Lesson Resource Kit: Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada

Grade 7: New France and British North America, 1713–1800

Upper Canada Gazette, 19 August 1795
N31, Archives of Ontario

Introduction

Designed to fit into teachers’ practice, this resource kit provides links, activity suggestions, primary source handouts and worksheets to assist you and your students in applying, inquiring, and understanding Canada between 1713 and 1800.

Topic

Slavery in British North America

Source

The Archives’ *Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada* online exhibit - [click here to view](#).

Use the Archives of Ontario’s online exhibit on Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada:

- As a learning resource for yourself
- As a site to direct your students for inquiry projects
- As a place to find and use primary sources related to the curriculum

Themes that can be addressed

- Use of Primary Sources
- The forced migration of African slaves to New France and British North America
- Restrictions on rights and freedoms of slaves
- An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves (1793)
## Curriculum

### Strand A. New France and British North America, 1713–1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Expectations</th>
<th>Historical Thinking Concepts</th>
<th>Specific Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1. Application:</strong> Colonial and Present-day Canada</td>
<td>Continuity and Change; Historical Perspective</td>
<td>A1.1, A1.2, A1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2. Inquiry:</strong> From New France to British North America</td>
<td>Historical Perspective; Historical Significance</td>
<td>A2.1, A2.2, A2.3, A2.4, A2.5, A2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A3. Understanding Historical Context:</strong> Events and Their Consequences</td>
<td>Historical Significance; Cause and Consequence</td>
<td>A3.1, A3.2, A3.3, A3.4, A3.5, A3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignment & Activity Ideas

Inquiring into Slavery in Upper Canada

- The historical inquiry process involves five steps:
  - Formulating a question
  - Gathering and organizing information or evidence
  - Interpreting and analysing information or evidence
  - Evaluating information or evidence and drawing conclusions
  - Communicating findings
- The curriculum highlights that these steps do not have to be completed sequentially nor together. You may wish to explore specific steps based on your students’ readiness and prior knowledge or your own resources and time. See pages 22-24 in the 2013 revised Ontario Social Studies and History curriculum for more details.
- Using a primary source handout from this kit, introduce your students to the topic of slavery in Canada. Ask students to ask questions of the primary source provided. Use these questions as a jumping off point to explore these historical issues in more depth.
- Click here to view Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada online exhibit and use this as a source to point your students for their own inquiry project. Here, they can view primary sources and secondary information to gather and organize historical information that they can interpret, evaluate, and communicate for different end products.

Imagining First-Hand Accounts

- We have very few first-hand accounts of slavery from the words of the people who were enslaved. We can encourage our students to research and imagine the words of those who were enslaved from the primary source left behind.
- For example, we are able to learn about Chloe Cooley through the words of others (see Chloe Cooley and Slavery in Upper Canada). While we don’t know what happened to Chloe, we know that in reporting her struggle at being sold, we have an account of how this woman actively resisted the actions done to her without her consent.
- Have your students write a first-hand account from the perspective of an enslaved person using the newspaper clippings provided on handouts Advertisements for Slaves (1795-1802) or Advertisements Regarding Escaped Slaves (1793-1795).
Memorializing Significance

- Using an imagined perspective of someone who was featured in the newspaper clippings on *Advertisements for Slaves (1795-1802)* or *Advertisements Regarding Escaped Slaves (1793-1795)*, have your students create a memorial plaque, such as the one found on the *Marking Significance* handout, a sketch of a statue, a postage stamp, or another form of memorialization to mark the significance of someone who was lost to history.

Examining Primary Sources

- Have your students read the *Chloe Cooley and Slavery In Upper Canada* handout. Ask them what they think happened following that incident. They may say that slavery was completely abolished in Canada following that incident. Highlight that this is a secondary source about slavery in British North America.
- Have students explore *An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves* that resulted from the Chloe Cooley incident. See if they can figure out that the Act prevents the further introduction of slaves to British North America without infringing on others' “private property,” or current slave holdings.
- Discuss with your students the importance of using primary sources to get a full account of the past. If you only read a secondary source, you might think slavery was completely abolished. As an extension, have your students research when slavery was completely abolished in British North America as well as New France.
Handouts & Worksheets

Introduction to Primary Sources.................................................................................. 6
Organizing Your Thoughts.............................................................................................. 7
Chloe Cooley and Slavery in Upper Canada ................................................................. 8
Advertisements, 1795-1802............................................................................................ 9
Unidentified Women (1875).......................................................................................... 10
Advertisements Regarding Escaped Slaves (1793-1795) ............................................. 11
Marking Significance...................................................................................................... 12
An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves (1793)........................................ 13
An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies (1833) ............... 14
Matthew Elliott Homestead ......................................................................................... 15
Henry Lewis’ letter to William Jarvis ........................................................................... 16
Introduction to Primary Sources

Advertisement, Niagara Herald, 28 August, 1802
Reference Code: N23
Archives of Ontario

A primary source is a document or object from the past created by people who lived during that time. Primary sources provide a view into an event or experience that only people living during that time could have experienced.

Archives collect and preserve primary sources so that students can learn history from the experiences of people who were there. At an archive, primary sources are called records. At a museums, primary sources are called artifacts.

Have you ever used a primary source before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Sources</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original material from the past</td>
<td>Material people today write about the past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaries</td>
<td>Textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Reference books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintings and other art work</td>
<td>Websites such as Wikipedia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphs</td>
<td>Current news articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>Documentaries and films</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are some other examples of primary and secondary sources?

Can sources be both primary and secondary?
Organizing Your Thoughts
What you know

What you want to know

What you are going to research
Chloe Cooley and Slavery in Upper Canada

March 14, 1793, Queenston, ON - William Vrooman, a Canadian slave owner, takes a woman slave by force across the river and sells her to an American buyer.

Chloe Cooley does not go quietly. It takes three men to tie her up and throw her in a boat. Once on the American side, she screams and resists - they bind her once more and hand her over to a new owner.

Chloe Cooley has no rights. She is considered property that can be bought and sold, or bequeathed in her owner’s will. Most of 18th-century society condones slavery as a normal condition and an economic necessity; few people are willing to assist slaves to escape their servitude.

Peter Martin, a free Black man, brought William Grisley, a witness to the Chloe Cooley’s struggle, to make an official report about this incident to John Graves Simcoe, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. Together, they recounted the story at the Executive Council meeting on March 21, 1793.

Simcoe, a supporter of the movement to abolish slavery even before coming to Upper Canada, used the Chloe Cooley incident as a catalyst for enacting legislation against slavery.
Advertisements, 1795-1802

For Sale, a Negro Wench,
Upper Canada Gazette, 19 August 1795
Reference Code: N 31
Archives of Ontario

Wanted, A Negro Boy,
Niagara Herald, 18 November 1801 to 9 January 1802
Reference Code: N 23
Archives of Ontario

For Sale, The Negro Man and Woman
Niagara Herald, 9 January to 13 February, 1802
Reference Code: N 23
Archives of Ontario
Unidentified Women, ca. 1875
Alvin D. McCurdy fonds
Reference Code: F 2076-16-4-7
Archives of Ontario, I0028819
Advertisements Regarding Escaped Slaves (1793-1795)

Upper Canada Gazette, 4 July 1793
N31, Archives of Ontario

Upper Canada Gazette, 19 August 1795
N31, Archives of Ontario
Marking Significance

CHLOE COOLEY AND THE 1793 ACT TO LIMIT SLAVERY IN UPPER CANADA

On March 14, 1793 Chloe Cooley, an enslaved Black woman in Queenston, was bound, thrown in a boat and sold across the river to a new owner in the United States. Her screams and violent resistance were brought to the attention of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe by Peter Martin, a free Black and former soldier in Butler’s Rangers, and William Grisley, a neighbour who witnessed the event. Simcoe immediately moved to abolish slavery in the new province. He was met with opposition in the House of Assembly, some of whose members owned slaves. A compromise was reached and on July 9, 1793 an Act was passed that prevented the further introduction of slaves into Upper Canada and allowed for the gradual abolition of slavery although no slaves already residing in the province were freed outright. It was the first piece of legislation in the British Empire to limit slavery and set the stage for the great freedom movement of enslaved African Americans known as the Underground Railroad.

Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario

This plaque, located on Niagara Parkway in Niagara-on-the-Lake, marks the spot where Chloe Cooley was forced across the river to be sold.

© Ontario Heritage Trust
An Act to Prevent the further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude within this Province.

[31st July, 1793]

WHEREAS it is unjust that a people who enjoy freedom by Law should encourage the introduction of Slaves, and whereas, it is highly expedient to abate Slavery in this Province, so far as the same may practicably be done without violating private property; 

BE IT ENACTED by the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province of Upper Canada, constituted and assembled by virtue of and under the authority of any Act passed in the Parliament of Great Britain, intituled, “An Act to prevent certain parts of an Act passed in the fourteenth year of His Majesty’s Reign, intituled, ‘An Act for making more effectual provision for the Government of the Province of Quebec, in North America, and to make further provision for the Government of the said Province,’” and by the authority of the same, That from and after the passing of this Act, no Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed in the thirtieth year of His present Majesty, intituled, “An Act for encouraging New Settlers in His Majesty’s Colonies and Plantations in America,” shall enable the Governor of Lieutenant-Governor of this Province, to grant a licence for importing into the said any Negro or Negroes, nor shall the same be hereafter permitted; and that from and after the passing of this Act, it shall not be lawful for the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor or Person administering the Government of this Province, to grant a licence for the importation of any Negro or other person to be subjected to the condition of a Slave, or for bound involuntary service for life, into any part of said Province; nor shall any person who shall come or be brought into this Province after the passing of this Act, be subjected to the condition of a Slave, or to such service.

In the Province, our shall any voluntary contract of service or indentures that may be entered into by any parties within this Province, after the passing of this Act, be binding on any of them, for a longer time than a term of ten years, from the day of the date of such contract.

II. Provided always, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be extended to increase to any Negro, or other person subjected to such condition, to the surety of the principal, the condition of such person, or to increase the price of the person, or to make any alteration in the condition of the person, against the will of the owner thereof, by his or her executor, administrator or assign, who shall have come or been brought into this Province, in conformity to the conditions prescribed by any authority for that purpose executed, or by any Order in Council against the execution thereof.

Be it enacted by authority aforesaid, That in case any master or mistress shall detain any such child born in their service or almost, beyond the time of twelve years, or any such child by reason of a contract of service, or indentures, duly and voluntarily executed, after such discharge as aforesaid, it shall and may, be lawful for such servant to apply to the court aforesaid, for a discharge to any of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace, who shall and may be lawfully for the said Justice to discharge such servant from such service as aforesaid, Provided always, That in case any issues shall be born of such children, during their debent service, or after, such
An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies (1833)

C.A. LXXII.

An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies; for promoting the Industry of the manumitted and for compensating the Persons herein entitled to the Services of such Slaves.

1833 British Imperial Act Passed in 1833

Courtesy of Parliamentary Archives, U. K

1833 British Imperial Act Passed in 1833

Courtesy of Parliamentary Archives, U. K
Matthew Elliott Homestead
Matthew Elliot, a Loyalist who came from Virginia during the American Revolution, probably had as many as sixty slaves living in the huts behind his home in Fort Malden (now Amherstburg).

Matthew Elliott homestead built in 1784 (from a photo taken in 1912), Parks Canada Agency, Fort Malden National Historic Site of Canada
Henry Lewis’ letter to William Jarvis

Henry Lewis escaped from his owner in Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake), Upper Canada by fleeing to Schenectady, New York. Sometime later he wrote to his ex-owner, William Jarvis, to request he be allowed to buy his own freedom from Jarvis.

Henry Lewis' letter of 1794 provides some indication of his motives:

“My desired to support myself as free man and enjoy all the benefits which may result from my being free in a country where a Blackman is defended by the laws as much as a white man is induce me to make you an offer of purchasing myself ... the reason why I left your house is this your [wife Hannah] vexed me to so high a degree that it was far beyond the power of man to support it is true and I will say in all company that I always lived as well in your house as I should wish.”

-Henry Lewis