

# 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Grey County Black History Event

## Dig Where You Stand

April 26, 2008  
Durham Arena and Community Centre

Amelia Ferguson

It was another great success for the Grey County Black History Event. The familiar locale of the Durham Arena welcomed back old friends and even saw families reunited.



**A captive audience for the Grey County Black History Event.**

Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost imparted the true story of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, escaped slaves from the Ohio River Valley, who made their way to freedom in Toronto. Evidence of this story was gained through archaeological excavations supported by archival research. The pinnacle of this study also takes the shape of a book, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*. This volume was a recipient of the 2007 Governor General's Award for Non-Fiction.



**A participant perusing one of the marketplace vendors, Natural Heritage Press.**

Greetings were brought by Bill Murdoch, MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and Dan Sullivan, Deputy Mayor of West Grey. Les MacKinnon, chair of Heritage Pathways, emceed the event. Norma Blacke Bourdeau graced us with spirituals and led us in prayer. Our delicious lunch was provided by Linda Leith and her team.



**Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost signing copies of her award winning volume, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*.**

As follow-up to last year's lecture, Kathleen LaBudie-Szakall spoke to using the internet as a tool for Black genealogy. Stress was put on the wide variety of resources available to internet users, including census returns, vital statistics, and transcriptions of archival documents. It was also helpful as a reminder to make use of message boards, blogs, and even creating your own web space in order to widen your exposure.



**Janie Cooper-Wilson and Norma Blacke Bourdeau.**

The afternoon programme saw a change as Madeleine Courtney was not able to grace us with her musical selections. Instead Jane Cooper-Wilson spoke about her experience in preserving and restoring the Bethel-Union Pioneer Cemetery, part of the Silvershoe Settlement, just outside of New Lowell, Ontario. This inter-racial cemetery is the final resting place of several Black settlers who lived in the area, many of which were slaves or the descendants of slaves.



**Afternoon panel: Dennis Scott, Petal Furness, Dr. Bill Plumstead, and Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost.**

The topic of the afternoon panel was “What is your organization doing to develop Black history?” The panel consisted of Petal Furness, Heritage Interpretation Supervisor for Grey Roots Museum & Archives; Dr. Bill Plumstead, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of English at Nipissing University; along with, Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost, author, archaeologist, historian; and was moderated by Dennis Scott, chair of the Emancipation Festival.

It was another glowing success for the organizers of this year’s Event. The opportunity to hear the heroic stories of real-life people is always amazing; from the heroes who risked their lives to begin anew over a century ago, to the heroes of today ensuring the original stories are not lost in the pages of history or the layers of soil and earth. Hope to see you in 2009!