

Name: _____

Imani in Canada

Songs
of

Freedom

Freedom in Canada - Freed Blacks Tell Their Stories

Directions: Read the story. In the box below, list all of the good things that the free blacks can do in Canada that they could not easily do in America.

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Imani's Box of Treasures

Directions: Study the items in the box. Decide what each one is, explain why Imani would have these items, and how they prove that her life is better now than back on the plantation.

WILLIAM GROSE.

[excerpted]

I served twenty-five years in slavery, and about five I have been free. I feel now like a man, while before I felt more as though I were but a brute. When in the United States, if a white man spoke to me, I would feel frightened, whether I were in the right or wrong; but now it is quite a different thing,--if a white man speaks to me, I can look him right in the eyes--if he were to insult me, I could give him an answer. I have the rights and privileges of any other man. I am now living with my wife and children, and doing very well. When I lie down at night, I do not feel afraid of oversleeping, so that my employer might jump on me if he pleased. I am a true British subject, and I have a vote every year as much as any other man. I often used to wonder in the United States, when I saw carriages going round for voters, why they never asked me to vote. But I have since found out the reason,--I know they were using my vote instead of my using it--now I use it myself. Now I feel like a man, and I wish to God that all my fellow-creatures could feel the same freedom that I feel. I am not prejudiced against all the white race in the United States,--it is only the portion that sustain the cursed laws of slavery.

Here's something I want to say to the colored people in the United States: You think you are free there, but you are very much mistaken: if you wish to be free men, I hope you will all come to Canada as soon as possible. There is plenty of land here, and schools to educate your children. I have no education myself, but I do n't intend to let my children come up as I did. I have but two, and instead of making servants out of them, I 'll give them a good education, which I could not do in the southern portion of the United States. True, they were not slaves there, but I could not have given them any education.

I have been through both Upper and Lower Canada, and I have found the colored people keeping stores, farming, etc., and doing well. I have made more money since I came here, than I made in the United States. I know several colored people who have become wealthy by industry--owning horses and carriages,--one who was a fellow-servant of mine, now owns two span of horses, and two as fine carriages as there are on the bank. As a general thing, the colored people are more sober and industrious than in the States: there they feel when they have money, that they cannot make what use they would like of it, they are so kept down, so looked down upon. Here they have something to do with their money, and put it to a good purpose.

I am employed in the Clifton House, at the Falls.