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interviews
& features





LISA SAKULIENSKY

Lawrence Hill

Author Biography

NOT LONG BEFORE they brought my brother, sister and me into the world, my parents had moved to Canada from Washington, D.C. Dad was black and Mom was white, and 1953 was no time to be marrying or living in the American South as an interracial couple. Toronto was better, but far from perfect. While Dad was still a graduate student at the University of Toronto, he and my mother were unable to rent an apartment together. Nobody wanted an interracial couple as tenants. To secure a place for the two of them, Mom had to take on a surrogate white husband for a day—Don McFadyen, a close friend of theirs who played bass in a jazz band. After the lease was signed, Don moved out and my father moved in, and my parents waited nervously to see how much of a stink the landlord would raise. Luckily, the landlord chose not to make an issue of it, and they were allowed to stay.

I was born in 1957 in Newmarket, Ontario, and grew up in a Toronto suburb. Throughout my childhood, stories of my parents' marriage and of their subsequent work as pioneers in Canada's human rights movement punctuated our kitchen table conversations. I was entranced by their ability to navigate injustice with humour and to become engaged Canadians without succumbing to bitterness. Later, I used the stories of my ancestors as emotional fuel to write *Any Known Blood* (1997), a fictional family saga about five generations of men moving back and forth between Canada and the United States.

From my earliest childhood, I recall my mother reading avidly to my siblings and me. I can still hear the inflection of her voice as we listened to “Disobedience,” by A. A. Milne.

“James James
Morrison Morrison
Weatherby George Dupree
Took great
Care of his mother
Though he was only three . . .”

I live for the sound of music in language and have come to believe that good fiction enters the reader’s ear first. Initially, I read and wrote to make sense of the world and my place in it. Turning to adult literature at the age of fourteen, I ate up the dozens of novels and essays on my parents’ shelves. Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Richard Wright and their contemporaries became my first literary mentors.

I worked for a spell as a newspaper reporter, initially for *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto and later for the *Winnipeg Free Press*. But I didn’t want to spend my life writing newspaper copy. I longed to write fiction and ached every time I came in contact with great art because it reminded me of what I wasn’t doing. Finally, at the age of twenty-seven, I felt despair at the thought of growing old and not accomplishing something more. I decided to take the plunge. I quit my job, moved to Spain, and, since I had no mortgage, car or kids, managed for a year or so to live cheaply. For the first time in my life, I wrote for hours every day, and after returning to Canada I continued to

“ I live for the sound of music in language.”

“ The novel is one of the few art forms to which a person can give birth almost entirely unassisted. ”

Author Biography *(continued)*

work on fiction. Eventually, I finished my first novel, *Some Great Thing*. I could wallpaper my bathroom with all the rejection slips the novel generated, but finally, in 1992, Turnstone Press in Winnipeg published the story—a romp about a black newspaper reporter’s first year on the job.

I have many interests in life—learning languages, reading, travelling, running, and loving my wife and five children are chief among them—but writing is the only kind of work for which I have a real thirst, and novels are what I most like to write. The novel is one of the few art forms to which a person can give birth almost entirely unassisted. The individuality of novel writing entrances me, and it never ceases to amaze me that the quirky turns of a solitary mind can create stories that hum for years, outlasting even the rise and fall of nations.

I have written seven books, *The Book of Negroes*, my third novel, being my most recent. I hope that there will be many more and that they will move readers as deeply as literature has moved me since it lifted me off my feet at the age of fourteen.

—*The Book of Negroes* was published in the United States by W. W. Norton & Co., under the title *Somebody Knows My Name* (2007). Visit www.lawrencehill.com.



An Interview with Lawrence Hill

When did you first come across the ledger called the *Book of Negroes*, and did you know immediately that you would write about it?

I first heard about the Book of Negroes in 1980 when I read *The Black Loyalists*, a scholarly book by Canadian historian James Walker. Even before I wrote my first novel, *Some Great Thing*, which was published in 1992, I knew that one day I would write the fictional story of a woman who had to have her name entered into the Book of Negroes. It wasn't until I began to research and write the novel in 2002, however, that I examined reproductions of the actual ledger. The research and writing took about five years.

How did you know when you'd researched "enough"? Did you ever feel overwhelmed by the weight of the history you were trying to capture in the novel?

Completely. I had to assimilate and then play with the history in so many locations—Mali, the South Carolina sea islands, Charleston, Manhattan, Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone and London. It felt as though I was writing several novels in one.

Research is captivating, but it also serves itself up as the quintessential avoidance strategy. "How did your work go on the novel today?" "Fine, I spent eight hours in the University of Toronto library." Eventually, you have to put down all the books ►

About the book

“ Eventually, you have to put down all the books and start mining your own soul for the story that waits within. ”

“ Canadians have had little exposure to aspects of the black experience that . . . reflect badly on our country and history. ”

An Interview with Lawrence Hill *(continued)*

and start mining your own soul for the story that waits within. The novel was more far-reaching in its first drafts. I chose to pare it back, whittling out hundreds of pages as I strove to make the story more manageable and engaging for the reader.

What was your most surprising finding?

The first discovery I made remains the most striking. In 1792, twelve hundred Black Loyalists set out in a flotilla of fifteen ships to sail from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Freetown, Sierra Leone. A number of the adults on board were not just travelling to Africa—it turns out that they had been born on that continent, so they were literally travelling back to Africa. This back-to-Africa exodus took place more than a century before the famed Jamaican Marcus Garvey urged blacks in the Diaspora to return to the motherland. It took place decades before former American slaves founded Liberia. The first massive back-to-Africa exodus in world history set off from the shores of Halifax, but to date, few Canadians know it.

Do you find that Canadians are surprised, or even unwilling to accept, that our history involves poor treatment of the Black Loyalists?

Canadians have had little exposure to aspects of the black experience that—unlike, say, the Underground Railroad—reflect badly on our country and history. Although

the British saved the Black Loyalists in New York, they betrayed them in Nova Scotia. In the early and mid-1780s in communities such as Shelburne and Birchtown, Nova Scotia, blacks faced outright segregation, were forced to work for wages inferior to those earned by whites for the same work, were kept (in many instances) in slavery or as indentured servants, were largely denied the farming land that they had been promised in exchange for serving the British during the Revolutionary War and were attacked physically during Canada's first anti-black race riot. It is a disgraceful time in Canadian history, and—outside academic circles and certain black communities—Canadians have largely avoided discussing the matter. I didn't write *The Book of Negroes* to wag a finger or to apportion blame. I wrote it because it is an astonishing and revealing story that readers deserve to know. It forms but a small piece of the history dramatized in *The Book of Negroes*. I carved out this work of fiction to celebrate one woman's journey and to chart her miraculous survival, both physical and emotional.

Why did you choose to make your central character a woman? And do you find it a challenge to write scenes, such as the birthing one, from her perspective?

The Book of Negroes is a woman's story and it was from the moment of conception. As a dramatist, I locate stories in the lives of the people who have the most to lose. Her own role as a mother is at risk in this story, yet Aminata has to do what she must to survive, and carry on catching other women's ►

“ I wrote [this novel] because it is an astonishing and revealing story that readers deserve to know. ”

“ It was liberating and riveting to create a character whom I could never be. ”

An Interview with Lawrence Hill *(continued)*

babies. On one hand, it was an immense challenge to write the life story of an African woman in the 1700s. On the other hand, it was liberating and riveting to create a character whom I could never be. I have always felt more comfortable writing about people who bear no resemblance to me.

I find the texture of her life fascinating. In the novel, one African who is stolen from her homeland becomes bitter to the point of turning murderous. Another African is so traumatized by the dislocation of slavery that he loses the ability to speak. Aminata somehow manages to keep going and to do so with love in her heart. This is what interests me most about her character. She can't stop all the evil in the world, but she will not stoop to it.

Some passages are heartbreaking to read. Which ones were the hardest to write?

I found it difficult to satisfy myself when writing the scenes in which Aminata is kidnapped in the country now known as Mali and forced to walk three months overland to the slave vessel waiting off the coast of Sierra Leone. How was I to convey the horror of an eleven-year-old who is torn from everything and everyone she knows? In the twenty-first century, you would have to be abducted by hostile extraterrestrials to know the horror that Aminata faces when she is sent overseas into slavery in the Americas. The challenge was to write about Aminata's feelings without melodrama. Definitely, writing about the

childhood abduction and the middle passage were among the hardest of my tasks and brought on their fair share of nightmares.

With your writing of this novel complete, does a part of you miss Aminata?

I loved Aminata from the moment that I first started imagining her face, hearing her voice, seeing the way she walked with a platter balanced on her head. My daughter—Geneviève Aminata Hill—was eleven years old when I started to write this story, the same age as my character when she is kidnapped by slave traders. I named Aminata after Geneviève and tried to love my protagonist the way I love my daughter. What if this had happened to my own child? How would she have carried on, after losing her parents, her religion and her language, and after being cast into an alien world that saw her as little more than a work animal? So Aminata, the character, grew up under my tutelage. She learned to walk and then to read and to navigate her way in the world, and now this fictional creation of mine is all grown up and gone from the house. She is no longer mine. She belongs to the world of readers now. Sure, I miss her.



“ I named Aminata after Geneviève and tried to love my protagonist the way I love my daughter. ”

“ Some
3,000 Black Loyalists
arrived in Nova
Scotia in 1783. . . . ”

A Word About History, by Lawrence Hill

The Book of Negroes is a work of my imagination, but it does reflect my understanding of the Black Loyalists and their history.

In this novel, some of the excerpts from the Book of Negroes are real, and others have been invented or altered. Readers who wish to see the Book of Negroes can find it, or parts of it, in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, the National Archives of the United States and in the National Archives (Public Record Office) in Kew, England. It can also be found on microfilm at the National Archives of Canada and, through an electronic link provided by Library and Archives Canada, at: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/ic/can_digital_collections/blackloyalists/index.htm. As well, the Book of Negroes is reproduced in *The Black Loyalist Directory: African Americans in Exile After the American Revolution*, edited and with an introduction by Graham Russell Hodges, Garland Publishing Inc., 1996.

Some 3,000 Black Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia in 1783, and about 1,200 of them gave up on Nova Scotia after ten years of miserable treatment in the British colony. From the shores of Halifax, they formed the first major “back to Africa” exodus in the history of the Americas, sailing to found the colony of Freetown in Sierra Leone. To this day, the Black Loyalists of Nova Scotia are still known as some of the founders of the modern state of Sierra Leone. Like my protagonist, Aminata Diallo, some of the

Nova Scotian “adventurers,” as they were known, were born in Africa. Their return en masse to the mother continent in 1792 took place decades before former American slaves founded Liberia, and more than one hundred years before Marcus Garvey of Jamaica became famous for urging blacks in the Americas to move “back” to Africa.

Readers might like to know that in 1807, the British Parliament passed legislation to abolish the slave trade the following year. In the United States, abolition of the slave trade also took effect in 1808. It was not until August 1, 1834, that slavery itself was finally abolished in Canada and in the rest of the British Empire. Another thirty-one years passed before the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution officially abolished slavery in the USA in 1865.

Though this work is built on the foundations of history, in some instances I have knowingly bent facts to suit the purposes of the novel. I will cite four key examples. First, my protagonist Aminata Diallo is paid by the British government to record the names of thousands of blacks into the Book of Negroes in New York City in 1783. My understanding is that the British did not hire private scribes for the Book of Negroes, but simply used officers from within their ranks. Second, Canada’s first race riot—in which disbanded white soldiers took out their frustrations on the blacks of Birchtown and Shelburne, Nova Scotia—actually took place in 1784, but I have set it in 1787. In the novel, some Black Loyalists are murdered during the Shelburne riots. Though I have not found any record of such murders in my research, the brutality of the ►

“ It was not until August 1, 1834, that slavery itself was finally abolished in Canada. ”

“ A number of fictional characters . . . are drawn from real people having the same names. ”

A Word About History *(continued)*

riots leads me to imagine that it is possible that people died. Third, Thomas Peters—the Loyalist who helped set the exodus from Halifax to Freetown in motion by travelling to England to complain about the ill treatment of blacks in Nova Scotia—travelled to Sierra Leone and died soon after his arrival, but not at the hands of slave traders, as happens in this novel. And finally, although the British Navy lieutenant John Clarkson organized the exodus from Halifax to Sierra Leone and sailed to Freetown with the black “adventurers,” he did not stay in Africa as long as I have him there.

John Clarkson and Thomas Peters are two of a number of fictional characters who are drawn from real people having the same names. Others are Clarkson’s brother Thomas Clarkson; the slave-ship surgeon and subsequent abolitionist Alexander Falconbridge; his wife Anna Maria Falconbridge; King George III and his wife Queen Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenberg–Strelitz; Nova Scotia governor John Wentworth and his wife Frances Wentworth; as well as Sam Fraunces, the tavern owner who fed George Washington and other patriots and went to work as a cook for the president after the Revolutionary War.

Moses Lindo was a Sephardic Jew from London, England who arrived in South Carolina in 1756. In Charles Town, Lindo became a member of the Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim—one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the United States. Eventually, Lindo became the official indigo inspector for the Province of

South Carolina. For this novel, I have borrowed Lindo's last name and his interest in indigo, but everything else about my fictional character Solomon Lindo is invented. In the case of Solomon Lindo and all other characters in *The Book of Negroes*, I have taken complete liberties, creating imaginary dialogue, actions, events and circumstances.



“ I have taken complete liberties, creating imaginary dialogue, actions, events and circumstances. ”

“ The [ledger] gives precise details about when and where freedom seekers managed to rip themselves free of American slavery. ”

From “Freedom Bound”, by Lawrence Hill

The novel *The Book of Negroes* borrows its title from a fascinating but little-known eighteenth-century British military ledger by the same name. The handwritten ledger runs to about 150 pages and offers volumes of information about the lives of black people living more than two centuries ago. On an anecdotal level, it tells us who contracted smallpox, who was blind and who was travelling with small children. One entry for a woman boarding a ship bound for Nova Scotia describes her as bringing three children, with a baby in one arm and a toddler in the other. In this way, the Book of Negroes gives precise details about when and where freedom seekers managed to rip themselves free of American slavery. As a research tool, it offers historians and genealogists the opportunity to trace and correlate people backward and forward in time in other documents, such as ship manifests, slave ledgers, and census and tax records.

Sadly, however, the Book of Negroes has been largely forgotten in Canada. And that is a shame. Dating back to an era when people of African heritage were mostly excluded from official documents and records, the Book of Negroes offers an intimate and unsettling portrait of the origins of the Black Loyalists in Canada. Compiled in 1783 by officers of the British military at the tail end of the American Revolutionary War, the Book of Negroes was the first massive public record of blacks in North America. Indeed, what

makes the Book of Negroes so fascinating are the stories of where its people came from and how it came to be that they fled to Nova Scotia and other British colonies.

The document contains the names of three thousand black men, women, and children who travelled—some as free people, and others as the slaves or indentured servants of white United Empire Loyalists—in 219 ships sailing from New York between April and November 1783. The Book of Negroes did more than capture their names for posterity. In 1783, having your name registered in the document meant the promise of a better life.

The Book of Negroes gives not only the name and age of every black person who sailed from New York under British protection, but, for the most part, a description of each person, information about how he or she escaped, his or her military record, names of former slave masters and the names of white masters in cases where the blacks remained enslaved or indentured.

Following is a sample of passengers listed on July 31, 1783, on the ship *L'Abondance* heading for Port Roseway (Shelburne), Nova Scotia. (“GBC” stands for Brigadier General Samuel Birch’s Certificate, which was proof of service to the British military during the American Revolutionary War.)

John Green, 35, stout fellow. Formerly the property of Ralph Faulker of Petersburg, Virginia; left him four years ago. GBC.

Rose Bond, 21, stout wench. Formerly the property of Andrew Steward of Crane Island, Virginia; left him four years ago. GBC. ►

“ In 1783, having your name registered in the document meant the promise of a better life. ”

“ 1,336 men, 914 women and 750 children embarked on more than two hundred vessels waiting to spirit them out of New York Harbor. ”

From “Freedom Bound” (continued)

The Book of Negroes also gives the name of the ship on which passengers sailed, its destination and its date of departure. To qualify for departure by ship to a safe haven well away from the thirteen colonies and the new country about to be established, blacks had to prove that they had served behind British lines for at least one year, though many who did not have certificates were allowed to sail.

In the end, while frustrated American army officers looked on, 1,336 men, 914 women and 750 children embarked on more than two hundred vessels waiting to spirit them out of New York Harbor.

“Freedom Bound” appeared in the February–March 2007 issue of *The Beaver*.



An Excerpt from *Any Known Blood*, by Lawrence Hill

I was born in Virginia in 1828. I will not say that I was born a slave, for I do not care for the word. I was born free, but a tobacco plantation owner named Jenkins stole my freedom. My mother and I and others in our situation worked for him, and for Thompson, his overseer. Thompson was an ignorant mass of a man, quick with his foot to your backside, and just as quick with the whip.

My father was sold south when I was a baby. My mother was sold to a plantation ten miles away when I was five. It took two men to drag her away. From time to time, in the summer, at night, when the moon was full and the sky clear, my mother would come to where I lay on the floor and wake me up. She always said she had been walking half the night and couldn't stay long. She would cry, and hold me, and cry some more. I would stay still, or tell her to stop weeping. It causes me great shame to say that on the third visit, I told my mother I hated her. She came twice more. But then she didn't come again. Months later, someone told me she had been sold south. I said I didn't care.

I worked in the fields by the age of six. I had been kicked a few times but whipped only once. The whipping consisted of one light lash, and I was warned it was only a trifle. I took the warning to heart, because that one light lash lit my back on fire.

When I was eight or nine, I was leading a horse to the master's house when I heard the ►

“ My mother was sold to a plantation ten miles away when I was five. It took two men to drag her away. ”

“ He knocked me on the head with a broom, once, when I didn’t serve [his cocoa] to him sweet enough.”

An Excerpt from *Any Known Blood* (continued)

master ask the overseer if there wasn’t a boy on the plantation who could be trained to catch rats. They were overrunning his barn and getting into his grain bins and leaving droppings all over the place. The next morning I walked up to the master, swinging two brown rats by the tail.

“Massa, wha’ I do wid dese?” I knew how to speak better than that, but that’s how I spoke around the master.

“You kill them, boy?”

“Sho’ nuff. Put out corn biscuit, Massa, an’ I jes’ wait an’ wait an’ wait until they come out one after de ubber.”

“How’d you catch ’em?”

“Plugged ’em wid stones, Massa.”

I became the master’s official rat catcher. It didn’t quite elevate me to the status of house nigger, but I got to hang around the barn and snoop in the house. The master didn’t have that many rats in his house. But I planted five or ten dead ones there, to underline the value of my services. I caught them by sitting long hours in the night, hidden from the bait, with good pitching stones at the ready. I’d sit for hours and hours and hours in the master’s house, and soon people stopped asking me what I was doing. They knew I was sitting for rats. I learned to read that way. One of the master’s sons showed me letters and words, that year, and I picked them up quick enough. I didn’t get to sit all the time. When the master or the overseer, who often dropped in to talk, saw that I was idle, they made me run chores in the house. They made me bring them drinks

in the evening from the kitchen. The master liked his coffee in the evening. The overseer developed a taste for hot cocoa. He liked it brought to him steaming hot. And then he would let it sit and sit and sit until it cooled. He would down it fast in long, continuous gulps. He knocked me on the head with a broom, once, when I didn't serve it to him sweet enough.

A man came by the house one time, when I happened to be scouting for rats, or pretending to. He sold the mistress some poison—strychnine, he called it—which he said was good for rat killing. The mistress gave it to the cook, who put it in the kitchen, where I found it when I needed it. It took me a lot of experimenting to get it right. I made sure nobody knew what I was up to. In the barn, I mixed some strychnine with rat bait. The rats wouldn't touch it. I mixed in some sugar. That worked. A rat ate the bait, tried to run off, but tipped over before it got out of sight. I set my sights on the biggest pig in the barn, and, one day, I ran to the master and announced that his prize sow had up and died.

I kept serving the overseer hot cocoa. The man started to like me. Called me the smartest nigger on the plantation. Said not to get too smart, or someone would bring me down a peg. He took over the plantation when the master and his mistress had to leave for a week. He took his cocoa as usual, in a huge mug, steaming hot, which he let cool and then drank fast. I served him regular, four nights in a row. On the fifth evening, I hit him with twice the sow's dose. He downed that cocoa and stood up and ►

“ Said not to get too smart, or someone would bring me down a peg. ”

An Excerpt from *Any Known Blood* (continued)

fell like a tree. I cleaned up his mug and put away the cocoa and told the world that I found him like that when I came into the house. Everyone thought his heart had given out on him. I'm sure it did. Bessie was the only one who knew what I done. I didn't tell her and didn't admit a thing, but she knew. "You fixed 'im, didn't you?" she whispered one night, while I lay next to her on the pallet on the floor.

6.

For Further Reading

FOR READERS WHO wish to know more about the history behind *The Book of Negroes*, I will mention some of the books that I came across in my research. (Other titles are noted in my acknowledgments.)

Novelists may forever be trying to make sense of the transatlantic slave trade, but in my view a good way to begin to appreciate its impact on ordinary people is by reading the memoirs of freedom seekers. As the editor of *The Classic Slave Narratives*, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., assembled four key slave narratives, including memoirs by Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano, Harriet Jacobs and Mary Prince.

First-hand accounts reflecting the experiences of the Black Loyalists of Nova Scotia can be found in George Elliott Clarke's *Fire on the Water: An Anthology of Black Nova Scotian Writing, Vol. 1*, which contains memoirs by David George, Boston King and John Marrant, among others.

Europeans have left accounts of their experiences with the Black Loyalists, travels in West Africa or participation in the slave trade in the eighteenth century. I am especially indebted to John Clarkson, whose personal journal documenting his work in organizing the exodus of the Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in 1792 was ably introduced and edited by Charles Bruce Fergusson in *Clarkson's Mission to America, 1791-1792*. Also indispensable were *An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* by the slave-ship surgeon Alexander Falconbridge and the letters written by his wife, Anna

For Further Reading (*continued*)

Maria Falconbridge, in *Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone During the Years 1791–1792–1793*. These two accounts can be found independently in libraries or joined together in one book with the same titles, introduced and footnoted by historian Christopher Fyfe. I relied on *The Journal of a Slave Trader (John Newton), 1750–1754; With Newton's Thoughts Upon the African Slave Trade*, edited by Bernard Martin and Mark Spurrell; and on *Journal of a Slave-Dealer: A View of Some Remarkable Exceedents in the Life of Nics. Owen on the Coast of Africa and America from the Year 1746 to the Year 1757*, edited by Eveline Martin. The historian Alexander Peter Kup edited *Adam Afzelius: Sierra Leone Journal, 1795–96*, the diary of a Swedish botanist. Dr. Thomas Winterbottom provides many details in his two-volume *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone*. Finally, in *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, the Scottish doctor Mungo Park describes his trip from Gambia through what are now Senegal and Mali in the years 1795–1797.

I found many books about the people of Africa. Some of the books about Sierra Leone were *A History of Sierra Leone* by Christopher Fyfe and *A History of Sierra Leone, 1400–1787* by Alexander Peter Kup. To learn more about Mali, I consulted *Groupes ethniques au mali* by Bokar N'Diayé; *The Heart of the Ngoni: Heroes of the African Kingdom of Segou* by Harold Courlander with Ousmae Sako; and *The Bamana Empire by the Niger: Kingdom, Jihad and Colonization 1712–1920* by Sundiata D. Djata.

There are many books about the transatlantic slave trade. Most helpful for my purposes were *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1518–1865* by Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley; *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785* by David Hancock; and *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440–1870* by Hugh Thomas.

For old maps of Africa, I studied the *Historical Atlas of Africa* by J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder; *Blaeu's The Grand Atlas of the 17th Century World* by John Goss; and *Norwich's Maps of Africa: An Illustrated and Annotated Carto-bibliography*, revised and edited by Jeffrey C. Stone.

For information about slave vessels and life on board eighteenth-century ships, I looked carefully at *Scurvy: How a Surgeon, a Mariner, and a Gentleman Solved the Greatest Medical Mystery of the Age of Sail* by Stephen R. Bown; *Slave Ships and Slaving* compiled by George Francis Dow; *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* by N. A. M. Rodger; and in *The Journal for Maritime Research*, Dr. Jane Webster's article "Looking for the Material Culture of the Middle Passage."

A number of books introduced me to the history of South Carolina—particularly the history of black people in Sea Islands and in Charleston (or Charles Town, as it was spelled before the American Revolution). Some were: *Slave Badges and the Slave-Hire System in Charleston, South Carolina, 1783–1865* by Harlan Greene, Harry S. Hutchins, Jr., and Brian E. Hutchins; *Charleston in the Age of the Pinckneys* by George C. Rogers, Jr.;

For Further Reading (*continued*)

and *A Short History of Charleston* by Robert N. Rosen.

The literature on the history of South Carolina is vast, but some books of great help to me were *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* by Philip Morgan and *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* by Lorenzo Dow Turner. I also read *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–82* by Elizabeth A. Fenn; *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740–1790* by Robert Olwell; and *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* by Peter Woods. Other helpful books were *Reminiscences of Sea Island Heritage: Legacy of Freedmen on St. Helena Island* by Ronald Daise; *Gullah Fuh Oonuh (Gullah For You): A Guide to the Gullah Language* by Virginia Mixson Geraty; and *The Gullah People and Their African Heritage* by William S. Pollitzer.

I also came across articles and books about slave hair and clothing. Shane White and Graham White wrote *Stylin': African American Expressive Culture from Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit*, as well as the article “Slave Hair and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” which appeared in the *Journal of Southern History*. In the *Journal of American History*, Jonathan Prude wrote “To Look upon the ‘Lower Sort’: Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750–1800.”

I drew additional information about South Carolina history and details about indigo

from *South Carolina: A History* by Walter Edgar; *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina, Volume 1, 1514–1861* by Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore and George C. Rogers, Jr.; and the booklet “Indigo in America” produced by BASF Wyandotte Corporation.

Two books offered herbal remedies and details about the care of pregnant women in the South: *Hoodoo Medicine: Gullah Herbal Remedies* by Faith Mitchell and *Southern Folk Medicine 1750–1820* by Kay K. Moss.

Various books describe Jews in South Carolina in the eighteenth century. Among others, I relied on *This Happy Land: The Jews of Colonial and Antebellum Charleston* by James William Hagy; *The Jews of South Carolina Prior to 1800* by Cyrus Adler and Leon Hühner; and *A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life* edited by Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten.

For details about New York City in the eighteenth century, I consulted *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* by Jill Lepore; *The Epic of New York City* by Edward Robb Ellis; *The Battle for New York: The City at the Heart of the American Revolution* by Barnet Schecter; *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* by Edwin Burrows and Mike Wallace; *The Loyal Blacks* by Ellen Gibson Wilson; and *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770–1810* by Shane White. To learn about the African Burial Ground in Manhattan, I read “Historic Background of the African Burial Ground,” a chapter in the *Draft Management Recommendations for the African Burial*

For Further Reading (*continued*)

Ground, produced by the United States National Park Service.

As for the lives of the Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia, I read *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne, Nova Scotia*, by Marion Robertson; *The Life of Boston King: Black Loyalist, Minister and Master Carpenter* edited by Ruth Holmes Whitehead and Carmelita A. M. Robertson; and the Nova Scotia Museum curatorial report "The Shelburne Black Loyalists: A Short Bibliography of All Blacks Emigrating to Shelburne County, Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, 1783," by Ruth Holmes Whitehead.

To learn about the abolitionist movement in Britain and to imagine the lives of blacks in London at the turn of the nineteenth century, I consulted *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth-Century English Art* by David Dabydeen; *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* by Peter Fryer; *Black England: Life Before Emancipation* by Gretchen Gerzina; *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves* by Adam Hoshschild; and *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain, 1780–1830* by Norma Myers.

I could never have written *The Book of Negroes* without the work of all the diarists, memoir writers and historians who went before me, but I alone am responsible for any intentional or accidental deviations from history in this novel.



Web Detective

www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/abolition/africa_article_01.shtml

On this BBC site, read “Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade,” an article by Dr. Hakim Adi, author and reader in the History of Africa and the African Diaspora at Middlesex University, London.

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php>

Most of the more than 1,200 images in this collection date from the period of slavery. “The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record” traces the experience of those who were sold into slavery in Africa and transported to the Americas, as well as that of their descendants.

<http://pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part1/1p276.html>

Read about Olaudah Equiano (1745–1797), who was sold into slavery at age eleven, eventually gained his freedom, and in 1789 wrote what was to become one of the most widely read slave autobiographies. Click “Equiano’s Autobiography” for the text.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/>

The U.S. Library of Congress site presents its digital collection, “African-American Odyssey,” which features more than 240 items relating to African-American history, from the early days of slavery through the twentieth century: important and rare books, government documents, manuscripts, maps, musical scores, plays, films, and recordings.

Web Detective (*continued*)

www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/mapsof africa/

The Northwestern University Library of Illinois site offers digital copies of 113 authentic antique maps of Africa and accompanying text dating from the mid-sixteenth century to the early twentieth century.

<http://blackloyalist.com/canadiandigitalcollection>

“Black Loyalists: Our History, Our People” offers a wealth of historical detail in the form of personal accounts of Black Loyalists, letters, and other documents and proclamations, including the text of the original Book of Negroes. Click “Documents” on the main page.



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