

Charles Daniels

Title: Charles Daniels

Subtitle: Historical Inquiry

Duration: 4-5 classes

Best Course(s) Fit: Law, History

Central Historical Question: Should Canadian students learn about Charles Daniels? Why? Why not?

Background Information

In February of 1914, a Black porter named Charles Daniels went to the Sherman Grand Theatre and purchased a ground floor ticket to see the play *King Lear* by William Shakespeare. When Daniels arrived at the box office, he was refused entry because of his skin colour. Instead, the clerk offered him seats in the upper balcony - a place where Black people were allowed to sit in the theatre. Charles rejected this and hired a lawyer to pursue legal action. Surprisingly, Charles Daniels won the lawsuit. He was awarded \$1,000.

Task

1. Read the documents.
2. Respond to the questions in complete sentences.
3. Answer the historical question, complete the graphic organizer, and write a paragraph

Document A - Newspaper Article

Excerpt adapted from :

<https://twitter.com/BashirMohamed/status/942549339355856896/photo/1>

CALGARY *** KICKS UP FUSS**

Interesting developments are promised in the case of a Calgary negro who has hired a lawyer to take action against the Sherman Grand Theatre because the theatre management refused to admit him to a performance last week.

It is printed on every ticket that the management reserves the right to refuse admissions to the holder. Negroes are not excluded from the theatre, provided they take the seats in the section of the house assigned to them.

Numerous complaints were received from white people who occupied high priced seats that negroes were offensive to them.

The manager maintains that it has the right to refuse to allow to enter the house at all if it so desires. A theatre is not a public place in the sense of a restaurant or clothing store or other place where absolutely necessary supplies are sold. People cannot live without food and clothing while they can get along without amusements. On this ground they reserve the right to bar people if they desire to do so.

CALGARY "NIGGER" KICKS UP FUSS

**Wants to Attend Theatres With
"White Folks" But Man-
agement Says No**

Calgary, Feb. 11.—Interesting developments are promised in the case of a Calgary negro who has instructed B. W. Collison to take action against the Sherman grand theatre because the theatre management refused to admit him to a performance last week. Speaking to the *Albertan* for the management, Treasurer James Leatherby stated that the theatre would fight the case to the last, on the ground that it was the privilege of the management to exclude any person they regarded as undesirable or likely to injure their business, except in the case of an officer of the law or other legalized official who attended in the performance of his duties. Mr. Leatherby took the stand that the fact that a person had purchased a ticket at the box office did not necessarily mean that the purchaser would be permitted to enter.

"It is printed on every ticket that the management reserves the right to refuse admission to the holder,"

said Mr. Leatherby. Negroes are not excluded from the theatre, provided they take the seats in the section of the house assigned to them. Manager Baker, of the Orpheum, and Mr. Longheed, discussing the numerous complaints received from white people who occupied high priced seats that negroes were offensive to them decided to refuse negroes admittance to the ground floor. The management maintains that it has the right to refuse to allow negroes to enter the house at all if it so desires. A theatre is not a public place in the sense of a restaurant or clothing store or other place where absolutely necessary supplies are sold. People cannot live without food and clothing, while they can get along without amusements. On this ground they reserve the right to bar people if they desire to do so.

Mr. W. Collison, solicitor for the negro, stated that suit would be proceeded with, and denied that the action had been taken by his colored client simply to get a cash settlement from the theatre management. He held that a theatre was a public place.

"Advertisements are published asking for patronage; the theatre is licensed as a public place of amusement and entertainment, and so long as a man is sober, sane and orderly, he is entitled to be admitted to any part of the house in which he chooses to sit, regardless of creed or color," said Mr. Collison.

Document B - Newspaper Article

Source: <https://www.sprawlalberta.com/calgarys-unknown-civil-rights-hero>

NEGRO GETS DAMAGES FROM LOCAL THEATRE

Charles Daniels Was Refused
Admittance to Performance
at Sherman Grand

When Case Was Called No Per-
son Was Present for Defence;
Case Went by Default

The suit of \$1,000 damages against W. B. Sherman and Senator Lougheed, instituted by Charles Daniels, colored, because he was refused admittance to a performance at the Sherman Grand, has been won by default by the plaintiff, neither the defendants nor their legal representatives, Lougheed and Bennett, appearing in court when the case was called. J. J. McDonald, solicitor for Daniels, has applied to the court for assessment of damages.

An effort was made by the solicitors for the theatre owners to have the action reopened, but this arrangement was not consented to by Mr. McDonald.

This is the first case of the kind which ever came before the courts of this city, and has excited widespread interest. The management of the theatre claimed the right to bar anyone which it regarded as objectionable, but Daniels based his action on the contention that, as the theatre was a public place and as he was sober and well behaved, he had the privilege of occupying any seat in the house which he was willing to buy at the regular rate.

Document C - Examination for Discovery

<https://www.sprawlalberta.com/calgarys-unknown-civil-rights-hero>

A. Well, I was refused the entrance on the night of Feb. 3rd. to see a play and they wanted to change my tickets.

4 Q. What is that?

A. They wanted to change my tickets.

5 Q. Yes?

A. And I asked him why and he refused to tell me and when I presented the ticket, he took it to the office at the door and said "have this ticket changed," and I said "how do you know I want it changed?" and he said "I will have it changed any way. "

6 Q. Who said he would have it changed any way?

A. The man standing at the door who took the tickets.

7 Q. Well, go ahead and tell me all. He took the ticket and said to you...

A. So of course the officer, he went to change the ticket and he would not answer me one way or the other.

109 Q. And then what?

A. He offered them to me.

110 Q. And what did you say?

A. I told him I wanted my original purchase.

111 Q. You declined to take the balcony tickets?

A. I did not accept them.

112 Q. You did not accept them, and then what?

A. He said "you will take these or get your money back?"

113 Q. Yes.

A. I said I did not want my money back.

Document C (part two)

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/charles-daniels-train-porter-racism-lawsuit-1.4826763>

71 Q. How did you arrive at that amount Mr. Daniel?

A. Well, I think the humiliation is worth that amount.

72 Q. Beg pardon?

A. I think the humiliation is worth that amount.

73 Q. In what way were you humiliated?

A. I was.

74 Q. In what way were you humiliated?

A. Because there were a number of men in the Department of the C.P.R. seen me in the lobby at the time, conductors and their crews.

Document D: Watch the video Secret Calgary: Kicking Up a Fuss

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLSxERRq8p0>



Questions

Contextualization Questions

1. Given these documents, do you agree or disagree with the following phrase, “Charles Daniels was a civil rights leader?” Explain your position.
2. According to the sources, what did Charles Daniels do?
3. What do these documents suggest about Charles Daniels?
4. Why do you think Charles Daniels was refused admission?

Close Reading Questions

5. Choose one of the headlines. According to the headline, what happened?
6. Notice the headlines. How does the information in the headlines affect you as you read them?
7. What do the headlines reveal about the reality of life for Black people in Canada during this time period?

Documents	What new information about race and racism in Canada does this document contain? Please use quotes from the source.	What does this source suggest about Charles Daniels?	How does this document challenge the narrative that Canada was “the promised land” for Black people?
A			
B			
C			
D			

Should Canadian Students Learn About Charles Daniels? Why? Why not?

My position:

Give at least three reasons why Canadian students should or should not learn about Charles Daniels. You must use at least three sources to support your claim. After you complete the graphic organizer, write a paragraph. Your paragraph must include:

- ✓ **a topic sentence**
- ✓ **3 details/examples and explanations**
- ✓ **a conclusion sentence**

Source	Evidence

Paragraph