

Forging Freedom: Conference Papers In Honour of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade

SUBJECT/GRADE/STRAND(S): Law/ Grade 11/ Heritage, Rights and Freedoms, Methods of Legal Inquiry and Communication; History/ Grade 12/ Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication

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OVERVIEW

The papers presented at the *Forging Freedom Conference In Honour of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade* cover a number of important issues in pre-Confederation history with regard to African Canadians. These are slavery, the extradition cases of fugitive slaves, and the operation of the Underground Railroad and settlement of Blacks, particularly in Ontario. One paper also looks at the biography of an important pioneer in the research and documentation of Black history, namely Dr. Fred Landon. These well-researched papers introduce a broad swath of this history to students and teachers and demonstrate that the fight for our freedoms and human rights had its beginnings in the fight against slavery.

PURPOSE

- To allow students to examine the involvement of the courts in ruling for or against slavery in Canada and the United States
- To enable students to view contemporary immigration policy from a historical perspective using the extradition cases of fugitive slaves in the nineteenth century
- To demonstrate to students how resistance on the part of enslaved Africans paved the way to their own freedom and enfranchisement in Canada
- To demonstrate to students that our rights and freedoms are not a given, that they must be fought for and won, often by those who have little or no power or authority

ACTIVITIES

Description

Students will read the papers presented at the *Forging Freedom Conference In Honour of the Bicentennial of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade*. They will review and answer questions related to the readings and discuss their implications. They will then choose one of the essay questions and write an essay on one of the topics dealt with in the conference papers. As an optional activity, they may also prepare a timeline of important legislation, legal court decisions and the actions of African people themselves that impacted on the lives of Blacks in Canada from the earliest beginnings to 1865.

Expectations

Understanding Canadian Law (CLU 3M) Grade 11, College/ University Preparation

- **Heritage**
Overall Expectations
By the end of this course, students will: analyze the contemporary impact of major historical developments in Canadian law
- **Rights and Freedoms**
Overall Expectations
By the end of this course, students will: describe historical and contemporary barriers to the equal enjoyment of human rights in Canada
- **Methods of Legal Inquiry and Communication**
Overall Expectations
By the end of this course, students will:
 - use appropriate research methods to gather, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information;
 - apply the steps in the process of legal interpretation and analysis;
 - explain, discuss, and interpret legal issues using a variety of formats and forms of communication.
- **Specific Expectations**
Research
By the end of this course, students will: draw conclusions based on analysis of information gathered through research and awareness of diverse legal interpretations (e.g., case studies)

Communication
By the end of this course, students will:
 - express opinions, ideas, arguments, and conclusions, as appropriate, for different audiences and purposes, using a variety of styles and forms (e.g.,

mock trials, case studies, interviews, debates, reports, papers, seminars), as well as visual supports (e.g., graphs, charts, organizers, illustrations)

- use correct legal terminology to communicate legal concepts, opinions, and arguments

Canada: History, Identity, and Culture, (C H I 4 U)
Grade 12, University Preparation

- **Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication**

Overall Expectations

By the end of this course, students will:

- use methods of historical inquiry to locate, gather, evaluate, and organize research materials from a variety of sources;
- interpret and analyze information gathered through research, employing concepts and approaches appropriate to historical inquiry;
- communicate the results of historical inquiries, using appropriate terms and concepts and a variety of forms of communication.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Advance Preparation

- Print out the student assignment and activity sheets.
- Teachers should review all materials prior to teaching the lesson.

Prior Knowledge Required

- Have an understanding of basic legal terms (ordinance, extradition, defendant, plaintiff, felon, *habeas corpus*, judgement, etc.)

Required Time: 2 Sessions

- Session 1: Read and analyze the conference papers independently.
- Session 2: Have a wrap up discussion, review the papers using the Review Questions and get students to talk about their opinions.

Planning Notes

- Have dictionaries available for students.
- Print out and photocopy essay question sheet.
- If you choose, arrange partners before class.
- Provide students with time in the library for research if necessary.

Materials Required for Teacher

- Copies of the review questions and assignment sheets
- Dictionaries

Accommodations/Modifications

- Check student IEPs and follow the proper accommodations/modifications of instructions as needed for the student(s).
- Place students in partners. Group English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education students with students who have strong English literacy skills.
- For auditory and visual learners, give instructions verbally, as well as written down either on a handout or on the board.

Assessment/Evaluation Description

1. Students will be assessed on their ability to read, understand and interpret the material through their responses to questions.
2. Student learning skills can also be assessed based on their written essays and timeline assignments for this lesson.

3. Participation in class discussions.

Resources Used and Consulted

Archives of Ontario - "Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada" Online Exhibit
<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/>

Archives of Ontario Lesson Plans "Attacking Slavery through the Courts" and "Slavery and the Move Towards Abolition in Upper Canada"
<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/education/index.html>

The Blacks in Canada: a History by Robin Winks, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997

Bound for the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero by Kate Clifford Larson, New York: Random House, 2004

The Freedom-Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada by Daniel G. Hill, Agincourt, ON: Book Society of Canada, 1981

The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montreal by Afua Cooper, Toronto: HarperCollins, 2006

A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide for Teachers and Students by James W. St. G. Walker, Hull, Que: Supply and Services Canada, 1980

I Came As A Stranger: The Underground Railroad, Bryan Prince, Toronto: Tundra Books, 2004

I've Got A Home In Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad by Karolyn Smardz Frost, Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2007

The Odyssey of John Anderson by Patrick Brode, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989

The Road That Led To Somewhere by Dr. Bryan Walls, Windsor: 1980

The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto! by Adrienne Shadd, Afua Cooper and Karolyn Smardz Frost, Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004

Additional Resources for Teachers and Students

See Bibliography

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Discussion: Talk about how the fight against slavery also took the form of legal battles. Enslaved Africans challenged their status in the courts and judicial and government officials in Upper Canada contested American slavery.

Reading and Vocabulary Comprehension: Have students read each of the conference papers and define all unfamiliar terms.

Review: If necessary, review key legal terms - extradition, felon, plaintiff, defendant, argument, *habeas corpus*, ruling, etc.

Wrap-up discussion: Have students share their findings, opinions, conclusions, and reflections with the class.

What insight is gained about the legal system?

What insight is gained about today's public policy with regard to refugees?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What is a common misconception about Canadian history as compared with its American counterpart?
2. Who was the first-known enslaved African on record in Canada and what date was his arrival?
3. In what year was slavery given legal foundation?
4. Who was Marie-Joseph Angélique and what became of her?
5. Which enslaved African Canadian in Nova Scotia sued her master for wrongful ownership?
6. What was the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1833 and which case was the first to be tried under this legislation?
7. Who was at the centre of the Niagara Riots of 1837 and what became of him?
8. Why were Canadian officials criticized in British government circles in the Nelson Hackett case?
9. How was the John Anderson case finally decided?
10. What modern-day public policy, according to author Smardz Frost, is echoed in the handling of the fugitive slave extradition cases outlined in her paper?
11. According to author Kate Clifford Larson, what were the circumstances surrounding Harriet Tubman's first rescue mission?
12. When and why did Tubman settle in St. Catharines, Canada West (Ontario)?
13. According to Larson, how many people did Harriet Tubman help to escape from slavery, either directly or indirectly?
14. What was one of Harriet's proudest achievements?
15. Who was John Freeman Walls?
16. What does Bryan Walls refer to as the first great freedom movement in the Americas?
17. How is Bryan Walls carrying out the legacy of his great great grandfather?
18. How did Fred Landon contribute to the story of African Canadians?

ESSAY QUESTIONS (500-750 WORDS)

1. One of the myths used by slave owners to justify slavery was that Blacks were happy being slaves. We now know that enslaved people resisted their status in a variety of ways. Discuss this resistance as it relates to the courts, including examples from the conference papers.
2. In “stealing themselves” and running, enslaved people broke the law. Discuss the various methods used and routes taken to evade slave catchers and the authorities, using examples of enslaved Africans in Canada and the United States.
3. Choose one person and write a biography of him/her. What qualities, circumstances and events make this someone of historic interest?

ANSWERS - REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. That slavery existed in Canada and was practiced by both the French and British regimes.
2. Olivier LeJeune in 1628
3. 1689
4. She was a slave woman from Portugal who lived in Montreal. She was tried, convicted and executed for starting the fire that burned down half of Old Montreal.
5. Nancy Morton
6. It was an Act to allow for the extradition of fugitive American criminals back to their country. The Thornton and Lucie Blackburn case.
7. Solomon Moseby. He escaped and went to England, returning some years later to the area, where he remained free.
8. Because he was never tried for theft but returned to his slave owner in Arkansas and publicly whipped six times, then sold away from his family further south.
9. By the Canadian court on a technicality
10. Refugee reception policy
11. Tubman's niece, Kessiah, and her two children were put up for auction and bid on by Kessiah's husband, who fled with them to Baltimore. Tubman then conducted them to freedom in Philadelphia.
12. In 1857, after rescuing her parents, because it had become too dangerous for her to remain in the United States
13. Approximately 140 - 70 she personally conducted out of bondage and 70 to whom she gave instructions
14. The opening of the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged in 1903 in Auburn, New York
15. An escaped slave from North Carolina who travelled on the Underground Railroad to Canada, settling in 1846 in Puce, now known as Lakeshore
16. The Underground Railroad
17. He wrote a book and established the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum to foster mutual respect and reconciliation, and to celebrate diversity.
18. He researched and wrote 54 significant articles on Black history between 1918 and 1960.

OPTIONAL PROJECT - TIMELINE

Students will create a timeline of important legislation and legal case studies which had an impact on Africans in Canada, whether enslaved or free. Students will include the actions of African people themselves which represented bold steps toward freedom and equality.

THREE IMPORTANT ACTS RELATED TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Read the actual wording of these historic pieces of legislation:

An Act to prevent the further introduction of Slaves, and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude within this Province (Upper Canada), July 9, 1793 (Statute 33, George III, Chapter 7)
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Upper_Canadian_Act_Against_Slavery (as of July 2008)

An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, March 25, 1807 (citation 47, George III Sess. 1 c. 36)
http://www.pdavis.nl/Legis_06.htm (as of July 2008)

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, August 28, 1833 (citation 3 & 4, Will. IV c.73)
http://www.pdavis.nl/Legis_07.htm (as of July 2008)

MARKING RUBRIC FOR ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

CRITERIA	Level 4 (80-100%)	Level 3 (70-79%)	Level 2 (60-69%)	Level 1 (50-59%)
Knowledge and Understanding The student demonstrates understanding of the experience of enslaved and freed Africans.	A clear, comprehensive, balanced and well integrated understanding of the materials as they relate to the experience of enslaved and freed Africans.	Clear and comprehensive understanding of the materials as they relate to the experience of enslaved and freed Africans.	Some understanding - though lacking in completeness, clarity and integration - of the materials as they relate to the experience of enslaved and freed Africans.	Limited understanding of the materials as they relate to the experience of enslaved and freed Africans.
Thinking and Interpretation The student demonstrates the ability to analyze critically the information presented in the conference papers.	A critical analysis presented with a high degree of ability and clarity resulting in a precise and persuasive interpretation.	A clear and critical position that is evident in all aspects of the work, with effective presentation of the research data.	Somewhat effective organization and interpretation of data but with limited understanding of the information.	Unclear perspective and limited understanding of the historical and geographical context.
Communication The student writes effectively for the purpose, using clear and persuasive language that elicits a positive response.	Precise use of language, clarity of organization and good stylistic control, illustrating a good understanding of the conventions of written communication	Consistent and effective use of language and clear organization of data transporting the reader into a clearly conceived time and place.	Somewhat effective use of language and organization of data but with limited understanding of the research.	Language and organization of data that demonstrates lack of sensitivity to the historical and geographical context.