

# **Black Issues Conference 2011**

## **Abstract**

As research has struggled to identify and define the Black experience (Du Bois, 1903; Bell, 2002), Obidah (2003) suggests that one of the lasting theoretical frameworks that resonates for the social science community and for Black people themselves is Dubois' (1903) notion of double consciousness. Dubois (1903) found that as African Americans, we live two lives – one that is full of pride for its African-ness and all that it encompasses; and a the second life in which we have to assimilate into the American (White) culture. Therein lies the struggle, where the African American is seeking to find a place where our Black experience can become a part of the “American” experience without having doors closed in our face for simply “being”. To fully understand this dynamic we have to travel back/explore our roots - Sankofa!

Because slaveholders limited or prohibited education of enslaved African Americans for fear they it might empower their “property” and inspire or enable emancipatory ambitions; oral traditions became the primary means of preserving history, morals, and other cultural information among the people. This oral tradition has been passed down through our cultural lineage and must be preserved for future generations. In this workshop we will examine the oral mediums by which African American history has been preserved. Attendees should leave with a fundamental framework and understanding of how to conduct and preserve their family history.