

JANIE COOPER-WILSON

BIOGRAPHY

HIGHLIGHTS:

Founder & Facilitator: *Bethel-Union Pioneer Cemetery Committee* - the driving force of the initial movement toward the restoration, documentation and re-dedication of the historical inter-racial [cemetery, formerly known as, *The Sunnidale Union Cemetery*, in New Lowell, Clearview Township, Simcoe County, Ontario. Facilitation of On-going Annual Cemetery Clean-up & beautification events and Annual Memorial Candlelight Services. As President and later, as Executive Director of *The SilverShoe Historical Society* lead the organization from its humble beginnings in 1997, to full Incorporation as an Affiliate of The Ontario Historical Society and honored recipient of an Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, *Roots of Freedom Grant*, in partnership with The Emancipation Festival - Owen Sound Branch and Clearview Township.

Recipient: *The Robert G. Kemp Award*, sponsored by The Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts, for literary & artistic excellence.

Artist: Black History Millennium Mural, *Logging on The Nottawasaga*, commissioned by the Town of Collingwood & The Blue Mountain Foundation for The Arts. Other pieces of Janie's artwork have been commissioned by The Canadian Wildlife Federation, The Ontario Humane Society, The J.S. Redpath Collection & The N.A.A.C.P.

Featured in: *Who's Who in Black Canada* - the inaugural edition and 2nd. Edition, a Contemporary Directory of Black Success & Excellence in Canada

Organized & Facilitated the *Simcoe County & District UGRR Welcome Reception* – Collingwood, Ontario involving representatives from 5 Municipalities – Clearview Twp; Oro-Medonte Twp; Town of Collingwood, Town of Blue Mountains and Town of Wasaga Beach - for 100 Cyclists from across the United States, traveling along the Underground Railroad routes, from Mississippi to the UGRR's northern terminus in Owen Sound, in collaboration with The Owen Sound Emancipation Festival and in remembrance of the Bicentennial of The Abolition of The Atlantic Slave Trade.

Hostess-Book Signing: Lawrence Hill: *BOOK OF NEGROES* - Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts , Collingwood, Ontario.

Nominee: *Harry Jerome Award for Community Service (2008, 2009)*- Black Business Professional Association

Recipient: *Emancipation Festival Community Recognition Award* – Outstanding Community Service

Presenter: *African Roots in Canada Workshop* – North York Library, in conjunction with The Ontario Black History Society and OGS – Toronto

Guest Speaker: *African-Canadian Studies Program– York University* – At the invitation of Dr. Karolyn Smardz-Frost Ph. D., speaking on the topic of the African-Canadian presence in Simcoe County, Pioneer Migratory Patterns in the Province of Ontario, Multiculturalism in the Province of Ontario, Restoration & Preservation of Historical Buildings & Cemeteries.

Guest Speaker: *Leaside Library*, Toronto – Natural Heritage Books/Dundurn Press

Guest Speaker: *Willowdale Library*, Toronto – Natural Heritage Books/Dundurn Press

Descendant Liaison / MC / Keynote Speaker: *160th. Anniversary of The Oro African Church National Historic Site* – Oro-Medonte Township

Executive Director: *Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society (2009-2010)*

Presenter: *N.A.A.C.P. Freedom Fund Banquet* – Cumberland, Maryland (2011)

Presenter: *African Youth Retreat* – Simcoe County.(2011)

Keynote Speaker – *City of Barrie Black History Event* – Mady Center (2011)

Keynote Speaker – *African Rights of Passage Symposium* – University of Toronto (2011)

Guest Speaker – *Grand River United Empire Loyalists* – Waterloo Museum, Kitchener 2011)

Presenter: *Old Durham Road Symposium* – Priceville, Ontario (2011, 2012)

Presenter: *The Promised Land Symposium* – Chatham & Buxton, Ontario (2012)

Facilitator: *War of 1812 Documentation Project* – Port Ryerse, Ontario (2012)

Presenter: *British Columbia Black History Awareness Society* – Victoria, B.C. (2012)

TELEVISION & RADIO APPEARANCES & INTERVIEWS:

The Daytime Show, Roger's Television – Barrie

The Daytime Show – Roger's Television – Collingwood

Main Street Ontario - Clearview Township, in conjunction with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture – to assist in the restoration of historical buildings and features of the Town of Stayner, ON.

IN FOCUS: *Raise the Spirit* - Rogers Television Film Special.

The John Nicholls Show – CKCB Radio – Collingwood

The Murphy Browne Show – CKLN Radio – Toronto

NATIONAL TELEVISION APPEARANCES: *BLOODLINES:*

Famous Last Words, History Television/Yap Films Special.

REGULAR SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS: At various Elementary & Secondary Schools, Public Libraries & Museums, Historical & Service Clubs throughout the Province.

BOOKS:

2004- *Morgan's Seed*. This book is based on the life of John Morgan Sr. 1763 - 1873; a Colonial Slave, who was born in Madagascar; was a survivor of The Middle Passage and first resident of The SilverShoe Settlement, in Old Sunnidale Township (*now, Clearview Township*) Ontario.

2011 – *ECHOES IN THE HILLS: My Eighteen-Month Search for John Brown's Legacy*. This book is the result of the author's research into Abolitionist, John Brown, the aftermath and the African-Canadian involvement in Brown's ill-fated raid on the Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (*now, West Virginia*) in mid-October 1859.

ARTICLES: appearing in ***The Northern Terminus: The African Canadian History Journal*** produced by the Grey County Archives, in partnership with the Grey County Black History Event.

By Any Means Necessary: The Silver Shoe Settlement (Vol. 4, 2007)

Bond of Blood: An Excerpt from Old Sunnidale Revisited (Vol. 5, 2008)

Executive Order No. 13 (Vol. 6 - 2009)

Historical Research and Victorian Mortuary Photography (Vol. 9, 2012)

Pending Article:

They Took the Bitter with the Sweet: The Men of Runchey's Colored Corps (Vol.10, 2013)

MEMBERSHIPS:

The SilverShoe Historical Society

The Ontario Historical Society

The Ontario Black Historical Society

The Owen Sound Emancipation Festival Committee

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Maryland, U.S.A.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Increased focus on the work of “The SilverShoe Historical Society”, in collaboration with various Municipalities, organizations and Educators with a view toward marked improvements in collective Multicultural Research & Education through publications, lectures, workshops & tours.

Designed & implemented the SilverShoe Historical Society's original website - <http://www.silvershoe.org>] to increase public awareness, education and social interaction with other cultural groups and organizations, throughout the Province, Canada and the United States, as a means of increasing education, multiculturalism and tourism within Clearview Township and North-Central Ontario. Development and implementation of a new and improved organizational website that will reflect the changes that have taken place over the last five years and to provide more educational information to the public.

Historical Advocacy Consultant & Leadership-Facilitator re: Genealogical Research Services, Senior Citizen/Youth Mentoring Programs and Young Offenders Programs, including Lectures and Workshops designed for Municipalities, Libraries, Church Groups, other Historical Organizations, Elementary, Secondary and Post-Secondary School students.

Continued research and documentation of the various ethnic immigrant migrations throughout the Province, with specific focus on the migration & social interaction of the original Freedom Seekers of Simcoe & Grey-Bruce Counties, in relation to African – Canadian settlements in Southern Ontario – 1832 – 1930.

Continued research and documentation of the migrations & social interaction of the early settlers of Old Sunnidale Township during the 19th. Century.

Historical Consultant / Co-Producer of a made-for-television film in collaboration with Mississauga-based, Northern Edge Productions, with a view to securing funding for a Television Series designed to increase public awareness regarding the African-Canadian presence and migration throughout the Province of Ontario; the gradual obliteration of Province - wide Historic Cemeteries and Buildings; and investigating the difficulties facing historical Non-Profit organizations in the 21st. Century.

Lobbying for necessary Amendments to the Heritage Act and Cemetery Act that will ensure protection of privately owned and/or inactive Cemetery Sites and threatened historical.

Working in conjunction with area businesses and secondary generators to increase the economy through tourism, while bringing about increased awareness of local history and its relationship to communities in other parts of the Province.

