

2024 OHS AGM Keynote Address Transcript
Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon
“The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom in 19th Century Ontario”

Kristin Ives: And it's now my pleasure to introduce our 2024 keynote speaker, Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon. Dr. Henry-Dixon is an assistant professor of African Canadian History at York University. The 2018 Vanier Scholar is currently researching the enslavement of black people in colonial Ontario in her project “One Too Many: The Enslavement of Black People in Upper Canada, 1760 to 1834.”

She has been an educator for 25 years, teaching kindergarten through to university. Dr. Henry-Dixon is an award-winning author and curriculum developer focusing on African Canadian experiences. Through her various professional, academic, and community roles, Dr. Henry-Dixon's work is grounded in her commitment to research, collect, preserve, and disseminate the histories of Black Canadians.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon. Thank you for joining us this evening, Dr. Henry-Dixon. I'll turn it over to you.

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Thank you so much, Kris, and good evening, everyone, and thank you for nominating and approving me to join the Board. I'm really looking forward to being involved with the Ontario Historical Society in the capacity of a Board member. Great to be with you this evening, just to share a little bit about my work, around a particular aspect of Black history in this province. And so I'll just go on and... give me one second to share my slides.

So my talk this evening is titled “The Paradox of Slavery and Freedom in 19th Century Ontario,” through different iterations of the colony that came to be the province of Ontario.

So one of the questions that's raised with the title of my talk is what can the dichotomous lens of slavery and freedom illuminate about the Black experience in colonial Ontario and about Canadian history? The earliest presence of people of African descent were those who were forcibly migrated to the colonies that became Canada. In these colonies, which were French and British colonies, at least 4,500 Black men, women and children were held in bondage in the colonies as I mentioned: Lower Canada, Upper Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

In my current research, I've been able to enumerate at least 620 enslaved Black people in Upper Canada between 1760 and 1834, which included Detroit up until 1796. These men, women and children, as I said, were forcibly migrated, through various points in time, the majority of whom would be brought into the colonies at the height of the American Revolution.

These men, women and children were forced to labour in various capacities and were held as chattel. And so they were legally held as property, bought and sold and forced to labour in a range of capacities, in agricultural fields as well as in the domestic field and any areas really

where their labour was needed, depending on the kinds of businesses or work that their enslavers were involved with.

These early Black residents, those who were enslaved, as I said, some of their work contributed not only to the households in which they were enslaved, but also, by extension, to the development of the colony. The labours, as I said, that they conducted, ranged from in the households to farming. They were clearing land, building structures that were needed. And again, some men would have been hired out to do a range of duties, as well, that contributed to the growth of the colonies as they increasingly became settled.

In my research, I've been able, as I said... the over 600 people that I was able to identify were distributed across Upper Canada, the province of Quebec when it was joined, and then when they were separated Upper Canada, from the Detroit River, going all the way to the eastern boundaries with Quebec. And this map provides a visual to give an idea of where enslaved people were held in the colony.

And so for me, during the course of my research, throughout these numbers of years, I've become quite intrigued about how both slavery and freedom have unfolded in this space, in this province, again, that we now call Ontario.

In mapping out those who were enslaved – and I will come to speak a little bit about the idea of freedom again – and what we can see here is that those who were enslaved were present unevenly, but across the colony. These people who were enslaved were held as property by those who were often a lot of the leaders, the prominent leaders and elite figures, government officials in the colony. And so we can see here through this visual that enslavement was, generally speaking, visible and recognizable and prevalent in the colony.

And for as long as Black men and women and children were forcibly held in bondage in the province, they always pursued their freedom. It was interesting to observe, through newspaper notices and other archival documents, the ways that those who were enslaved sought their freedom.

These are two examples. Here we have both women fleeing their conditions of enslavement in different locations. Here we have a woman named Sue fleeing from the Niagara area in 1795, and a woman named Bet fleeing her enslaver with a young child in 1818.

Something that's also interesting in regards to those who were enslaved, and enslavement continued through to the early 1800s until slavery was abolished, as I'll talk about in a brief moment... Something that also is interesting to me is how those who were brought in enslaved were able to gain their freedom, often through manumission, and for some, were actually able to live some of their lives in freedom.

One of those examples was that of a gentleman by the name of Joseph Gutches.

And here is his obituary published in the *Kingston Gazette* in 1842. And it notes that he was brought in by Richard Cartwright, judge, politician, well-known community leader in Kingston, enslaved by Richard Cartwright. He was actually bequeathed to one of Richard Cartwright's sons, and he was enslaved for some time before he was manumitted. And it describes him as being present in Kingston since 1784.

So here is just again one example of someone who was enslaved for most of their adult life and who had actually remained with the family that enslaved them in freedom, often because there was very limited choices in terms of how they could maneuver their lives in old age, when they became free.

Something that's interesting as well is that even as there has been a bit more attention in the popular memory to slavery, there is a much stronger awareness and embracing of the history of the Underground Railroad and its association to providing freedom for freedom seekers from the United States. And oftentimes the role of slavery in Canada, even though it was an institution for just over 200 years, has often been downplayed. This is, I've observed, for various reasons.

For example, because how slavery came to be adapted in this space differed from plantation economies in the Caribbean and the Southern United States. Slavery was on a smaller scale, and so somehow, it's viewed as less significant in comparison to some of these places in the Southern hemisphere.

But recently, there have been scholars who have been drawing more attention to slavery, and more particularly, the experiences of the individuals who throughout history are often viewed only as property. And so that is, you know, a lot of the work that I've been putting through recently with my project, "One Too Many," as was introduced, which is a website, working on a database, and more information to come as well in a forthcoming publication.

In looking at the paradox of slavery and freedom, it is important to look at the legal standing of racial chattel slavery in Upper Canada because it helps to provide some insight into the complexities of slavery and freedom, and it also provides insight into the views held by the settlers who established the system and those who were subjugated within it.

So the legislation, and in short form it's referred to as the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery. And the impetus for the introduction of this legislation was an incident whereby an enslaved Black woman, Chloe Cooley, was violently bound by her enslaver, Adam Vrooman, and some other fellow settlers because he wanted to sell her across into New York.

So this legislation came as a result of a compromise between Simcoe and the attorney general, John White, and their fellow politicians, because at least half of the 22 politicians of the First Parliament actually held property in enslaved Black people and a small number of Indigenous people. And so, with this compromise, it actually confirmed that slavery would continue, as I highlight here and in the transcribed text. That those who were held as enslaved, who, when

this legislation passed, would remain what is often called the “slaves for life” unless they were manumitted. And that it confirmed that those who held property in slaves, that they had the legal right... it confirmed their legal right to do so.

And so this highlights the way that slavery was a legal instrument, was legal. It was confirmed through private law, through contract sales and through wills. What it also did is it also introduced gradual abolition. And so over a couple of generations, the institution of slavery was supposed to gradually phase out. And that would mean that children born to those who were enslaved in 1793 would be born into slavery, but they would be manumitted at the age of 25. And then when those children had children, those children would be born free.

So this document very clearly encapsulates the contradictions and the complexities of freedom and unfreedom in Upper Canada. It maintained slave status for those who were enslaved, while simultaneously providing an avenue for freedom for those who were born in the province, and made Upper Canada a place of freedom for Black people who were enslaved elsewhere because it barred the importation of any enslaved people from other jurisdictions into the colony.

It's worth mentioning briefly that this is within the context of increased gradual abolition in Northern American states, and so Upper Canada fit within this.

The results of this is what happened was that there were Black people in the province who had conflicting social statuses, those who were held enslaved and those who were free. And this then also opened up Upper Canada to be a place to seek freedom. And Black people from the United States, who were held in bondage there, would slowly begin to make their way into the province in pursuit of freedom. And so this is really complicated. And in my study, I capture the diversity of the lives of those who were enslaved in the province. And we can see this in one story that I'd like to share with you, the complexities of their experience as enslaved people, but also the complexities and the paradox of slavery and freedom.

And this is with the story of Judah and Mink. A Black woman named Judah and a Black man by the name of Mink. And I've been able to piece together just a bit of their story through the archival fragments that I've been able to retrieve from various repositories, to try to tell a story in a way that humanizes them and their experience in this space.

Judah was enslaved by Sir John Johnson, who was a superintendent of the Indian Department. He inherited her from his father, Sir William Johnson, and she was brought into the colony during the American Revolution. She was one of just over 180 Black women that I've been able to identify who were enslaved in the province. Enslaved Black women, sometimes gender informed the kinds of work they did, including the domestic duties of cooking and washing, cleaning, tending to children. But they also performed general work. Agricultural work was not necessarily gendered, and they also participated in that as well. Judah's work and the work of enslaved women was important to the smooth operation of the domestic sphere in the homes of the settlers that enslaved them.

By 1785, Judah was manumitted by Sir John Johnson somehow, based on her service in the British military. And we know that she served in some capacity, likely continuing some of the work that she did, because she is listed on the provisions roll, receiving food ration and supplies. And she actually also received a land grant of 100 acres in 1785, in Charlottenburg in the eastern part of the province.

In 1787 she petitioned the colonial government with two complaints. One, she complained that she was struck off of the provision list of people who were entitled to continue receiving support. And then her second petition, and was most pressing, was that her husband Mink had lost his freedom and was re-enslaved even though he had served in the British military. Her husband was enslaved by Johan Jost Herkimer in New York and actually was re-enslaved when he made his way here to Upper Canada. In her petition, Judah states here, as I quote, "that her husband, formerly a slave to Captain Herkimer was sold by the rebels in the country and afterwards he made his escape and came to this place or province of Canada and joined the King's service and served during the war whereas agreeable to the King's proclamation he ought to have his freedom. But still is kept a slave by Captain Herkimer."

And so this is really interesting, because here we have this Black woman, recently freed, petitioning and raising the issue of her husband's freedom in this request. And so it also points to an interesting fact, in contradiction of the American Revolution, that here we have a war launched for independence from the British crown pushing for freedom. But this idea of freedom did not include freedom for the Black people who were enslaved.

When Mink arrived, he escaped the Patriots and arrived to this province, he was hired out to work as a bateaman to deliver goods and services to the British soldiers in the Kingston area, and so he was employed in this capacity for some time. And Mink was not actually the only one. There were several other Black men who were also working in this similar condition, and one gentleman, a member of the Royal Engineer, Captain Twist, observed that Mink and other Black men were actually free men, but had been re-enslaved, and that their pay was being transferred to their masters, and again raised this concern. So here we see this predicament of these men fighting and supporting the war effort, but here we have again, their freedom is being denied because they were re-enslaved.

Mink then would go on to... One of these Black men actually raised a complaint around being re-enslaved and that he's supposed to have his freedom. And Mink was part of this petition. He confirmed their situation, that he had joined the British Army afterwards on the faith of a proclamation promising manumission to such as would quit their masters and join the standard or the British military. And so the argument that Judah and Mink were making was that because his last status of being enslaved was by a Patriot, that he should be treated as a slave of a Patriot and be freed, as Lord Dunmore had offered through his proclamation to enslaved people. His enslaver, Captain Herkimer, was asked to respond to these claims, and he confirmed that he did, in fact, re-enslave Mink, and that he would only manumit him and relinquish him if the provincial government compensated him for his loss.

There are no records that speak to the colonial government compensating Herkimer and, indeed, Captain Herkimer's will confirms that Mink remained enslaved. And Mink was one of just over 200 Black men that I've been able to identify. In 1795, Captain Herkimer bequeathed the people that he enslaved and other properties to his wife, Mary. His labour, again, was very important to the development of the Herkimer property, the homestead, and by extension, the colony.

In 1796, Judah sold her improved lot and unfortunately died shortly after. One question raised for me is if Judah had hoped to purchase her husband's freedom with the money that she raised for selling her land. Unfortunately, we do not come to know that. Their story raises again the issue of the complexities of the different statuses of enslaved Black people at that time. And here in one family, I've seen actually examples in several families in Upper Canada where one member was enslaved, unfree, and another was free.

And this speaks to the complex reality of their experiences. It also raises questions around the idea of their family ties and how they were able to, or what hindered their family development and their relationship. It's also, again, striking that we get to hear a bit of their voices through the records, very fragmented, limited records. In this case, the petition that we hear deeply from them. In an effort to humanize their experience, these are some of the stories that I've been telling and tracing their family from slavery to freedom as much as possible.

And so here you see – I mapped this, their family a bit – where Cornelius Mink was with Judah Johnson, his first wife. He would go on to be with a second woman named Nancy. And then he had several children, including James Mink and George Mink and his sons. These sons were likely born into slavery and obtained their freedom, were manumitted, a short time after.

George married a woman named Ellen and had three daughters, and then had a second wife after Ellen passed away and had five children. George and James would go on to operate an omnibus service transporting people and mail and prisoners between Toronto or the town of York and Kingston.

And so here, through their stories again, we are able to trace a bit of their family history and to better understand some of the conditions of slavery and freedom through their personal stories.

James Mink's daughter... I should mention James. He married a woman named Eliza and had a daughter named Mary, who had a marriage to William Johnson and had two sons, and they resided in the town of Toronto.

So as this family and several other enslaved families are transitioning from slavery to freedom and slavery is gradually phasing out, in 1833, the British Parliament introduced abolition to abolish slavery throughout most British colonies. And this legislation took effect on August 1st, 1834, and this day is known as Emancipation Day. And on this day the end of slavery, the

abolition of slavery throughout most British colonies, including Canada, is celebrated and commemorated.

Here is a marker of the end of enslavement and the ushering in of freedom. And so, another aspect of my research looks at the history of Emancipation Day and to think about the idea of freedom as it grows in this space of Upper Canada, then Canada West, as we're transitioning into this time.

Emancipation Day celebrations were an important and a red-letter occasion for the Black community. They were organized by the Black community and for the Black community. And it was inclusive of general society, as I'll highlight briefly with this overview of Emancipation Day commemorations. It took place in many different towns and cities and villages across the country at different points in time, as highlighted here. The general format included church services and in largely Black churches, but also Anglican churches as well, as highlighted here. There were also speakers, which were an important part of Emancipation Day. Black abolitionists, white anti-slavery leaders, were speaking to educate the general public. To encourage people to fight against slavery in the United States, and to speak about the idea of living in freedom and talk about what that could and should mean for the growing Black community here, as the numbers grew, as the numbers of freedom seekers grew. Speakers such as Josiah Henson and African American abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

There were also parades, which is a key feature of Emancipation Day. People taking to the streets to march. Here we have the parade, a more familiar image, the parade that took place in Amherstburg in 1894. These parades were often led by a range of musical bands and military veterans. Here are examples of bands who were invited from different places. The Oneida Native Brass Band from in the Brantford area and the French Dukes Precision Drill Team, who participated in Windsor Emancipation Day events, coming from Detroit.

There were a range of performances, concerts and theatrical performances, and there were also dance competitions such as the Cakewalk Dance. If you've ever heard of the phrase "taking the cake," that is where it comes from. Going into the 20th century, Emancipation Day became a more leisurely, less formal occasion, and this included integrating sports events such as baseball games, amusement parks, picnics. I highlighted here the Chatham All Stars. Baseball was something that was looked forward to.

Here is a couple of images from Owen Sound where Emancipation Day commemorations became family gatherings and picnics, continuing well to today. This year, they marked 162 consecutive years of Emancipation Day events.

Something in my research on Emancipation Day, that although throughout the 19th century men figured prominently in the public eye, women were always present. Women were always involved in the organizing and the execution of Emancipation Day events such as highlighted here, where women sold tickets and fundraised at the Emancipation Day event in order to build the Sandwich First Baptist Church. It's in 1954 when an Emancipation Day event dedicates the

entire commemoration to recognizing the role of women. And they invited civil rights activist, pictured here in the center, Mary McLeod Bethune, to speak. And it's noted as well that Mary Ann Shadd Cary actually spoke 100 years prior in Toronto in 1854.

Although people were coming together to mark freedom and to discuss this idea of freedom and how it should unfold, it was also very much the continuation of the push for full freedom and racial equality. This is a placard that was carried in a Toronto Emancipation Day parade in the 1950s, and here very much captures the tone and tenor of the time where the civil rights movement... People often look to the United States, but people in Toronto and in this province were saying, we need to recognize that Canada needs racial equality, too.

Emancipation day was just as much about protest and the persistent pursuit of freedom and citizenship and equality issues from segregated schooling, racial discrimination in employment and housing and public services as well. And so we see this theme of freedom, freedom realized and freedom yet to be achieved, weaving its way throughout Emancipation Day commemorations.

An interesting thing to point out is that it's not well known that Caribana has its roots in marking Emancipation Day in the Caribbean. And when Caribana was introduced in Toronto in 1967 as part of the Bicentennial of Canada, that this was brought in as a way to highlight the importance of carnival and masquerade as part of Emancipation Day events that happen at that same time in the year around August 1st. This year marks actually 190 years of Emancipation Day events in Ontario and across Canada, and it's great to see that it's been revived in many ways.

From the early 1800s through to the 1850s, hundreds of Black people, a large number of African Americans, but also people from the Caribbean and other places, they pursued their freedom here in what would later become free British soil. They had visions of freedom, and they continued to fight to define that freedom for themselves. They were actually contemplating the idea of freedom and constructing it on their own terms. And through Emancipation Day, we can see how, in this negotiation of freedom, it was also a way to interweave their faith, their thanksgiving, education, remembrance, family, community and their resistance. All of these connected to freedom, and continuing their resistance much more beyond enslavement and into present day.

It was great to see that in 2021, through the passage of Bill M-36, that Emancipation Day came to be recognized nationally. And so across Canada, August 1st is now recognized as Emancipation Day. And then this past summer, this past August 1st, Parks Canada unveiled a plaque at St. James Cathedral, downtown Toronto, which again acknowledges the historical significance of the celebration of Emancipation Day in Canada.

And so, through my brief talk, through exploring, just a small aspect of Black history, through the lens of slavery and freedom and the particular paradox that it created, I hope we can better understand and appreciate some of the experiences of Black people in colonial Ontario during

the 18th and 19th century, and more about how they forged their lives and their communities, often in a less than hospitable environment.

And this history is what I continue to share through many different platforms, my project “One Too Many,” and these two books that I was able to write on the history of Emancipation Day in Canada. And it's really great to see that there continues to be engagement with this work, even after they've been published in 2010 and 2012, respectively. And so I wanted to end my talk here and would love to open up the floor to any questions that you may have or comments. Thank you.

Kristin Ives: Great. Thank you, Natasha. As you've noted, we'll now open the floor to questions for Dr. Henry-Dixon. I'm happy to moderate those. Just a reminder that you can present your questions through the chat function, please.

Okay, so Dorothy Abbott says many thanks, Natasha, for this informative presentation, one that is very near and dear to me, as you well know. Always happy to continue to learn. Congrats on joining the OHS board.

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Thank you Dorothy. And while the questions are coming in, I actually noticed I think Jane Gibson might still be on the meeting and just wanted to say hello as well. It was a great experience working with Jane and Barry to publish these books on Emancipation Day. This is my first publications, and it really meant a lot to me to be able to be entrusted with documenting this history and getting and sharing these stories out there. So I wanted to say hello and thanks to Jane and Barry.

Kristin Ives: Wonderful. Thanks, Natasha. So Stuart Patch has a question. Are there records of compensation being paid to Ontarians after emancipation?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: So what is interesting is when slavery was abolished by the British Parliament in 1834, we know that there was compensation issued to enslavers, not to those who were enslaved. I've been able to identify about 40 individuals residing in Canada during the time period who submitted claims for compensation. And what's interesting is that their claims for compensation were not tied to people who were held in slavery here, but tied to the property, plantations and enslaved people that they held in the Caribbean. And these were often properties that they may have inherited from their family or they had investments in. And so it's interesting to see that some of these individuals resided in Canada, but were filing for compensation for property for claims of loss in the Caribbean.

Kristin Ives: Great, thank you. So while we wait to see if any others are posed, I'm a lifelong resident of the Windsor Essex region. So emancipation celebrations, you know, have occurred here for quite a long time as well. You sort of mentioned in your talk a little bit about a revival of this, the celebrations. Do you think there's a reason that those are gaining popularity and community support again in this time?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Yes. I think there are a few reasons. The ongoing conversation, there's been ongoing advocacy for Black Emancipation Day commemorations. It also is often tied to the presence of a Black population. And so we've seen historically, for example, some communities may have had larger Black populations in the mid 19th century, and then these communities kind of dissipated, and Emancipation Day events also went in a similar way where they weren't necessarily held anymore.

But then when we start to see an increase in the Black population again, in some places, that there has been an increased interest in reviving Emancipation Day. And in some places that have had a history of Emancipation Day and some places that are new to marking Emancipation Day, like they're now marking Emancipation Day in Nunavut, which is amazing to see. And so, again, it speaks to the increased awareness in that, and one good thing about the Bill by the federal government is that they've actually supported events through cultural funding. And so that has also enabled groups across Canada to organize and participate in Emancipation Day events. So it's really great to see that increase and to see that this is an avenue to learn more about Black history in different places across the country.

Kristin Ives: Absolutely. That is great to see. Thank you. Okay. Tory asks, where is your research taking you now?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Well, my research is "One Too Many" currently. That was my doctoral research and I've been continuing that research and I will actually be publishing my dissertation research, adapting it for a book manuscript currently, and we'll be looking forward to launching the book and the database as well.

The idea was, you know, this history is so fragmented in a lot of different repositories. And so it really has... making the story visible and legible, it's kind of been hindered by that. And so through the development of the database that I'm still working on, all of these stories, these individuals will come together. And so it will be a publicly accessible database that people can learn more about these people who were enslaved. Many names known, but also many unknown. And to learn more about this particular experience and aspect of Canadian history.

Kristin Ives: Excellent. Thank you. Janie Cooper-Wilson says, thank you, Natasha, and congratulations on your appointment to the OHS Board of Directors. I hope you enjoy the experience as much as I did. And she gives you her best wishes for good luck.

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Thank you, Janie.

Kristin Ives: Okay, a question from Dr. LaBarge. Great presentation, Dr. Henry-Dixon. What is your view of the status of Black history learning and teaching in Ontario schools today?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Yes. Thank you. Well, something that I've lobbied for for quite some time, as a historian and educator, it has been more mandated or mandated learning around Black history. My master's thesis actually focused on looking at the curriculum. And believe it or

not, there hasn't been anything that students have had to learn about the 400-year Black presence in Canada. Anything that's been taught has been based on what individual teachers have taught, or decided to teach. There's been an increase because, you know, the recognition of Black History Month, which has been a great avenue as well, to increase the awareness, but nothing in the curriculum per se. And so it was good to see that this past February, that this Ministry of Education introduced that they will be integrating some compulsory learning expectations on Black history in grades seven, eight and ten.

It's a good start. Not enough, but it's finally something that hopefully will come to fruition. Because, as I've said in my role with the Ontario Black History Society, we had a campaign there. Black history is Canadian history. And so, to better represent the diversity and the complexities of Canadian history means including the experiences of Black people in this space. And so it's good to see there's more courses and high school teachers, individual teachers, elementary, secondary, teachers continue to take the initiative. More courses at the university level, such as myself at York University, and my classrooms are just representative of Canada. They're so diverse. Students want to learn more. And so it's great to see such a positive response in the classroom as well as from the general public as well through different initiatives.

Kristin Ives: Great. Julia Armstrong asks regarding Judah's petition. Would she have submitted it on her own, or would she have needed help and advice from someone, perhaps to write it for her?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Right, so thanks for that question. Yes. So it appears as though someone did write it because she does only sign with X, her mark. We know, yes, that literacy rates generally were low for people at that time. But then we also know, based on the history of slavery, that Black men and women and children were not necessarily taught to read and write, and that in some places it was illegal for them to learn or for them to be taught how to learn to read and write. And so, it looks like her petition was dictated, and that someone synthesized her views, as well as that of Mink as well.

Kristin Ives: Stephen Smith comments: thank you for the talk. Incredible work. I know it's a big question, but generally if you're interested in learning more, where does one look to find these stories? Newspapers, probate... are specific archival fonds more fruitful than others?

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: It is a big question and it's hard to say because it just runs the gamut in terms of the kinds of archival records that enslaved people are in. They're in the military records. They're in church records, newspapers, wills and probate, as you mentioned. There are quite a few of those as well. They're really in a range of documents. And so that's why an important component for my research has been crafting, constructing, these biographical narratives so that it can piece together all of these, right? All of these kind of scattered pieces in the archives to tell their stories.

I've been able to share the stories, for example, of John Baker, out in Cornwall. I was invited to write the text for his memorial plaque at the Cornwall Museum. I've written several entries for the Canadian Encyclopedia. And I'm also pleased to announce that I've completed a set of eight biographies with the Dictionary of Canadian Biographies, which is slated to be released in February.

So some of these stories of these individuals and these families are coming out, and that is an important way that I will be structuring my book and to share these stories as well. So there's more to come as well as my website. So there's some on the website, the project website "One Too Many," and we'll be building up to sharing some more of these individual stories leading up to the release of my book and the database. And then that's again why it feels important to put together the database so that people can delve into these stories and the archival material for themselves.

Kristin Ives: Absolutely. Well, we really look forward to the release of the book and the database. Jane has her hand raised. We can enable her mic, sure. Just a comment from Jane.

Jane Gibson: Well, both Barry and I wanted to congratulate Natasha for so much that she has achieved. It was a truly wonderful time when we were working together and developing the first two books and coming up to Owen Sound to be part of the special day. And we try to follow your career and we're looking forward to hearing more and seeing more, particularly around your new book. And through this, I heard Dorothy [Abbott], of course, has been a compatriot in all of us. So once again, congratulations.

Dr. Natasha Henry-Dixon: Thanks so much, Jane. Wonderful to hear from you.

Kristin Ives: Great, thank you Jane. So lots of wonderful general comments and accolades for tonight's talk. On behalf of the Ontario Historical Society and all of the members, thank you so much, Dr. Henry-Dixon, for your fascinating presentation and for being open to these questions and discussing your work in such great detail. It's made for a wonderful closure to our 136th Annual General Meeting.