

**Lesson Plans For**  
***Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada, Dundurn Press, 2010***  
**and**  
***Talking about Freedom: Celebrating Emancipation Day in Canada, Dundurn Press, 2012***  
**by Natasha Henry**

**Introduction:** Emancipation Day is the annual commemoration of the end of the enslavement of Africans in all British colonies. On August 1, 1834 the Slavery Abolition Act came into effect freeing millions of slaves in the English-speaking Caribbean, South Africa, and Canada. This historic occasion was marked by freed slaves, free Blacks, and abolitionists and instantly became a yearly tradition in the African-Canadian community. Features of August First celebrations include church services, parades, military bands, speakers, toasts and resolutions, feasts, picnics, and the theme of remembrance.

**Curriculum Connections:** Grade 2 Changing Family and Community Traditions/ Grade 3 Communities in Canada 1780 – 1850/ Grade 6 Communities in Canada, Past and Present/ Grade 7 New France and British North America, 1713–1800; Canada, 1800–1850: Conflict and Challenges/ Grade 8 Creating Canada, 1850–1890; Canada, 1890–1914: A Changing Society / The Arts: Music grades 1 to 8 / Grade 10 History (CHC 2D/2P)/ Grade 11 History-Canadian History and Politics Since 1945 (CHH 3C/3E)/ Grade 12 History-Canada: History, Identity, and Culture (CHI 4U)/ Grade 11 Law (CLU 3M, CLU 3E)/ Grade 12 Law (CLN 4U)

**Aim:** Students will gain an understanding of the journey of freedom for African Canadians through an examination of Canadian slavery, the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, and the Civil Rights movement in Canada.

**Lesson Idea #1**

In small groups, examine laws that ended the African slave trade and the enslavement of African peoples – the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade 1807, 1793 Limitation Act, 1833 Slavery Abolition Act, and the Emancipation Proclamation, 1863. Summarize the tenets and present to your class.

**Lesson Idea #2**

Recreate an Emancipation Day Parade or create your own freedom parade as an in-school parade, a small classroom parade, or stage the parade outside on the playground. Have students plan a parade that includes parade rules and regulations, an elected Grand Marshall, a musical band/ music, banners and signs that depict what freedom means to them, marchers, an audience, and if possible a guest speaker.

**Lesson Idea #3**

Create a collage that depicts what freedom-past and present- means to you. Use a variety of materials: newspapers, magazines, photographs, textiles, objects; use a variety of art forms: free hand, graffiti, computer graphics, etc.

**Lesson Idea #4**

- a) Map areas of early Black settlement and Emancipation Day celebrations.
- b) Map the parade routes for various Emancipation Day celebrations in different cities (use the list below). Use Bing.ca for maps and highlight parade routes. Include the year.

- Oakville p. 23
- Halifax p. 177
- Toronto p. 121-131, p. 132-133, 142
- London p.98, 99
- Amherstburg p. 53, 51
- Windsor p. 66
- Chatham p. 77
- Hamilton p. 116

### **Lesson Plan Idea #5**

Research, analyze, and share cases of discrimination against African Canadians during the early to mid-1900s-segregated schools, denial of services in public places, restricted housing, employment discrimination, prohibition from attending nursing schools, etc.

### **Lesson Plan Idea #6**

Language/ English lessons:

- Write biographies for a person in the book.
- Read and study various slave narratives (see Benjamin Drew's *The Refugee: Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada*)
- Use digitized online newspapers to find media coverage of Emancipation Day celebrations (*The Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, www.ink.ourontario.ca, etc.*)
- Create a community directory of African Canadian churches, aid societies, Masonic Lodges, and other community organizations.

### **Lesson Plan Idea #6**

Music:

African Canadian composer R. Nathaniel Dett composed two songs, "After the Cake Walk" and "The Cake Winner" for the cake walk dance, which was a very popular dance competition at Emancipation Day celebrations. Write a biography on Nathaniel Dett, listen to these songs and describe in writing the mood and feel of the music.

<http://www.ragtimepiano.ca/rags/cakewalk.htm>

### **Other Supporting Lesson Topics:**

- Slavery in Canada (African and Native enslavement )
- The Underground Railroad in Canada
- The Lives of Early African-Canadian Settlers
- Segregation and Anti-Black racism in Canada
- Blacks in the Labour Movement in Canada

## Additional Resources

### Video:

Emancipation Day in Windsor, Ontario 1951, Eye Witness No. 33 (2:42-5:22)  
[http://www.nfb.ca/film/eye\\_witness\\_33](http://www.nfb.ca/film/eye_witness_33)

### Augmented Reality:

Emancipation Day  
<http://futurestories.ca/tubman/>  
- click on Emancipation Day Narrative, print marker and use to view

### Books:

McKissack, Patricia. *Mirandy and Brother Wind*. Random House, 1988 (Gr. 1 and up). Mirandy, the main character, is trying to catch the wind to be her partner at a cakewalk dance contest, an earlier African-American tradition that was very popular at Emancipation Day celebrations in Canada.

### Websites:

**Windsor Mosaic – Emancipation Day**  
<http://www.windsor-communities.com/african-cele-emancipation.php>

**On the Road North Online Exhibit**  
<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/blackhistory/index.html>

**Archives of Ontario-Black history online exhibits** (Includes lesson plans in *Just Add Students* section)  
<http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/on-line-exhibits/index-black-history.aspx>

- *Enslaved Africans in Upper Canada*
- *The Black Canadian Experience in Ontario 1834-1914: Flight, Freedom, Foundation*

**Virtual Museum of Canada-“...and still I rise”: A History of African Canadian Workers in Ontario: 1900 to Present**  
<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Africanworkers/English/index.html>