

University of New Hampshire
University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository

Media Relations

Administrative Offices

6-7-2006

UNH Hosts Landmark Conference About The Black Experience In Northern New England

Lori Wright

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Wright, Lori, "UNH Hosts Landmark Conference About The Black Experience In Northern New England" (2006). *UNH Today*. 1167.

<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/1167>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Administrative Offices at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Media Relations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.



UNH Hosts Landmark Conference About The Black Experience In Northern New England

June Event Is First To Focus On Black Life And Culture In The Region

Contact: [Lori Wright](#)
603-862-0574
UNH Media Relations

June 7, 2006

DURHAM, N.H. -- Americans and New Englanders may be surprised to learn that New Hampshire was a major slave smuggling center during the colonial era. Although the issues of race and slavery normally are not associated with Northern New England, the region that includes New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont has a history of black culture that dates back hundreds of years. For the first time, the region will welcome scholars and researchers to a conference dedicated to the black experience in the region.

"Black New England: Life, History, and Community in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont," will be held June 23-24, 2006, at the University of New Hampshire. Sponsored by The Center for New England Culture at UNH, the conference will gather community members, teachers, scholars, researchers, and members of local organizations to share their work and insights.

"'Black New England' promises to be a landmark event in increasing awareness and sharing information about African American life and history in the region," says David Watters, director of the Center for New England Culture at UNH, professor of English, and co-editor of *The Encyclopedia of New England*.

Panel presentations will cover contemporary civil rights issues, genealogy and family history, race and place, and preservation efforts. A complete schedule of events is listed below.

James O. Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies and History at George Washington University, will present the keynote address, "Race and Slavery in New England from the American Revolution to Abolition" at 7 p.m. Friday, June 23, in MUB Theater I. A reception follows.

According to Horton, slavery was technically legal in New Hampshire for much of the 19th century. Not until 1857 did the state pass an act prohibiting state citizenship based on race. "This is generally taken to signal the legal end of New Hampshire slavery, although some historians argue that the institution could have legally survived in the state until the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that abolished slavery nationally in 1865. The New Hampshire census of 1840 did report the presence of one slave, a drop from a total of three slaves in the state in 1830," Horton says.

"New Hampshire was a major slave smuggling center in the colonial era. Because it did not impose a slave importation tariff, slaves could be brought to the colony by sea, and then smuggled over land into surrounding colonies where the importation of slaves was heavily

taxed," he says.

Horton has served as director of the African-American Communities Project at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. He is the author of numerous articles and five books, including, *Free People of Color: Inside the African-American Community* (1993), *In Hope of Liberty: Culture, Protest, and Community Among Northern Free Blacks, 1790-1806* (1997), and *Slavery in the Making of America* (2004).

The public is welcome to attend the Friday evening keynote event and reception free of charge. A registration fee of \$25 covers all other events and lunch Saturday. The conference is co-sponsored by the UNH Office of Black Heritage Partnerships, the African American Collection of Maine at the University of Southern Maine, and the Harriet Wilson Project.

For more information and registration, visit www.neculture.org or e-mail jerriane.boggis@unh.edu or call 603-862-0353.

EDITORS AND REPORTERS: The complete conference schedule follows. Watters can be reached for interviews at 603-862-3983 and david.watters@unh.edu.

Black New England: Life, History, and Community in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont

June 23-24, 2006

UNH Center for New England Culture

Friday, June 23

**UNH Memorial Union Building
Rooms 338 & 340**

1 – 2:45 p.m.: Black Culture in Northern New England

"Race & Place in New England," W. Jeffery Bolster, associate professor of history at UNH
 "Africans in Early Vermont: Jeffery Brace & His Contemporaries," Kari Winter, professor of American studies at the University of Buffalo
 "Black Yankee Tricksters: Historical Anecdotes and Race in New Hampshire," David Watters, director of the Center for New England Culture

3 – 4:45 p.m.: Black Life in Northern New England

"The Blanchards: Living And Thriving in Milford, New Hampshire," Reginald Pitts, historian and coeditor of a new edition of Harriet Wilson's 1859 novel, *Our Nig*
 "Rock Rest: An African American Resort in the Age of Segregation," Valerie Cunningham, coordinator of the Black Heritage Partnerships and founder and president of the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail
 "'N_____ School': The Plight of Noyes Academy in Canaan, New Hampshire," Craig S. Wilder, professor of history, Dartmouth

7 – 10 p.m.: Keynote Address and Opening Reception (MUB Theatre 1)

"Race and Slavery in New England From the American Revolution to Abolition," James O. Horton, Benjamin Banneker Professor of American Studies and History, George Washington University

Saturday, June 24
UNH Huddleston Hall**8:30 – 10 a.m.: Black Presence in 19th Century Northern New England**

"Malaga Island: The Destruction of an African American Community," Rachel Talbot Ross, president, NAACP, Portland, ME

"The Underground Railroad in Vermont," Jane Williamson, director of the Rokeby Museum, Ferrisburgh, VT

"The Resurrection of Harriet E. Wilson, an African American Novelist," JerriAnne Boggis, Center for New England Culture and director of the Harriet Wilson Project

10:30 a.m. – noon: Black History in New England Museums, Historical Societies, and Communities

"African American History and Public History," James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton

"The Black Church as Community," Rev. Arthur Hillson, New Hope Baptist Church, New Hampshire

1 – 2:30 p.m.: Black Family History and Genealogy

"Methods to Researching Black Families," Reginald Pitts

"Cumberland County: Home for Eight Generations," Bob Greene, genealogical researcher and author

"Lincoln Hill: 1790-1870: Black Hill Farmers in Northern Vermont," Elise Guyette, Vermont historian

3 – 4:40 p.m.: Civil Rights and Current Issues

"Civil Rights and New England," Harvard Sitkoff, professor of history, UNH

"The NAACP and New Hampshire," Fred Ross, president of the NAACP, Portsmouth, NH

"Dialogues in Diversity: The Voices of Anti-Oppression Peer Educators in Portland, Maine," Keita Whitten, program coordinator, Multicultural Student Affairs, University of Southern Maine

Tour of Historic Black Sites and Strawberry Banke Museum, Portsmouth, NH

Participants will drive/carpool to Strawberry Banke Museum for tour of sites and closing reception.

Strawberry Banke is a 20-minute ride from UNH.