

Bryan & Shannon Prince Biographical Sketch

Bryan and Shannon Prince are from the historic Elgin Settlement and Buxton Mission, which was a haven for fugitive slaves prior to the American Civil War. They have been married for 30 years and, along with their four children, continue to farm in this area where their ancestors found freedom so many generations ago. Both are active with the Buxton National Historic Site & Museum, where Shannon is Curator and Bryan is an historian and longtime Board Member.



Both have been members of several organizations in Canada and the United States including Ontario's Underground Railroad Alliance; The African Canadian Heritage Network; York University's Harriet Tubman Institute; joint projects with Millersville University and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Historical Society; and the advisory board for Chatham-Kent Tourism department. They have lectured extensively across Ontario and the United States and are among the organizers of an annual Canadian/U.S. Black History and Genealogy Conference that brings together distinguished scholars from across the continent.

In addition to farming, Bryan spent many winter months working for several social service agencies, including a Caseworker and Employment Counselor for Chatham-Kent Social Services, Counselor Assistant at the South-West Regional Centre, Counselor at Kent County Children's Aide Society's Group Home, Prevention Worker at the Pearson Centre, and Instructor at ARC Industries. His love for history has allowed him the opportunity to serve as:

- consulting editor with England's Adam Matthew Publications digital project *Slavery, Abolition and Social Justice 1490 – 2007*;
- member of the Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee on the Abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade;
- member of the International Underground Railroad Heritage Program initiated by the Canadian Consul General;
- member of Ontario's Cultural Strategic Development initiative for Underground Railroad sites
- member of the Ontario Agricultural Museum

He is an award-winning author whose works include the books *I Came As A Stranger: The Underground Railroad*, *A Shadow On The Household*, and the script for the Omni television documentary *A Thousand Miles to Freedom*.

Shannon's earlier careers were radio dispatcher for the O.P.P. and later, Home Care Worker caring for aged and physically disabled. For many years, she was an active member and officer of both the Merlin and the Kent County Home and School Association and was their representative at the County's Board of Education. During that time, she attended St. Clair College in the evenings and graduated with certificates in Social Welfare and Personal Support Worker. In 1999, she accepted her current position as Curator and graduated the Museum Studies Program through the Ontario Museums Association. She is currently a member of the Ontario Museums Association; the Co-Chair of the National Historic Sites Alliance of Ontario; the Ontario Trillium Fund Grant Review Team; the Board of Directors for the Capitol Theatre; and the Chatham-Kent Cultural Mapping team. She is a much sought after Storyteller, participant in re-enactments and has performed in the stage production of the historical drama *Rainbows and Wings*.