

K-12 STUDY CANADA

University of Washington • Western Washington University

Spring 2004



Welcome to spring in Canada and the last snow of the season – hopefully – in Calgary! Tina and I have had another wonderful few months on the “teaching Canada circuit” presenting at conferences, holding **K-12 STUDY CANADA** workshops, and creating new curriculum materials.

The most exciting news of the season is that Tina just wrote a newspaper supplement entitled, *O Canada! The True North Strong and Free* initially published by *The Washington Times*, funded by the Government of Canada, and sponsored by the Center at WWU. The 16-page insert was distributed as part of the *Newspapers in Education* program impacting over 1.4 million students in the national capital region. The supplement is a valuable teaching tool that provides information and classroom activities related to Canada’s history, government, geography, economy, culture and Canada-US relations. Copies in a PDF format are available on **K-12 STUDY CANADA**’s homepage at <http://k12studycanada.wvu.edu> or contact Tina for a hardcopy.

This winter I also participated in a wonderful curriculum development project acting as the educational consultant

for a set of Canadian educational videos produced by Schlessinger Media. The videos entitled *Canada for Children* are aimed at a K-4 audience and include “The History of Canada,” “The Geography of Canada,” and “The Culture of Canada.” Each video is 30 minutes in length and provides a lovely visual overview of the topic. Copies can be ordered by calling Schlessinger at 1-800-843-3620.

Since early fall, Tina and I have reached hundreds of educators locally and nationally. In the fall we met with members of the National Council for Teaching Canada in Chicago where we presented on using literature to teach Canadian geography; we held the 4th annual *Teaching Cultural Diversity and Cross-Cultural Understanding through Documentary Film* workshop at the UW; in collaboration with Seattle University and the UW Educational Outreach we organized a workshop for teachers of French on Québec history and culture; and I presented on the history of sovereignty in Québec at the annual *Seattle International Children’s Festival Mosaic Workshop for Educators* in April – to mention some of our activities.

There are two upcoming workshops at the end of June that we hope you will consider participating in. The six-day *STUDY CANADA Summer Institute* at WWU offers participants 3 university quarter credits or 40 clock hours and reduced registration fees for new and pre-service teachers. For those of you seeking more of an international focus, the UW Canadian Studies Center is offering a 2-day workshop in late June entitled, *Living in Our World: Environmental Challenges and Solutions for the 21st Century* that includes a presentation on Canada. (Registration information on back.)

We look forward to seeing you in June in Seattle or Bellingham and wish you a wonderful, restful summer that hopefully includes a vacation north of the border!

Nadine Fabbi, Canadian Studies Center
Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
University of Washington
(206) 543-6269/nfabbi@u.washington.edu

Tina Storer, Center for Canadian-American Studies
Western Washington University
(360) 650-7370/tina.storer@wwu.edu

Inuktitut the Inuit Language – an Excerpt

by Nadine Fabbi

This excerpt is from an essay presented at the 7th Annual World Languages Day at the UW. A copy of the full essay can be downloaded from our website. The UW Canadian studies Center has a CBC News in Review video on Inuktitut, two Inuit legends narrated in Inuktitut, and CDs in the Inuktitut language that educators can borrow at no charge.

Introduction

The Inuit across the circumpolar world are actively addressing language issues today through the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the international association for the Inuit. The Conference has a Language Commission with the mandate to preserve Inuktitut and to develop a unified writing system. In Canada, official language policies in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Nunavik (in northern Québec) have helped to ensure the survival of Inuktitut. Today, Inuktitut is one of just three of Canada’s 50-plus aboriginal languages that is expected to survive. (There are over 40,000 Inuit in Canada and about 27,000 speak Inuktitut fluently.) While language preservation in Canada’s Far North is not without its challenges, the number of Inuit that are fluent in Inuktitut is actually increasing – an uncommon trend for an aboriginal language.

Language categories and dual orthographies

Inuktitut has two major divisions – Yupik, spoken in Siberia and southwestern Alaska; and Inuit, used in northern Alaska, Canada and Greenland. The Yupik and Inuit languages are pretty much unintelligible from one another but the Inuit language, while it varies from country to country and across regions, can be understood by the Inuit throughout the circumpolar North.

In Canada, the Inuit language is written using either the Roman alphabet or syllabics (symbols that represent sounds). The lack of a unified orthography has posed challenges to language preservation efforts as it becomes more difficult to produce printed materials, primarily school texts, that can be used in all Inuit communities.

The syllabic writing system was developed by Reverend James Evans in the early 1800s. Frustrated with the limitations of using the Roman alphabet to write the Ojibway and Cree languages, Evans developed a syllabic orthography based on his knowledge of Pitman shorthand. Evan’s orthography was to become the basis for the Inuktitut syllabic system that spread across the Central and Western Arctic (mainly Nunavut and

Nunavik in northern Québec). In the Eastern Arctic and Labrador the Innuvialuit and Nunatsiavut learned to write Inuktitut using the Roman alphabet. The two writing systems have been the standard now for over 25 years and it is unlikely that this will change as each community is committed to maintaining its traditional way of writing.

Inuktitut language policies in Canada

Canada is a bilingual nation and, in addition, each province or territory selects its own official language(s). Two territories – Nunavut and the Northwest Territories – include Inuktitut as one of their official languages. This enables Inuktitut to be taught in the schools and for government documents to be available in the language. The Nunavut government has a 20-year plan to make Inuktitut the working language in parliament. There is also a move to create a law that all signage – public signs, posters and commercial advertising – be in Inuktitut. These policies/plans, enjoy wide support in the territory.

‘Firsts’ in the history of Inuktitut language use

Inuktitut was first used in the Canadian federal parliament in 1979. That year the federal government created a second seat in the House of Commons for the Northwest Territories in roughly the same area as today’s Nunavut. The first Inuk to be voted in as a Member of Parliament was Peter Ittinuar. When Ittinuar gave his maiden speech as a new member of parliament, it was in Inuktitut – an historical moment in Canadian history.

For decades now the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the North has been broadcasting in Inuktitut with these programs and interviews now available on the CBC website. Inuktitut is used on northern television and in videos and film. *The Northern News*, the newspaper for the Canadian territories, is available in Inuktitut as well as English.

Perhaps most importantly, the first film written, produced and directed by an Inuk and in Inuktitut was first screened in 2001. *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)* was produced by Zacharias Kunuk from Igoolik. Kunuk won the Camera d’Or at Cannes in the spring of 2001 and gave his acceptance speech in Inuktitut – another historic first.

Conclusion

While the preservation of a language takes tremendous resources and effort, it is the vision of the Inuit across the circumpolar North to keep their language alive and thriving. With the continued support of the federal and territorial governments and such

organizations as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, there is every hope that this may be the case. Language policies and retention efforts in Canada’s Far North are impressive and provide a model for what is possible for minority communities in the rest of the world.



Canadian History Winners

In 2003 Catherine Means, Miriam Schwartz and Claire Simon won in the Junior Category for Canadian History at National History Day competition in Ellensburg, Washington (see students above with teacher Karen Hart). Their group performance, “The Acadian Exile: The Rights Denied” explored the history of the thousands of Acadians that were expelled by the British from Canada in 1755. The three young women were awarded copies of *The Canadian Encyclopedia* and spoke with Nadine about their project.

Claire’s father was born in Louisiana and had ancestors who came to the region during the Acadian Expulsion. For Claire the project meant learning not only about North American history but about her family’s history as well. While she knew a little about the Expulsion from her family, she’d never heard of the Acadians at school. “If this happened in the US, we would all know about it,” she said. “But, aside from family stories, I’ve never heard anything about this.”

The three students wanted to address a story of migration, exile, and rights and responsibilities in North America. The project taught them not only about a vital part of US history but about a little known foreign country, Canada.

“Before I started this project, I only thought of Vancouver when I thought of Canada,” said Miriam. “It seems we don’t take the time to understand other histories in school.”

“It is weird,” added Catherine, “we don’t know anything about Canada at all.”

Each year **K-12 STUDY CANADA** awards two prizes (Junior and Senior) for Canadian history as part of the National History Day program and in conjunction with the Canada-America Society and the Canadian Consulate. Encourage your students to pick a Canadian History topic and be our next state winners!

“Language is a cultural mosaic of communication. Through song, story, and conversation, we reveal our cultural identities. The air of Nunavut is filled with sounds, resonating in four languages. Often, the words begin to meld together. The balance between Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, English, and French is a delicate one. Language is dynamic, capable of adapting and evolving.”

Nunavut Department of Culture,
Language, Elders and Youth



Upcoming Workshops on Canada

STUDY CANADA Summer Institute - \$500/\$400

Sunday, June 20 to Friday, June 25
WWU Center for Canadian-American Studies

Fee includes tuition, campus housing, meals & parking

Registration: Tina Storer - 360-650-7370/
tina.storer@wwu.edu

2004 Summer Seminar for Educators - \$80

Environmental Challenges and Solutions for the 21st Century

June 29-30, 2004
Jackson School of International Studies
Outreach Centers

Registration: Sara Van Fleet - 206-543-9606/
seac@u.washington.edu.

Whaling in First Nations History and Culture - \$40

June 26, 2004
8:30 - 4:30
University of Washington Campus

Registration:
Write canada@u.washington.edu to request email notification of dates



At a workshop on Québec local educators had the opportunity to learn about the history and culture of the province - a unique area of study for American educators.

Canada in the Classroom: K-12 Resources

Connect your current curriculum to black Canadian history and explore the Black Canadian experience with these favorite title choices:



NON-FICTION CHOICE - *The Kids Book of Black Canadian History* by Rosemary Sadlier (Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2003), 56 pages. ISBN 1-55074-892-0 (Grades 4-9/Ages 8-12)

This addition to *The Kids Book of...* series covers early complex and sophisticated civilizations in Africa, and examines the impact the slave trade in both Canada and the US had on these civilizations. Stories about the Underground Railroad and Black Loyalists who settled in the Maritime are featured. The book examines racism and prejudice as well as the achievements of many Black Canadians through the use of fact boxes, detailed illustrations, quotes, legends, and timelines. It also includes profiles of inventors, politicians, writers, artists, scientists, heroes, and athletes, and the mark they left on Canadian history. The author, Rosemary Sadlier, has been instrumental in making the celebration of Black History Month a national event in Canada and her book gives expression to the experience and achievements of African Canadians.

SEE ALSO: *In Our Time—African Canadian Achievement (An Introductory Resource Guide)* by Robert Ffrench. Other titles are listed at www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/rec_mor_2002_feb.jsp#juvenile. An additional list of teacher/secondary student resources can be found at <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/underground/resource.html>



YOUTH FICTION CHOICE - *If I Just Had Two Wings* by V.F. Schwartz (Toronto: Stoddart Kids, 2001) 221 pages. ISBN 0-7737-6192-6 (Grades 6 and up / Ages 11 and up)

Phoebe embarks on a dangerous four-month journey from Alabama north to Chatham, Ontario. Using historically documented stations on the runaways' route as well as the songs, code words, passwords, visual signs, and oral signals that moved runaways along the Underground Railroad, the author brings Phoebe's story and the harsh realities of slavery to life. Young readers who often take their freedom for granted get a glimpse of a difficult historical era in this well-researched and carefully documented novel.

SEE ALSO: *Rachel - A Mighty Big Imagining; Rachel: Book Two—The Maybe House* (both are part of the Our Canadian Girl Series); *Underground to Canada; The Root Cellar; The Last Safe House.*



VIDEO CHOICE - *Breaking the Ice: The Story of Mary Ann Shadd.* First Run Icarus Films, 1999. (23 min. color documentary)

Using interviews with Shadd's descendents, this film traces the remarkable story of a Black American immigrant to Canada and her legacy as an abolitionist, integrationist and suffragette. Shadd started the first integrated school in Canada, was the first female newspaper owner and editor (The Provincial Freeman) and the first black female attorney in North America. The video "recreates the experiences of the early Black community in Canada, while opening an engaging chapter on Black Canadian and African-American history." (Tip: Be sure to visit <http://www.whitepinepictures.com/seeds/i/5/teacher1.html> for lesson plans for the film.)

SEE ALSO: *Kentucky's Underground Railroad—Passage to Freedom* - Documentary video segments are available online at <http://www.ket.org/underground/resources/segments01.htm>. See Section 14 - Terminus - Ontario (3:21) for interviews with members of the Buxton Settlement in Ontario, Canada, which was founded by escaped slaves from Kentucky and is still thriving; and with a great-great-granddaughter of Josiah Henson, who fled from Owensboro with his family to Canada and is regarded as the inspiration for Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's book.

WEBSITE CHOICE: *Social Studies Resource Center* www.qesnrcit.qc.ca/socialsciences/bhr/hbhmcn.htm



This site offers numerous curricular and pedagogical resources for K-12 study of the Black experience, including lesson plans and classroom ideas, access to historical documents online, and links to other African-Canadian and African-American websites.

SEE ALSO: *African Canadian Online* www.yorku.ca/aconline/index.html; *The Black Thread in the Canadian Tapestry* www.blackhistoricalmuseum.com/index.htm; *The Black Loyalist Heritage Society (Nova Scotia)* www.blackloyalist.com; and the *Ontario Black History Society* www.blackhistorysociety.ca.

K-12 STUDY CANADA

University of Washington
Canadian Studies Center
Jackson School of International Studies
Box 353650
Seattle, WA 98195-3650

K-12 STUDY CANADA is a quarterly publication of the Pacific Northwest National Resource Center for Canada (NRC) - a joint center linking the Canadian Studies Center, Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington to the Center for Canadian-American Studies, Western Washington University. The NRC offers quarterly workshops on specific Canadian topics; the annual, week-long STUDY CANADA seminar held the last week of June, and; an extensive Resource Library for the use of local educators. The NRC is funded through a Title VI Grant from the U.S. Department of Education and an annual Program Enhancement Grant from the Canadian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

65-8009



WESTERN
WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Center for Canadian-American Studies
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225-9110

Return Service Requested



Grade 3 students learn about Québec at K-12 STUDY CANADA presentations.