

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Grey County Black History Event**  
North American Connections  
29 April 2006  
By Amelia Ferguson

With weather not being a factor, the Grey County Black History Event went off in great style. The Durham Arena was filled with interested attendees, speakers and vendors.



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

The keynote speaker for this year's event was Peter Hanes. Mr. Hanes works for the U.S. National Park Service in Washington DC where he provides marketing and outreach support for various Black History related public programs. He educated the crowd concerning his ideas in expanding and promoting relations between Canadian and American educators and other supporters of Black heritage.



**Norma Blacke Bourdeau singing spirituals.**

Greetings were brought by West Grey Mayor Delton Becker, who also brought greetings on behalf of Grey County Warden Bob Pringle. Art Harvey of the Bruce and Grey Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society emceed the entire event with great charisma. Norma Blacke Bourdeau graced us with spirituals and led us in prayer. Our delectable lunch was provided by Linda Leith and her team.



**Dr. Afua Cooper reading from her new release *Copper Woman*.**

Readings were done by Dr. Afua Cooper and Kathleen James. It was very exciting to be part of the launch of Dr. Cooper's latest literary masterpiece, *Copper Woman*, a collection of poems stressing that equality and equity are achievable. The poetic performances of the women were both moving and inspiring.



**Event MC, Art Harvey, introducing the Leith Singers.**

Musical entertainment in the afternoon, provided by the Leith Singers, was magnificent. The youngsters sang pieces with significance to the Underground Railroad. With Dianne Leith conducting and Chris Patterson on keyboard, the room was filled with youthful voices and upbeat accompaniment.



**Afternoon panel: Peter Hanes, Rod Charles, Bonita Johnson-deMatteis, and Paul Cornfield.**

The afternoon panel consisting of Peter Hanes, Rod Charles, Bonita Johnson-deMatteis and Paul Cornfield, moderated by Kathleen James was quite informative. The theme was *Developing Black History in Grey County*. The varied backgrounds and interests of the panellists added to the range of ideas brought forth. The audience members were asked to submit written questions, which sped up the process and kept everything streamlined.



**Naomi Norquay's lecture at the South Grey Museum.**

Attendant events included:

- book signing by author Dr. Afua Cooper for *Copper Woman*
- Heritage Pathways Committee Annual General Meeting
- launch of *Northern Terminus: The African Canadian Journal* Volume 3 at Grey Roots Museum & Archives, 102599 Grey Road 18, RR4 Owen Sound
- lecture by Naomi Norquay detailing the history of the banjo at the South Grey Museum in Flesherton
- *Beneath the Surface* art show at the Left Side Gallery in Flesherton

This was another successful Event, in terms of both visitor participation and speaker quality. The opportunities for education and awareness are bountiful and limitless. I'm sure next year's Event will be just as, if not more, informative and engaging. Hope to see you in Durham in 2007!