

K-12 STUDY CANADA

University of Washington ✦ Western Washington University Winter/Spring 2010



As we enter a new decade, American classrooms must continue to use a more international lens for North American topics and focus on issues that impact us all as global citizens. As a National Resource Center (NRC) on Canada, it has certainly been our hope that the K-12 STUDY CANADA resources developed over the last ten years have helped you to regularly connect your curricula to Canada in new and innovative ways. We were pleased to showcase some of them in Atlanta last November at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) conference. Several partners have consistently helped the two NRCs on Canada raise a high profile for Canadian Studies and it seems only fitting to gratefully acknowledge them as the New Year begins: the US Department of Education, the Embassy of Canada in Washington, DC, and its consulate offices in the US, the Québec Government offices in the US as well as NCSS and its state councils.

The world will certainly be watching Canada in 2010...literally on television. Canada is serving as host nation of the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympics Games and coverage will undoubtedly showcase Canada along with outstanding

athleticism and values of the Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Our annual *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute for K-12 Educators* has witnessed the Vancouver Organizing Committee's preparations unfold for the past three years so it will be particularly interesting to see the results once the Olympic torch is lit on February 12 at the Opening Ceremonies. 2010 will also mark the last time "STUDY CANADA" is held in Vancouver and Whistler, so we encourage applications now to avoid disappointment later. In the meantime, we know the Games will offer many "teachable moments" for American classrooms. The Jan-Feb. 2010 Resource Notice emailed to "Canada Listserv" members and posted at www.k12studycanada.org/news_resource_notices.asp offers numerous teaching resources and curriculum ideas for you.

February also offers opportunities to celebrate Black History Month and this edition features many ways historical connections to Canada can be added to curricula. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Over and above any kinship of U.S. citizens and Canadians as North Americans, there is a singular historical relationship between

American Negroes and Canadians." [See more at www.mcgill.ca/maritimelaw/history/kingjr/] We were delighted that Evelyn C. White, author of *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone: A Photo Narrative of Black Heritage on Salt Spring Island*, agreed to write a feature article that focused on John Craven Jones, a Black educator who influenced both Canadian and US history. This "unsung" hero's story can be shared with your own classrooms—ironically—through song. We hope you find this issue offers you new ways to look at Black History and that the new decade proves as successful as the last for establishing curriculum connections to Canada.

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Celebrating Black Canadian History: The Story of John Craven Jones

—by Evelyn C. White

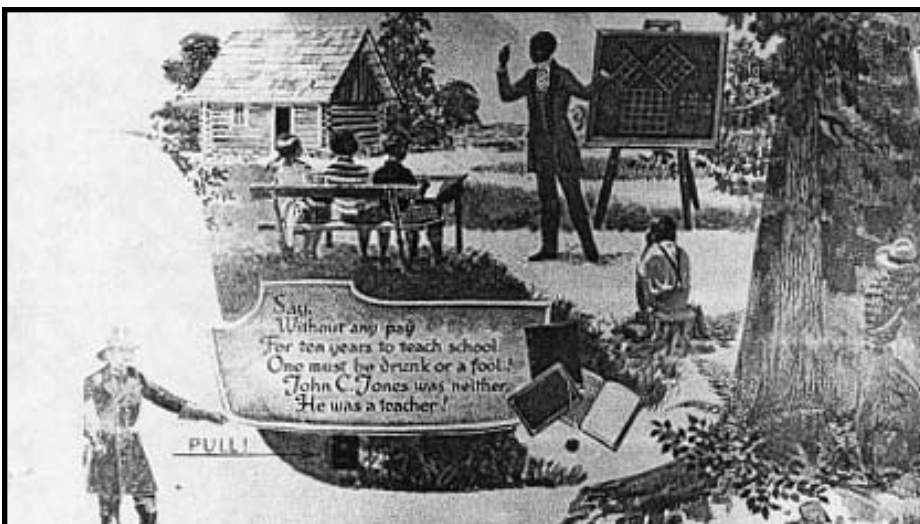
Had he remained in the United States, North Carolina-born educator John Craven Jones (1834-1911) might have been remembered in the realm of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Dubois, or Martin Luther King, Jr.—all legendary figures lauded for their commitment to racial justice and equality.

Instead, Jones migrated from the United States to western Canada in 1859, when he was age 25. There, in the then deeply forested, cougar-filled terrain, Jones labored as the first teacher on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia (B.C.). Now, nearly a century after his death, Jones has been honored with a folk song by a Salt Spring musician who was inspired by the educator's saga and the stature that schooling held for the island's first year-round residents.

"I was really struck by how this group of black people who came here were not your normal pioneers," said singer/songwriter Phil Vernon, explaining the impetus for his tune "John Craven Jones." "I had a really strong sense of the importance of education for the early black settlers." Mindful that blacks were forbidden, during slavery, to learn how to read or write, Vernon composed a refrain with special meaning for his song:

"You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones."

An 1856 graduate of Oberlin College with a proficiency in Greek and Latin, Jones was among a group of free blacks that settled on Salt Spring in the late 1850s. Accomplished as civic leaders, merchants, trades people and farmers, the blacks had departed from Northern California under the threat of a series of repressive laws that aimed to curtail their hard-won freedom. Interestingly, the disaffected blacks were seeking sanctuary at the same time that B.C. provincial governor James Douglas (himself the son of a black woman born in Barbados) was in need of skilled laborers to support the boomtown frenzy after gold had been discovered along the Fraser River. After a sojourn in Victoria, many of the blacks moved on to Salt Spring, the ancestral home then, as now, of the Coast Salish people.



This photo is of an illustration of Jones teaching in the 1860's from a mural depicting the history of Salt Spring Island's settler community. It was painted by Alfred Temmel, a master muralist of the old Bavarian tradition, in the early 1970's. The text references the ten dedicated years that Jones was rumored to have gone without salary to educate island children. The mural still exists but lies underneath layers of wallpaper glue and paint. [With permission from: <http://saltspringarchives.com/roots/schools/pages/JCJones.html>]

As a student at Oberlin, Jones had learned how to set up a one-room school for children in grades one through eight. "Almost all the black settlers came as families with children and John Craven Jones was teaching almost immediately," notes the Salt Spring Archives. "By 1861, the black settlers were building a big log schoolhouse at Central. Before that, we know that Jones was teaching children wherever he could, in rough sheds or in a family's cabin for a day. Soon he had two schoolhouses, the one at Central and one further north."

Such was Jones's dedication to the youth of Salt Spring that he remained undaunted when the Provincial Board of Education refused to pay him for several years. Grateful for his sacrifice, the parents of Jones's students assisted him with food, shelter and clothing. The man, later hailed as among the most educated in the province, eventually earned a salary of about \$500 per year.

By 1875, Jones had stopped teaching and focused his attention on farming. In the early 1880s he left for the United States and returned to the classroom. Teaching the preferred profession of Jones's immediate and distant kin, a family member would later instruct civil rights activist Jesse Jackson during his college years in North Carolina.

The story of John Craven Jones holds special relevance at a time when the pool of black male teachers is in decline. The latest data available shows that black males comprise only 2 percent of the 2,619,000 credentialed teachers in the country according to the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education.

Phil Vernon says he's been uplifted by the response to "John Craven Jones" and is now teaching the song to Salt Spring school children. "They are proud to know that the first teacher on the island was a black man," Jones says. "It makes them feel special."

Teachers and students can listen to the song about John Craven Jones at: www.k12studycanada.org/files/audio/John_Craven_Jones_Demo.mp3.

Evelyn C. White is a journalist and author of several books including *Every Goodbye Ain't Gone: A Photo Narrative of Black Heritage on Salt Spring Island* (Dancing Crow Press, 2009) and *Alice Walker: A Life* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2004).

John Craven Jones

Phil Vernon ©2009

The year was eighteen-fifty-nine
When Blacks came to these shores
Leaving California
And its discriminatory laws
They came for land and liberty
To build a life that was their own
And with them was a man of books
Named John Craven Jones

Now Jones was fresh from college
With a school teacher's degree
To him an education
Was the key to being free
But the children of the settlement
They had no school at all
So we built a big log cabin
And Jones took up the call

You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

He taught three days at Central
Three days at Fernwood too
For years he had no salary
For the teaching that he'd do
There were kids of every colour
Well-fed or skin and bones
All hungry for the knowledge
Of their teacher Mister Jones

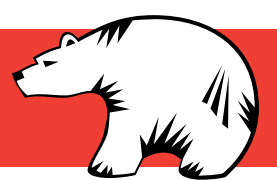
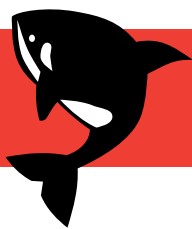
You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

There's a spirit dwells inside us
There's a light that shines within
No matter what our station
Or the colour of our skin
Sometimes that spirit rises up
To shine for everyone
And the light within
John Craven Jones
It shone just like the sun

You can build your house of timber
You can build your house of stones
But the best foundation
Is a good education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

You can travel all around this world
You can spend your life at home
But the best foundation
Is a proper education
Said our teacher Mister Jones

Salt Spring Island's first
schoolteacher
John Craven Jones



Upcoming 2010 Workshops & Activities

Olympics-Related Activities - January-March at WWU
WWU Campus Connections to Vancouver 2010
Details: www.wwu.edu/canam/events.shtml

Public Lecture - February 10 at UW
From Igloos to Internet: The Inuit in the 21st Century
by Pita Aatami, President, Makivik Corporation, Nunavik
Details: <http://jsis.washington.edu/canada/events.php>

Educator Workshop - February 12 at UW
Journey to the Canadian Arctic: Interactive and Interdisciplinary Curriculum for K-12 Educators
Presentation by Elizabeth and John Kilbourne, Grand Valley State University
Details: <http://jsis.washington.edu/canada/events.php>

Educator Conference - March 9-10 in Lake Chelan, WA
WSCSS: Teaching Like our Future Depends on it!
Presentation by Kindra Kilgore, Teacher Associate
Details: <http://www.wscss.org>

SMAK Film Series - March 18 at UW
Canadian Film: Breakfast with Scot
Details: <http://jsis.washington.edu/smak>

Educator Workshop - May 8 at UW
K-8 Mosaic: Movement and Music across the Curriculum
Details: <http://jsis.washington.edu/outreach/mosaic/>

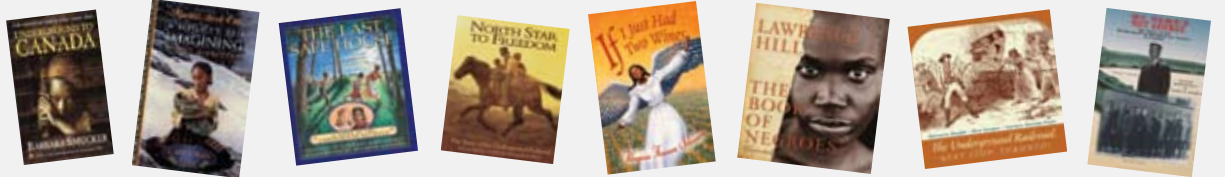
Educator Workshop - June 20-25 in BC (Canada)
32nd Annual STUDY CANADA Summer Institute: Experience BC from the 5 Themes of Geography to the 2010 Olympics
Details: www.k12studycanada.org/scsi.asp

Educator Workshop - June 28-29 at UW
JSIS Summer Seminar: The International History and Economics of Food

For additional details and descriptions of the Canadian component to each event, please visit: www.k12studycanada.org/calendar.asp and <http://jsis.washington.edu/outreach/events.php>

Canada in the Classroom: K-12 Resources

Consider these Internet sites, books and curricula during Black History Month and when offering classroom connections to Canada. Many students never realize that "Canaan" in spirituals and the North Star on quilts represented Canada when taught about the Underground Railroad. Even fewer know that St. Catherine's, Ontario, was the base of Harriet Tubman's operations from 1851 to 1857 for conducting so many former slaves to freedom.



Best of the Internet:

Who Killed William Robinson?
www.canadianmysteries.ca/sites/robinson/home/indexen.html. A contemporary of John Craven Jones, William Robinson taught Sunday school in the same log schoolhouse. His brutal murder in 1868 and subsequent charges against an indigenous man merit further inquiry and students enjoy history when trying to solve "cold cases" like this one.

The Black Canadian Experience in Ontario (1834-1914): Flight, Freedom, Foundation
www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/on-line-exhibits/black-history/index.aspx

Black History Canada <http://blackhistorycanada.ca>

Black Loyalists: Our History, Our People
<http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/blackloyalists/index.htm>

Canadian Black Heritage in the Third Millennium
<http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~gpieters/blklinks.html>

Remembering Black Loyalists, Black Communities in Nova Scotia <http://museum.gov.ns.ca/blackloyalists/>



Curricula:

Black Canadians: Heritage, Culture and Contributions
www.curriculum.org/blackcanadians/index.shtml
This portal offers access to excellent classroom materials such as the "Blacks in Canada: A Long History" background at www.statcan.gc.ca/studies-etudes/11-008/feature-caracteristique/5018918-eng.pdf

Some Missing Pages: The Black Community in the History of Canada and Québec
www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/curriculum/social_sciences/features/missingpages

To Be A Slave: An Integrated Theme Unit on African Slavery and the History of the UGRR www.stf.sk.ca/services/stewart_resources_centre/online_catalogue_unit_plans/middle_level_unit_plans/pdfs/E112_84.pdf

Some Missing Pages: 45-page Activity Book
www.learnquebec.ca/export/sites/learn/en/content/curriculum/social_sciences/documents/smpsup.pdf

Underground to Canada: Webquest Supplement
www.saskschools.ca/~lumsdenel/undergroundtocanada/

Just Add Students: Instant Lesson Plans
www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/educational-resources/just-add-students.aspx

"The Underground Railroad...Then What Happened?" and "Ruth Writer's UGRR Bibliography" www.k12studycanada.org/resources_lesson_plan_links.asp

Historical Youth Fiction:

Underground to Canada by Barbara Smucker. This is a Canadian favorite and the foreword is written by Lawrence Hill.

Our Canadian Girl Series: Rachel (4 titles by Lynne Kositsky) Teaching guides for the first 3 novels are available at <http://ourcanadiangirl.ca/teachers/index.php>

The Last Safe House: A Story of the Underground Railroad by Barbara Greenwood and Heather Collins

North Star to Freedom: The Story of the Underground Railroad by G. Kinton Gorrell, L. David and R. Brown

If I Just Had Two Wings by Virginia Frances Schwartz

Secondary-level Fiction and Non-Fiction:

The Book of Negroes by Lawrence Hill. "Stylistically flawless, thematically layered and historically fascinating, this novel is a masterpiece." — Edeet Ravel, author.

"The Complex Face of Black Canada" by George Elliot Clarke <http://news-archive.mcgill.ca/w97/black.htm>

The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto! by Adrienne L. Shadd, Afua Cooper and Karolyn Smardz Frost

My Name is not George: The Story of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in Canada by S. G. Grizzle

Tubman: Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Her Life in the United States and Canada by Rosemary Sadlier.

Other Voices: Writings by Blacks in Canada (Editor: Lorrin Elliott) Poetry, plays, and short stories.

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