

Haldimand Museums Black History of Haldimand County Educational Package



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BACKGROUND

Black people have lived in what we now call Canada since the 1600s. From that time until the early 1800s, hundreds were forced to come here as enslaved people.

Mathieu da Costa is believed to have be the first Black person in Canada; however, he was not a slave. Mathieu da Costa was part of Samuel de Champlain’s expedition from France to Port Royal around 1606. Da Costa was a translator who facilitated trade with the Mi’kmaq peoples. He remained in New France until the following year before returning to England.

Joseph Brant

After the American Revolution ended in 1783, Joseph Brant settled along the Grand River in what would become Brantford.

He brought with him more than thirty slaves.



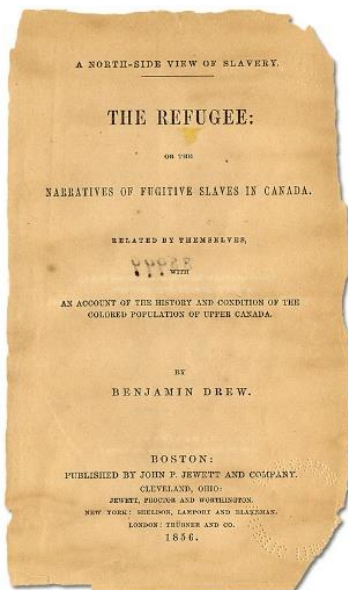
Sophia Pooley

Sophia Pooley was born a slave in Fishkill, New York; she was the daughter of Oliver and Dinah Burthen.

At a young age, Sophia and her sister were taken to Niagara, where they were sold to Mohawk chieftain Joseph Brant. Brant brought the two girls to his home on the Mohawk reserve in Upper Canada.

Sophia was treated well by Brant and became part of the family until he married his third wife, who beat her and cut her with a knife.

After 13 years with the Brants’, Pooley was sold to Samuel Hatt of Ancaster who freed her, allowing her to eventually marry.



In 1856, white American abolitionist Benjamin Drew published:

The Refugee: or the Narratives of the Fugitive Slaves in Canada, Boston: John P. Jewett, 1856.

Sophia Pooley was interviewed by Drew when she was in her nineties:

"While I lived with old Brant we caught the deer...Peggy and Mary, and Katy, Brant’s daughters and I. Brant’s sons, Joseph and Jacob, would wait on the shore to kill the deer when we fetched him in..."

SLAVE OWNERSHIP IN CANADA



When 13 American colonies rebelled against the government of King George III in 1775, those citizens who remained loyal to Britain left their homes in the United States to settle in British areas, including Haldimand County, bringing their slaves with them.

The slaves of the United Empire Loyalists formed the beginnings of Black settlements in Canada and, even though they came to Canada as slaves, many were given their freedom. The growing anti-slave movement, and the cost of owning slaves, helped the Loyalists realize that slavery was no longer acceptable or economically necessary in Canada.

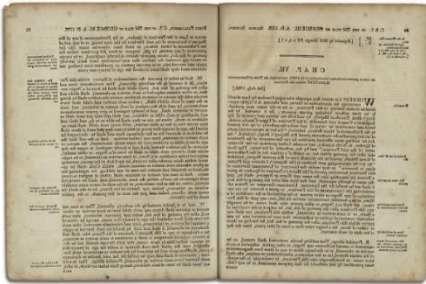
Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe

In 1791, a Bill regarding slave ownership in Upper Canada was introduced in the British House of Commons by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. In 1793, the Bill passed, resulting in the prohibition of new slaves being brought into the colony; however, those already here remained slaves.

Although he would have preferred outright abolition, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe made compromises to satisfy the interests of 15 members of the Legislature who owned slaves.



Upper Canada Act Against Slavery (the Upper Canada Legislature passes the Slave Bill –1793)



"An Act to prevent the further introduction of slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude within this province."

After proclamation of the Act, slaves already in Upper Canada would remain the property of their owners for life. Children born to slaves were to be free at age 25. Children of children born to slaves were to be free at birth. No slaves could enter the province, and any slaves brought into Upper Canada would be freed automatically. Owners of freed slaves had to provide for their security.

SLAVERY ABOLITION ACT 1834

The Slavery Abolition Act came into effect on August 1, 1834, ending slavery throughout the British Empire, including British North America. The Act made enslavement officially illegal in every province, and freed the last remaining enslaved people in Canada.

After slavery was abolished here in 1834, thousands of people of African descent from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa chose to come to Canada at different times and for various reasons.

For four hundred years, Black men and women have contributed to all areas of Canadian society. They have fought for Black people to be treated with fairness and equality in the struggle against racial discrimination, a fight that has benefited all Canadians.



The Slavery Abolition Act 1833

(3 & 4 Will 4 c. 73)

10. *An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies*
(28th August 1833)

After 1st August 1834, all slaves in the British colonies shall be emancipated, and slavery shall be abolished throughout the British possessions abroad

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD – ROAD TO FREEDOM



Routes to Freedom

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses established in the United States during the early- to mid-19th century. It was used by African-American slaves to escape into free states and Canada, with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause.

In Haldimand County, the Indiana Trail became one of the routes to Canfield.

Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman was an American abolitionist and political activist.

Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently undertook some 13 missions to rescue approximately seventy enslaved people, including family and friends, using the network of anti-slavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.

During the American Civil War, she served as an armed scout and spy for the Union Army, where she freed more than seven hundred slaves. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the struggle for women's suffrage.



Freedom



In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the number of abolitionist sympathizers grew in Canada. As more and more Black refugees fled into Canada, anti-slavery societies were established to influence public opinion and help fugitives on their way.

The overwhelming sentiment against slavery in Upper Canada made the practice almost obsolete. By 1834, when the British government abolished slavery throughout the Empire, there were only a handful of slaves left to be set free.

The United States Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act on September 18, 1850. The Act required that slaves be returned to their owners, even if they were in a free state. The Act also made the federal government responsible for finding, returning and bringing to trial escaped slaves. Slave catchers were known to cross the border into Canada in pursuit of escaped slaves.

Underground Railroad

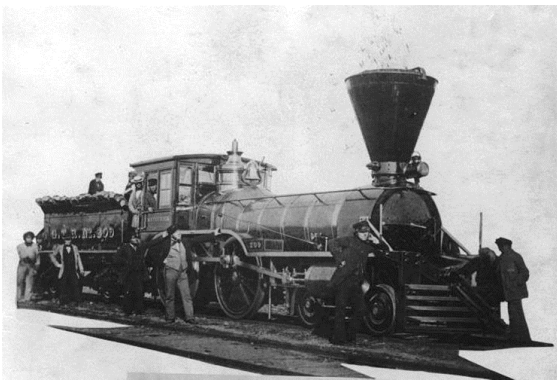
In the years just prior to the Civil War, the Underground Railroad helped thousands of escaping slaves find their freedom.

These travellers needed to be invisible to authorities and informants, and secrecy and signaling systems were critical to making this "railroad" succeed.

Not surprisingly, many of these signals were carried using familiar cultural items: quilts and songs. Quilt blocks such as bow ties, flying geese and wagon wheels helped escaping slaves find their way to Canada.



Secret Code Words



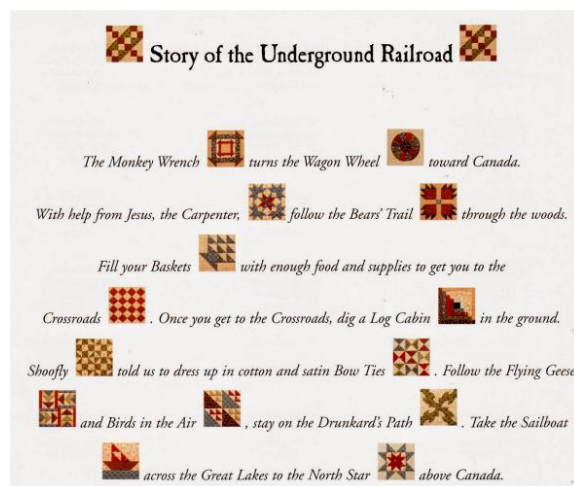
Secret code words were critical to the success of the Underground Railroad including:

- “Bundles of Wood” or a “Parcel” = Incoming Slaves
- “Stations” or “Depots” = Hiding Place
- “French Leave” = Sudden Departure
- “Tickets” = Slaves Travelling on Railroad
- “Patter Roller” = A Slave Patroller or Slave Hunter
- “Promise Land” = Canada
- “Moses” = Harriet Tubman
- “Drinking Gourd” = Big Dipper and the North Star
- “Abolitionist” = Person Who Demanded Immediate End to Slavery
- “Agent” = Coordinator who Plotted Escape Route, Made Contacts
- “Conductor” = Person who Directly Transported Slaves.

Quilt Codes

According to legend, a safe house along the Underground Railroad was often indicated by a quilt hanging from a clothesline or windowsill. These quilts were embedded with a kind of code; by reading the shapes and motifs sewn into the design, an enslaved person on the run could know the area’s immediate dangers or even where to head next:

- Bow Tie = Dress in Disguise to Appear of a Higher Status
- Log Cabin = Seek Shelter Now
- Flying Geese = Go North
- Drunkards Path = Stagger your Path
- Bear Paw = Go Through the Woods
- Basket = Provisions Available at this Location
- Wagon Wheel = Travelling in Wagon
- North Star = Follow the North Star.



Songs

Harriet Tubman and other slaves used songs as a way to communicate with slaves in their struggle for freedom. Coded songs contained words giving directions about how to escape, also known as Signal Songs. Map Songs helped direct freedom seekers to places to meet. Some of the songs were:

- "Follow the Drinkin' Gourd"
- "Go Down Moses"
- "Let Us Break Bread Together"
- "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"
- "Steal Away (To Jesus)"
- "Wade in the Water"
- "Song of the Free"

MAKING THEIR MARK



Black immigrants who came to Canada on the Underground Railroad made lasting contributions to their communities. Many became farmers; growing crops such as wheat, peas, tobacco and hemp. Others were skilled tradespersons; working as blacksmiths, shoe makers and wagon makers.

Women did not often work outside of their homes. They raised their children, or worked for wages as seamstresses and washerwomen.

New Land, New Life

In Canada West (Upper Canada), Black men had the right to own property and vote if they met property requirements. All Black persons could earn a living, get married and start a family. With assistance from Canada's government and abolitionist societies in Canada and the United States, these new residents had the possibility of building a new life. Land was sold to refugees at a reduced rate and education subsidies were available.

Emancipation Proclamation



On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation abolishing slavery in the United States.

The proclamation declared: "that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be, free".

After the Emancipation Proclamation was signed, about two-thirds of the Black refugees in Canada returned to the United States. Those who stayed in Canada continued to contribute to their communities. In 1911, there were only 32 Black settlers residing in Canfield and other areas of Haldimand County.

Education

Attendance at church and school were among the most important things to Black settlers. Throughout Haldimand, both Black and Caucasian children attended the same schools. There were no separate schools for Blacks, or any record of the white community trying to prevent their Black counterparts from sending their children to the same schools as children from white families.



NORTH CAYUGA BAPTIST CHURCH



In 1844, the first church services took place in Stepney and Lucy Street's home in the village of Canfield. Residents worshipped here for nine years. In 1853, Mr. Street deeded a property on the corner of Hwy. #3 and Hwy. #56, and a little log church was built. In 1882, the current brick church was completed. The church remained in operation for more than seventy years, after which it became a private residence. This church was not part of the Amherstburg Black Baptist Association because the members never wanted it to be an all-Black church. Next to the church is the North Cayuga Baptist Church Cemetery.

A FEW OF THE FAMILIES

Morris Family

Randall Morris, a slave, escaped from the United States and settled in the Canfield area; he was later joined by his son, Edward. The Morris's were among the first settlers to the area.

Edward Morris and his wife Emelia raised their family of four children—Edward Jr., Joseph, Lahdal and Emelia—in Canfield after their initial arrival in Canada.

Later, some of the family moved to Seneca Township to join the Duncan's and other Black families.

Phillips Family

George Phillips was born into slavery on a plantation near Baltimore, Maryland. He lived on that plantation with his wife and nine children. He escaped via the Underground Railroad; it was a thrilling escape as he was chased by bloodhounds and slave-catchers. George crossed the river into Canada on a log for fear of being caught if he tried to take the ferry.

Despite attempts to rescue them, George never saw his wife and children again. After coming to Canfield, he re-married and had more than a dozen children. George died in 1904, when he was 108 years old.

Duncan Family

Charles Duncan Sr. settled on what was known as the Brown Tract on the First Concession of Indiana Road around 1837. His parents were George and Edy Duncan, who had escaped into Canada from Ohio in the 1820s. They originally settled in the Niagara area, later moving to North Cayuga and then to Seneca.

Charles Sr. was a leader within the Black community as he helped many slaves escape to freedom. He donated a corner of his farmland to build the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Charles Sr.'s grandson, also Charles, contributed a great deal to the community. He enlisted in the army in 1916 and, when he returned from the war, served the Village of Cayuga for many years as the police constable. In his later years, he was the caretaker of the Cayuga High School. He died in 1975 at the age of 102.



Barnes Family



The Barnes family was one of the early Black families to settle in Canfield.

William A. Barnes married Henrietta Street and moved to Cayuga, opening his first barber shop there in 1865. He died in 1872, leaving his 16-year-old-son, William Jr., to run the shop, which he did until his death in 1943.

Lorne Barnes, William's brother, opened Barney's Garage in 1926. Lorne was an active community member, including as a long-time volunteer firefighter and a member of the Historical Society.

Street Family

Stepney and Lucy Street and their children were one of the oldest families in Canfield. Street, a former slave from West Virginia, escaped to Canada in the early 1840s. He made his way to Canada by way of the Underground Railroad. His wife Lucy, their children, two brothers and another slave escaped shortly after and made their way to Fort Erie. Lucy then advertised for her husband, and they were reunited, first settling in St Catharines and then relocating to Canfield. For nine years Lucy and Stepney held church services in their home; later they donated land for the first log chapel. The chapel was replaced in 1882 with the brick church that still stands today (North Cayuga Baptist Church). Stepney and Lucy had twelve surviving children. Their eldest child, Henrietta, married William A. Barnes; Ellen Street married John Williams and Josephine and Charity Street married into another long-time Canfield family in the Black community, the Harpers.



John Hedgeman



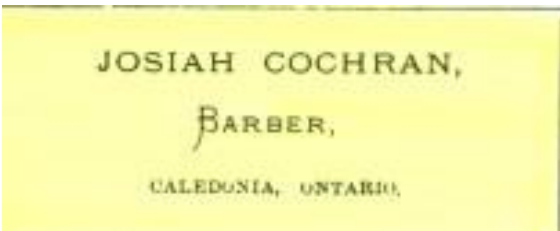
John Hedgeman lived in Dunnville with his wife Eliza J. and their children, Rebecca, Frances, Charles, Andrew, Francis and Elizabeth. John hauled items for David Price and was also a handy man doing odd jobs for residents in the community. He was a member of the Methodist Church.

William Galloway

William was born to Mr. and Mrs. William Galloway, who lived on Alder Street, Dunnville, in 1880. William was an outstanding baseball player and a skilled hockey player. In 1899, he was considered one of the top players in the Central Ontario Hockey Association. He was popular with the Dunnville baseball fans and, because of his hitting ability, his services were in constant demand by other ball clubs. He played for the Woodstock team for a short time but the opposing teams objected to him playing. He later joined the Cuban Giants, an all-Black team, and went on the road.



Josiah Cochrane



Josiah Cochrane was an escaped slave who settled in Caledonia in the 1840s. He was a local barber for many years. His shop was located on Caithness Street between Fred Avery's Garage and where the Legion is today. He was married twice and had five children. His first wife Amelia died in 1872. He married again to Mary Ann and had five children, Amelia, Lewis, Samuel, Levi and Isaiah.

Andrew Wallace

Andrew Wallace was a former slave who fled the United States during the American Civil War. He walked along the Lake Erie Shore and up the Grand River to Caledonia. He lived and worked on the farm of a friend for a number of years, later becoming the caretaker at the Public School and the Presbyterian Church. He died in 1910 and is buried in the Caledonia Cemetery.

Ruby Douglass (née Lee)

Ruby was the last descendent of the original Black settlers to live in Canfield. She was a descendant of the Burke and Harper families. Mary Ruby Annabel Francis Kahia Lee was born in 1920. Her parents were Isaac John Lee and Adeline Stanzy Burke. She had one brother, Harry Allen Percy Lee (1913-1953), and one sister, Constance Lee (b.1915, stillborn). Growing up, she lived on Taylor Street (now Adair Street) in Canfield and attended S.S. #7 Canfield School.

Ruby married Fred Douglass from Canfield and they had four children: John (1946-1978), Betty Ann (Constance) Douglass, Ruth Douglass and Bill Douglass. Following the death of her first husband, Ruby re-married Gordon Hildebrandt, but he passed away a short time after. She moved to Dunnville when her eyesight failed. Ruby passed away in 2006 and is buried in the Canfield Cemetery.

Others who settled in Haldimand included: the Taylor, Hunt, Shuler and Groats families who lived in Oneida for several generations, and the Morris, Lewis, Johnson and Stewart families, who settled in Seneca.



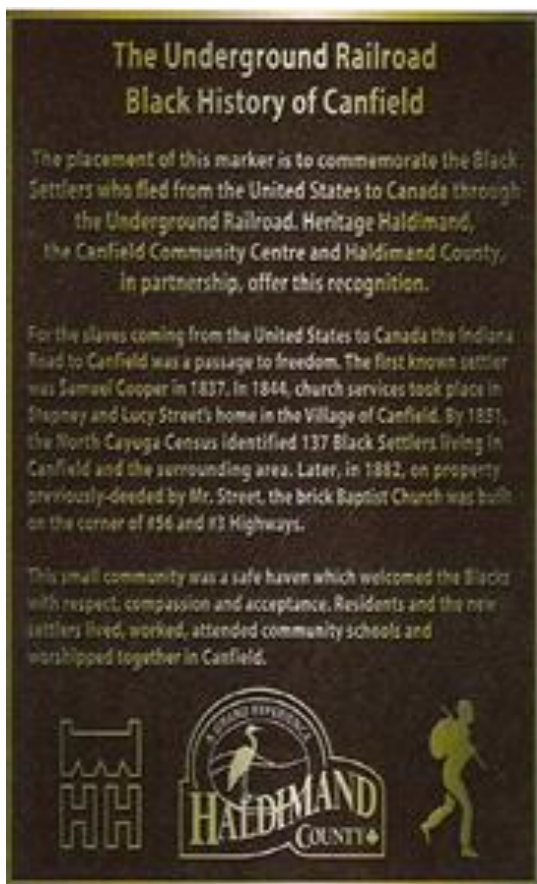
HALDIMAND'S BLACK POPULATION

By 1911, the Black population in Haldimand had decreased to 98 from its peak of 227 in 1861. The Canfield settlement had gone from 137 in 1851 to only 32 by 1911.

The chart below does show some areas of increase: Cayuga went from zero Black population in 1851 to 34 in 1911. This indicates that families had either moved to more urban areas or returned to the United States.

Black Population of Haldimand County							
	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Cayuga	0	0	8	8	3	31	34
North Cayuga	137	122	65	54	45	54	32
South Cayuga	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caledonia	0	0	3	6	7	6	0
Seneca	0	23	39	19	35	26	6
Oneida	10	19	2	16	15	21	14
Dunn	14	0	0	4	0	0	2
Dunnville	0	44	40	61	15	64	10
Moulton	36	10	27	0	0	0	0
Sherbrooke	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rainham	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Walpole	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Canborough	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Total	209	227	184	170	120	202	98

CONCLUSION



More than 150 years ago, the community of Canfield welcomed slaves fleeing the United States through the Underground Railroad, providing a safe haven and freedom. In September 2017, the Canfield Community Centre, Heritage Haldimand and Haldimand County collaborated on the installation of a marker—in Canfield Park—honouring this history. On Sunday, February 10, 2019 a plaque was unveiled recognizing the donors and families to this project, as well as the community of Canfield, as a 'station' within the Underground Railroad

Plaque Text:

“The placement of this marker is to commemorate the Black Settlers who fled from the United States to Canada through the Underground Railroad. Heritage Haldimand, the Canfield Community Centre and Haldimand County, in partnership, offer this recognition.

For the slaves coming from the United States to Canada the Indiana Road to Canfield was a passage to freedom. The first known settler was Samuel Cooper in 1837. In 1844, church services took place in Stepney and Lucy Street’s home in the Village of Canfield. By 1851, the North Cayuga Census identified 137 Black Settlers living in Canfield and the surrounding area. Later, in 1882, on property previously deeded by Mr. Street, the brick Baptist Church was built on the corner of #56 and #3 Highways.

This small community was a safe haven which welcomed the Blacks with respect, compassion and acceptance. Residents and the new settlers lived, worked, attended community schools and worshipped together in Canfield.”

WORKSHEET #1 - SONGS

Objective

African slave songs are a way to explore one aspect of slave life. Through this music and these songs, the slaves were able to communicate a legacy of the African culture they brought with them from Africa and passed on to future generations.

These songs also became a source of hidden messages, allowing the slaves to pass information to each other without the overseers knowing what was happening. Many of these songs allowed the slaves to discuss meetings, freedom and other Underground Railroad information.

Students will examine messages embedded into the freedom songs of slavery, explore their relationship to the plight for freedom and the Underground Railroad.

Read the following song and give your interpretation of its meanings:

Follow the Drinkin' Gourd

(Performed by Richie Havens; Songs of the Civil War, 1991)

Follow the drinkin' gourd
Follow the drinkin' gourd
For the old man is comin' just to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinkin' gourd
When the sun comes back and the first quail calls
Follow the drinkin' gourd
For the old man is waiting just to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Follow the drinkin' gourd
For the old man is waiting to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Well the river bank makes a mighty good road
Dead trees will show you the way
Left foot, peg foot, travelin' on
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Follow the drinkin' gourd
For the old man is waiting to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinkin' gourd
Well the river ends, between two hills
Follow the drinkin' gourd
There's another...

Give the interpretation of each verse of the song:

Verse 1: When the sun comes back and the first quail calls, follow the drinkin' gourd. For the old man is waiting for to carry you to freedom, follow the drinkin' gourd.

Interpretation:

Verse 2: Well the river bank makes a very good road, dead trees will show you the way, Left foot, peg foot, travelin' on; follow the drinkin' gourd.

Interpretation:

Verse 3: Well the river ends between two hills, follow the drinkin' gourd. There's another river on the other side, follow the drinkin' gourd.

Interpretation:

Verse 4: Where the great big river meets the little river, follow the drinkin' gourd. For the old man is awaiting to carry you to freedom if you follow the drinkin' gourd.

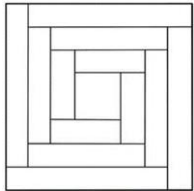
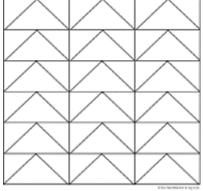
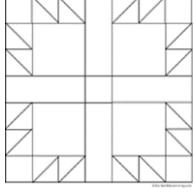
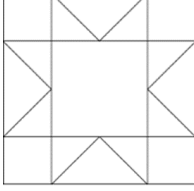
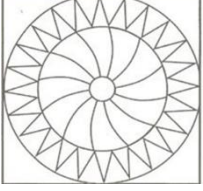
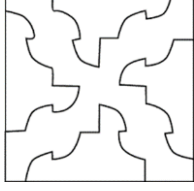
Interpretation:

Why was the big dipper called "The Drinkin' Gourd"?

WORKSHEET #2 - QUILT CODES

Secret Quilt Codes:

How did the escaping slave use the quilt codes as they travelled on their journey?

<p>What is the hidden meaning of the Log Cabin Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>What is the hidden meaning of the Flying Geese Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>What is the hidden meaning of the Bear Paw Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>What is the hidden meaning of the North Star Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>What is the hidden meaning of the Wagon Wheel Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>What is the hidden meaning of the Drunkard Path Quilt Block?</p>		<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

WORKSHEET #3 - UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

1. What impact did Harriet Tubman have on slavery and the Underground Railroad?

2. How was Tubman able to accomplish her missions to bring escaping slaves to Canada?

3. What qualifies someone as a hero; who are your heroes?

4. Would you have helped the slaves escape? If so, how would you have done it.

5. Would you have opened your house to the runaway slaves, provided them with food and money to help them escape?

6. You are a slave owner and discovered all of your slaves ran away. What do you do?

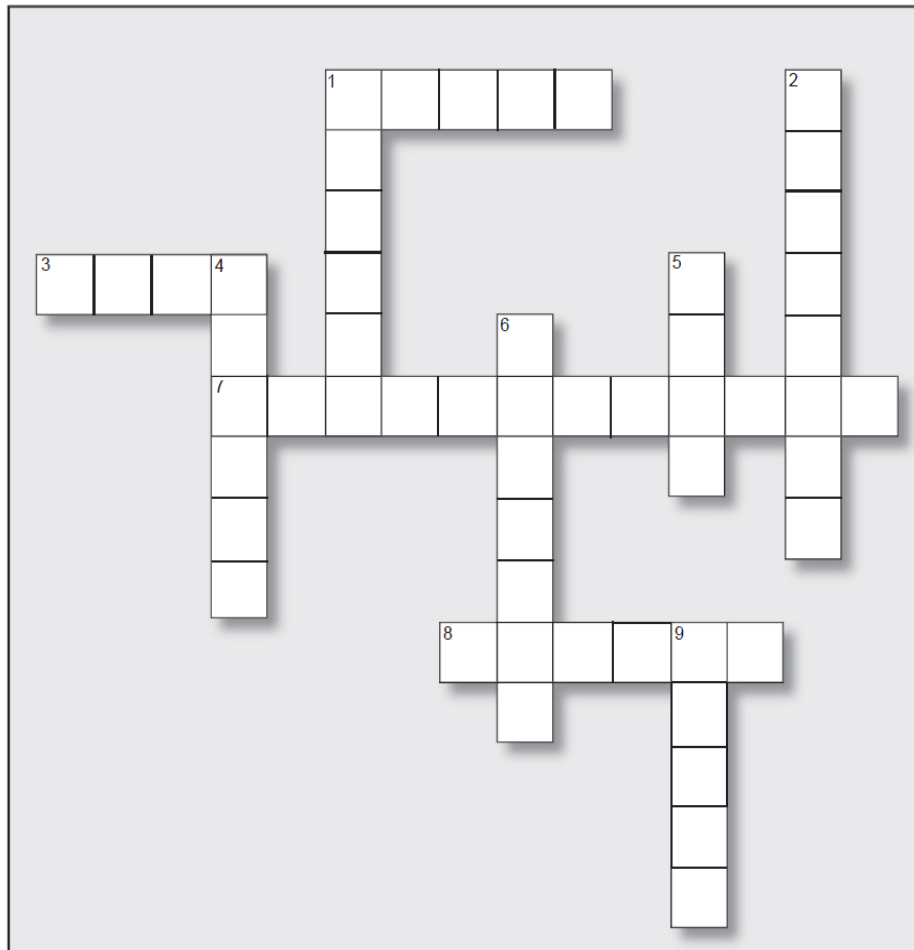
7. You are a runaway slave and are traveling the Underground Railroad when you discover that your owner is following you and is not far behind. What do you do?

8. During your escape you come across a log cabin quilt hanging on the porch, what do you do?

WORKSHEET #5 - FREEDOM

Name: _____

Freedom Crossword Puzzle



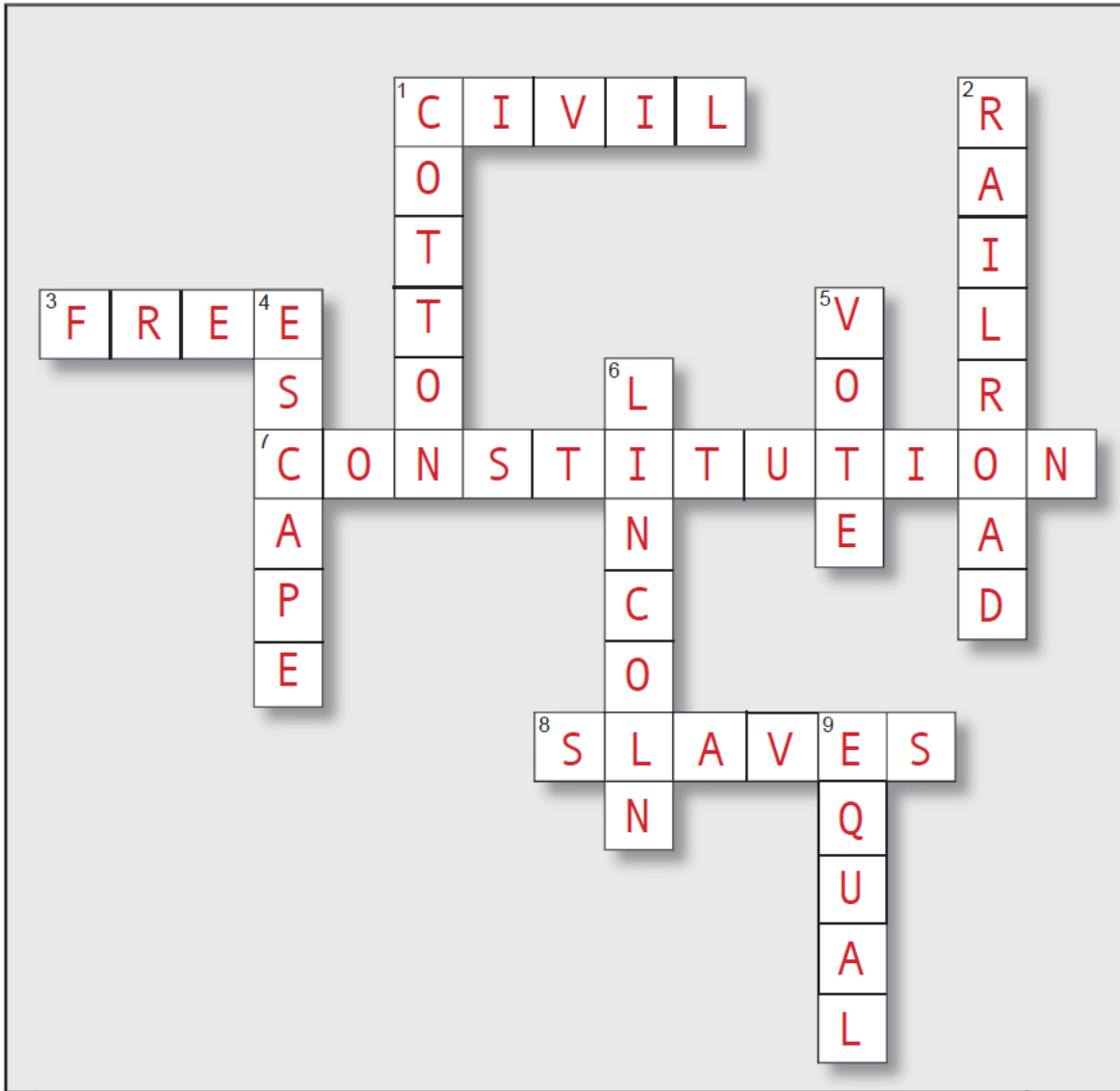
ACROSS

1. The North and South fought in the _____ War
3. If you have liberty, you are _____.
7. The Bill of Rights is part of this important U.S. document.
8. People who are forced to work against their will

DOWN

1. Main crop of the South in the 1800s
2. African Americans used the Underground _____ to get to freedom.
4. To run away from danger
5. Cast a ballot or make a choice.
6. President Abraham _____
9. The Declaration of Independence says "All men are created _____."

Answers:



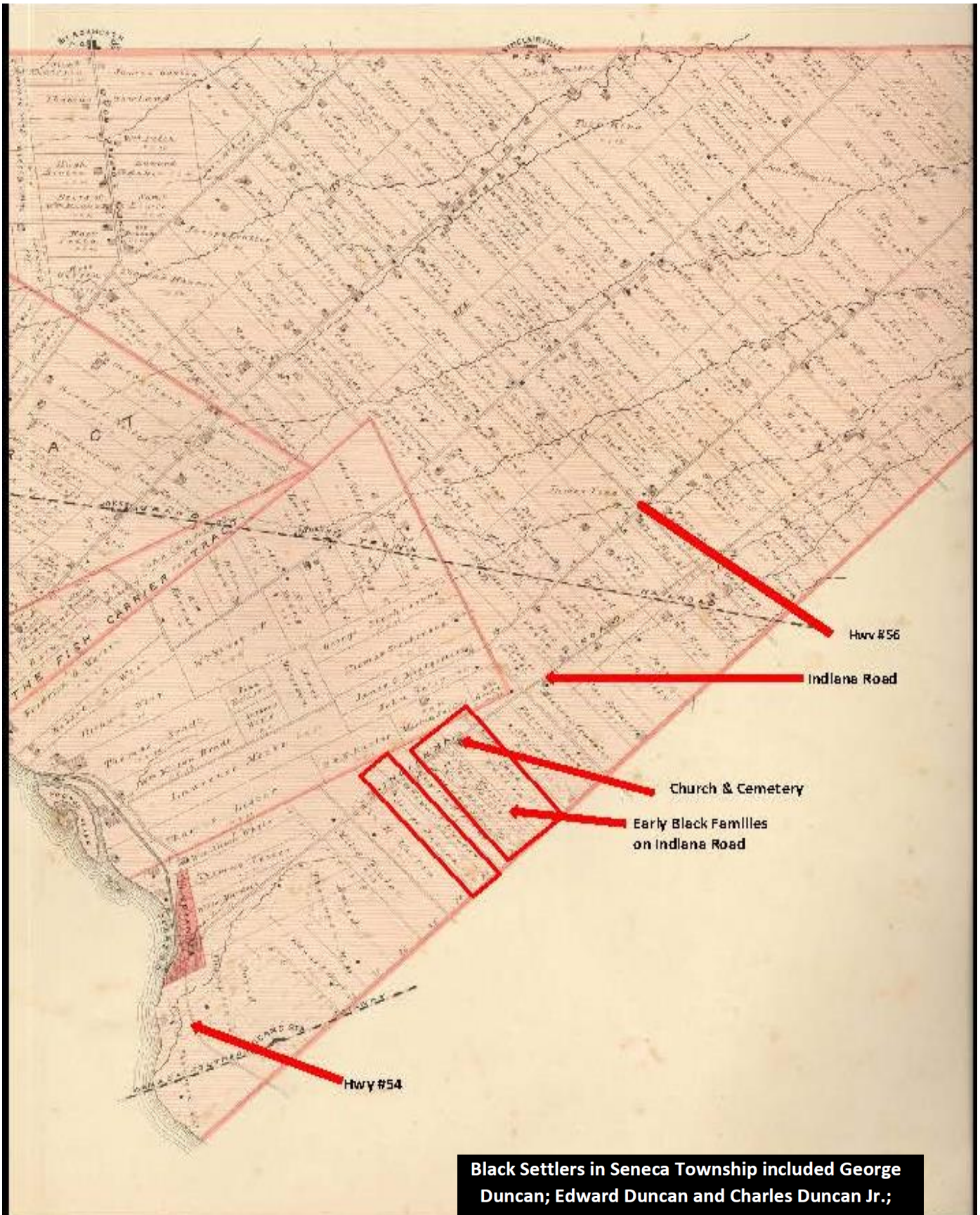
Worksheet #6 - ROUTES TO CANADA

Follow the route to Canada and to Haldimand County. Using the map of Underground Railroad Routes and the North Cayuga and Seneca Maps, trace the route that an escaped slave might have taken as they worked their way towards Haldimand County.

Underground Railroad Routes 1860

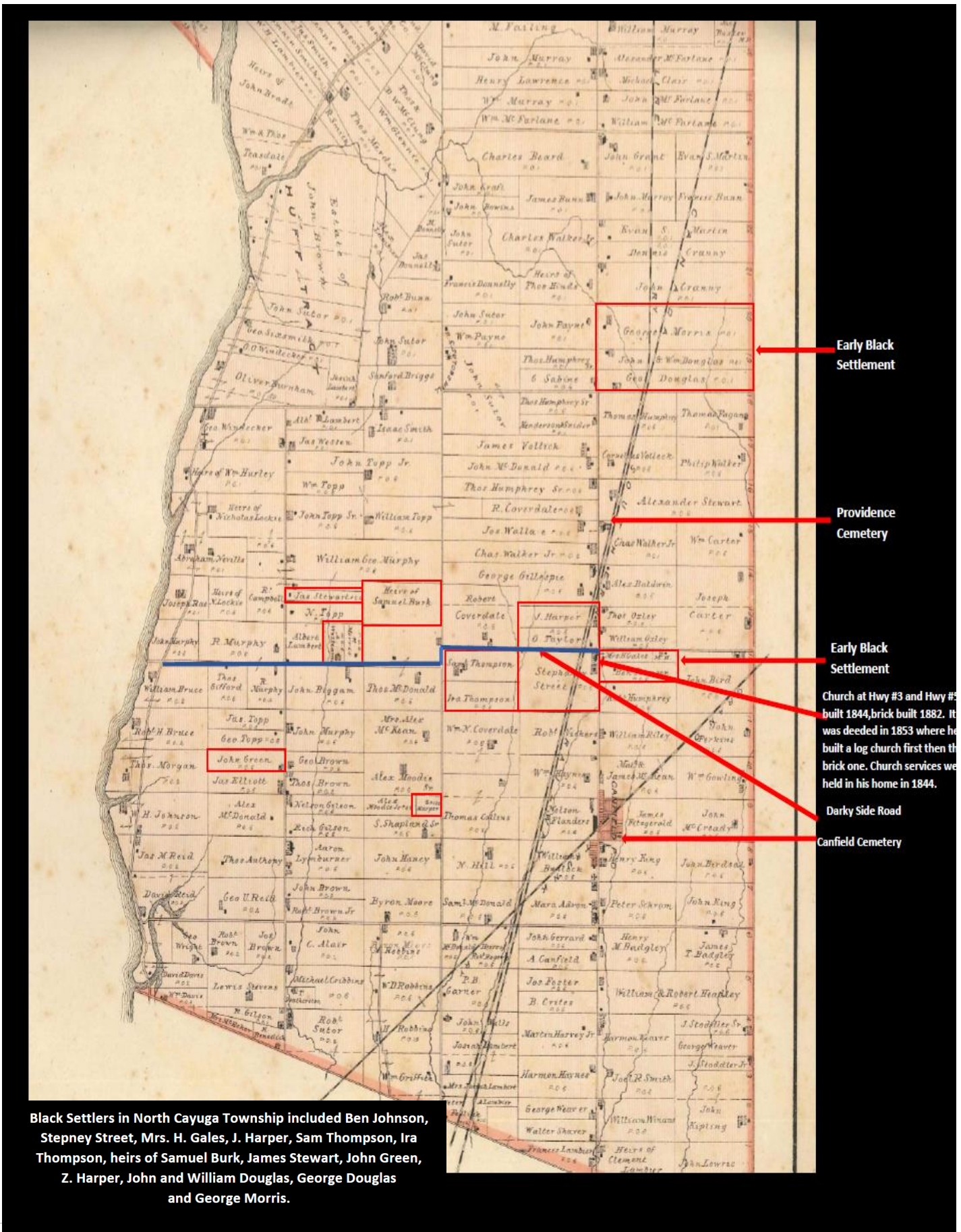


SENECA TOWNSHIP MAP 1879



Black Settlers in Seneca Township included George Duncan; Edward Duncan and Charles Duncan Jr.; Eli Johnson; Joseph Morris and Vinzte Morris; and, heirs of George Steward.

NORTH CAYUGA TOWNSHIP MAP 1879



Black Settlers in North Cayuga Township included Ben Johnson, Stepney Street, Mrs. H. Gales, J. Harper, Sam Thompson, Ira Thompson, heirs of Samuel Burk, James Stewart, John Green, Z. Harper, John and William Douglas, George Douglas and George Morris.

Worksheet #8 - SECRET CODE WORDS FOR THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The Underground Railroad symbols were secret codes; words, signals and signs used to pass along hidden messages to and from slaves who were seeking freedom, as well as those who were helping them in this very dangerous activity. The success of the Underground Railroad was dependent on complete secrecy.

1. What does the term Underground Railway mean for a slave?

2. What does a "Conductor" do?

3. What does "Station Master" mean to an escaping slave?

4. What would it mean to a Conductor if he was told to expect a "bundles of wood"?

5. What does "tickets" mean to a Station Master or a Conductor?

6. If an escaping slave or a Conductor heard the words "patter roller", what would that mean?

7. What does "Promise Land" mean to an escaping slave?

8. Who is "Moses"?

9. What is an abolitionist?

10. What does an "Agent" do?
