



## U.S. EMBASSY DUBLIN

American Studies Newsletter  
February 2010

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## The Olympic Winter Games – Vancouver 2010



Lindsey Vonn © AP Image



**Winter Games History:** The first modern Olympic Games were held in the summer of 1896. The organizers added skating to the Summer Games in 1908 (ice rinks could be kept cold even in the hottest weather) – but eventually decided that winter sports were perhaps best left to the winter. The first Olympic Winter Games were held in 1924, in Chamonix, France. [Vancouver 2010](#)

## Black (African American) History Month



### [People & Places: Exploring Black History Month](#)

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Each February, Black History Month honors the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles — slavery, prejudice, poverty — as well as their contributions to the nation’s cultural and political life. To commemorate and celebrate the contributions made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation’s bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month. Presidential Proclamation by President Barack Obama: [National African American History Month](#)

**America.gov:** [People & Places website featuring Black History Month materials](#) - The page explores the topic of "talking openly about race and ethnicity" and notions of cultural and ethnic identity in a dynamic, pluralistic society like the U.S. It employs first-person narratives, photo galleries and interactive elements to show how communities are fighting stereotypes and promoting open and honest discussions about race, ethnicity and identity.

### Links

- [Library of Congress: African American History Month](#)
- [NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#)
- [Smithsonian: African American History and Culture](#)
- [History.com: Black History](#)
- [America.gov: Beyond Dr. King - Notable African Americans](#)
- [The National Museum of African American History & Culture](#) is an excellent source of information on the Civil Rights Movement but including scientific and technological inventiveness. The museum currently has an online presence but is still awaiting its permanent home on the National Mall in Washington.

### Further Information

- [Migration Information Source: African Immigrants in the United States](#)
- [American Anthropological Association: Understanding Race](#)

**The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)** designates the annual theme for U.S. Black History Month. The theme for 2010, "The History of Black Economic Empowerment," recognizes the lives of successful black men and women. This year ASALH is celebrating the centennial of the National Urban League, which was founded in New York City in 1910 by a group of dedicated reformers, both black and white, who wanted to address the needs of African Americans as they migrated northward to escape economic, social and political oppression in the South. [America.gov](#)

The late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed an unprecedented degree of racial solidarity and organization. In 1910, a group of dedicated reformers, black and white, gathered to create an organization to address the needs of African Americans as they migrated to the cities of the United States. The organization that they created a century ago became we all know as the National Urban League. For a century, they have struggled to open the doors of opportunity for successive generations, engaging the challenges of each age. ASALH celebrates the centennial of the National Urban League by exploring racial uplift and black economic development in the twentieth century.

[MORE](#)

**[The National Urban League](#)** - Its mission is to enable African Americans to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.

### Publications

- The Book ["Free at Last: The U.S. Civil Rights Movement"](#)
- The Book ["Abraham Lincoln: A Legacy of Freedom"](#)
- The book ["Justice for All: The Legacy of Thurgood Marshall"](#)
- eJournal USA: ["Multicultural Literature in the United States Today"](#) (Feb. 2009) This publication focuses on the ethnic diversity among distinguished American writers and the richness various cultures bring to U.S. society and the arts.

### America.gov Photo Galleries

- [African Athletes Shine in American Football](#)  
[http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/4110/african\\_athletes\\_football/](http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/4110/african_athletes_football/)
- [Black Economic Empowerment in America](#)  
[http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/30145/black\\_econ/](http://www.america.gov/multimedia/photogallery.html#/30145/black_econ/)

### Teaching Sources

- In recognition of Black History Month, [here](#) is a collection of New York Times and Learning Network materials for teaching and learning about African-American history.
- [Federal Resources for Educational Excellence](#): Nearly 70 offerings that address important events, individuals, or periods in African American history.
- [Race: A Teacher's Guide](#): American Anthropological Ass.: A teaching tool to assist educators in addressing race and human variation.
- [Race – The Power of an Illusion](#): The companion website to California Newsreel's documentary Race: The Power of an Illusion about race in society, science and history. Site contains many online activities, lesson plans, and informative interviews with anthropologists & other scholars.
- [PBS: Matters of Race](#): Companion website to a PBS documentary on contemporary U.S. racial identities. Site includes a teacher's guide for using the documentaries.
- [Slavery in New York](#): The website for the popular New York Historical Society exhibit, *Slavery in New York*. The site includes an educator's guide and other downloadable classroom resources.
- The National Archives: [Teaching With Documents - The Many Faces of Paul Robeson](#)



Jackie Robinson © History.com: [Black History Milestones](#)

## Literature



### Push by Sapphire

A courageous teacher inspires Claireece Precious Jones, the victim of father-daughter incest and other violence, to learn to read and then to write her story. In finding her voice, Precious is empowered to create a new life.

Claireece is sixteen years old. She should be a junior in high school, but is only in ninth grade. She was held back in second grade because she couldn't read and peed on herself. When she was twelve, she left school to give birth to her daughter, who was born with Down's Syndrome. The baby is her father's. Precious says he has been raping her since she was in second grade. [More on Bookrags.com](#)

Push won the Book-of-the-Month Club Stephen Crane award for First Fiction and the Black Caucus of the American Library Association's First Novelist Award. Push was named by the Village Voice and Time Out New York as one of the top ten books of 1996. [More](#)

**Study Guides** Random House: [Guide for Teachers: Push](#)  
Barnes&Noble: [Reading Group Guide](#)  
Bookrags: [Push Study Guide](#)

**About the Author** [Push](#) is Sapphire's first novel. She was born in 1950 and grew up on army bases in California, Pennsylvania, and Texas. She was graduated from City College in New York, received an MFA from Brooklyn College, and taught reading and writing to teenagers and adults in Harlem and the Bronx for eight years. Sapphire is a performance poet and the author of American Dreams. She lives in New York City. Sapphire's work has appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times Magazine, The New York Times Book Review, The Black Scholar, Spin, and Bomb. In February of 2007 Arizona State University presented PUSHing Boundaries, PUSHing Art: A Symposium on the Works of Sapphire. Sapphire's work has been translated into eleven languages and has been adapted for stage in the United States and Europe.

### Links

The African American Literature Book Club: [Sapphire](#)  
GoodReads.com: [Push](#)

## Precious, the Film Adaption

Precious, the film adaption of Push, won the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Awards in the U.S. dramatic competition at Sundance (2009). Sidibe (Precious) made her screen debut in "Precious," earning an Oscar nomination for her first professional acting job. Watch the trailer on the official movie site at [www.weareallprecious.com](http://www.weareallprecious.com)

- NPR: [Sapphire's Story: How 'Push' Became 'Precious'](#)
- New York Times: [Movie Review - Precious](#)

[Announcement by the National Education Association](#): "NEA recognizes and applauds this powerful film that explores so many brutal but urgent issues facing students and teachers every day," said NEA President Dennis Van Roekel. "Precious is one of the most celebrated films of the year—a vibrant, honest and resoundingly hopeful film about the human capacity to grow and overcome even the most seemingly insurmountable circumstances. [...] As Precious discovers her own potential and worth, she is able to break the chains of her circumstances, and pursue her vision of a better future, for herself and for her children.

### [America.gov](#):

#### Articles on African American Literature

- [What Is African-American Literature?](#)

Emergence of a new, black pulp fiction may indicate the maturity, rather than the decline, of African-American literature.

- [Literature at the Crossroads](#)

## Pop Culture versus Real America

A new America.gov publication!



U.S. television and cinema promote images of Americans that are ... well ... wrong! Pop Culture versus Real America will contrast those pop culture images with profiles of real Americans in every walk of life. Look [here](#) soon for the entire book.

For now, this **First Look** edition includes the [introduction and two chapters](#):

- Baywatch / Real Lifeguards
- Grey's Anatomy / Real Doctor



## Webchats & Webcasts

<http://www.america.gov/multimedia/askamerica.html>

## Embassy Events

Ambassador Daniel M. Rooney will host a Community Forum to discuss the question:

***" Will Growing Two-Way US-Ireland Economic Links Help Drive  
Growth After the Crisis? "***

DATE: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 201

TIME: 2:00 PM

LOCATION: Renehan Hall, South Campus, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare

If you plan on attending, please RSVP by e-mail or telephone to Margot Collins, Office of Public Affairs,

U.S. Embassy, Dublin

E-Mail: [collinsmm@state.gov](mailto:collinsmm@state.gov)

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