

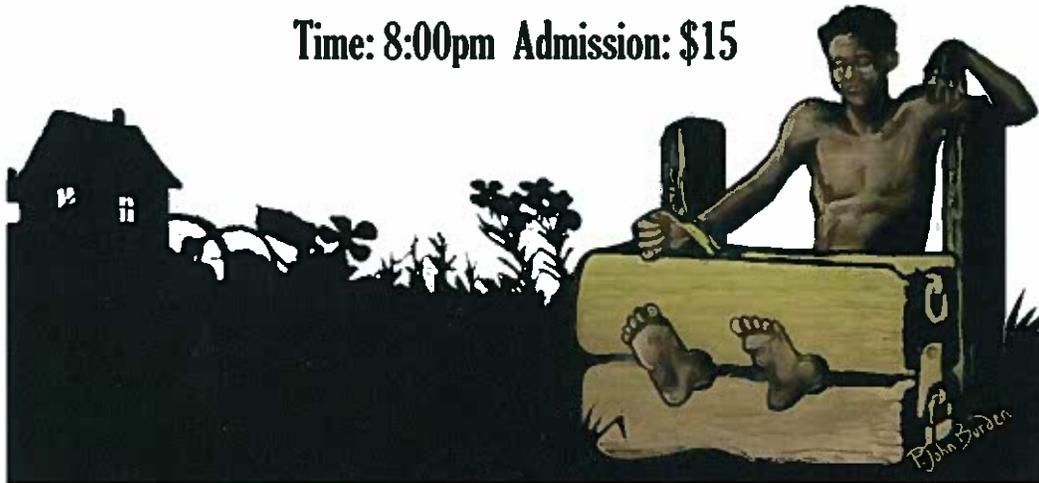
THE OLD STOCK

The Old Stock Players Present

A Play of Black Island History

Created by Ron Irving, Harry Baglole and Scott Parsons

Time: 8:00pm Admission: \$15



CLASSROOM LEARNING MATERIALS

Grade 6 Social Studies

History of Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Canada



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CHARLOTTETOWN

Black Islanders – Part of Our Heritage

The Old Stock

Teacher Guide

Instructional Objectives

Introduction

Pre-viewing Activities

- ~ Anticipation Placemat
- ~ The Old Stock
- ~ What I Am

Post-viewing Activities

- ~ Dembo Suckles
- ~ Web-site Activity

Appendix

Black Islanders – Part of Our Heritage

Intended Grade/Subject

Grade 6 Social Studies

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- develop an awareness of Black Heritage in Prince Edward Island
- develop an understanding of how culture can be expressed through oral history, music and song.

Corresponding Curriculum Outcomes

Black Islanders – Part of Our Heritage activities may assist with student understanding of the following curriculum outcomes.

Social Studies

Grade 6: Prince Edward Island History

Students will be expected to

- 6.2.1 demonstrate an understanding that people from many parts of the world are part of Prince Edward Island history
- 6.7.1 demonstrate an understanding of the influence of Prince Edward Island cultural traditions on present day Prince Edward Island lifestyle
- 6.7.2 demonstrate an understanding of a significant event of Island history

Grade 6: World Cultures

Students will be expected to

- 6.4.1 illustrate an understanding of how cultures from around the world have contributed to the development of Canada's multicultural mosaic

Also supports the areas of Music and Language Arts.

Recommended Time Frame

Based on a 40-minute class period

- Introduction and pre-viewing activities: 1 class
- Post-viewing activities 2 classes

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Background Information

The Old Stock is a newly revised and expanded version of the play by Ron Irving and Harry Baglole illuminating a dark corner of P.E.I. history. The play performed by the Old Stock Players features the music of award-winning singer/songwriter Scott Parsons.

Synopsis

The play follows a young Island bride-to-be who discovers her ancestry is much more colourful than she ever suspected, prompting some mystical tricksters to take her on an educational journey through the little-known history of P.E.I.'s early black residents.

Introduction

The following activities (pre- and post-viewing) are intended to provide an opportunity for students to develop an awareness of this often forgotten Black community in P.E.I. The numbers of African-Islanders were the amongst the smallest of any of the British colonies and over time they became virtually invisible as members of the community either emigrated to other places or became assimilated with the existing Island population. However, the stories of PEI's earliest Black Islanders afford us a glimpse into an often ignored chapter of Island history that still exists today within many Island ancestries.

PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

ANTICIPATION PLACEMAT

Students in triads or small groups respond to the statements presented in the “What do you think?” placemat. Students state whether they agree or disagree with the statement and provide a reason(s) for their response (see appendix).



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Transmission of culture – The oral tradition of story-telling and songs was often the only means of passing down family stories to younger generations. At a time when few people were literate, especially not slaves, songs and stories held an important place. Scott Parsons’ songs, written specifically for *The Old Stock*, continue this tradition and reveal much about the lives and realities of African-Islanders.

Song Analysis – The following original songs tell the stories of several African-Islanders in PEI history. The stories reveal actions, attitudes, and consequences that were part of the Black Islanders reality. The music itself sometimes echoes early African rhythms and later variations of blues music that are synonymous with African-American roots. **Note:** Teachers are reminded to preview the song lyrics before utilizing with their class.

All songs by Scott Parsons

1. Dembo Suckles
2. Jupiter Wise
3. Spanish Dollars
4. Is Sook Willin?
5. The Old Stock
6. The Sheppard Accident
7. Klondike Gold
8. What I Am
9. Blackjack Byers

Pre-viewing Activities

1. ***The Old Stock*** (Track #5)

Listen to the lyrics of the song. Discuss the following questions.

- a) Who is the “Old Stock” referred to in the song? Where are these people now?
- b) What does the writer mean by “...times have changed and there’s no shame in common history”?

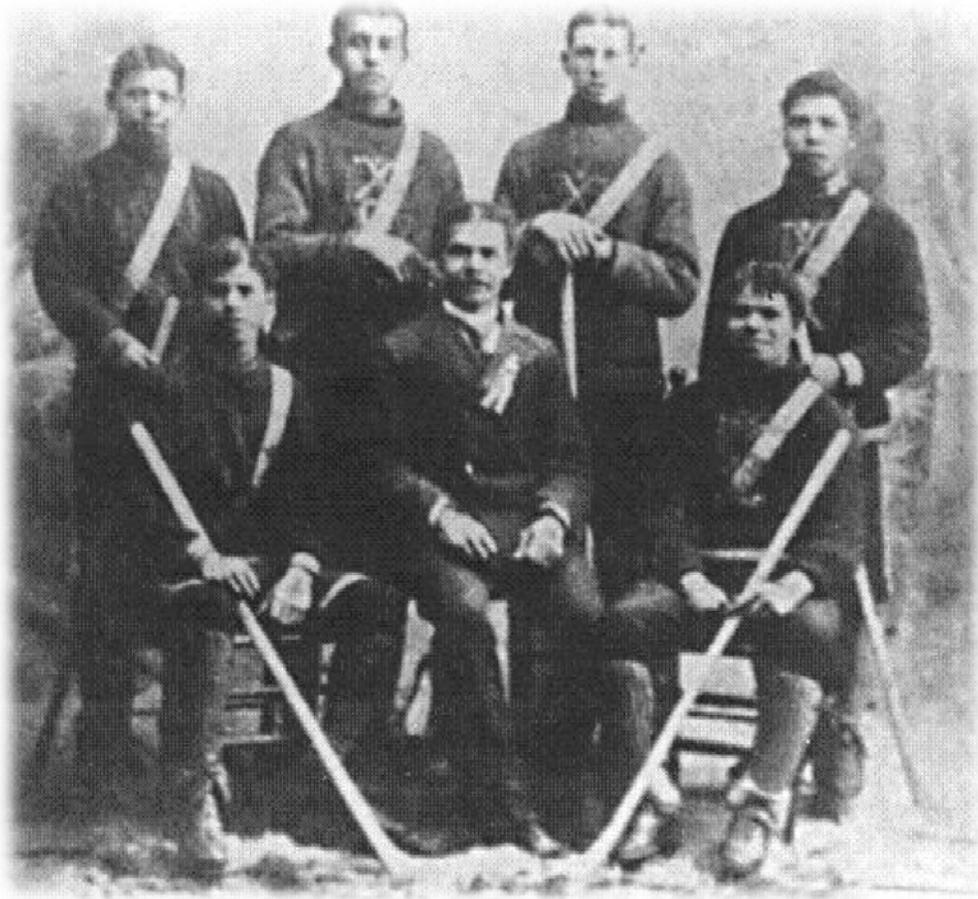
2. ***What I Am*** (Track # 8)

Listen to the lyrics of the song. Create a “What I Am” web. Using computer software (e.g., Inspirations or interactive white boards) ask students to create a web demonstrating all that they are as a person (see appendix for sample).

Note: The song lyrics for *What I Am* contains the term “Indian” and is used in this context to refer to the people of India.

Black Islanders – Part of Our Heritage

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES



West End Rangers Hockey Team circa 1900

Black Islanders – Part of Our Heritage

Historical Thinking Concepts

Historical thinking concepts are designed to help students think more deeply and critically about the past as well as their own relationship to the past, including how it can be linked to the present. Teachers can use these concepts to extend and deepen the learning. Below is a brief explanation of one of the six historical thinking concepts that has been integrated into the study unit for *The Old Stock*. For a more comprehensive explanation of the six historical thinking concepts and guiding examples, please refer to the following resource: Denos and Case. *Teaching about Historical Thinking*. (2006). Vancouver: The Thinking Consortium (TC2).

Historical Significance – why an event, person, or development from our past is important. (e.g., what is the significance of a particular event in history? What would have happened if this person [historical figure] had not existed?)

What is the historical significance of Black settlement in PEI and beyond?

1. Dembo Suckles (Track #1)

Listen to the lyrics of the song.

- a) What can you tell about Dembo's life story from the lyrics?
- b) Use a globe, map, atlas, or computer software to trace the journey that Dembo would have taken from his birthplace (evidence suggests western Africa) to his eventual arrival and settlement on St. John's Island (via the New England states).

2. Web-site activity

Have students break into pairs or small groups to briefly research a family of Black heritage. Students create a "Fast Fact" file on the family. Students place their file on a map of P.E.I. to signify where the family settled.

<http://www.blackislandersofpei.com/research.php>

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Recommended Research Sources

Black Islanders Cooperative of Prince Edward Island <http://www.blackislandersofpei.com/index.php>

Jim Hornby, *Black Islanders: Prince Edward Island's Historical Black Community*. (Charlottetown: Institute of Island Studies, 1991)

Black Souls by Martine Chartrand (A National Film Board of Canada production. A copy of this DVD may be accessed through the Confederation Centre Library. As always, when using a resource that is not authorized, please preview to determine if it is appropriate for the intended purpose.)

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Appendix

Anticipation Placemat BLM

What I Am: Web sample

The Old Stock Song Lyrics

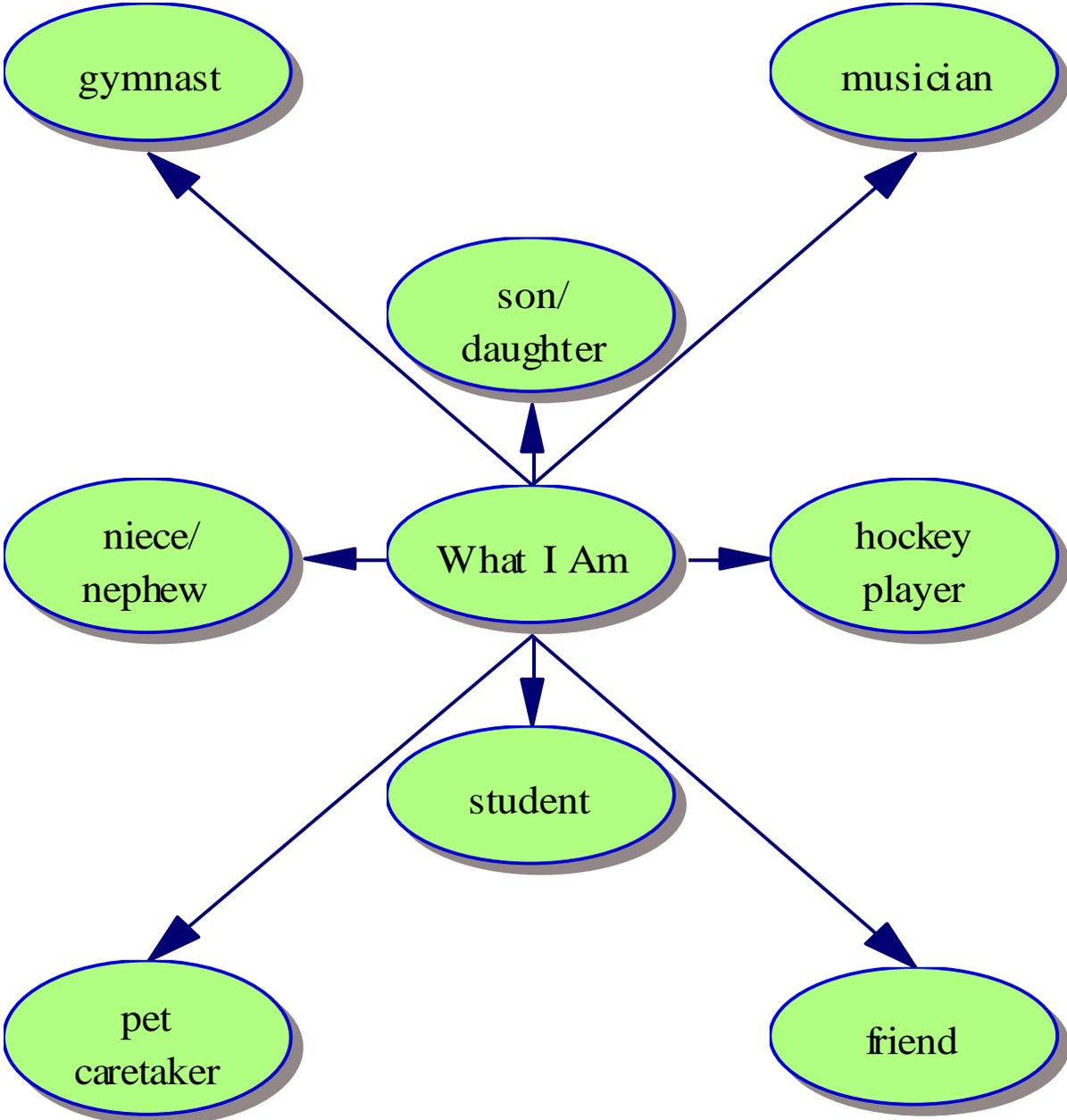
Slavery existed on Prince Edward Island in the past.



Your Opinion Please

Racism did not exist on P.E.I. until the 20th century.

There are many Islanders who can trace their family roots to African heritage.



The Old Stock

Song Lyrics

Written by Scott Parson

Dembo Suckles

Scott Parsons

Track # 1

He was born in Africa, Slavers raided his native place
Ran and hid in a hollow log, Dembo Suckles would soon be his name

Chorus

Dembo hid in a hollow log, slavers searched and found him there
He was dragged from his hiding place, By an iron hook stuck into
his back

He could show to his dying day, the mark left by that cruel hook
He could show to his dying day, the mark left by that cruel hook

The year of 1793, Reverend MacGregor opposed to slavery
Manumission at the standard rate, Good Captain Creed agreed to
free his slave

Chorus

Given one good cow, two sheep, one sow, and a suit of clothes upon
his back

Dembo truly a self made man, bought a hundred acres of land
Married Governor Fannings' slave, lived life to a very great age

Chorus

Jupiter Wise

Scott Parsons

Track #2

Court records from 1785, case of the King versus Jupiter wise
Convicted of assault, he was sentenced to die, the King versus
Jupiter wise
The King versus Jupiter Wise

Called him a thief and a violent slave, he never guess what his friends
would say
Meant to steal a boat for the United States and be a free man for the
rest of his days

Jupiter, Jupiter Wise, for assaulting John Clark they're gonna hang
you high
Plead Benefit of Clergy and save your life, The King versus Jupiter Wise
The King versus Jupiter Wise

Sent for seven years service to his Majesty's Isles
Case of the King versus Jupiter Wise
A slave in the West Indies, last we heard of his life
The King versus Jupiter Wise, the King versus Jupiter Wise

One Spanish Dollar

Scott Parsons

Track #3

One Spanish dollar and an English half crown
One stole bread and butter, the other five pounds
Some fish for his mother, Hanged 'till they be dead
The family was outraged, at the price that they paid

Black Peter and Sancho both hanged for their crimes
A travesty of justice on Prince Edward Isle

For one Spanish dollar and an English half crown
One stole bread and butter the other five pounds

In the cold light of morning, in the hours before dawn
Black Peter and Sancho, would soon be beyond
Their poor hearts would tremble in fear all the while
The hangman awaits them on Prince Edward's Isle

For one Spanish dollar and an English half crown
One stole bread and butter, the other five pounds
Black Peter and Sancho, both hanged for their crimes
A travesty of justice, on Prince Edward's Isle

Is Sook Willin'

Scott Parsons

Track #4

I know a secret that's very old, I know a secret if the truth be told
I know a secret though some will say, Save your secrets for the
judgment day

Well, is Sook willin', (answer) is Sook willin'
Is Sook willin', (answer) is Sook willin'
well is Sook willin' (answer) is Sook willin'
Is Sook willin' to marry you?

Now love is a mighty and wonderful thing
doesn't care what religion or songs you sing
Doesn't care 'bout the color of your skin
Doesn't care if it's a sin

Well is Sook willin'...

Hope for better things to come, hope and the day is won
Hope as love shines through
To a better day for me and you

Well is Sook willin'...

The Old Stock

Scott Parsons

Track # 5

Hmmmnn Hmmmnn, It's been a long time, it's been a long long time

(spoken) The Old Stock are still here, just can't be seen

For a long time, perhaps it was better that way

I recall, my father said to me, folks round here have plain forgot
They're a part of the old stock, the old stock with ancient Africa in
their veins

The old stock, he'd laugh and say, things aren't always what they seem
He'd point out many people in the community

Now times have changed and there's no shame in common history
The old stock lives on and on inside of you and me

You got a hard name, you got a hard name my son
Byers a hard name, a hard name my son
Byers's a hard name, part of the old stock

The Sheppard Accident

Scott Parsons

Track # 6

A shocking calamity for the Sheppard family, February 1869

Sheppard and his son, cutting fence rails in the woods
Sent home with a full load, the boy did not return
Sheppard searched and found, tipped over on the ground
The horse had fallen a short distance from the house

Returning to the scene, Sheppard shocked by what he saw
The dead boys feet stuck out from underneath the horse
Sheppard crawled on hands and knees, threatened friends and family
Taken to the Georgetown jail by the law

A lunatic they said, caused by the accident
The unfortunate man was brought to town
To the asylum he was sent, by the local government
To live out, the rest of his life

The bereavement of the family, a shocking calamity February 1869

Klondike Gold

Scott Parsons

Track #7

Lemuel and Robert of the Sheppard family left Cardigan 'round 1896
They worked in Maine for years, to earn enough money
To go in search of Klondike gold

A good many hard knocks, we went hungry more than once
Just kept on diggin' all the day
The nights were hard and black, they could tear a man asunder
Better fellows, we watched as they went under

Then there it was one day after years of arduous toil
We finally struck the paystreak
We headed back to Maine, gold nuggets that we gave
To loved ones who helped us on our way

Home to Prince Edward Isle, with a fortune and a smile
We helped the whole community
We believe in church and farm, and spinning Klondike yarn
With our good friends and family

What I Am
Scott Parsons
Track # 8

Everybody wants to know what I am, what I am, what I am
Everybody wants to know what I am, what I am

I am an Englishman, I am an African,
I am an Indian, I am a human

Some folks don't understand, there's already enough pain,
Some folks don't understand, inside we're all the same
Some folks don't understand, there's better things to do
Some folks don't understand, no matter what you do
Everybody want to know
Everybody want to know
(repeat all)

Blackjack Byers

Scott Parsons

Track # 9

Lt Colonel Robinson, a loyalist from the states
Brought to the Island of St John's, a couple who were slaves
Blackjack and Amelia Byers might have their liberty
At the end of one year, if they were well behaved

1804 the story goes, Blackjack before the court
Stealing to the value of ten pence, they tied him to a cart
From Harvies Brig at Pownal Square, they whipped him to the stocks
Thence to the wharf and back to gaol, their hopes of freedom lost

Soon after this, notorious judicial punishment
Was laid upon two of their sons, they hanged them for their sins
Sancho stole bread and butter, Peter a few coins
A travesty of justice on the Island of St John's