



## Learning Activity - Key Stage 3

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It is one of a series of six relating to Paul Robeson for KS3.

Let Paul Robeson Sing!  
Paul Robeson's Early Life  
Paul Robeson- An Education  
Paul Robeson: Global Citizen  
Paul Robeson: Stage and Screen  
**Paul Robeson in Wales**



## Paul Robeson in Wales



## By South Wales Miners Library

### Introduction

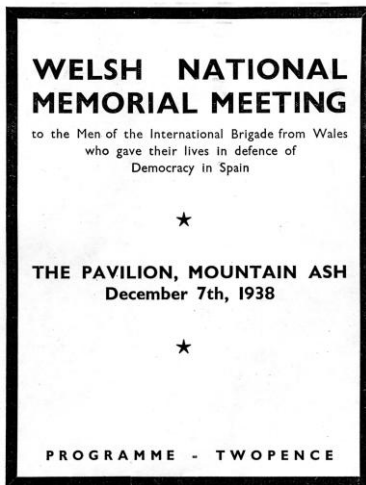
#### What links are there between the African-American Paul Robeson and Wales?

This unit supports investigations into a significant person from the twentieth century who was an international figure but with links to Wales.

#### Tasks and learning objectives

- 1 How did Robeson make his connections with Wales?
- 2 The Trans-Atlantic Exchange in Porthcawl, 1957
- 3 The National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale in 1958

## 1. How did Robeson make connections with Wales?



*Programme of Welsh National Memorial meeting, 1938*



*Proud Valley, 1940*

In a moving centenary tribute to Paul Robeson held in New York's Carnegie Hall in 1998, the actors Whoopi Goldberg and Ossie Davis recalled the story of Robeson's first contact with the Welsh people in London:

“One day during the grim winter of 1929, when unemployment and desperate poverty stalked the British Isles, he was on his way to a gala affair when he heard the rich sound of a Welsh miners' choir. He had crossed the path of a group of miners from South Wales who were walking along the street at the kerbside and singing for money to sustain themselves. One of their signs said they had walked from Wales to petition the government for help.

Without hesitation, Paul joined the group of singing miners, walking the streets with them humming along. When they reached one of the large downtown buildings, Paul mounted its front steps and sang to his new friends – ‘Ol’ Man River’, popular ballads, and spirituals. To those who were there it was an unforgettable experience.

Later, he organized enough contributions to provide them with a ride back on a freight train that included a carload of food and clothing for the miners of the Rhondda Valley and their families. That year he contributed the proceeds of one of his concerts to the Welsh Miners' Relief Fund and visited the Rhondda Valley in person to sing for the mining community and to talk with the people.”

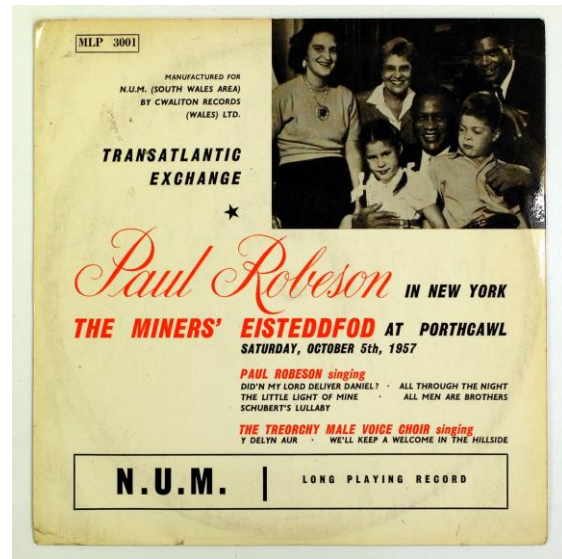
**Link to images on People's Collection Wales website**

[Programme of Welsh National Memorial meeting, 1938](#)  
[Proud Valley, 1940](#)

## 2. The Trans-Atlantic Exchange in Porthcawl, 1957



*Porthcawl Miners Eisteddfod, 1957*



*LP cover for the Trans-Atlantic Exchange Port*

The new technology of the time was the ability to use the telephone for calls across the Atlantic between Britain and the United States of America.

To get around the passport ban on Paul Robeson a telephone call was set up between Porthcawl at the Annual Miners' Eisteddfod and New York.

**Link to images on People's Collection Wales website**

**[Porthcawl Miners Eisteddfod, 1957](#)**

**[LP cover for the Trans Atlantic Exchange Port](#)**

## 3. The National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale in 1958



*National Eisteddfod Ebbw Vale, 1958    National Eisteddfod Ebbw Vale with A Bevan, 1958*

In July 1958 Paul Robeson and his wife Eslanda recovered their passports.

An overwhelming welcome met the Robesons in Britain and throughout Europe. Between September and December of 1958 Robeson performed a hectic round of concerts from Glasgow to Exeter, Bradford to Belfast.

In Wales he performed in Porthcawl (5 October), Cardiff (4 November) and Swansea (23 November).

Robeson was invited to sing at the National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale in 1958.

**Link to image on People's Collection Wales website**

**[National Eisteddfod Ebbw Vale, 1958](#)**