Dr. Paul E. Lovejoy was the recipient of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) Teaching Award. Professor Lovejoy was nominated by current and former students, with faculty support. Students submitted letters describing the impact that his teaching has had on their scholarly, professional and personal lives over the years.

Professor Lovejoy is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, Distinguished Research Professor at York University, Canada Research Chair in African Diaspora History, and Director of the Harriet Tubman Institute. He has taught Graduate students in African History and African Diaspora for several years. He said the award was “the highest honour” he has received in his career, and that “to have had the opportunity to have interacted with each of you...has been its own award.”

Because of his tireless efforts, the African History and African Diaspora fields at York University have attracted a great number of graduate students, exchange students, Post-doctoral fellows and scholars from around the world. Congratulations Professor Lovejoy, and from all the students thank you!

Tracy Lopes
York University
Letter From the Director

In this Newsletter, we highlight the activities of the Tubman Institute and its partners for the first part of 2012. It might be worthwhile to reflect on the achievements of the Tubman Institute even further by examining the recent publications in the Harriet Tubman Series on the African Diaspora, which is published by Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ, under the editorship of Kassahun Checole. The Tubman Series has now published 18 volumes, including the ones that are currently in press. This remarkable growth in the Tubman Series reflects the continuing research that is underway by associates of the Tubman Institute and demonstrates that great advances are being made in breaking the silence about the importance of the African experience in the development of the modern world.

The Harriet Tubman Series explores the African Diaspora in historical and contemporary times. It is named after Harriet Tubman (c. 1820-1913), who as a young woman fled slavery to help others escape to Canada on the Underground Railroad and subsequently fought in the U.S. Civil War to end slavery. The Tubman Series examines all aspects of the global migrations of African peoples, whether under conditions of slavery, or more recently as a product of the postcolonial conditions of the global society. The Series addresses the quest for social justice and equitable conditions of life in Africa and diaspora as revealed in history, literary studies, culture, and the performing arts. The Series focuses on the enslavement of Africans in the racialized colonial context of the Americas and the place of slavery and abolition in various global contexts centered on Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Islamic world encompassing the regions crossing the Sahara from the Mediterranean to West Africa. The Series offers a perspective on global multiculturalism emphasizing the centrality of African peoples. The contributions in the Tubman Series are intended to promote dialogue along and across regional, religious, cultural, and political frontiers.

Among the books recently published are the four volumes that appeared in 2011, including Carolyn Brown and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., Repercussions of the Atlantic Slave Trade: The Interior of the Bight of Biafra and the African Diaspora; Ana Lucia Araujo, Mariana P. Candido and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., Crossing Memories: Slavery and African Diaspora; Ute Röschenthaler, Purchasing Culture in the Cross River Region of Cameroon and Nigeria; and Ehud R. Toledano, ed., African Communities in Asia and the Mediterranean: Identities between Integration and Conflict. Among the volumes that are being released this spring are the following titles: Edmund Abaka, House of Slaves and “Door of No Return”: Gold Coast/Ghana Slave Forts, Castles and Dungeons and the Atlantic Slave Trade; Christopher Innes, Annabel Rutherford and Brigitte Bogar, eds., Carnival – Theory and Practice; Audra Diptee and David V. Troiman, eds., Memory, Public History & Representations of the Past: Africa & Its Diasporas; Joel Quirk and Darshan Vigneswaran, eds., Slavery, Migration and Contemporary Bondage in Africa; Benjamin Bowser and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., New Directions in Teaching Slavery and the Slave Trade; and Modesto Amegago, The Continuity of African Drumming Traditions.

In addition, several other books are forthcoming during this coming summer and early fall, including: Elisabeth Cunin and Odile Hoffmann, eds., Blackness and Mestizaje in Mexico and Central America; Johnston Akuma-Kalu Njoku, From Freedom to Freedom: Journeying Back to Heal the Wounds of the Atlantic Slave Trade; Suzanne Schwarz and Paul E. Lovejoy, eds., Empire, Slave Trade and Slavery in Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Civil Society Past and Present; Bruce Mouser, The War of 1812 and an American Colony in the Rio Pongo; Hakim Adi, Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora 1919-1939; and Chouki El Hamel, ed., Confluence of Cultures or Convergence of Diasporas.
Publications

“The essays in this collection are concerned with the construction of memories and public histories. They explore the processes and dynamics that shape the ways in which Africa and its Diasporas have been historicized outside of the academy. The chapters focus on the public presentation of the imagined past of Africa, and of the uses of that past both with Africa and in the numerous African Diasporas created by the historical and contemporary movement of Africans outside of Africa under a variety of circumstances. Collectively, these authors cover a broad geographic span and address issues in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, the United States of America and Canada. By way of specific examples, they examine various forms of public history including museums, monuments, parades, and the performing arts.”

“Ghana’s slave forts and castles formed an integral part of the Middle Passage. Yet they have received very scant scholarly attention. House of Slaves is a multi-layered historical study of the slave forts and castles of the Gold Coast that focuses on the people who worked in these slave castles. The book seeks to unravel the interplay between people and structures in the facilitation of the Atlantic Slave Trade on the West African Coast. Life in the slave castles mirrored the conditions aboard slave ships on the Atlantic: starvation and disease. A better understanding of the West African dimension of the trans-Atlantic Slave trade; the creation of the early African diaspora in the Americas, the West Indies and Europe, and the “reconnections” between Africa and its global diaspora, since the 1990s, should begin from a textured analysis of the activity, memory and symbolism that these coastal ships at permanent anchor embody in African history and the history of the African Diaspora.”

“The chapters in this volume do not deal with the Atlantic world, where the study of forced migration, enslavement, and diasporas has attracted much scholarly interest that has produced a large body of literature. Instead, the contributors concentrate their efforts on the less studied regions of the globe—the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds. They do not seek here to resolve the “two-models dispute,” but rather hope that the studies presented in this volume will, in and of themselves, help establish a clearer understanding of the differences and similarities that existed between the types, modes, and practices of enslavement in those wide geographical spaces. Still, their main goal in this project aims to bring to the fore a sound statement, which is both empiric and grounded in theory, about processes of identity construction, or identification, among uprooted Africans and their descendants in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds.”

“The essays in this volume are all drawn from papers presented at the International Conference on Carnival, held in Toronto in August 2008 to coincide with the Caribana Festival there. The selection of essays has been made to give a clear focus on the Caribbean diaspora, with specific emphasis on carnival developments in London, New Orleans and Toronto. Putting Carnival in perspective, the volume opens with a brilliant, bravura historical and artistic rant by the pre-eminent Carnival designer, Peter Minshall, provocatively entitled “Nignorance & Enwhitenment,” which covers his own stellar in highly personal detail, as well as giving an astringent political commentary on what he describes as the degrading commercialization and tourification of Trinidad’s Carnival. The volume then proceeds with a historical review of Trinidadian Carnival, with a grouping of essays analysing its roots in Africa and its development under the slavery of colonial society, together with its current politicized state and social significance.”
Performing Diaspora was initiated by the Harriet Tubman Institute in 2007 under the directorship of Professor Paul Lovejoy. Among other things, it seeks to bring together African Diaspora artists, performing groups and the global community to share the artistic contributions of African people thereby creating cross cultural awareness, fostering a sense of tolerance and respect for other cultures, strengthening international relations and contributing to the achievement of global harmony. The program also contributes to the archives of African Diaspora expressive culture to serve as a source of reference for students, scholars and researchers. Danielle Robinson, the first curator of Performing Diaspora (2007/8 and 2009) in collaboration with the director of the Tubman Institute and members of the planning Committee (including Dawn Ralph, Professors Robert Simms, Michael Marcuzzi and Modesto Amegago) had worked hard to make the festival a resounding success.

Since its establishment in 2007, the Tubman Institute has engaged a number of African Diaspora artists and performing groups to share the artistic and cultural contributions of African peoples with the larger community. The celebration takes place in February during the Black History Month and features community outreach performances, workshops and artist talks in the nearby schools, the Jane and Finch community near York Gate Mall and at York University.

The fifth annual Performing Diaspora was celebrated under the theme: “Sharing the Africana Experience with the Global Community”. It was curated by Modesto Amegago and Janelle Belgrave who again collaborated with members of the Tubman Institute (including Dawn Ralph, Tom Main, Carlos Algandona, Shiemara Hogarth, Rafael Slobodian and some student volunteers) to plan and monitor the events. It featured Ijo Vudu African Dance Ensemble, led by Sani-Abu Mohamed that performed the music and dance of the Yoruba, Hausa and Mande. This was followed by a grand opening performance featuring Nutifafa and Balafola Afrikan Performance Ensembles, Oakwood Steel Pan, Elite Dance Company Incorporated and Samba Squad led by an award winning musician Rick lazer, as well as visiting artists M’Bemba Bangoura, Akua Dentah Acheampong and Sani-Abu Mohamed. The event was also attended by special guests including the Ghanaian Consulate General in Toronto, Nene Kwesi Kafele, a Krobo-Ghanaian chief responsible for Youths Development and an educationist, Torgbui Zonya, an Anlo Chief and educationist, media practitioner and a promoter of Performing Diaspora on CHRY channel.
The opening performance was followed by a two-day African percussion and dance and hip hop dance workshops at the Dance department studios led by visiting artists M’bemba Bangoura, Sani-Abu Mohammed and Akua Dentah Acheampong who had taught the participants the Triba, Jole, Sinte, Sorsorne and Doudoumba drumming and dance of the Malinke Nalu, Baga and Susu; the Kokoma court dance of the Yoruba and Hip hop dance of the African American, followed by a finale performance on the Sunday evening during which the workshop participants and their leaders performed to the larger community the music and dance forms that were taught during the workshops. Despite the snowy weather conditions and construction works at York campus, the performances and workshops were orderly, educational and entertaining and left the audience and workshop participants very impressed by the artistry, talents and calibre of the performers. Nene Kwesi Kafele, a Torontonian-Ghanaian Chief who attended the grand opening performance, writes, “I was impressed by the variety of the program, artistry of performers and positive vibration all around. I must say the performances were powerful, entrancing and again demonstrated the richness and creativity of the African spirit and ethos.”

We would like to acknowledge our student-volunteers who had served in various capacities, particularly Isaac Akrong a Ph.D. candidate who had served as the MC for the grand performances over the years. We would also like to thank Professor Lovejoy, the director of the Institute, Professor Joseph Mensah, the deputy director, the past and present curators, the Tubman faculty and staff, and affiliates, students; the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Deans and Chairs of the Faculty of Fine Arts and departments of Music and Dance, Masters of Founders College, Winters College and Stong College, York University Faculty Association, York University Community engagement Centre (Doreen Malcom, Sue Levesque and their staff) and other philanthropists and volunteers and the larger community for their continuing supports and patronage toward the Performing Diaspora celebrations.

Dr. Modesto Amegago, York University
On February 29th 2012, the Graduate History Students Association hosted “Teaching Race: Triumphs & Challenges in Academia,” a roundtable event on the subject of how educators and academics experience and teach race in Canadian academia. The event was organized by Equity Officers Francesca D'Amico and Funke Aladejebi and had Dr. Michelle Johnson as moderator.

The guest speakers, including Dr. Tania Das Gupta, Dr. Jerry Ginsberg, Dr. Pablo Idahosa, Dr. Uwafiokun Idemudia and Dr. Joseph Mensah discussed their experiences in dealing with the subject in the classroom, among students and in their personal lives. They highlighted how race interacts with gender and class and how racism operates in Canada. The event was a success and had an extraordinary attendance including faculty members, graduate and undergraduate students, showing its relevance in academia today.

Vanessa S. Oliveira
PhD Candidate
York University
On March 13-14, 2012, Nigeria hosted the International Scientific Committee of the UNESCO's Slave Route Project, activities that were reported to the Director General and the General Assembly of UNESCO. Plans are also afoot to put related resolutions before the African Union for approval.

The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Culture and coordinated by Professor Tunde Babawale, the Director of the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC). It highlighted the leading role of Nigeria in world issues, the global stature of CBAAC as a first rate national cultural institute, and the contribution of Professor Babawale to attract the ISC to Nigeria.

The meeting reviewed global issues on past and contemporary forms of slavery, studied the Calabar slave sites, revived partnership with various African countries and discussed updates on the Permanent Memorial on the slave trade and slavery to be built in the UN Compound in New York. It also followed up to the Head of States Summit in Salvador de Bahia, and the Declaration of the Summit and the Proclamation of an International Decade for People of African Descent.
In September 2001, slave trade and slavery were recognized by the United Nations as a ‘crime against humanity’ during the “World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance” held in Durban, South Africa. Research was carried out by African and African Diaspora Studies programmes worldwide to investigate and disseminate knowledge on slave-related issues.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) drafted the UNESCO General and Regional Histories program and launched the UNESCO Slave Route Project in 1994 to break the silence surrounding the slave trade and slavery that has affected all continents. The project enhances the understanding of diverse histories and heritages that stemmed from this global tragedy by studying the causes, and consequences of slavery and the slave trade.

To date, because of the availability of documentation and archival records, these efforts have focussed primarily on the Trans-Atlantic slave trade to Europe, the Americas and the Caribbean between the 16th and 18th century. Very little is known about internal slaving in Africa, the Trans-Saharan slave trade, as well as slaving in the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and around the Mediterranean.

Greater knowledge will contribute to an objective assessment of this first ‘Globalization’ in human history. The UNESCO slave Route Project is dedicated to promoting research and initiatives on the slave trade and slavery in regions which have been ignored in the available scholarly work. The international colloquium “Slave Trade and Slavery in the Arab Islamic World: Untold Tragedy and Shared Heritage” held in Calabar, Nigeria, on March 14 and 15, 2012, provided insight into the foundations, characteristics and the functioning of this human trafficking, and highlighted the effects of the slave trade and slavery on contemporary societies within this particular context. The Conference was organized by the Centre for Black and African Arts and Culture (CBAAC), Lagos, under the directorship of Dr. Tunde Babawale, and the UNESCO Slave Route Project, under the direction of Dr. Ali Moussa Iye.

The conference addressed the state of the debate on internal slavery in Africa, the slave trade, slavery through the Arab-Muslim world, and trends and challenges with regards to the development of scientific research, heritage protection and museum initiatives in this domain today. The participants were scholars from Africa and the Arab-Islamic region, as well as eminent specialists around the world. Some of the participants included Dr. Paul E. Lovejoy, Dr. Abubakar Sani, Dr. Maria de Carvalho Soares, Dr. Ismael Musah Montana, Dr. Behnaz Mirzai, Dr. Toyin Falola, Dr. Abdi Kusow, Dr. Maria Elisa Velásquez, Dr. Jennifer Loftkranz, Dr. Ibrahima Seck, and Dr. Michael Gomez.
On 10 April 2012, Professor William C. Found made a presentation at the Harriet Tubman Research Institute’s weekly seminar. Professor Found shared his knowledge on a collection of historical maps and prints on the Caribbean islands that he recently donated to the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University. He revealed that his interest in historical maps started during his doctoral studies when he worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands of Jamaica in the mid-1960s. However, he attributed his enthusiasm for collecting historical maps to his wife, Professor Jane Couchman (York/Glendon), who provided his first historical map of Jamaica.

Professor Found demonstrated how researchers may utilise these maps and prints for scholarly purposes. According to him, early maps on the Caribbean islands illustrate navigational and military life, place names utilised by indigenous and colonial inhabitants, cartouches (which often include information of interest to researchers), land surveys, land use, settlement, and personal information about land owners and (rarely) slaves. In this seminar he concentrated on research information related to slavery – of indigenous Amerindians, and of those originating from Africa.

He illustrated his research by examining maps of the following islands: Barbados, Haiti, Hispaniola, Jamaica, Martinique, St. Christopher (St. Kitts), St. Croix, and St. Lucia. The presentation addressed the depiction of slavery, including structural information such as the location of plantations or estates; the demarcation of fields producing both products for export, and food for slaves; and place names, which relate to enslaved peoples. It is clear that historical maps serve as an important, but relatively unused, documentary source for examining slavery in the Caribbean world.
During the presentation, Found acknowledged the time provided by staff of the Map Library at York University, especially Trudy Bodak and Dana Craig, for organizing the collection in its infantile stage. He praised the efforts made by staff of the Clara Thomas Archives for organizing and hosting the current collection. Found informed the audience that he will make future deposits to this collection, so we look forward to learning more about how historical maps can contribute to future research.
Awards and Congratulations

Karlee Sapoznik was nominated for the YMCA-YWCA Women of Distinction Awards. The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg provides thousands of children and adults with programs and services dedicated to personal growth and community development. The award is a celebration of talent, achievement, imagination and innovation, and honours Manitoba women who have made a unique and exemplary contribution to their community.

Karlee is the founder of the Alliance Against Modern Slavery, a non-profit charitable organization that combats slavery in Canada and around the world by building programs and creating alliances among a network of local and global partners. She has met with victims of trafficking, mentored a young Somali survivor, and met with Canadian MPs and the President of Mali. Karlee is also a PhD candidate, university educator, writer, researcher, presenter, organizer, spokesperson and mentor to other antislavery activists.

Dr. Abubakar Babajo Sani was recently appointed the Head of the Department of History, Yar’Adua University, Katsina. Dr. Babajo Sani was recently a visiting Fellow at the Tubman Institute and works on credit and agency in the nineteenth century Sokoto Caliphate.

He presented a paper at the Tubman Seminar Series entitled “Exploring The Business Ledger of Ahmad Abu Al-Ghaith Tuat: A Trans-Saharan Merchant in Katsina c.1824-1869,” that provided insight into the modus operandi and some of the salient features of the Trans-Saharan trade. It provided background on Abu Al-Ghaith Tuat’s and his company, which operated out of Katsina (the entire Central and Western Sudan) from 1824-1869, and explored joint ventures, the slave trade, mortgages, usury, credit and arbitrage and other forms of banking and finance operations.
The Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples at York University is proud to be part of an international network of research centres committed to overcoming injustice and inequity as a result of slavery. Our leading-edge research focuses on the forced and voluntary movement of African peoples around the world. As a social innovator, the Institute’s mandate is to promote a greater understanding of the history of slavery and its legacy. The Institute fosters debate, informs public policy and strives to resolve current social injustices. Digital archiving technology enables the preservation of documents and other materials for easy access to historical records. The Institute is named for the spirit of Harriet Tubman, liberator of her people, feminist, and humanist (c.1820-1913).

www.yorku.ca/tubman