

Title: Chloe Cooley and Slavery Legislation

Subtitle: Research/Diary Assignment

Duration: 5 classes

Best Courses Fit: Law, Canada: History, Identity, and Culture, English



Source: <https://www.kingdomnubia.com/chloe-cooley-and-the-1793-act-to-limit-slavery-in-upper-canada-niagara-on-the-lake/>

Background Knowledge

Upper Canada was settled mostly by United Empire Loyalists who left their homes in the colonies and pledged faith to the Crown. Many brought their enslaved property with them to their new country.

The first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada was Colonel John Graves Simcoe. Simcoe detested slavery and had spoken against the inhumane practice of enslaving human beings in the House of Commons in England.

On March 14, 1793, Chloe Cooley, an enslaved Black woman in Queenston, Upper Canada, was tied up and forcefully thrown in a boat and sold across the river to a new owner in the United States. At the time of this incident, Cooley had been enslaved by United Empire Loyalist Sergeant Adam Vrooman. Her screams were brought to the attention of Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe by Peter Martin and William Grisley. Simcoe used this incident as a way to abolish slavery in the new province of Upper Canada. However, because many members in the House of Assembly were enslavers themselves, they opposed Simcoe's proposal. As a result, a compromise was reached on July 9, 1793, when *An Act to Prevent the further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude* (also known as the *Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada*) was passed. Those who were already enslaved would remain the property of their owners. No one was freed outright. Instead, the Act prevented importing any enslaved persons into Upper Canada and allowed for the gradual abolition of slavery. Children born to enslaved women after 1793 would be freed upon reaching the age of 25 years. Enslaved people could still be sold within the province or in the U.S. It was the first piece of legislation in the British Empire to limit slavery and pave the way for the great freedom movement of enslaved African Americans known as the Underground Railroad.

Not much is known about Chloe Cooley's early life or what happened to her after March of 1793. Nonetheless, her fierce display of resistance is a testament to the realities of slavery in Canada and the many ways in which the enslaved resisted it.

Sources: <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/en/plaques/chloe-cooley-and-1793-act-to-limit-slavery-in-upper-canada>

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/chloe-cooley-and-the-act-to-limit-slavery-in-upper-canada>

Tasks

1. Read the documents.
2. Respond to the questions.
3. Complete and submit the diary assignment.

Document A - Report of the Chloe Cooley Incident

The following is a report of a meeting of his Executive Council:

"At the Council Chamber, Navy Hall, in the County of in- coln, Wednesday, March 21st, 1793.

"PRESENT

"His Excellency, J. G. Simcoe, Esq., Lieut.-Governor, &c., &c.,

The Honble Wm. Osgoode, Chief Justice The Honble Peter Russell.

"Peter Martin (a negro in the service of Col. Butler) attended the Board for the purpose of informing them of a violent outrage committed by one Fromond, an Inhabitant of this Province, residing near Queens Town, or the West Landing, on the person of Chloe Cooley a Negro girl in his service, by binding her, and vio- lently and forcibly transporting her across the River, and deliver- ing her against her will to certain persons unknown; to prove the truth of his Allegation he produced, Wm. Grisley (or Crisley).

"William Grisley an Inhabitant near Mississague Point in this Province says: that on Wednesday evening last he was at work at Mr. Froomans near Queens Town, who in conversation told him, he was going to sell his Negro Wench to some persons in the States, that in the Evening he saw the said Negro girl, tied with a rope, that afterwards a Boat was brought, and the said Frooman with his Brother and one Vanevery, forced the said Negro Girl into it, that he was desired to come into the boat, which he did, but did not assist or was otherwise concerned in carrying off the said Negro Girl, but that all the others were, and carried the Boat across the River; that the said Negro Girl was then taken and delivered to a man upon the Bank of the River by Fromand, that she screamed violently and made resistance, but was tied in the same manner as when the said William Grisley first saw her, and in that condition delivered to the man...Wm. Grisley farther says that he saw a negro at a distance, he believes to be tied in the same manner, and has heard that many other People mean to do the same by their Negroes.

"Resolved.-That it is necessary to take immediate steps to prevent the continuance of such violent breaches of the Public Peace, and for that purpose, that His Majesty's Attorney-General, be forthwith directed to prosecute the said Fromond. "Adjourned."

This is copied from 'The Slave in Canada' by William Riddell (pp. 55-56) taken from the official report sent to Westminster by Simcoe. There is the usual amount of uncertainty in spelling names Grisley or Crisly, Promand, Frooman, Proomond or Eromond (in reality Vrooman)

Source: Excerpt adapted from William Riddell, *The Slave in Canada* (Washington, DC: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1920), 55-56.

Document B - The 1793 Act to Limit Slavery

Read the excerpts from the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery.

No negro or other person shall be brought into this Province to be a slave.

No negro will be liberated or discharged from the possession of their owner.

Every child born of a Negro mother shall remain with the master or mistress in whose service the mother shall be living at the time of such child's birth and such master or mistress is required to give proper nourishment and clothing to such child/children, and shall/may put such child/children to work and retain him or her in their service until such child reaches the age of twenty-five years at which time, he or she is entitled to be discharged.

Source: Excerpt adapted from An Act to Prevent the further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude Statutes of Upper Canada Cap. 7, 33 George III, 1793.

Retrieved from:

http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/alvin_mccurdy/big/big_03_anti_slavery_act.aspx

Document C - Chloe Cooley Plaque



Source: This plaque, located on Niagara Parkway in Niagara-on-the-Lake, marks the spot where Chloe Cooley was forced across the river to be sold. © Ontario Heritage Trust

Retrieved from: http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/en/explore/online/slavery/big/big_03_cooley-plaque.aspx

Questions

Sourcing	Document A	Document B	Document C
What about this source makes it good evidence about the existence of slavery in Canada?			
Why was it created?			
When was it created?			
Is it a reliable source? Explain.			

Corroboration

What are the three ways the three documents are similar?

What are three ways the three documents are different?

What other perspectives, documents, types of evidence would you need to further explore the experiences of Chloe Cooley?

Document A - Report of the Chloe Cooley Incident

Contextualization

What does this report suggest about Chloe Cooley?

Based on this report, describe the state of affairs in Upper Canada. Find three sentences from the report to support your answer.

Why do you think Chloe Cooley screamed and resisted?

Close Reading

According to the report, what happened on March 14, 1793?

How does this report portray slavery in Canada?

Document B - The 1793 Act to Limit Slavery

Contextualization

Given this document, do you agree or disagree with the following phrase, “*The 1793 Act to Limit Slavery was ineffective in the fight against slavery*”? Explain your position.

What does this document reveal about slavery in Canada?

Why do you think this Act was needed?

Close Reading

What was the purpose of this Act?

Based on the language used in the Act to Limit Slavery, how do you think Black people were viewed? Use evidence from the document to support your answer.

Why is this information useful evidence for understanding the history of Black people in Canada?

Explain societal attitudes and values that promoted and prevented this type of legislation.

Based on the language used in the Act to Limit Slavery, how do you think Black people were viewed? Use evidence from the document to support your answer.

Document C - Chloe Cooley Plaque

Contextualization

How does the creator of the source generally feel about Chloe Cooley? Explain.

Why might Peter Martin and William Grisley have reported the incident to Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe?

What does this plaque suggest about Chloe Cooley?

What does this plaque suggest about Peter Martin and William Grisley?

What does this plaque suggest about John Graves Simcoe?

Close Reading

How is Chloe Cooley connected to the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery?

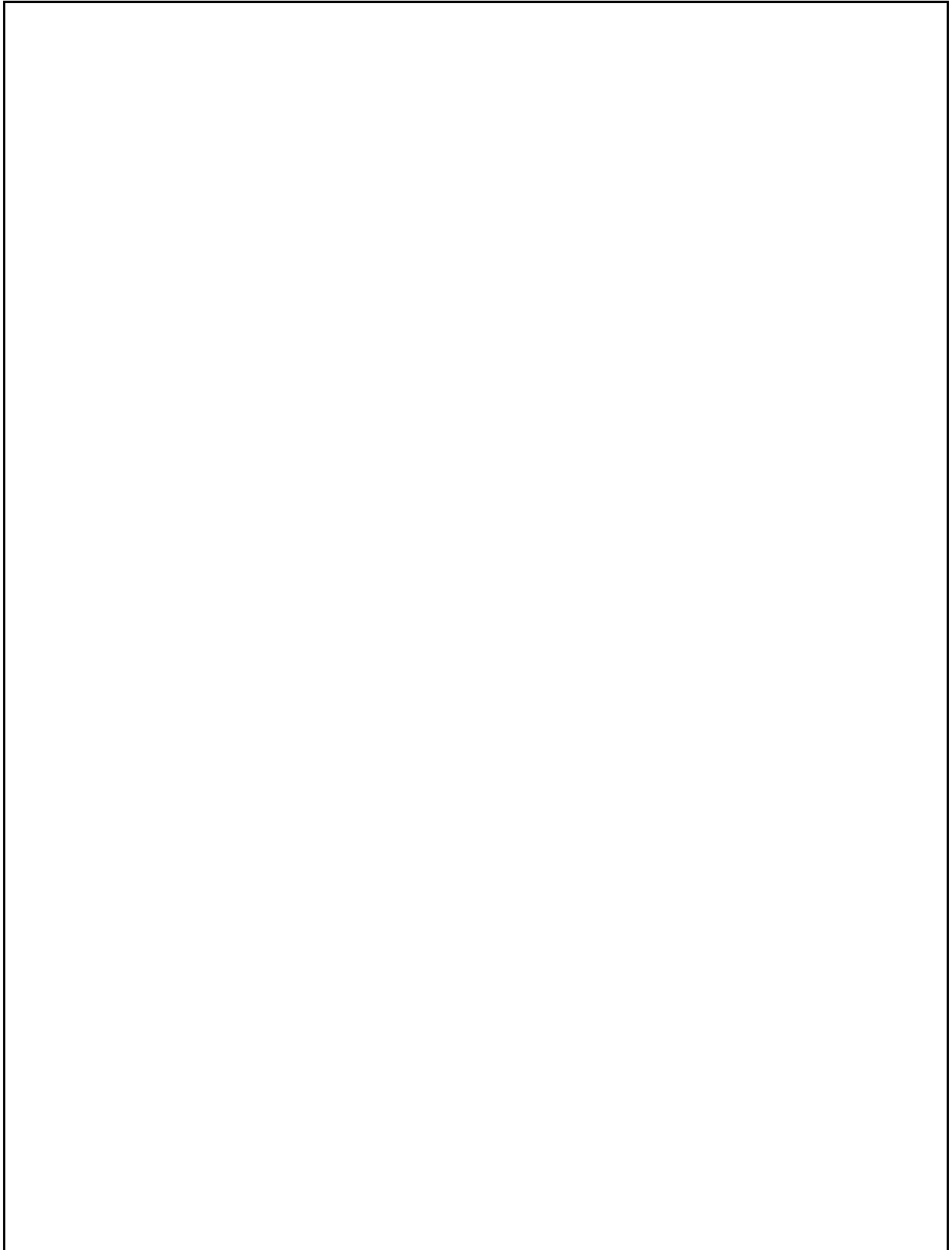
Assignment

Students will write three diary entries from Chloe Cooley's perspective. The first diary entry will be from March 13, 1793 (the day before she was sold), the second one will be from March 14, 1793 (the day she was sold across the river), and the third one will be a date of their choice, after Chloe's departure from Ontario (get imaginative).

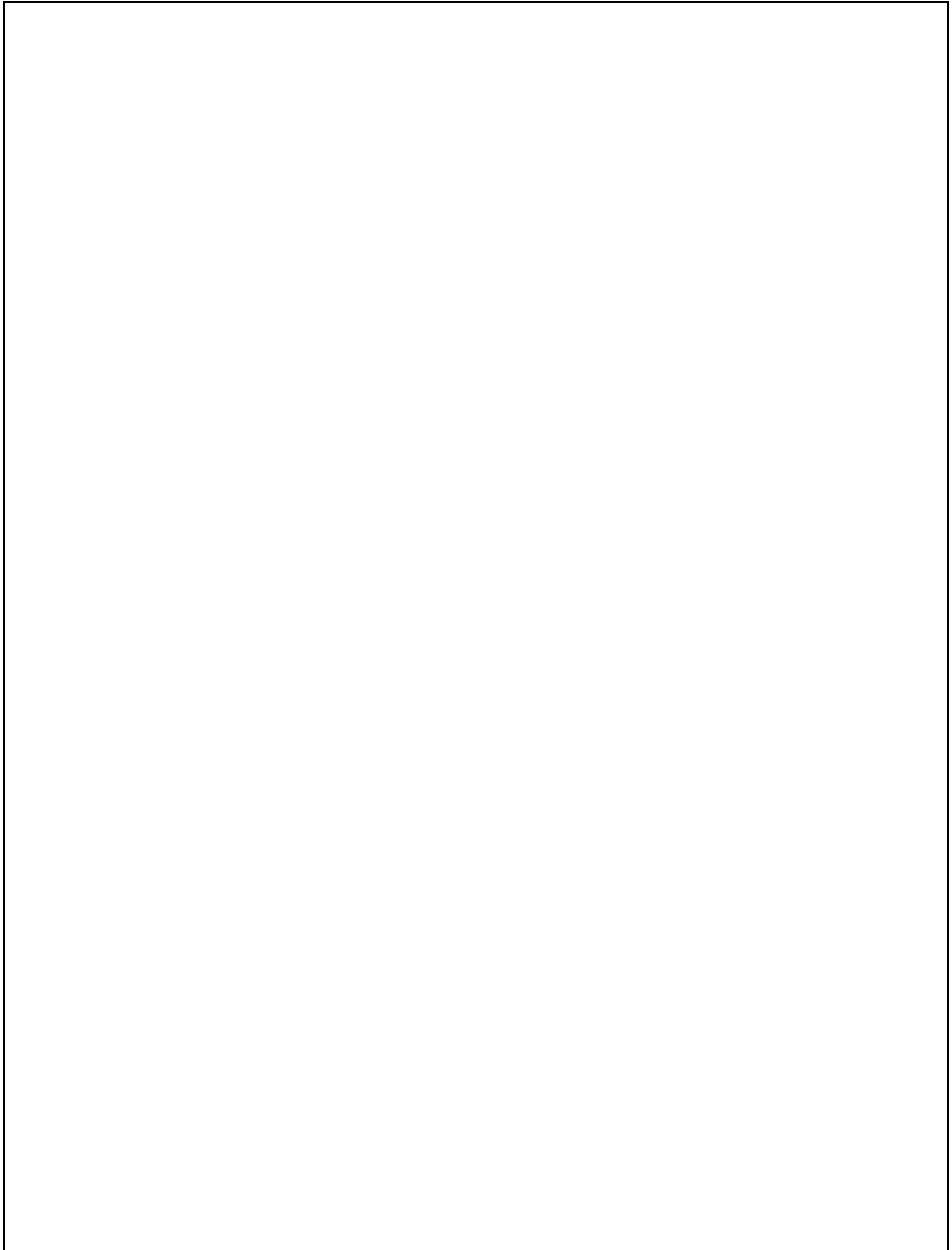
Each entry will include the following information:

- accurate historical facts
- plausible information related to the time period and location (get creative, but realistic)
- clear details of events
- reflects the feelings, emotional states, opinions, fears, motivations, and actions of Chloe Cooley
- effects of Chloe's behaviours/actions on other individuals
- vivid descriptions of the events
- What might/could happen next?

Diary Entry #1



Diary Entry #2



Diary Entry #3

