." Combine this with next one
- February 14-16. Rust College (Holly Springs, MS) presented a series of evenings with Richard Wright in drama, poetry and film.
- February 21-24. The 2008 Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration was devoted to "Richard Wright, the South, and the World." Selected papers from that conference were published in *The Southern Quarterly* (Winter 2009).
- February 25. Princeton University sponsored a special panel on Wright's Black Power trilogy (*Black Power, White Man, Listen! And The Color Curtain*).

- March. OAH panel at Schomburg Research Center features Julia Wright, Maryemma Graham, John Edgar Wideman, Sonia Sanchez, and Hazel Rowley.
- March 11-13. Dillard University hosted Jerry Ward's presentation of three Richard Wright Centennial lectures, one of which was delivered at Nazareth College (Rochester, NY) on March 31.
- April 12-13. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill held The Richard Wright Centennial Celebration, giving special attention to Wright's collaboration with Paul Green on the play version of *Native Son* (1941) and to Green's revised adaptation of the play.
- June 19-21. The American University of Paris presented the International Richard Wright Centennial Conference, at AUP and the Muse des Annes Trente in Boulogne-Billancourt.
- June 28-29. The 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Japan Black Studies Association featured a Wright symposium in Hiroshima, which included Professor Maryemma Graham and Julia Wright and her son Malcolm.
- June 30. In addition to the many newspaper and magazine articles generated by these events, *The Richard Wright Encyclopedia*, edited by Jerry W. Ward, Jr. and Robert J. Butler was published by Greenwood Press.
- September 4. Wright's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, began with early morning radio broadcasts.
  - o On National Public Radio, Garrison Keller made remarks about Wright on *The Writers Almanac*.
  - o Patrick Oliver hosted the birthday tribute on *Literary Nation* (KABF FM 88.3, Little Rock, Arkansas), which included interviews with Patricia McGraw and Jerry Ward.
  - o At Tougaloo College, Howard Ramsby (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville) spoke on publishing and Wright, a prelude to evening activities.
  - o In Little Rock, the Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center unveiled the "Richard Wright Day Proclamation" and presented a program of Wright's poetry; discussions of Wright's teenage years, Wright and the Harlem Renaissance, Wright and today's music (rap, R & B, hip hop); readings of excerpts from Wright's works by male youths.
  - o In Dallas, Texas, the Paul Quinn College Library presented "One Book, One College."
- September 4-11. Jackson, Mississippi began a week of events with a reception for Wright daughter Julia at Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center, the school from which her father graduated in 1925.
  - o September 5. Tour: Richard Wright's Jackson
  - o September 5-6. Richard Wright Institute for Teachers sponsored by the Margaret Walker Alexander Research Center at Jackson State University
  - o September 6. Richard Wright Parade in which five Jackson Public Schools marching bands participated
  - o September 7. Humanities forum on "Richard Wright and Activism" featuring Julia Wright, College of Liberal Arts, Jackson State University
  - o September 9. Keynote address by Julia Wright at Tougaloo College
  - o September 10. Wright Day to Read at Tougaloo College with Jerry Ward's lecture "One Writer's Legacy" and the Mississippi Department of Archives and

History “History is Lunch Series” featuring Julia Wright and former Mississippi Governor William Winter

- September 11. Address and book signing by Julia Wright at Tougaloo College and a lecture by Dr. Marvin Haire (Mississippi Valley State University) on “Richard Wright and the Blues” at the State Capitol.
- September 15. “Celebrating African American Voices” at Pennsylvania State University with “The Legacy of Richard Wright,” a lecture by Jerry Ward
- September 20. Initial meeting of the Mississippi Humanities Council’s “4 W Teacher Institute,” which involved workshops during 2008 and 2009 on Richard Wright, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, and Margaret Walker Alexander in Jackson, Clarksdale, and Natchez, MS
- September 27. “Richard Nathaniel Wright: A Centennial Celebration” at the Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez, MS
- October 2. Julia Wright’s keynote address at the Fogelman Executive Center, University of Memphis.
- October 3. The University also sponsored a symposium on Wright featuring Reginald Brown’s “Performing Richard Wright.”
- October 3. Southwest Tennessee Community College students performed dramatic readings of Wright’s texts under the direction of Levi Frazier.
- October 4. Conversations with Julia Wright and STCC Honors Academy and Service Learning students were held in Parrish Library
- October 6. Julia Wright was the International Education speaker at the STCC Union Campus Theater.
- October 8. In Nashville, TN Jerry Ward presented “Reading Wright” at Vanderbilt University.
- October 16. Cheryl A. Wall (Rutgers University) and Eugene B. Redmond, editor of Drumvoices Revue, were co-directors of “Drumvoices: A Celebration of Richard Wright (1980-1960) and Henry Dumas (1934-1968)” at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.
- October 18. A “Richard Wright Centennial Discussion” was held at the Community Book Center in New Orleans.
- October 21. at Vanderbilt University, the Richard Wright Centennial Reading Series, a year-long discussion of Wright’s work and its historical and cultural contexts, focused on *Uncle Tom’s Children*.
- November 7-8. Richard Wright Centennial Symposium at the African American Museum in Dallas, Texas. This conference included talks by James A. Miller (Richard Wright Circle), Maryemma Graham (University of Kansas), Jerry Ward (Dillard University), and Dereck C. Catsam (University of Texas of the Permian Basin).
- Mid-November. Darryl Dickerson-Carr spoke on “Writers Block on Richard Wright” at Paperbacks Plus (Dallas).
- November 19. Vanderbilt University’s Richard Wright Centennial Reading Series discussed *Native Son*.
- November 28-29. The final major European event in the rich mix of centennial tributes was “Richard Wright at 100,” an international conference sponsored by the Department of Letters, University of Beira Interior, Portugal

- December 16. Vanderbilt University's Richard Wright Centennial Reading Series discussed *Black Boy*.

It should be noted that *Drumvoices Revue* 16: 1-2 (Spring-Summer-Fall 2008) featured "Kwansabas for Richard Wright Centennial" by 95 writers; Julia Wright's essay "The Homestretch to the Centennial" and her four tankas and Joyce Ann Joyce's review essay "Richard Wright's *A Father's Law*." *Valley Voices: A Literary Review* 8.2 (Fall 2008) was a special Richard Wright Centennial issue as was *Papers on Language & Literature* 44.4 (Fall 2008). The *Mississippi Quarterly* 61.4 (Fall 2009) also focused on Wright.

## **2009**

- April 2-5. "Richard Wright: The Man, the Writer, and His Place in American and African American Letters" at the University of Utah, a progressive forum for the voices of Wright scholars, undergraduate and graduate students, and such established writers as John Edgar Wideman, William Henry Lewis, Jeffrey Renard Allen, and Randall Kenan.
- April 9. United States Postal Service honored Wright at the Chicago Post Office with a first-day-of-issue ceremony for the 61-cent stamp that bears his image.
- June 8-12. The Faculty Resource Network, New York University, offered a week-long seminar "Reading Richard Wright"