

BLACK HISTORY MONTH – Week 2

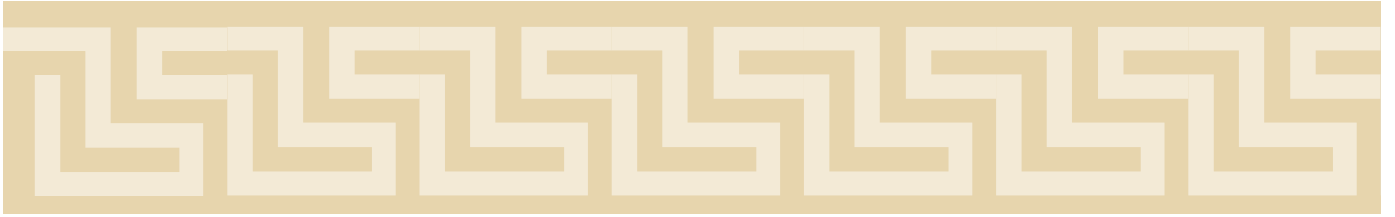
#BlackHistoryMatters

A large silhouette of a hand with fingers spread, wearing a metal chain around the wrist. The hand is set against a background of a sunset sky with orange and yellow clouds. The overall image is in black and white, with the sunset background providing the color.

Slavery and freedom in Canada

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WEEK 2: SLAVERY AND FREEDOM IN CANADA

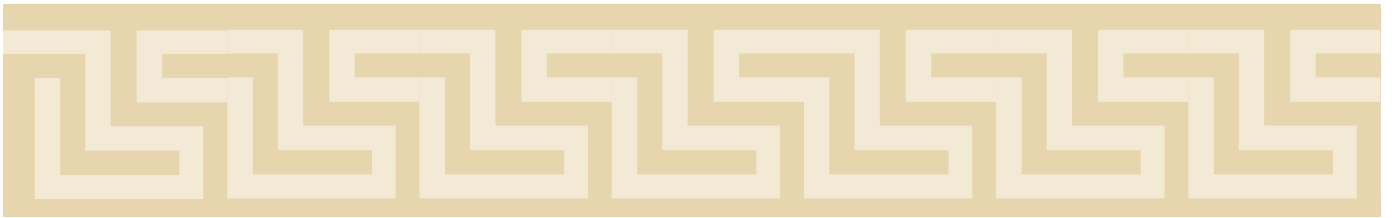
European chattel slavery was introduced into what we know as Canada by French colonists in the 1600s. Aboriginal peoples were enslaved first and enslaved Africans were brought via the Transatlantic Slave Trade in as early as 1608. The earliest record of Black enslavement in Canada is of the sale of a young boy named Olivier LeJeune in 1629 in New France. By 1759 two-thirds of enslaved people in New France were First Nations and one-third were of African descent. Slavery expanded after the end of the American Revolution in 1783 when United Empire Loyalists relocated to various places in eastern Canada: Lower Canada (Quebec), New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Upper Canada (Ontario) and brought the almost three thousand Africans they enslaved. Under British rule, Africans were the majority enslaved.

Enslaved Africans were used as free labour to meet the demands of developing a new colony. Enslaved Blacks worked in rural and emerging urban areas in a range of occupations. They worked as domestic servants, fur traders, miners, fishermen, wharf workers, and sailors. Enslaved Africans also worked in various trades as blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, and coopers. Enslaved Blacks cleared and farmed land, and worked in the different kinds of businesses operated by their owners. Canada further participated in the Transatlantic Slave Trade through the trading of products like salted cod and timber with slaveholding Caribbean colonies for slave-produced goods such as sugar, molasses, rum, and tobacco.

Enslaved Africans were bought and sold at public auctions and through newspaper advertisements. As personal property, enslaved Blacks were passed down to family members in wills, along with farming tools and furniture. Government officials, church leaders, military officers, merchants, Natives, and United Empire Loyalists were some of the people who enslaved Blacks. Enslaved Africans resisted their bondage in many ways such as fleeing to the free territories of the northern US in pursuit of their liberty. The enslavement of Africans existed in the colonies of New France and British North America for over 200 years until it was abolished on August 1, 1834.

August 1st, also known as Emancipation Day, became an annual commemoration of the abolition of slavery in British colonies and a celebration of freedom. People gathered at various locations across Canada to mark the occasion. There were parades, church services, guest speakers, picnics, dances and other festive cultural activities. The occasion was also a time to discuss issues of concern to the Black community.

Approximately 3,000 Black Loyalists also moved to Canada after the American Revolution. Black Loyalists were Africans enslaved in America who obtained their freedom in return for fighting for the British during the American Revolution. When the War of 1812 broke out, Black Loyalists enlisted to fight in support of Britain once again to secure their freedom. An American victory could mean a return to slavery for Blacks in the British colonies. At the age of 68, Richard Pierpoint suggested the formation of an all-Black militia in the Niagara region made up of veterans of the American Revolution. It was called the Coloured Corps. These brave men helped to defend Upper Canada (Ontario) and defeat the Americans.

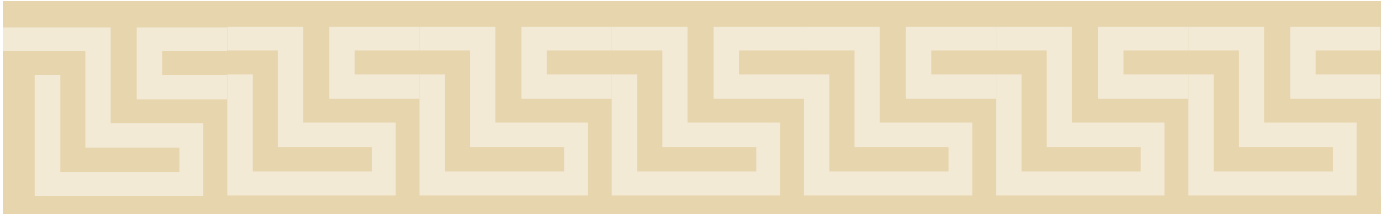


For their service, Black Loyalists were offered 100-acre land grants. Many received land in Oro Township in Simcoe County between 1819 and 1831. It was a settlement planned by the government to fulfil the promise to Black veterans while having a trained militia available in the event of an American invasion via Georgian Bay or Lake Huron. They were joined by freedom seekers and free Blacks. They cleared land, built homes and a school, and created a small, close-knit community. In 1849 Blacks in Oro built a church after worshipping in the homes of community members over the years. Several Black residents were buried in the church cemetery. Though the community no longer exists, the Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church still stands today. Over the years the church has been restored and in 2000 it was designated as a National Historic Site. In 2015, a campaign was launched to save the log structure, one of the oldest relics of Black history in North America still standing.



CHRIS SO/TORONTO STAR

Oro-Medonte Township, Ontario - MAY 2, 2015 Janie Cooper-Wilson is a descendant of the original black settlers that built the church behind her some time in the 1840's. The African Methodist Episcopal Church located at Third Line north of Barrie is one of North America's oldest African churches. Now a National Historical site, the township is trying to preserve the one room log cabin from decay.



ACTIVITES

After reading the background page on Slavery and Freedom in Canada, answer the questions below

Who was Olivier LeJeune?

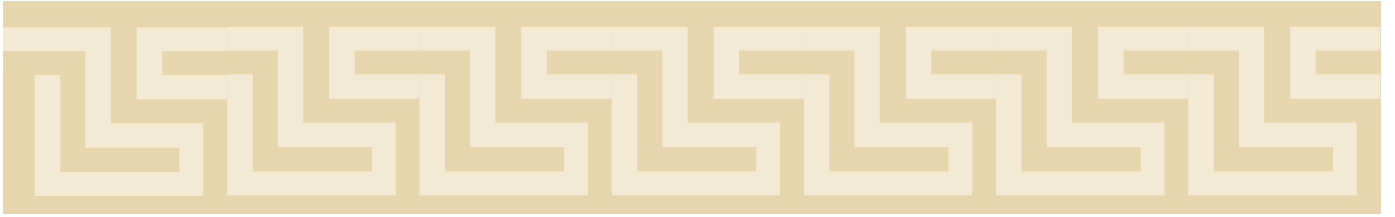
Describe how Canada was part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

When was slavery abolished in Canada?

How was the end of slavery celebrated?

Who were Black Loyalists?

Why are the efforts to save the Oro African Methodist Church important to Black history?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The Hanging of Angelique by Afua Cooper

Canada's Forgotten Slaves: Two Hundred Years of Bondage by Marcel Trudel

Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada

<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/slavery/index.aspx>

Talking About Freedom: Celebrating Emancipation Day in Canada by Natasha Henry

Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada by Natasha Henry

The Greatest Freedom Show on Earth documentary, TVO

<http://tvo.org/video/documentaries/the-greatest-freedom-show-on-earth>

The Book of Negroes miniseries

<http://curio.ca/en/collection/the-book-of-negroes-1932/>

Richard Pierpoint Heritage Minute

<https://www.historica-dominion.ca/content/heritage-minutes/richard-pierpoint>

Oro Settlement

<http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/war-of-1812/post-war-aftermath/oro-settlement/>

We Stand on Guard for Thee: Teaching and Learning the African Canadian Experience in the War of 1812.

<http://tubman.info.yorku.ca/educational-resources/>



ACTIVITY: ANALYZING SLAVE ADS

Primary sources can provide evidence and insight into the experiences of African Canadians. Use the examples of slave ads below published in Canadian newspapers to help you fill in the chart on page 7:

T O B E S O L D,
A Likely, healthy negro wench, of about 17 years of age, is well calculated for the country, and sold for want of employ.—The title indisputable. If not sold within 8 days from the date hereof by private sale, she will be sold at public auction.—Enquire of **THOMAS MALLARD.**

#1

The Royal Gazette, September 11, 1787

T O B E S O L D.
A Mulatto Boy fifteen years old; capable of Cooking and doing all kind of House Work, any person wishing to purchase, enquire of the Printer.

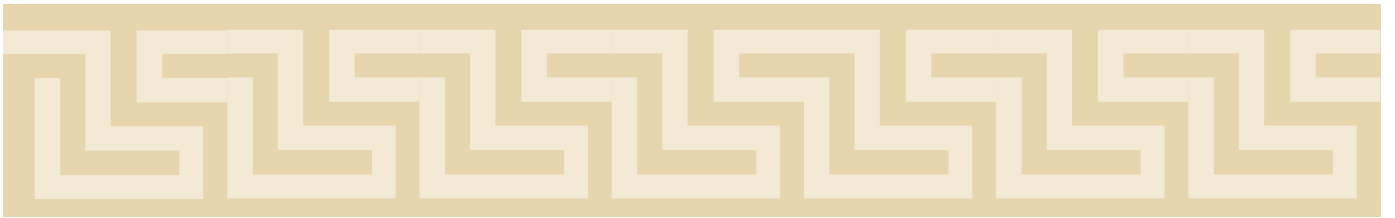
#2

Montreal Gazette, May 16, 1793

Notice.
RAN away from the subscriber, a Servant black woman, by the name of *BET*, with a male child, two years old and upwards.—Whoever will return the said Wench and boy, to the subscriber, or give information, so that she and he may be brought back, shall receive six pence reward, and no charges paid. All persons are strictly forbid harboring or trusting him on my account, under the penalty of the law.
R. LEAVENS.
 Bellville, 29th Sept. 1818. 19

#3

Kingston Gazette, October 6, 1818: 3



ACTIVITY: ANALYZING SLAVE ADS

	#1	#2	#3
What type of document is it?			
When was it produced?			
Who produced it?			
Where was it produced?			
Why was this document produced?			
What does this document reflect about the attitudes and beliefs towards Blacks in Canada at that time?			
What do you learn about the subject of the document?			