Lesson Resource Kit:

Black Canadian Migration Experiences

Grade 8: Creating Canada, 1850–1890,
Canada, 1890–1914: A Changing Society

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 1850-1914.

Topic

Escape from slavery and establishment of the Black community in Ontario

Sources

- Click here to visit The Black Canadian Experience in Ontario 1834-1914 online exhibit
- Click here to visit the Images of Black History: Exploring the Alvin McCurdy Collection online exhibit
- Click here to visit the Letter of Tom Elice (Ellis) to Mary Warner online exhibit
Use the Archives of Ontario’s online exhibits on Black Canadian experiences:

- As a learning resource for yourself
- As sites to direct your students for inquiry projects
- As places 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 and the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833
- The Underground Railroad and migration of former slaves to Ontario

**Curriculum Links**

**Strand A. Creating Canada, 1850–1890**

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**Strand B. Canada, 1890–1914: A Changing Society**

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Assignment & Activity Ideas

Inquiring into Black Canadian Migration Experiences

- 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 by clicking here.

- Using a primary source handout from this kit, introduce your students to the topics of slavery and Black Canadian settlement in Canada. Ask students to ask questions of the primary source provided. Use these questions as a jumping off point to explore these historical topics in more depth.

- Click here to access the Black Canadian Experience in Ontario 1834-1914 online exhibit, click here to access the Images of Black History: Exploring the Alvin McCurdy Collection online exhibit, and click here to access the Letter of Tom Elice (Ellis) to Mary Warner online exhibit to use 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.

Creating First-Person Narratives with Research

- 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, using the Excerpt from the Emancipation Papers of Susan Holton (1848) or the photograph of Levi Veney (1898) in this kit, your students can create backstories for people whose words are lost to history
  - Using these two primary sources as inspiration, have your students do research on the history of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and Canadian settlement and create a back story for these two individuals

- Have them write diary entries for major points of their life or create a graphic narrative highlighting these major points in their life. You can use the Graphic Narrative Cells handout in this kit to support you in this task.
Exploring Primary Sources at Different Archives

- Give your students a chance to review the Canadian primary sources that we have made available in this Kit and on the online exhibits. [Click here to access the exhibit for the Black Canadian Experience in Ontario 1834-1914], [click here to access the Images of Black History: Exploring the Alvin McCurdy Collection online exhibit], and [click here to access the Letter of Tom Elice (Ellis) to Mary Warner online exhibit].
- Have a discussion about the primary sources and what your students find useful about them for learning more about history of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and Canadian settlement. Create a list of criteria about what makes a useful primary source for studying history.
- As a class, generate a list of questions your students have about this topic and, based on the criteria you created, have students identify what other primary sources they may want or need for learning about these topics.
- For homework or in a computer lab period, have students explore other archives and the primary sources they have. Each student chose one primary source to bring to class that fits the criteria you developed as a class. If a student likes a primary source that doesn’t fit the criteria, ask them to modify the criteria to account for their primary source.
- Following this exploration, see if students can answer their predetermined questions using the class set of primary sources.

Letters in Response

- Give your student the Letter from Tom Elice to Mary Warner (1854) and S. Wickham’s Warning of Slave-Catchers in the United States (1850) handouts.
- Have your students to a Think-Pair-Share about the contents of the letters and the implications of what they letters are discussing.
- Have your students write a response letter to Tom or S. Wickham asking for clarification, and describing their own (fictionalized) situation.

Writing for the Voice of the Fugitive

- *The Provincial Freeman* and *The Voice of the Fugitive* were important publications for spreading information and community-building.
- Give your students these primary sources to examine and discuss the possible content that would be featured in these newspapers.
- Based on research they completed on history of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and Canadian settlement, ask your students to write a featured article for the Voice of the Fugitive. Use the *Writing for the Voice of the Fugitive* as a worksheet.
Handouts & Worksheets

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Introduction to Primary Sources

The Evening News of Detroit reported on the Dunn segregated schooling case, September 6, 1833
Alvin D. McCurdy fonds
Reference Code: F 2076-14-0-3, page 18
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 museum, primary sources are called artifacts.

Have you ever used a primary source before?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Primary Sources</th>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
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<td>Material people today write about the past</td>
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What are some other examples of primary and secondary sources?

Can sources be both primary and secondary?
Excerpt from the Emancipation Papers of Susan Holton (1848)

Excerpt from the emancipation papers of Susan Holton, Ohio, 1848
Reference Code: F 2076-1-0-15
Archives of Ontario
Voice of the Fugitive, March 12, 1851
Alvin D. McCurdy fonds, Reference Code: F 2076-16-9-35
Archives of Ontario
In introducing the Voice of the Fugitive to its patrons, the rules of propriety, as well as a long established custom, make it our duty to set forth some avowal of the principles by which we shall be governed in its editorial management…

We expect... to advocate the cause of human liberty in the true meaning of that term. We shall advocate the immediate and unconditional abolition of chattel slavery everywhere, but especially on American soil. We shall also persuade... every oppressed person of color in the United States to settle in Canada, where the laws make no distinction among men, based on completion, and upon whose soil “no slave can breathe”...

We shall oppose the annexation of Canada to the United States to the fullest extent of our ability, while that Government continues to tolerate the abominable system of human slavery.

We shall from time to time endeavor to lay before our readers the true condition of our people in Canada, of their hopes and prospects for the future - and while we intend this to be a mouth piece for the refugees, yet we mean to speak out our sentiments as a freeman upon all subjects that come within our sphere...
What are the duties of colored men in these Provinces, who have been forced here from American despotism and oppression? We shall answer this question as frankly and at the same time, as sincere (sic) as we think its importance demands. Well then! we live in a government that knows no caste in its political organization. All men stand on the broad platform of equality before the laws, and are alike cared for by Her Majesty’s government. It is as true now as it was when Curran spoke those immortal words.

No matter what complexion incompatible with Liberty, an Indian or an African man may have burnt upon him, the moment he sets his foot upon British soil he is free.

...From this pleasing picture we turn to its contrast, the Republican government of the United States.

And what are its recent decisions upon questions involving the liberty of her entire colored population. Why? that none but white men were intended to be recognized as citizens in the political structure of the government. That negroes constitute the exceptions; that they have no rights under her laws; are aliens and outcasts on her shores...We owe everything to the country of our adoption and nothing to that miserable, contemptible, despotism the government of the United States.
Levi Veney (1898)

Levi Veney, ex-slave who lived in Amherstburg, taken at J. D. Burkes' store, 1898
Alvin D. McCurdy fonds
Reference Code: F 2076-16-3-5
Archives of Ontario, I0024830
Map of Canada West showing the principal stations of the free colored population (1855)

Southwestern Counties of Canada West showing the principal stations of the free colored population, 1855
Reference Code: Pamphlet no. 41
Archives of Ontario
Chatum Canada West July the 9 1854

Dear Mary,

I now take this opportunity to inform you that I am well at present and hope these few lines will find you and the rest are also well. The girls have joined the Methodist Church and Al has gotten married to Mrs Hopday. I have saw the most of the folks from our part of the country and I think it is one of the best country I ever was in. There is lots of coloured people here and coming every day more or less. O Dear Mary how I should like to see you. I would give the entire world to see you and I would come but I can’t be a slave agent tell my master that I should like to see him and mistress and all the rest of the folks. But give me my liberty before all the world. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends but give my love all to yourself. Write to me in Windsor, Canada West and let me know how all of the folks are getting along. I remain your truly till Death, so may God bless you Dearest, this is from your

Tom Elice to
Mary Warner
Letter dated Oct. 12, 1850 from S. Wickham
D. B. Stevenson fonds
Reference Code: F 499 MU 2885
Archives of Ontario

Transcription (edited for clarity):

Oswego, October 12th 1850

Mr Stevenson, I write these few lines to inform you and all my old picton friends that these few lines leaves me in good health and hoping these will find all my acquaintances in the same. Please sir, give my love to my Aunt Dinah Caty and Jane Bennet. Tell them I say they must not come to the States but stay in the land of freedom while they have good homes, for the law is so now all through the United States that the slave holders can take their slaves were ever they can find them, and since that law passed here there has been several colored people taken some of which was borne free but they had not their free papers and would not be allowed proper time to send for them. Neither a friend I expect to leave the States the last for no colored person is safe in any part of the States. My advice to all colored people to stay in Canada wither they are free or fugitives.

Mr Stevenson, please send this within letter to Mr William W. Cunningham by some trusty person for I have sent several letters and received no answer.

Respectfully yours from S. Wickham

Please excuse my bad pen
An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies (1833)

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

[20th August 1833.]

WHEREAS divers Persons are held in Slavery within the Colonies, and that it is just and expedient that such persons should be compensated and set free;

And that a reasonable Compensation should be made to the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such Slaves for the Loss which they will incur by being deprived of their Right to such Services; and whereas it is also expedient that Provision should be made for promoting the Industry and securing the good Conduct of the Persons so to be manumitted, for a limited Period after their Manumission: And whereas it is necessary that the Laws now in force in the several Colonies should be adapted to the new State and Relations of Society therefor, in which will follow upon such general Manumission as aforesaid, with such Adaptation of the said Laws, a short Interval should elapse before such Manumission should take effect, be therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the First Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four all Persons who in conformity with the Laws now in force in the said Colonies respectively shall on or before the First Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four have been duly registered as Slaves in any such Colony, and who on the said First Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four shall be actually within any such Colony, and who shall by such Registration appear to be on the said First Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four the Full Age of Six Years or upwards, shall by force and virtue of this Act, and without the previous Execution of any Indenture of Apprenticeship, or other Deed or Instrument for that Purpose, become and be apprenticed; Provided, that, for the Purposes aforesaid, every Slave engaged in his ordinary Occupation on the Sea shall be deemed and taken to be within the Colony to which such Slave shall belong.

II. And be it further enacted, That during the Continuance of the Apprenticeship of any such apprenticed Labourer such Person or Persons shall be entitled to the Services of such apprenticed Labourer as would for the Time being have been entitled to the Services of such Person or Persons as a Slave if this Act has not been made.

III. Provided also, and be it further enacted, That all Slaves who may at any Time previous to the passing of this Act have been brought with the Consent of their Possessors, and all apprenticed Labourers who may hereafter with the like Consent be brought into any Part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, shall be entitled to the Services of the said Labourer to be continued for Three Years from and after the passing of this Act.

IV. And whereas it is expedient that all such apprenticed Labourers should, for the Purposes herein-after mentioned, be divided into Three distinct Classes, the First of such Classes consisting of prudential apprenticed Labourers attached to the Soil; and comprising all Persons who in their State of Slavery were usually employed in Agriculture, or in the Manufacture of Colonial Produce or otherwise, upon Lands belonging to their Owners; the Second of such Classes consisting of prudential apprenticed Labourers not attached to the Soil, and comprising all Persons who in their State of Slavery were usually employed in Agriculture, or in the Manufacture of Colonial Produce or otherwise, upon Lands not belonging to their Owners; and the Third of such Classes consisting of non-prudential apprenticeship Labourers, and comprising all apprenticeship Labourers not included within the Second of such Classes, it is hereby enacted, That such Division as aforesaid of the said apprenticed Labourers into such Classes as aforesaid shall be carried into effect in such Manner and Form and subject to such Rules and Regulations as shall be appointed by the said two Class of apprenticeship Labourers unless such Person shall for Twelve Calendar Months at the least next before the passing of this present Act have been habitually employed in Agriculture or in the Manufacture of Colonial Produce.

V. And be it further enacted, That no Person who by virtue of this Act, or of any such Act of Assembly, Ordinance, or Order in Council as aforesaid, shall be an apprenticed Labourer, whether attached or not attached to the Soil, shall continue in such Apprenticeship beyond the First Day of August next ensuing, and forty-five Hours in the whole in any One Week.

VI. And be it further enacted, That no Person who by virtue of this Act or of any such Act of Assembly, Ordinance, or Order in Council as aforesaid, shall be a non-prudential apprenticed Labourer, shall continue in such Apprenticeship beyond the First Day of August next ensuing, and forty-five Hours in the whole in any One Week.

Before the Apprenticeship is expired, the Labourer may be discharged by his Employer upon the ground of the said Labourer having been employed in Agriculture or in the Manufacture of Colonial Produce; and Provided always, that no Person of the Age of Twelve Years and upwards shall by or by virtue of any such Act of Assembly, Ordinance, or Order in Council, be included in either of the said Two Classes of prudential apprenticed Labourers unless such Person shall for Twelve Calendar Months at the least next before the passing of this present Act have been habitually employed in Agriculture or in the Manufacture of Colonial Produce.

1833 British Imperial Act Passed in 1833

Courtesy of Parliamentary Archives, U. K
Remains of Old Mission House (1895)

Remains of Old Mission House, Sandwich, 1895
Alvin D. McCurdy fonds, Reference Code: F 2076, Box D-4
Archives of Ontario, I0027877
Organizing Your Thoughts

What you know

What you want to know

What you are going to research