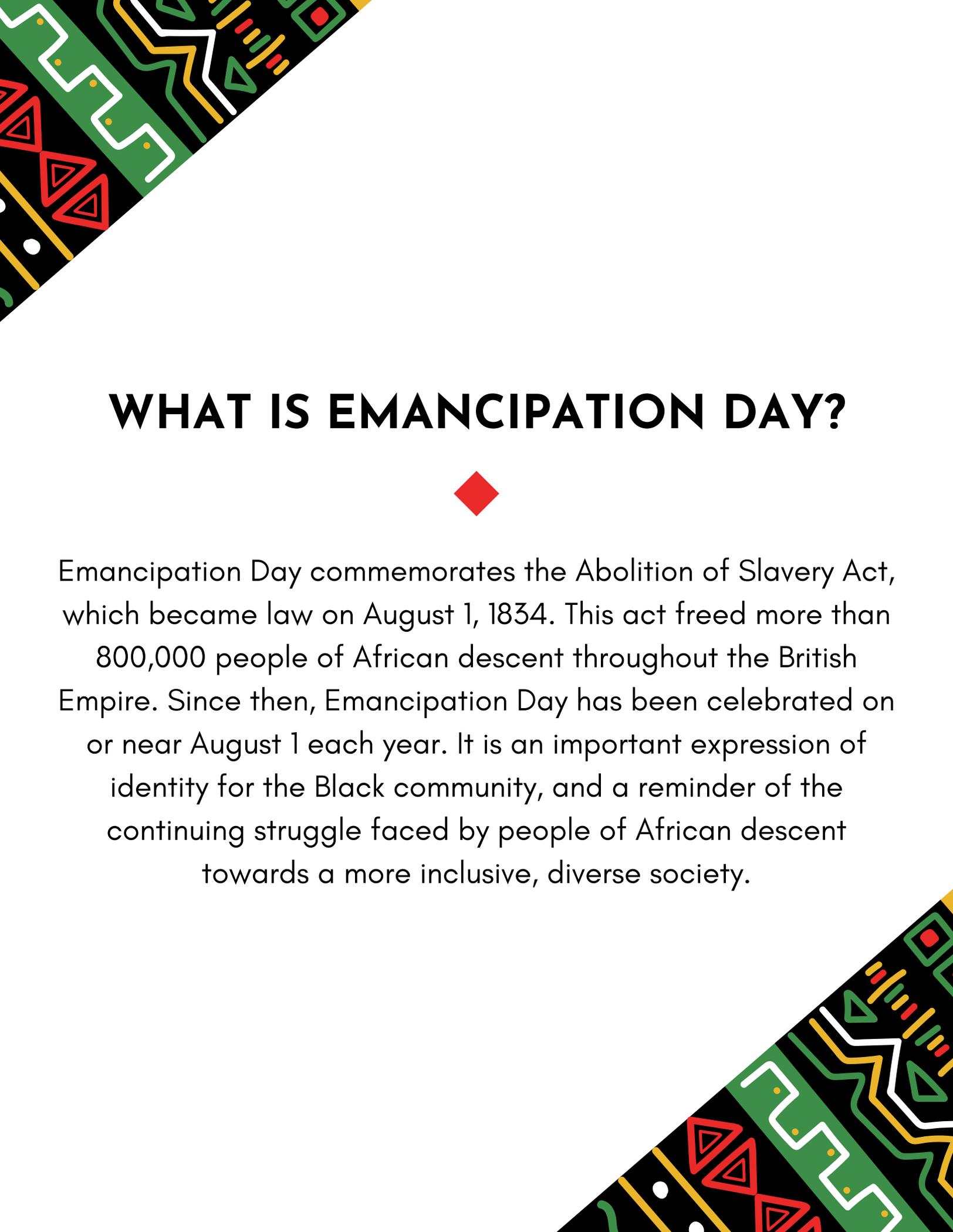
A decorative border surrounds the central text, featuring a variety of colorful geometric shapes and patterns. On the left and right sides, there are vertical columns of symbols including spirals, wavy lines, horizontal bars, triangles, and squares. At the bottom, there are more geometric shapes like a mountain range and horizontal lines. The colors used are red, green, yellow, white, and black.

# *Emancipation Day*

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PRESENTED BY  
THE ONTARIO BLACK HISTORY SOCIETY  
AUGUST 1, 2021  
6PM - 7:30PM

The page features decorative geometric patterns in the top-left and bottom-right corners. These patterns consist of various shapes like triangles, lines, and dots in colors such as green, yellow, red, and white, set against a black background. The patterns are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger, repeating design.

# WHAT IS EMANCIPATION DAY?



Emancipation Day commemorates the Abolition of Slavery Act, which became law on August 1, 1834. This act freed more than 800,000 people of African descent throughout the British Empire. Since then, Emancipation Day has been celebrated on or near August 1 each year. It is an important expression of identity for the Black community, and a reminder of the continuing struggle faced by people of African descent towards a more inclusive, diverse society.



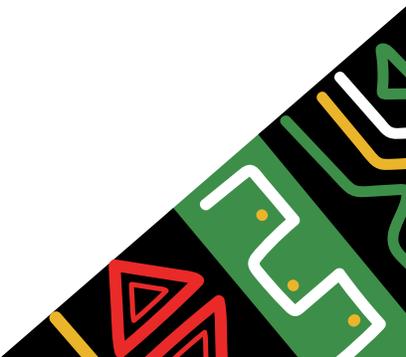
# EMANCIPATION DAY IN CANADA



On August 1st, the OBHS hosts virtually the annual Emancipation Day celebration to commemorate the anniversary of the Slavery Abolition Act.

August 1, 1834, marks the day in which the practice of the enslavement of African peoples in all British colonies came to an end. Through the tireless efforts of both the enslaved and free status Africans, as well as Black and white abolitionists, emancipation finally became a reality.

On March 24th, 2021, by unanimous consent, the House of Commons has adopted the M-36 bill. Canada has now recognized August 1st as Emancipation Day nationwide - But the recognition, the education, the fight for justice has just begun.





# MOTION M-36



**The Motion M-36 under PMB in the name of MP Majid Jowhari, demonstrates that the House recognize that:**

- “(a) the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Empire as of August 1, 1834;
  - (b) slavery existed in British North America prior to its abolition in 1834;
  - (c) abolitionists and others who struggled against slavery, including those who arrived in Upper and Lower Canada by the Underground Railroad, have historically celebrated August 1 as Emancipation Day;
  - (d) the Government of Canada announced on January 30, 2018, that it would officially recognize the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent to highlight the important contributions that people of African descent have made to Canadian society, and to provide a platform for confronting anti-Black racism; and
  - (e) the heritage of Canada’s people of African descent and the contributions they have made and continue to make to Canada; and that, in the opinion of the House, the government should designate August 1 of every year as “Emancipation Day” in Canada.”
- 



# WHY DO WE CELEBRATE EMANCIPATION DAY?



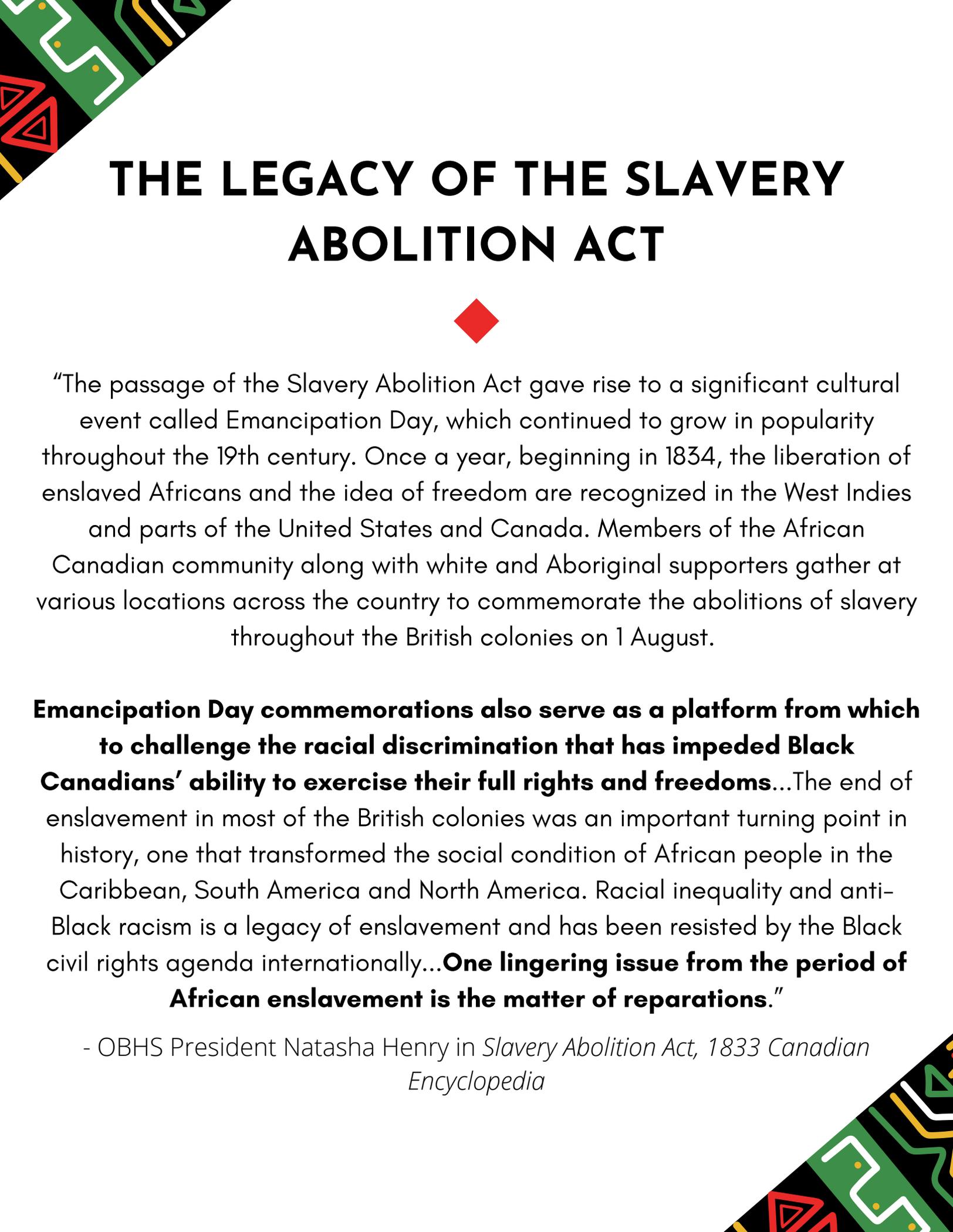
We celebrate Emancipation Day because it marks the beginning of the end of enslavement in most of the British empire.

We celebrate Emancipation Day to acknowledge how far we have come and the events in history that have allowed us to be where we are today.

We celebrate Emancipation Day to acknowledge our history and our roots and reconnect with our culture and identity in an environment that celebrates it rather than suppressing it.

We celebrate Emancipation Day because there is still a lot work to be done to make Canada a place that is inclusive and free of discrimination towards the black community who continues to face racism and oppression.





# THE LEGACY OF THE SLAVERY ABOLITION ACT



“The passage of the Slavery Abolition Act gave rise to a significant cultural event called Emancipation Day, which continued to grow in popularity throughout the 19th century. Once a year, beginning in 1834, the liberation of enslaved Africans and the idea of freedom are recognized in the West Indies and parts of the United States and Canada. Members of the African Canadian community along with white and Aboriginal supporters gather at various locations across the country to commemorate the abolitions of slavery throughout the British colonies on 1 August.

**Emancipation Day commemorations also serve as a platform from which to challenge the racial discrimination that has impeded Black Canadians’ ability to exercise their full rights and freedoms...**The end of enslavement in most of the British colonies was an important turning point in history, one that transformed the social condition of African people in the Caribbean, South America and North America. Racial inequality and anti-Black racism is a legacy of enslavement and has been resisted by the Black civil rights agenda internationally...**One lingering issue from the period of African enslavement is the matter of reparations.”**

- OBHS President Natasha Henry in *Slavery Abolition Act, 1833 Canadian Encyclopedia*



## DAN HILL ON HIS EXPERIENCE WITH RACISM AND PREJUDICE



“The unremitting sting of prejudice remained as our family grew, with the arrival of my siblings, Larry and Karen. Our parents distracted us the only way they knew how: with round-the-clock music. Over and over, the soulful thrum of jazz rocked our Newmarket home. What incredible dancers our parents were! Swaying rhythmically, locked in embrace, they would suddenly turn on a dime and transition into swing dancing. I was entranced. The music that burst from their hi-fi stereo uplifted and enlivened me. Looking back, I realize my parents escaped into music just as Black slaves did 400 years ago. In song, they found something beautiful. Something comforting and soothing to hold on to. Something no one could take away.

And how thrilling that now, unlike when I first shot to fame in 1975, Black music is dominating the airwaves, with a staggering number of Canadian Black artists, songwriters and producers achieving international success. While this success is still tempered by persistent racism, no longer are these inequities going unremarked. People are standing up for change, and the media has made an abrupt turn, citing daily examples of the systemic racism that has for so long bedevilled us all, regardless of our race.”

- Dan Hill in *'My pain was your pain.'* *On wrestling with my racial inheritance at a moment of great reckoning*, The Globe and Mail



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# THE TORONTO CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL



This year's Emancipation Day celebration will be highlighting the history of the Toronto Caribbean Carnival which is a commemorative festival that began in 1967.

"Scheduled on the first Saturday of August, in commemoration of the full emancipation of slaves in Canada in 1838, the festival is a spectacular display of costume, sound, and colour that moves its way through the city of Toronto. Recognizing our past provides an opportunity to examine what freedom and liberation mean today."

*- the Toronto Carnival Virtual Timeline Project (The Beginning)*



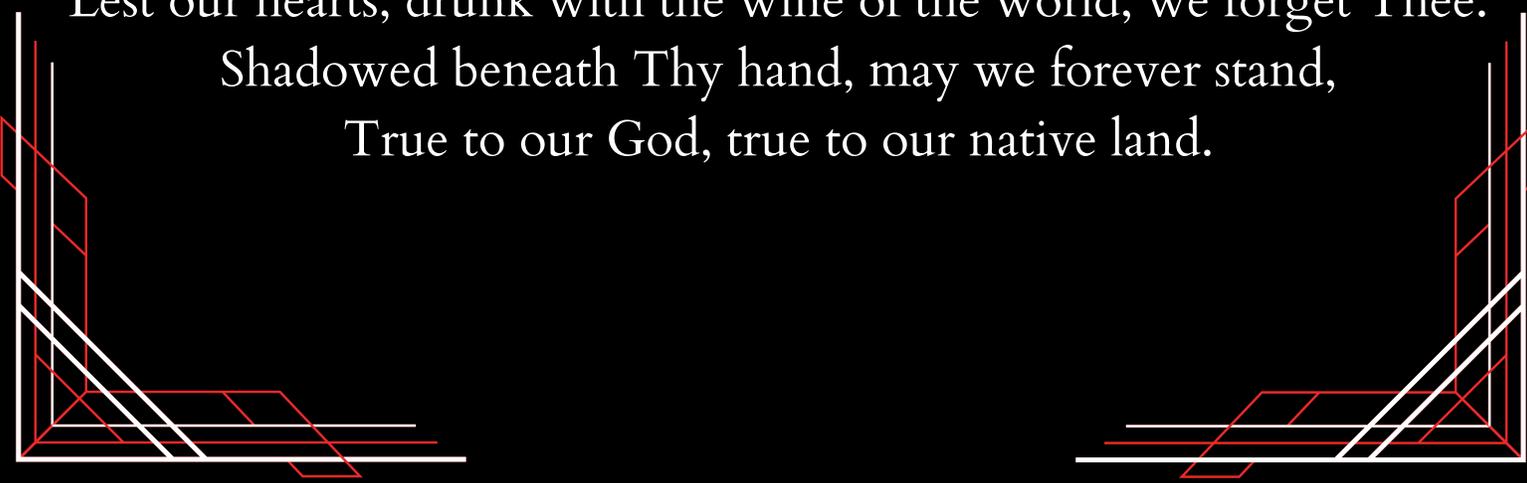
# Lift Every Voice

## Verse 1:

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of faith that the dark past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of hope that the present has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

## Verse 3:

God of our weary years, God of our silent years,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.  
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.



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