

HONOURING BLACK CANADIAN HISTORY IN NIAGARA FALLS

Niagara Falls, Ontario holds a place in history as one of the final destinations of the renowned 'Underground Railroad', a secret network of routes from Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and on to Niagara-on-the-Lake that enslaved people from the United States followed to find freedom in Canada. It is estimated that 30,000-40,000 enslaved people escaped into Canada from the US from 1800-1865. Among those who escaped to Canada was a heroine named [Harriet Tubman](#) who made 13 return trips to liberate others through the Underground Railroad between 1852 and 1857. [Burr Plato](#) also escaped to Canada where he went on to become a prosperous businessman and politician in local government and had property acquisitions on what is now Stanley Avenue in Niagara Falls.

For those who wish to retrace the final steps of the thousands who found freedom in Canada and pay homage to the heroes and heroines who helped them, here are some ways to explore the region.

Canada's stories of freedom and courage can be explored through Niagara Parks' collection of displays and monuments honouring Black Canadian history. Follow the scenic Niagara River Parkway from Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and to Niagara-on-the-Lake and learn about Niagara's role in the legendary Underground Railroad. Stand in the spot where Harriet Tubman first crossed into Canada in 1851 and see the printing press that printed Canada's 1793 Act Against Slavery.

- Whether driving leisurely along the Parkway or walking or cycling the 56-km (35 mi) Niagara River Recreation Trail, over 20 plaques and displays highlight some of the most historic moments that unfolded in the Niagara region. Use [this map](#) to help plan out your journey to explore Black Canadian history at these sites along the Niagara River.
- The [Niagara River Recreational Trail](#) is a paved path that meanders through some of the most beautiful countryside in the world. Perfect for hiking or cycling or by [Ebike](#), travel through Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and the Queenston and Niagara-on-the-Lake taking in historical sites, attractions, restaurants and parkland along the way.

FORT ERIE

- The Crossing: Bertie Street Ferry Landing & Freedom Park - a Niagara Freedom Trail plaque describes the ferry system which crossed into Canada.
- Little Africa – a popular settlement for freedom seekers arriving in Canada during the 1840s. Look for a plaque on a rock on the south side of the Niagara Parks Marina parking lot.
- [The Niagara Movement](#) – the site of the inaugural meetings of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), originally called the Niagara Movement.

NIAGARA FALLS

- [Nathanial Dett Memorial Chapel of the British Methodist Episcopal Church](#) The British Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1836. The [Nathaniel Dett Memorial Chapel](#) is a designated National Historic Site part of the Freedom Trail points of interest in history of the Underground Railroad.
- Harriet Tubman Tribute – in June 2017 Niagara Parks Commission unveiled an interpretive plaque commemorating Harriet Tubman's first crossing into Canada in 1856. She crossed on a suspension bridge near the current Whirlpool Bridge Plaza along the Niagara Parkway north of the falls. Look for a series of plaques at the entrance to the [White Water Walk and Whirlpool Bridge](#).
- [Niagara Falls History Museum](#) – visit black history exhibits throughout the year.



NIAGARA FALLS TOURISM

- Louis Roy Press and 1793 Act Against Slavery (Queenston) – the oldest wooden printing press in Canada which was used to print the 1793 Act Against Slavery. [Mackenzie Printery & Newspaper Museum \(Queenston\)](#)

Other nearby sights:

Soar above the Gorge on the [Whirlpool Aero car](#), a cable car with incredible views of the Niagara Whirlpool high above the racing Niagara River. Explore the [WildPlay Whirlpool Adventure Course](#), a unique Niagara experience of suspended obstacles and ziplines provides a new fun and thrilling way to see the world-famous whirlpool and Niagara Gorge from high above. Deep in the Great Gorge, the [Niagara Glen](#) is a designated Nature Reserve with 4 km (2.5 mi) of paths that wind through a pristine pocket of Carolinian Forest.

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

- [Voices of Freedom Park](#) is designed to celebrate black history. An app featuring interactive map and audio stories about people of African descent who lived and worked in Niagara-on-the-Lake allows users to learn more.
- [William and Susannah Steward House](#) –William Steward was involved in freeing Solomon Mosby and his home in the Negro Village represented a successful businessman who contributed to building Niagara-on-the-Lake and protecting African American refugees in the region.
- [Simcoe Memorial](#) – where John Graves Simcoe made the first legislative steps in the Act Against Slavery of 1793.
- [Negro Burial Ground](#) – a provincial historical plaque marks the site of a former Baptist Church and burial ground.

Other nearby sights:

Sprawling vineyards, award-winning wines and a remarkable microclimate make Niagara's wine country one of the most visited wine regions in the world. Enjoy patios and unique culinary experiences overlooking lush vineyards at [Peller Estates](#), [Two Sisters Vineyards](#), [Lailey Winery](#), [Trius Winery](#), [Wayne Gretzky Estates](#), and [Ravine Vineyard](#). [Oast House Brewers](#) housed in a refurbished red barn takes pride in working with local ingredients with BBQ style cuisine and live entertainment on their two-tiered patio.

GUIDED TOURS – NIAGARA BOUND TOURS

Skip the self-guided options and pre-book a unique and memorable bespoke tour with Niagara Bound Tours led by Lezlie Harper, a fifth-generation Canadian descendant of a fugitive slave from Kentucky. Niagara Bound Tours for individuals, groups and schools provide historical perspective while capturing the essence of what those forced to flee were faced with.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROGRAMMING (FEBRUARY)

Each February during Black History month explore special exhibits, lectures and tours to honour Black Canadian History in Niagara Falls presented by the [Niagara Falls History Museum](#) and [Parks Canada](#).

Local history sources: Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Falls Museum of History and Lezlie Harper with Niagara Bound Tours.



ABOUT NIAGARA FALLS CANADA

Overlooking of the legendary Canadian Horseshoe, American and Bridal Veil waterfalls, Niagara Falls is a four-season destination renowned for its awe-inspiring natural wonders combined with world-class accommodation, thrilling entertainment and a burgeoning culinary scene. Visitors from Ontario, across North America and around the world who come to experience adventure, discover family fun, feel the romance and create unique and memorable experiences have made it Canada's #1 leisure travel destination.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

To plan your getaway to Niagara Falls, please visit www.niagarafallstourism.com and these helpful resources:

WHERE TO STAY

Book a room in [nearby hotels](#) within walking distance of the Falls or a Fallsview room to enjoy a [Room with a View](#), the majesty of the Falls from the comfort of your bed, any time of the day. Niagara Falls [campgrounds and cottages](#) afford visitors a special way of getting a little closer to nature.

RESOURCES

- Niagara Falls Illumination: Niagarafallstourism.com/Illumination/
- Niagara Falls Itinerary Ideas: Niagarafallstourism.com/blog/itinerary/
- Attraction Packages: Niagarafallstourism.com/attraction-packages/
- Niagara Falls 24/7 Live Cam: [Niagara Falls Live Stream](#)

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

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