NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL BLACK HISTORY NEWS DIGEST-MARCH 2014

Compiled by Peter Hanes
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WEBCAST/WEBVIDEO ALERT: UN to mark annual International Day to remember the victims of slavery, March 25-27, 2014, at UN headquarters in New York City, and with worldwide activities across 2014; The commemoration, whose theme is *Victory over Slavery: Haiti and Beyond*, will also honour the UNESCO Slave Route Project's 20th anniversary, the winning design for a UN memorial to victims of slavery, and is a prelude to the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024).

UNITED NATIONS--The United Nations (UN) will mark its annual International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade in a series of commemorative, educational and cultural events (to be webcast) March 25-27, 2014, at UN headquarters in New York City, NY, and with related worldwide activities across 2014.

The commemoration, whose theme is *Victory over Slavery: Haiti and Beyond*, is being held in concert with the UNESCO Slave Route Project's 20th anniversary, will also recognize the winning design for a UN headquarters permanent memorial to such victims of slavery, and is a prelude to the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) to be launched in January, 2015. The March 25, 2014 UN General Assembly solemn commemorative meeting will include remarks by various distinguished individuals, including former Governor General of Canada, the Right Hon. Michaëlle Jean, in her capacity as UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti and a member of the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Slave Route Project (2014-2015).
[see http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/index.shtml]

For over 400 years, more than 15 million men, women and children were the victims of the tragic transatlantic slave trade, one of the darkest chapters in human history. The British Parliament passed the 1807 Abolition of Slave Trade Act on March 25, 1807, to outlaw such trade throughout the British Empire. The Act prohibited British ships from being involved in the slave trade and marked the start of the end of the transatlantic traffic of human beings. A year later, the Royal Navy's West African Squadron was established to suppress transatlantic slave trading. Over the next 60 years, the squadron's anti-slavery operations along the West Coast of Africa and into East Africa and the Caribbean enforced the ban. William Wilberforce, the British Parliamentary leader of the anti-slavery movement, with key allies Thomas Clarkson, Olaudah Equiano and others, led the successful effort to convince the Parliament to pass the Act. The measure set in motion an international crusade that ultimately resulted in the outlawing of slavery worldwide.

Every year on 25 March, the UN International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. The International Day also aims at raising awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

The UN will erect a permanent memorial to honour such victims at UN headquarters in New York City, NY. The winning design for the memorial, *The Ark of Return* by Rodney Leon, an American architect of Haitian descent, was selected through an international competition and announced in September 2013.

2014 Commemoration-This year's theme, *Victory over Slavery: Haiti and Beyond***,** pays tribute to the fight against slavery in nations around the world. Haiti was the first nation to become independent as a result of the struggle of enslaved men and women led by Toussaint Louverture. This year marks 210 years since the Republic of Haiti was established on January 1, 1804.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO Slave Route Project, launched in Ouidah, Benin, in 1994, which decided to break the silence surrounding the slave trade and slavery. The project has produced multimedia educational materials, available for educators, students and the general public.

A number of worldwide activities will be organized throughout the year in addition to the official observance of the UN International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, on 25 March 2014. Activities, many of which will be webcast live and webarchived, include: a solemn commemorative meeting of the UN General Assembly; roundtable discussions; a film festival; an exhibit; a non-governmental organization (NGO) briefing; and a global video conference with students living in countries affected by the transatlantic slave trade.

For more information on the program, visit http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/
See attachments and related weblinks below.

RELATED UN AFRICAN AND UN AFRICAN DIASPORA HERITAGE INITIATIVES/INFORMATION

UNESCO Slave Route Project (SRP)-Theme: *Resistance, Liberty, Heritage*;
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dialogue/the-slave-route

UNESCO SRP 20th Anniversary Commemoration-Theme: *Assume the Past, Understand the present, Build the future together*
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dialogue/the-slave-route/spotlight/twentieth-anniversary/

UNESCO General History of Africa Project
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dialogue/general-history-of-africa/

UN INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT (2015-2024)
UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/237, Dec. 19, 2013 submitted by the President of the General Assembly was approved Dec. 23, 2013: Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) (2 pages)--
Theme: People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/237

See also:
UN International Decades List [http://www.un.org/en/events/observances/decades.shtml]
UN General Assembly Resolutions List [http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/resolutions.shtml]
UN General Assembly Dec. 23, 2013 meeting record GA 11479 [
http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2013/ga11479.doc.htm]

UN Department of Public Information News October 21, 2013:
Adopting Consensus Text, UN General Assembly endorses construction of
permanent memorial at UN headquarters to honour slave victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade
www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2013/ga11443.doc.htm

Unveiling of the winning design for the UN headquarters permanent memorial to victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade
[see www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/in-focus-articles/the-ark-of-return/ and www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=45947&Cr=slavery&Cr1=#.UlLi1lOCD_w]

UN International Day for the Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade-Annual Commemoration held on March 25
[2014 Theme: *Victory over Slavery: Haiti and Beyond* (see weblink below for the UN headquarters events, many of which will be webcast and also open to the public).
http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryremembranceday/

UN Mandela International Day [for freedom, justice and democracy]-July 18
http://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition (UNESCO)-August 23
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/slave-trade-and-its-abolition/

FILMFEST: Featured Films Related to Slavery (Not an exhaustive list)

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Fox Searchlight Pictures TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE (2013) | Rated R | From acclaimed director Steve McQueen comes this "deeply evocative and brilliantly acted" film (Claudia Puig, USA Today) based on the true story of Solomon Northup. It is 1841, and Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor in a gripping performance), an accomplished, free citizen of New York, is kidnapped and sold into slavery. Stripped of his identity and deprived of all dignity, Northup is ultimately purchased by ruthless plantation owner Edwin Epps (Michael Fassbender) and must find the strength within to survive. Filled with powerful performances by an outstanding cast that includes Benedict Cumberbatch, Brad Pitt and newcomer Lupita Nyong'o, 12 Years A Slave is both an unflinching account of slavery in American history and a celebration of the indomitable power of hope. | runtime: 134 minutes |. For DVD information, see Fox Searchlight Pictures [http://www.12yearsaslave.com/] and Amazon [www.amazon.com].

Monterey Pictures TWELVE YEARS A SLAVE: SOLOMON NORTHUP'S ODYSSEY (1984) | Rated NR | with Avery Brooks (Actor), John Saxon (Actor), Gordon Parks (Director). Decades before Hollywood released the popular new movie, *12 Years a Slave*, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) helped *Life Magazine* photographer Gordon Parks make a film about the same historic episode. *Solomon Northup's Odyssey*, recounting the kidnapping and enslavement of Northup in Saratoga, New York, in 1841 was shown on PBS' *American Playhouse* in 1985. [runtime: 117 minutes]. For DVD information, see Monterey Pictures [http://www.montereymedia.com/literature/americanplayhouse/solomon_northrup.html] the National Endowment for the Humanities [http://www.neh.gov/films/twelve-years-slave-solomon-northups-odyssey] and Amazon [www.amazon.com].

PBS-TV Broadcast Documentary Film Series-The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross with Dr. Henry Louis Gates (2013) | Rated NR | Check website for local TV broadcast listings and for series webvideo episodes [Especially see the webvideo episode The Age of Slavery (1800-1860) that includes the Underground Railroad, Harriet Tubman and Canada]. [runtime: 360 minutes]. www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/

PBS-TV WNED Online Documentary Video-Underground Railroad: The William Still Story (2012) Rated NR | with commentary by Ontario Historians Bryan Prince, Rosemary Sadlier, and Karolyn Smardz Frost [runtime: 55 minutes] http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/shows/list/underground-railroad/home/

PBS-TV Broadcast Documentary Film Series-Black in Latin American with Dr. Henry Louis Gates (2011) | Rated NR | Check website for local TV broadcast listings and for series webvideo episodes [runtime: 240 minutes]. www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/

PBS-TV WNED Broadcast Documentary Video-The War of 1812 (2011) | Rated NR | Check website for local TV broadcast listings and for series webvideo episodes [runtime: 120 minutes]. http://www.pbs.org/wned/war-of-1812/home/

UNESCO Slave Route Project (SRP) documentary film, *Slave Route: the Soul of Resistance*
A UNESCO Slave Route Project Educational Film (2012) | (General Audience Film)
Executive Producer: Ali Moussa-Iye, Chief UNESCO Slave Route Project
Director: Tabue Nguma | Nil Viasnoff
Writer: Tabue Nguma | Les enfants du Reseau des Ecoles Associees de L'UNESCO
Evaluation Copy Not for Resale | Run time: 34:53 minutes (see full video below).
http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/index.php?s=flvplayer&pg=33&vo=2&vl=Eng&id=1901

Film Synopsis: Slavery is told through its materiality under the guise of enslaved voices but also of those called the master or slave trader. Each one tells his experience (similar to that of some others) : from deportation to the plantations, from daily life to abolitions... The slave system from the inside. The film is targeted to students. However, it is well suited for a general audience and references the works of distinguished abolitionists such as William Wilberforce (Britain), Victor Schoelcher (France), Frederick Douglass (USA), Harriet Tubman (USA), and Joaquim Nabuco (Brazil).

UNESCO Slave Route Project (SRP) documentary film, *Slave Routes: A Global Vision*
A UNESCO Slave Route Project Educational Film (2010) | (General Audience Film)
Executive Producer: Ali Moussa-Iye, Chief UNESCO Slave Route Project
Directors: Sheila Walker/Georges Collinet
Writer, Researcher, Videographer: Sheila Walker
Evaluation Copy Not for Resale | Run time: 57 minutes (see excerpts below 9:06 minutes).
http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/index.php?s=flvplayer&pg=33&vl=Eng&vo=2&id=1637

DVD and Pedagogical Guide
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/dialogue/the-slave-route/right-box/related-information/slave-routes-a-global-vision/

Alternate Contact for DVD and group discussions on the film: Sheila Walker, Ph.D. [email: afrodiaspora@me.com], who is based in Washington, DC.

Film Synopsis: The film presents the diverse histories and heritages stemming from the global tragedy of the slave trade and slavery. Aimed at a general audience, it provides an overview of the massive deportation of African populations to different parts of the world including the Americas, Europe, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East, and Asia.

The DVD highlights the African presence across continents, the significant contributions of the African Diaspora to the host societies in various fields (arts, religion, knowledge, gastronomy, agriculture, behaviour, linguistics, etc.), and the racism and discrimination inherited from this tragic past. Its scope moves beyond the trauma of slavery and emphasizes slave resistance and resilience in surviving such a dehumanizing system.

The film is suited for a general audience and references the works of distinguished abolitionists such as William Wilberforce (Britain), Victor Schoelcher (France), Frederick Douglass (USA), and Harriet Tubman (USA).

See other UNESCO Slave Route Project Films online at:
http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/index.php?pg=90&pattern=Slave%20route

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Eleventh Day Entertainment, Inc. FOR LOVE OF LIBERTY: THE STORY OF AMERICA'S BLACK PATRIOTS (2010) | Rated NR | Writer, Producer, Director: Frank Martin. If prevalent and accepted accounts of American History – both scholarly and those portrayed by Hollywood – are to be believed, the face of the United States Armed Services was white. The truth is over 5,000 Black soldiers fought in the American Revolution. And though most were not recognized as citizens or even free man, more than 200,000 took up arms in the Civil War. Over 380,000 African-Americans served in WW I and more than 2,000,000 defended this country in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Yet most accounts of their valiant actions are absent from history books and contemporary film.

For Love Of Liberty: The Story Of America's Black Patriots finally, and for the first time, sets the record straight. Its theme, the price of liberty, is relevant to all Americans. Ten years in the making, the 4 hour, 2 part PBS documentary is introduced by Colin Powell, hosted on-camera by Halle Berry and features an outstanding cast that includes: Morgan Freeman; Bill Cosby; John Travolta; Ossie Davis; Ruby Dee; Robert Duvall; Danny Glover; Sam Elliot; Delroy Lindo; Walter Cronkite; Angela Bassett; John Amos; Kris Kristofferson; Ice-T, Donald Sutherland; Blair Underwood; Cliff Robertson; Courtney B. Vance; Alan Rickman; Jesse L. Martin; Alfre Woodard; Robert Townsend; Mel Gibson; Charles Dutton; Michael Clark Duncan; Chris Cooper; and Louis Gossett Jr.

This cast reads from a collection of letters, diaries, speeches and military records that document and acknowledge the sacrifices and accomplishments of African-American service men and women since the earliest days of the republic. The story spans the Revolution to Afghanistan and examines why, despite enormous injustice, these heroic men and women fought so valiantly for freedoms they themselves did not enjoy. [runtime: 240 minutes]. For DVD information, see Eleventh Day Entertainment, Inc. [http://forloveofliberty.org/index.html] and Amazon [www.amazon.com].

Anthony Sherwood Productions HONOUR BEFORE GLORY (2001) | Rated NR | Producer/Director/Writer: Anthony Sherwood The story of Canada's only all-Black Battalion during World War I; Blacks from Canada, the United States and the Caribbean served in the battalion.

The story is based on the diary of Reverend William White, the only Black commissioned officer in the entire British Armed Forces during the First World War. Poetic and eloquent descriptions from William White's diary provide an emotional narrative for the documentary. Through compelling dramatizations, personal interviews, and archival film footage, details of his story come to life in the film. As the contents of the diary are revealed, we learn how this unique battalion overcame immense obstacles of discrimination to become an important part of Canadian history. Blacks from Canada, the United States and the Caribbean served in the battalion. The film was written, produced and directed by Canadian actor Anthony Sherwood, who is the great-nephew of William White. | run time: 66 minutes | For DVD information, see Anthony Sherwood Productions [www.anthonysherwood.com and contact the producer email: a.sherwood@bell.net]

FEATURED BOOKS, ARTICLES

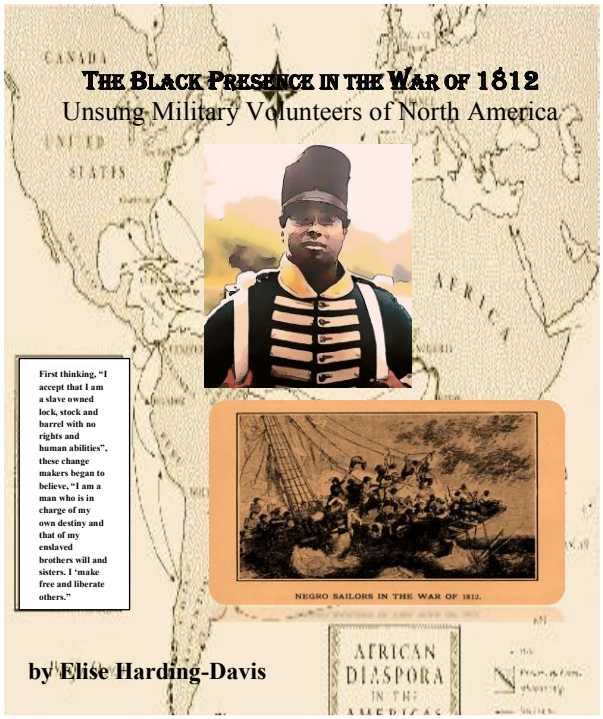
The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery: New Directions in Teaching and Learning, edited by Paul E. Lovejoy and Benjamin Bowser, was formally launched at UNESCO in Paris on April 16, 2013. The Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, the President of the UNESCO Executive Board, Alissandra Cummins, and the President of the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO Slave Route Project, Maria Elisa Velasquez, praised the publication as an important milestone in fulfilling the goals of UNESCO. Professor Paul Lovejoy, co-editor of the book and former Director of the Harriet Tubman Institute, explained the aims of the book in addressing the difficulties of teaching the subject of slavery in the classroom and other disseminating knowledge of slavery as a crime against humanity. The presentation took place in the presence of ambassadors, representatives of Member States of UNESCO and the UNESCO Executive Board. The book is published by Africa World Press [http://www.africaworldpressbooks.com/servlet/Detail?no=988]

In praising the publication of the book, the UNESCO Director-General underlined the tragic history of the slave trade and slavery. The book focuses on the pedagogical and psychological dimensions of teaching and learning and as such represents a unique contribution to the humanistic ideal of promoting universal human rights -- hence, the importance of making this history an engine for intercultural dialogue in our plural societies.

"Education is essential for raising awareness about the slave trade and slavery and for better understanding the societies we live in today," said Irina Bokova. The Director-General underscored the role of UNESCO in transmitting the history of the transatlantic slavery and its abolition as being essential to the struggle against racism and for the observance of human rights, of human dignity and for building peace. “The story of the slave trade raises issues that affect the very foundation of our humanity”, she declared. The Director-General highlighted the importance of exploring the transmission of history in textbooks, teaching materials and teacher training. She emphasized the need to integrate the issue of slavery into formal education as a lever for international reconciliation, mutual understanding and social inclusion.

The Chair of the Executive Board, Alessandra Cummins from Barbados, emphasized the need for a breakthrough of scientific research on the history of the transatlantic slave trade, which, she said "is a topic still absent in textbooks, in films, and in the media". She further underscored the "expectations generated through the Slave Route Project in different regions and countries over the last ten years" had led to considerable breakthroughs, including the identification by the United Nations of the Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). The Chair urged "UNESCO to directly contribute to raising awareness of the malignant influences of the slave trade in neglected regions, such as the Indian Ocean, Middle East and Asia."

Professor Paul Lovejoy noted the progress in raising public awareness since the inception of UNESCO's Slave Route project in 1994, underscoring its paramount objective "to do justice to the past" and "to identify and recognize global diversity" that has arisen from the ashes of slavery.



THE BLACK PRESENCE IN THE WAR OF 1812

Unsung Military Volunteers of North America

About the bold and daring "civilian soldiers" fighting for freedom on land and sea:

- **Africans • Americans**
- **Canadians • Caribbeans**

A new book by Elise Harding-Davis:
African Canadian Historian; Curator/Administrator Emeritus, North American Black Historical Museum & Cultural Centre; Author; Lecturer; Consultant

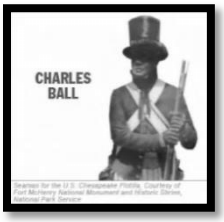
**WITHOUT POSITIVE BLACK HISTORY--
ALL HISTORY IS INCOMPLETE!**

ISBN 987-1-623-193-6 | Price: $15.00 CDN/ $15.00 US + shipping | **Email: elisedavis62@yahoo.com**
Phone: 519-738-6820

The War of 1812 was a defining moment in Canadian and American history. Blacks, "as a people", lived, toiled under the yoke of slavery and died dreaming of freedom. Black men had a vested interest in fighting for liberty. An American victory would see British Canada forfeit its freedom to agonize under foreign control. Blacks would surely be enslaved! To every single African Canadian pioneer, enslavement was a fate worse than death. African Americans wanted to hasten emancipation in the U.S.A. and free family and friends. All Blacks wanted to fight for liberty, prove their manhood and be counted as nation builders.

The aim of this book is to flesh out the contributions of Blacks in the War of 1812 from a North American Black prospective. The true unheralded nature of their involvement must be brought to light as it is fundamental to the development, building and progress of North America. The intention is to provide a more accurate historical picture of the role and influence of Black people than has been presented heretofore. The reader will discover that the role of Black military personnel, nationally and internationally, in this conflict contributed substantially to shaping our beloved Canada and the illustrious United States of America. Examining 'our' reasons for joining the cause and publicizing 'our' determinations of a better destiny will give both a clearer view of history and a helpful interpretation of the interplay of cultures - economically, socially and intellectually, as they exist to-day . . . ."

RICHARD PIERPOINT was born free in Bondu, Africa. During his lifetime, he was a slave, a Black United Empire Loyalist, a Canadian pioneer, a freedom fighter in three wars, a subsistence farmer and a labourer for hire. There was no documentation that he ever married. He left behind no known descendants. He was very likely illiterate. Given his social challenges and the era he lived in, it is remarkable we know anything about him at all. Still, he has emerged as one of Canada's most remarkable War of 1812 heroes. Pierpoint 'stepped out of his place' and approached Major-General Sir Isaac Brock to form an all-Black fighting unit - *The Coloured Corp*. For his vision and valiant efforts, Richard Pierpoint should be declared and celebrated as a National Historic Hero. Richard Pierpoint was a true Black revolutionary!



CHARLES BALL was a third generation slave born in Calvert County, Maryland. In 1805, he was sold to a Georgia trader. He spent the next several years working on plantations in the South. Ball decided to be free and made a daring escape back to Maryland. Declaring himself a free man, Ball worked for local farmers until war broke out in the Chesapeake. In December 1813, he enlisted under Commodore Joshua Barney and served as seaman and cook for the Chesapeake Flotilla. Later he helped to sink the flotilla to keep it out of British hands. Soon after, he marched with Barney's troops from Benedict to Bladensburg and manned the cannon to the left of Barney until the Commodore was shot down. Ball was discharged in the fall of 1814 and behaved as a free man. Incredulously, he was still subject to Fugitive Slave Laws. Charles Ball wrote a book about his life.

***Port of Harlem Snippets* online Praising the Past**
The War of 1812: A Black Bicentennial Perspective

by CR Gibbs, Historian of the African Diaspora
June 14, 2012

Image: British loyalist and Senegambian-Canadian Richard Pierpoint. Artwork by Malcolm Jones, courtesy Canadian War Museum

Blacks with the Americans--At the beginning of the war, there were 1.3 million persons of African descent in the United States, representing 19 percent of the total population. Eighty seven percent of the Black population was enslaved. Thirteen percent was free. The two and a half year conflict between England and the United States began in 1812. No matter how little known or remembered today, the war was a transforming struggle for many Blacks.

Thousands of men, women and children left slavery's grief in the wake of the British ships they sailed away on to an often arduous, but free future in ports as distant as Trinidad, Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. Men of African descent in opposing armies warily eyed each other over their gunfights in several of the war's major battles, including Bladensburg and New Orleans. And throughout America, at all times, Black people sought to exploit the opportunities and inconsistencies of the war for one paramount objective: freedom.

History books tell us that the war had three major causes: the seizure of American vessels trading with France (with whom England was fighting), England's arming of Native Americans who raided American frontier settlements and England's forcible taking of thousands of sailors in an act known as "impressment." (The Impress Service was formed to force sailors to serve on naval vessels -- there was no concept of joining the navy as a fixed career path for non-officers at the time.)

In 1807, in one of the war's most notorious preludes, at least one of the four men British sailors seized by force from the American frigate "Chesapeake," was David Martin, a free Black man from Massachusetts. Some scholars believe that two other impressed crewmen, Strachan and Ware, were also Black. The British claimed they were members of the British Royal Navy.
Despite both a 1792 militia act and a Federal ban on Black military service, large numbers of African Americans enlisted in the American Navy seeking opportunity and relishing the freedom of the seas. They comprised over 15 percent of all American naval forces and participated in many significant naval battles.

In 1814, at the Battle of Lake Erie, considered the war's most important naval engagement, Blacks made up nearly a quarter of the complement of the American squadron. Some Blacks were even able to enlist in the regular United States Army, particularly in the 26th Regiment. In 1814, New York State recruited 2,000 free and enslaved Blacks, promising the enslaved their freedom at the end of the war.
In cities and on plantations, many American slave-owners feared their enslaved would rebel when they heard about the war. In Georgia and East Florida, fugitive enslaved Blacks joined Native Americans and conducted guerilla warfare. Patrols increased as did reports of enslaved conspiracies and news of actual or attempted revolts from Mississippi to Maryland. When the mayor of Washington, D.C. learned that British troops were about to invade the city, "he even begged colored men to join the citizens' corps of workers" to help protect the city, wrote one historian. After the British redcoats had left, he expressed his gratitude for their "zeal," "order" and "propriety."

Blacks with the British--When the British fleet arrived in the Chesapeake Bay in March 1813, between 3,000 to 5,000 enslaved individuals and families ultimately made their way to these vessels. At the end of the war, nearly 1,500 runaways were with the Royal Navy when it evacuated Cumberland Island, Georgia. At Fort Albion on Tangier Island in the Chesapeake Bay, the British trained African Americans who served in the Colonial Marines disrupted commerce and freed enslaved Africans along the Northern Neck of Virginia and the Eastern Shore of Maryland. **British forces also made excellent use of African Americans, African Canadians, and West Indian troops.**

See above Port of Harlem article at: http://www.portofharlem.net/praisingthepast/gibbsjun12.html

Useful Links
War of 1812 Bicentennial International Events
Maryland Star Spangled 200
Virginia Bicentennial of the American War of 1812

***Port of Harlem Snippets* online-Praising the Past**
Africans' Role in the First World War

by CR Gibbs, Historian of the African Diaspora
February 6, 2013

"The power struggle for Africa was one of the causes of World War 1."
- Endre Sik (The History of Black Africa, Volume 2.)

This year marks the beginning of the international centennial commemoration of the First World War (1914-1918) - - the war to end all wars. Standard history books tell us that the cause of the war was the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand, the start of a seemingly inexorable chain of circumstances that plunged the major nations of Europe into a cataclysmic conflict in which Black folk had no part and Africa had no role.

This first of the 20th century's two global clashes ushered in the age of high-tech slaughter. In the bloodiest contest the world had ever known up to that time, there were over 5,700,000 Allied military deaths of which the troops of Great Britain and its empire amounted to over 1,000,000. Civilian deaths from all causes among the Allies were more than 3,500,000.

Deaths suffered by the opposing Central Powers were 7,000,000. Total deaths among the warring nations were over 16,500,000. In addition there were over 21,000,000 military wounded. And the dead and wounded were not all European.

Africa: Men and Resources

W.E.B. DuBois observed that "Competition for colonies among Britain, France, and Germany deserve a share of the blame for World War 1. Germany's four African colonies comprised three on the west and one on the east: Togolands, Cameroons, German Southwest Africa, now part of Namibia, and German East Africa."

Historian James Ciment in his historical atlas also noted that "Among the many causes of the war was the imperial scramble for African colonies in the last two decades of the 19th century. At various points in that period, England, France, and Germany nearly came to blows over African territory, creating tensions that would play themselves out in European politics of the early 20th century."

European nations raced against each other in Africa to assert their national and racial pride, pursue exploitative commercial policies, and secure military and naval bases for strategic purposes. For example, French bases in the Horn of Africa enabled the French flag to wave over its colonial possessions in southeast Asia. Added to the rape of the continent's minerals, metals, wood, and rubber, was superadded the forced conscription of its soldiers and civilians in a colossal and vicious conflict that straddled the planet and pitted Africans fighting each other under opposing European flags.

France employed the largest number of African troops. By August, 1914, there were 14,000 soldiers from Senegal (Tirailluers Senegalese) in France. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians, Kenyans, Namibians, Congolese, Moroccans, South Africans and many others served as soldiers, laborers, or carriers. An estimated 2,000,000 people in Africa made huge sacrifices for the European Allies. Approximately 100,000 men died in East Africa, and 65,000 from French North Africa and French West Africa lost their lives. The last troops to surrender after the war were East African soldiers serving under the German flag.

The United States and the Caribbean

Black men outside Africa saw the war as an opportunity to demonstrate their patriotism and equality. The first Bermudian killed in the war was William E. Smith who died when his Royal Navy cruiser sank in the North Sea. Eighty-nine more Bermudians died during the war. The U.S. entered the war in 1917 and over 350,000 African American men and women served before the end of hostilities in November, 1918.

See above Port of Harlem article at: http://www.portofharlem.net/snippets14/feb192014.html#one

Black Freedom Days Fact Sheet -
A Summary of Key Events in the Abolition of Slavery Worldwide
by C.R. Gibbs, Historian of the African Diaspora

January 1, 1804	Haiti celebrates its independence. This country is the first modern nation to be led by a person of African descent. Haiti is the world's only example of a successful slave revolt leading to the establishment of an internationally recognized nation or republic. Celebrations of Haiti's existence and achievements take place throughout the Black Diaspora.
September 15, 1829	Mexico abolishes slavery.
March 25, 1807	The British Parliament passes the 1807 Abolition of Slave Trade Act to outlaw such trade throughout the British Empire. The Act prohibited British ships from being involved in the slave trade and marked the start of the end of the transatlantic traffic of human beings. A year later, the Royal Navy's West African Squadron is established to suppress transatlantic slave trading. Over the next 60 years, the squadron's anti-slavery operations along the West Coast of Africa and into East Africa and the Caribbean enforced the ban. William Wilberforce, the British Parliamentary leader of the anti-slavery movement, with key allies Thomas Clarkson, Olaudah Equiano and others, led the successful effort to convince the Parliament to pass the Act. The measure set in motion an international crusade that ultimately resulted in the outlawing of slavery worldwide.
August 1, 1834	The 1833 Slavery Abolition Act takes effect to end slavery within the British Empire's colonies. At this time, the Empire spanned several continents and encompassed parts of the Caribbean, Africa, Canada, India, China, Australia, and South America as far as the tip of Argentina. Also at this time, there are about 800,000 enslaved persons in the British West Indies. This historic action fueled abolition movements worldwide that led to slavery's end in Europe, the Caribbean colonies, the United States, and South America. Annual observances still occur in Trinidad, Jamaica and Guyana. The Caribbean Historical Society leads present-day efforts to make August 1st, International Emancipation Day worldwide.
April 27, 1848	The French republic decrees the end of slavery in its empire. Annual commemorations occur in France and some former French Caribbean colonies.
April 16, 1862	President Abraham Lincoln signs the District of Columbia Emancipation Act which abolishes slavery in the District and provides the only example of compensation by the Federal Government of former slaveholders for the freedom of the enslaved persons.
June 19, 1862	Slavery is ended in all United States territories, e.g. Utah, Nevada, and Colorado, et al.
January 1, 1863	President Abraham Lincoln signs the Emancipation Proclamation. It declares enslaved persons in the rebellious states to be free and formally allows Black men to enlist in the Union Army. Yearly observances take place in Black communities in the East and South.
July 1, 1863	Holland frees its enslaved persons.
June 19, 1865	Union Army General Gordon Granger lands in Galveston, Texas, and issues General Order No. 3 bringing an end to slavery and equality before the law. Juneteenth celebrations commence.
December 6, 1865	The U.S. Congress ratifies the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ending slavery.
May 13, 1888	Slavery ends in Brazil.
1868 – 1888	Slavery is abolished in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil, etc. Yearly observances were held often.

Note: Many Caribbean and South American countries substituted their respective independence celebrations for earlier emancipation festivities.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE—NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

HON. REV. DR. DON MEREDITH, SENATOR, SENATE OF CANADA: HONOURS BLACK CANADIAN VETERANS, LEADS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL BLACK VETERANS MONUMENT; INTRODUCES A BILL TO ESTABLISH A LINCOLN ALEXANDER DAY TO HONOUR THE DISTINGUISHED CANADIAN; HONOURS THE LATE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA NELSON MANDELA.

The Valiant Military Contributions of African Canadians in Defending Freedom - Throughout Canada's history, since colonial times, Canadians of African descent have served on the field of honour with their compatriots. They aided in defending the Nation with pride and courage on foreign soil and at home, in war and in peacetime. Blacks, enslaved and free, served in the military on both sides during the American Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, respectively, and those enslaved also sought their freedom through such military service. Black Canadians fought in the American Civil War's union forces that won the war, saved the union and paved the way for slavery's end in the USA. Black Canadians—soldiers, sailors and airmen-- have served with valor with the Canadian Forces across the globe to defend freedom. Black Canadians served bravely with their countrymen and Canada's allies in Europe in two world wars and the Korean War and continue to be part of peacekeeping missions around the world. Among a few of numerous other examples, Canada's all-Black battalion during WWI, the No. 2 Construction Battalion which was deployed to Europe, consisted of Blacks from Canada, the USA and the Caribbean. Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Flying Officer Alan Bundy flew many missions in Europe during WWII. Capt. Fred Hutchinson, RCAF, was a flight instructor during WWII who ferried American-made bombers across the Atlantic to Great Britain and was later a RCAF flight instructor for the renowned Tuskegee Airmen.

See Sen. Don Meredith and Ryerson University host 3rd annual UK Commonwealth Remembrance Day Program November 9, 2013 to honour Black Veterans
See Video [runtime: 1 hour, 25 minutes]: https://ryecast.ryerson.ca/46/watch/5259.aspx

The Hon. Lincoln Alexander - was a distinguished Canadian and a tireless advocate for education, youth, fairness and justice who: served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during WWII; was an excellent lawyer-his outstanding merit and contributions to the legal profession were recognized when he was appointed as Queen's Counsel in 1965; was elected in 1968 as Canada's first Black member of parliament, representing Ontario's Hamilton West; was a United Nations observer in 1976 and 1978; was named in 1979 as Minister of Labour, Canada's first Black cabinet minister; was appointed in 1985 as Ontario's twenty-fourth Lieutenant Governor, representing Queen Elizabeth. He was the first minority to hold that office. He was also the first minority to hold a vice-regal post in all of Canada.

As Lieutenant Governor, Alexander's focus was on education and youth. Over the course of his service, he visited schools across Ontario. At each every stop, he would exhort and inspire students about the value of a good education and how it made a difference in his own life and how it would also make a difference in their lives. After he left his office, Alexander continued his service to Ontario as the first Black chancellor of the University of Guelph. He held his position longer than any other chancellor in the school's history, serving five terms. He continued his long string of firsts when he became the first Black chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust. In 1992, Alexander was honoured as a Companion of the Order of Canada and to the Order of Ontario.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario passed Bill 125 on November 28, 2013, to establish each January 21st as Lincoln Alexander Day [see http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&Intranet=&BillID=2886]. The bill gained royal assent/was signed into law by Ontario's LT Governor David Onley on December 12, 2013. LT Governor Onley and the Province of Ontario marked the first annual Lincoln Alexander Day Commemoration on January 21, 2014 [see writeup: http://www.lgontario.ca/en/events/pages/eventdetails.aspx?eventid=80 and related photos/video: http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/citizenship/honours/lma.shtml]

Province of Ontario, Canada marks first Annual Lincoln Alexander Day on January 21, 2014 to honour Distinguished Canadian http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/news/lincoln-alexander-day-celebrates-life-and-legacy-of-a-pioneer-1.2504008

Sen. Meredith introduced on December 9, 2013 in the Senate of Canada, Bill S-213, an Act to establish Lincoln Alexander Day, [see http://www.parl.gc.ca/LEGISInfo/BillDetails.aspx?billId=6378745&Language=E&Mode=1] which just passed its second reading in the Senate of Canada [see http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/Sen/Chamber/412/Debates/028db_2014-01-28-e.htm#47].

Sen. Don Meredith's *Meredith in Motion Newsletter* - Winter 2013
http://donmeredith.sencanada.ca/en/resources/media/Newsletter%20Proof%20Q42013.pdf

Mrs. Marni Beal Alexander, Lincoln Alexander's widow, has been a major force behind the provincial and federal legislation and other noble efforts to advance Lincoln Alexander's legacy on education, youth, fairness and justice issues. Numerous individuals and groups in the public and private sectors, including, the Ontario Black History Society and its president, Rosemary Sadlier, have also been supportive of the legislation.

USA

DEL. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON INTRODUCES U.S. CONGRESSIONAL BILLS TO ESTABLISH: FREDERICK DOUGLASS BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION COMMISSION; CIVIL WAR DEFENSES OF WASHINGTON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Del. Norton Introduces Bill for Commission to Honor 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Distinguished Abolitionist Frederick Douglass--U.S. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) introduced a bill on February 11, 2014 to establish a Bicentennial Commission to study ways that the federal government might honor and celebrate the life of Frederick Douglass during the bicentennial anniversary of his birth in 2018. Douglass did not know his actual birthdate but later chose to celebrate it on February 14.

In her statement for the Congressional Record introducing the bill, Norton said, "Douglass dedicated his life to achieving justice for all Americans. He lived in the District of Columbia for 23 of his 57 years as a free man and was deeply committed to obtaining equal congressional voting and self-government rights for District of Columbia residents…My bill would simply establish a commission to examine ways the federal government can honor Douglass during the bicentennial anniversary of his birth, including the issuance of a Frederick Douglass bicentennial postage stamp, the convening of a joint meeting or joint session of Congress for ceremonies and activities relating to Frederick Douglass, a rededication of the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, and the acquisition and preservation of artifacts associated with Frederick Douglass."

After years of rebuffs by opponents of D.C. statehood, Norton last year got her bill passed that treats D.C. like the 50 states by bringing a statue of Frederick Douglass representing the District to the U.S. Capitol Building. D.C. is now the only jurisdiction that is not yet a state to have a statue there, along with the 50 states. House and Senate Republican and Democratic leadership sponsored the unveiling of D.C.'s Douglass statue, with Vice President Joe Biden and members of the Douglass family joining Norton and others to speak at the ceremony. Douglass, whose statue is one of four statues or busts in the U.S. Capitol that honors an African American, was known as an abolitionist and an international human rights champion, but he also served in D.C. posts and was a militant fighter for equal citizenship for D.C. residents.

For more information, see the weblinks below:
http://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-introduces-bill-to-honor-frederick-douglass

HR 4055IH Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c113:1:./temp/~c113LjlSvN**::**

Del. Norton Introduces U.S. House Bill to Preserve Washington, DC Region Civil War Defenses-- During the 150th anniversary year of the Civil War, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) introduced on February 5, 2014, a bill to recognize and preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington located in the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland. The bill was introduced with a bipartisan group of Members from the regional delegation – Representatives Donna Edwards (D-MD), Jim Moran (D-VA) and Frank Wolf (R-VA). In her statement for the Congressional Record introducing the bill, Norton said, "Taken together, these battles were pivotal to the outcome of the war and the freedom and democracy that the war represented for this country. It is therefore fitting that we recognize these sites by redesignating them as a national historic park as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War."

For more information, see the weblinks/information below:
http://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-introduces-bill-to-preserve-dc-region-civil-war-defenses

HR 4003 Civil War Defenses of Washington National Historical Parks Act
http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c113:H.R.4003**:**

Loretta Neumann, Vice President
Alliance to Preserve the Civil War Defenses of Washington
Web: http://dccivilwarforts.org/ | email: LorettaNeumann@dccivilwarforts.org
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OTHER NEWS

Fundraising drive underway to repair damage at the African American Civil War Memorial--The African American Civil War Museum [http://afroamcivilwar.org/] is sponsoring a fundraising drive called the RALLY ON THE HIGH GROUND, to fix the shooting-related damage at and around the African American Civil War Memorial. The museum is the nonprofit foundation that built the memorial and operates the museum at the site. For more information on the museum's meaningful educational projects, programs, events, visit http://afroamcivilwar.org/ Individuals and organizations are encouraged to make a financial donation to the RALLY ON THE HIGH GROUND project, through the museum's web page, or by mailing checks to:

African American Civil War Museum
1925 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001 USA

Washington Post February 22, 2014 article Lonnie Bunch, Curator on Exhibit--about the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and its founding director; Museum is projected to open in 2015.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/lonnie-bunch-the-curator-on-exhibit/2014/02/20/7f3c29c0-983c-11e3-afce-3e7c922ef31e_story.html

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park projected to open in January, 2015
http://dnr2.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/eastern/tubman.aspx
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SAVE THE DATE—UPCOMING 2014 NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Conference
June 13-14, 2014
Chesapeake College-Cambridge Branch | Cambridge, Maryland
http://www.tubmanugrr.net/

Mississippi Freedom Summer Civil Rights 50th Anniversary Conference
June 25-29, 2014 | Toogalou College | Jackson, Mississippi
http://www.msfreedomsummer50th.com/Home_Page.html

National Park Service National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program Conference
July 16-20, 2014 | Detroit, Michigan
http://www.nps.gov/subjects/ugrr

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Convention
July 19-23, 2014 | Las Vegas, Nevada
http://www.naacp.org/pages/convention

National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACWC)
July 23-27, 2014
Union Station Hilton Doubletree Hotel | St. Louis, Missouri
http://www.nacwc.org/

National Urban League Conference
July 23-26, 2014 | Cincinnati, Ohio
http://nul.iamempowered.com/

Association of African American Museums (AAAM) Conference
August 6-9, 2014
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel | Birmingham, Alabama
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Johnnetta Cole, Director, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art
http://www.blackmuseums.org/

Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) Annual Legislative Conference
September 24-27, 2014
Walter E. Washington Convention Center | Washington, DC
http://www.cbcfinc.org/

Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) Convention
September 24-28, 2014
The Peabody Hotel | Memphis, Tennessee
http://www.asalh.org/

Afro American Historical & Genealogical Society (AAHGS) Conference
October 9-12, 2014
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel | Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
http://www.aahgs.org/

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Conference
November 21-23, 2014
John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center | Boston, Massachusetts
http://www.socialstudies.org/conference |
*Future Conferences http://www.socialstudies.org/conference/future_years

*NCSS members may submit for consideration, conference session proposals which are due toward the end of January each year.

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