

## Making History/Faire l'histoire Speaker Series Report



From 2010 to 2012 the Educational Research Unit *Making History: Narratives and Collective Memory in Education/Faire l'histoire : récits et mémoires collectives en éducation* at the University of Ottawa utilized a THEN/HiER grant to invite speakers from the Faculty of History and Faculty of Education as well as from other universities across Canada, and from the various organizations such as the national museums surrounding the university community, to share their work with colleagues, graduate students and the public. Graduate students from the History Department as well as professors from other faculties either here at the University of Ottawa and/or Carleton University attended the workshops. Members of the research unit hosted the workshops as part of their graduate and undergraduate courses, along with one or two invited guest speakers. The workshops focused on the different methodological strategies and disciplinary traditions for doing oral history research. Each professional development workshop varied from 90 minutes to 3 hours and was followed by a small reception for students to discuss their projects with professors and guest speakers. The Educational Research Unit (ERU) seeks to advance the production of historical knowledge by providing a site for collaborative, bilingual research into educational history, focusing on the Outaouais Region, and the University of Ottawa's role within it. The ERU aims to make visible historical archival sources in local boards of education and other educational sites, and to collect more records through its digital oral history centre. It aims to encourage academic analysis and dissemination of these records by graduate students as well as the ERU members, and the inclusion of such records into curriculum products by undergraduate students in both the Anglophone and Francophone sectors. The ERU is particularly attentive to educational history which is interdisciplinary, bilingual, and sensitive to issues of race, place, culture and gender as constituent forces in the making of history. The ERU continues to create and support organizational infrastructure through our website, and its digital oral history centre, the provision of office space for storing digital recordings, the training of students and the transcription of data. The intellectual products of our joint academic efforts will continue to be disseminated through invited seminars such as the Making History Speaker series.

**Sharon Cook, Ruby Heap, Stéphane Lévesque, Lorna Mclean, Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, and Tim Stanley** would like to thank THEN/HiER for helping the Educational Research Unit to facilitate the following workshops from September 2010 to December 2012. Videos of some of the presentations can be found at [www.makinghistory-fairehistoire.ca](http://www.makinghistory-fairehistoire.ca).

## Workshop 1

### Aboriginal Place-Stories, Curricular Topographies, and Reimagining Inherited Geographies of Citizenship



**Dr. Dwayne Donald**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta

Recent curricular initiatives across Canada emphasize engagement with Aboriginal issues and perspectives across grade levels and subject areas. This major public political shift is indicative of the changing character of the relationships connecting Aboriginal peoples and Canadians. In this presentation, Dr. Donald showed how Aboriginal-Canadian relations have typically been conceptualized according to geographies of citizenship that organize people in troubling ways. These geographies of citizenship are predicated on colonial frontier logics and promote certain curricular sensibilities. He presented Aboriginal place-stories as examples of organic curriculum that have the potential to inspire decolonized curricular topographies and promote an active reimagining of Aboriginal-Canadian relations. Dwayne Donald (Apiyomaahka) was born and raised in Edmonton and is from the Papaschase Cree.

## Workshop 2

### Just Talk?: The Educational Value of Oral History Production



**Dr. Kristina Llewellyn**, Assistant Professor of Social Development Studies (Education Specialization), University of Waterloo

Is oral history produced through simple conversation with education stakeholders? What value does oral history provide for educators and education researchers? This address explored critical methodological and theoretical issues for conducting oral history that when carefully considered increase the educational value of oral history. In so doing, the address explored one of the key research areas for Making History: Narratives and Collective Memory in Education, namely, the influence of oral history on the narrative of educational history.

Kristina Llewellyn has conducted oral histories for over 10 years. Her most recent project focused on an analysis of women teachers' oral histories to understand 'democracy' in education during post-WWII Canada. Dr. Llewellyn is the co-editor of the Canadian Oral History Association's journal *Oral History Forum/d'histoire orale*. She is a Research Associate with the Education Research Unit Making History: Narratives and Collective Memory in Education at the University of Ottawa.

### **Workshop 3 (Offered in 2011 and 2012)**

#### **Collecting Oral History with Any Grade Level, from Elementary Grades to Graduate School**



**Barbara Brockmann**, Elementary School Teacher and Governor General Award Winner

Collecting Oral History is a project which integrates historical inquiry, reading, writing, visual arts and research. Barbara Brockmann observes that children naturally soak up historical knowledge long before they are formally taught it – and that teachers need to help students make connections between their society and history before the popular mythmakers in the media do it with inaccurate knowledge. What better way to help students make the connections than with their own family stories? Easy to institute and deeply affirming, the project can be instituted by viewing student samples.

Barbara Brockmann is the 2002 Winner of the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History, and an OCDSB Instructor, B. Ed Program, University of Ottawa.

## Workshop 4

### On the Record: Negotiating Survivor and Perpetrator Life Histories in Aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994



**Dr. Erin Jessee**, Post-Doctoral Fellow (Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et culture), School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University

Oral historians are increasingly expanding their gazes to consider intimate accounts of extreme human experiences, such as mass human rights violations. Yet there is a paucity of literature that adequately discusses the theoretical, ethical and methodological challenges that emerge from such research, particularly when conducted in highly politicized nations, such as Rwanda. In this presentation, Dr. Jessee reflected on the particular challenges he experienced while negotiating government, survivor, and perpetrator narratives related to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. She explored the effect of ethnographic seduction on her attempts to listen deeply to and share authority with her participants amidst competing narratives proffered by survivors and perpetrators regarding what really happened during the genocide. Candid consideration of these kinds of challenges should be a crucial part of fieldwork and research dissemination to encourage awareness of the intricate ways that macro- and micro-level politics shape a researcher's understanding of conflict.

**Erin Jessee** is affiliated with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Institute of African Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. She holds a PhD in the Humanities (specialization in anthropology and oral history) from Concordia University in Montreal, and a MA in Archaeology (specialization in Forensics) from Simon Fraser University. Read more about Dr. Jessee and her work at [www.erinjessee.com](http://www.erinjessee.com).

## Workshop 5

### Traditional Teachings: Family and Culture of the Métis



**Dr. Brenda Macdougall**, Canadian Research Chair of Métis Research, University of Ottawa

In 1889, Johnny Grant, a man born at Fort Edmonton in 1831 but who lived in the Montana territory most of his adult life, returned to the site of his birth. Looking for his mother's grave on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, he was acutely aware of being home:

We looked around the country. The weather was fine. I thought I had never [seen] such a fine country. I wrote to my wife and told her that I had travelled in many places in my time, but I had never seen any country [as] fine as Edmonton, the country of my birth and that we must come to live here.

A year later, Grant and many of his family relocated to the Edmonton area. Métis family structures were based on balanced, reciprocal, good relationships with children at the centre of all belonging. We have nineteenth century expressions of home and family embedded in government documents that are the foundation of our oral history about family, landscape, and traditional values. There are likewise oral narratives that have been published, such as “The Woman Who Married a Beaver,” “Jacob,” “Dah Teef,” and “The Red Headed Fur Buyer” which provide insight into the role of family and culture in the lives of the Métis. Through a variety of sources, we can understand not only how the Métis were, but how they understood themselves.

Brenda Macdougall has worked extensively with Métis communities in Saskatchewan documenting their history. The author of several articles and a book, *One of the Family: Métis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (2010), her work has centred on Métis family and culture. In her new role at the University of Ottawa, Dr. Macdougall has been engaging in Ontario-based Métis historical and community research as well as continuing previous work with Great Plains-based Métis societies.

## Workshop 6

### Le passé du Québec dans la conscience de sa jeunesse



**Professeur Jocelyn Létourneau**, Chaire de recherche du Canada en histoire du Québec contemporain, Université Laval

Chercheur principal d'une alliance de recherche université-communauté sur le thème « Les Canadiens et leurs passés », le professeur Létourneau s'est livré à des études originales sur la relation que les Québécois entretiennent avec le passé. Il a lancé un chantier novateur de recherche sur la conscience historique des jeunes Québécois. Il a abordé la question difficile de la juste histoire dans le contexte des défis, communs aux sociétés actuelles, de passer à l'avenir. Explorateur savant, il cherche à saisir la société québécoise dans sa présente mouvance en se situant à l'extérieur des schémas de pensée utilisés pour cerner cette société dans ses complications d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.

Jocelyn Létourneau est chercheur au CÉLAT (Centre d'études sur les lettres, les arts et les traditions) et professeur au département d'histoire.

## Workshop 7

### Le rapport entre la pensée et la conscience historiques chez les élèves du secondaire



**Professeure Catherine Duquette (adjointe)**, didactique de l'univers social, département des sciences de l'éducation Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC)

Graduée de l'Université Laval en 2010, la professeur Duquette s'intéresse aux rapports qu'entretiennent les jeunes d'aujourd'hui avec l'histoire. On lui attribue plusieurs définitions, tant sur le plan de sa nature que sur ses liens entretenus avec la pensée historique. Si de nombreuses recherches soulignent l'importance de la conscience historique dans le processus de compréhension de l'histoire, aucun auteur ne définit clairement le rapport qu'elle entretient avec la pensée historique. En somme, de quelle manière la conscience historique influence-t-elle le développement de la pensée historique chez les jeunes et vice versa? A l'instar de ces travaux au doctorat, Catherine Duquette nous a présenté sa conception particulière de la conscience historique dans le développement des étudiants au niveau secondaire.

## Workshop 8

### When Social Justice Goes Viral – How 2012 was the Year Teachers Across Canada Learned How to Confront our Country’s Hidden History



**Sylvia Smith**, Teacher, Elizabeth Wyn Wood Alternate High School, Ottawa

As educators, we want our teaching practice to build confidence, self-esteem, and collective well-being amongst our learners. And as teachers, parents, caregivers, concerned members of our communities, we anxiously hope for these outcomes. But too often such goals remain mere buzz-phrases and educational jargon. This presentation demonstrated how teachers can make the high-sounding ideals come to life for our students, by teaching and modeling for social justice. Project of Heart demonstrates how all aspects of the learner in both formal and informal learning environments can be engaged through art and activism, to centre the lived experiential knowledge of the “experts” -- the Indian Residential School survivors themselves. Participants learned how to engage the heart and spirit so our quest for reconciliation can become a reality.

Since 2007, Sylvia Smith has been teaching history students about the difficult topic of Indian Residential Schools. In December 2011, she won the Governor General’s History Award for Teaching Excellence for the Project of Heart learning module she created to teach about the Residential School era; over 140 schools across Canada have now participated in the project. By 2013, 70,000 tiles commemorating students who attended Indian Residential Schools will have been created by project participants.

## Workshop 9

### Sunken Villages - Canada's Atlantis



**Louis Helbig** BA, McGill University; MSc., London School of Economics

Artist, aerial photographer, social commentator and pilot Louis Helbig discussed *Sunken Villages*, a dramatic series of images from the air and through the water of the communities leveled and flooded by construction of the St Lawrence Seaway, between 1954 and 1958. *Sunken Villages* is important not only for the 6,500 people and their descendants whose 12 villages, hamlets and island either disappeared or were significantly altered, but for all Canadians: a battlefield of the war of 1812 was flooded; promises of progress and prosperity were never quite realized. Dynamics between Canada and the USA and the Lost Villages Historical Society are keeping communities and history alive.

Artiste, photographe aérien et pilote, Louis Helbig a parlé de *Sunken Villages*, une série d'images extraordinaires prises d'en haut dont celles des eaux qui ont rasé et inondé des communautés entières à cause de la construction de la Voie maritime Saint-Laurent entre 1954 et 1958. *Sunken Villages* est important non seulement pour les 6500 habitants et leurs descendants issus de 12 villages, hameaux et îles totalement disparus ou presque, mais aussi pour tous les Canadiens : les espaces inondés ont été un champ de bataille pendant la guerre de 1812 ; les promesses de progrès et de prospérité n'étaient jamais vraiment tenues. La dynamique entre le Canada et les États-Unis et la *Lost Villages Historical Society* ravive à la fois les communautés et l'histoire.

Louis Helbig's best-known project, *Beautiful Destruction – Alberta Tar Sands Aerial Photographs*, uses the evocative power of art to create space for viewers to reflect, imagine and think for themselves. Another ongoing project is *Sunken Villages* about what disappeared and has re-emerged; ten communities flooded by the St Lawrence Seaway in 1958 reappearing in water now clarified by the zebra mussel.

## Workshop 10

### *Don't Bother with the Textbooks: Chinese Canadian Stories and Educational Resources Using New Technologies*



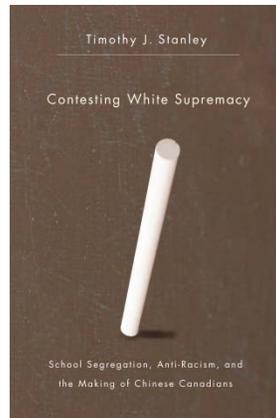
**Dr. Henry Yu**, Chair of Asian Canadian History, and Principal of St. John's College, University of British Columbia

The Chinese Canadian Stories project <[chinesecanadian.ubc.ca](http://chinesecanadian.ubc.ca)> works directly with K-12 teachers to rethink Canadian national history as well as to co-produce learning resources. It disrupts hierarchies of “scholar/teacher” and “university/high school” in favour of a collaboration involving community-based historians, community elders, students, and teachers while also taking advantage of the resources of universities as research institutions. Game design and digital video editing software allowed the production of engaging resources that embody pedagogical goals set by teachers with classroom experience.

Henry Yu is Director of the Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (*INSTRCC.ubc.ca*) at UBC, and the Project Lead for the \$1.175 million “Chinese Canadian Stories” project (*chinesecanadian.ubc.ca*) involving UBC, SFU, and a wide spectrum of academic and community collaborators. He is also the Co-Chair of the City of Vancouver’s project, “Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal, and Immigrant Communities” (<http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/dialoguesproject>).

## Workshop 11

### Contesting White Supremacy School Segregation, Anti-Racism, and the Making of Chinese Canadians



**Dr. Timothy Stanley**, Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa

In 1922-23, Chinese students in Victoria, British Columbia, went on strike to protest a school board's attempt to impose racial segregation. Their resistance was unexpected at the time, and it runs against the grain of mainstream accounts of Asian exclusion in Canada, which tend to ignore the agency of the excluded. In *Contesting White Supremacy*, Timothy Stanley combines Chinese sources and perspectives with an innovative theory of racism and anti-racism to explain the strike and construct an alternative reading of racism in British Columbia. His work demonstrates that education was an arena in which white supremacy confronted Chinese nationalist schooling and where parents and students contested racism by constructing a new category – Chinese Canadian – to define their identity.

## Workshop 12

### **The Limits of Oral History: Ethics and Methodology Amid Highly Politicized Research Settings**



**Dr. Erin Jessee**, Post-Doctoral Fellow (Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et culture), School for International Studies, Simon Fraser University

In recent years, oral history has been celebrated by its practitioners for its humanizing potential, and its ability to democratize history by bringing the narratives of people and communities typically absent in the archives into conversation with those of the political and intellectual elites who generally write history. And when dealing with the narratives of ordinary people living in conditions of social and political stability, the value of oral history is unquestionable. However, in recent years, oral historians have increasingly expanded their gaze to consider intimate accounts of extreme human experiences, such as narratives of survival and flight in response to mass atrocities. This shift in academic and practical interests begs the questions: Are there limits to oral historical methods and theory? And if so, what are these limits? Dr. Jessee begins to address these questions by drawing upon fourteen months of fieldwork in Rwanda and Bosnia Herzegovina, during which she conducted multiple life history interviews with approximately one hundred survivors, ex-combatants, and perpetrators of genocide and related mass atrocities. She argues that there are limits to the application of oral history, particularly when working amid highly politicized research settings.

**Erin Jessee** is affiliated with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Institute of African Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. She holds a PhD in the Humanities (specialization in anthropology and oral history) from Concordia University in Montreal, and a MA in Archaeology (specialization in Forensics) from Simon Fraser University. Read more about Dr. Jessee and her work at [www.erinjessee.com](http://www.erinjessee.com).