



MUNICIPALITY *of the*  
COUNTY *of* KINGS

Municipal Message

August 1, 2022

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**Emancipation Day:**

**A message from the Municipality of the County of Kings**

Content Warning: This Municipal Messages discusses potentially triggering or upsetting content, such as the enslavement of African Descendent/Black and Indigenous people, human trafficking, and modern-day slavery.

Since March 2021, August 1 is known as Emancipation Day in Canada as commemoration of August 1, 1834, when Slavery Abolition Act 1833 came into effect. In April 2021, the Province of Nova Scotia passed similar legislation to its federal counterparts and officially began acknowledging August 1 as Emancipation Day in Nova Scotia.

The outlaw of enslavement began around the 1700s. By the 1800s, Upper Canada, Lower Canada and the Maritimes had already put forth bills to criminalize enslavement, however, these were not successfully passed. Despite the growing negative opinions of enslavement practices, some Maritimers in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, specifically the Annapolis Valley, put forth bills in support of enslavement, that, fortunately, were also unsuccessful.

The implementation of the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 freed a conservative estimate of 800,000 people from slavery throughout the British Commonwealth.

Emancipation Day is a day to reflect upon the following:

- The history of enslavement of African/Black persons and anti-Black racism in Canada
- The history of the enslavement of Indigenous people and anti-Indigenous racism in Canada
- The contributions of African/Black and Indigenous folks towards Canada's development and growth throughout history despite rampant and persistent systemic discrimination
- The impacts of enslavement and anti-Black racism on our present-day society
- To celebrate, remember, and recognize those who fought for emancipation

Emancipation Day reminds us to reflect on and commemorate the stories and lived experiences of those who came before us. Within the Municipality, there are two Historical Black/African Nova Scotian communities, the communities of Pinewoods and Gibson Woods. Gibson Woods was founded by a black loyalist named George Gibson and is located north of Kentville, between Centreville and Canning. Pinewoods was founded by Dinah Powell and Chloe Landsey, two formally enslaved sisters. Pinewoods is now the community of Aldershot, although there is still some evidence of the former community.

Modern slavery, more commonly known as human trafficking, is still an issue today, and primarily targets marginalized or disadvantaged persons. Human trafficking does not have to involve crossing borders, and it is not solely a foreign problem - it is happening right now, right here, and in communities across Canada. No community is immune to modern slavery. Further, Nova Scotia leads the country, with police-reported incident rates several times higher than the national average.

Human trafficking can take many different forms, including labour exploitation (e.g., forced, low or no wages), sexual slavery, and sexual exploitation. If you are/have been trafficked or believe someone you know is being trafficked, you can call or text the 24/7 support line to speak with a member of the Nova Scotia Human Trafficking Team at 902-449-2425 or 1.833.900.1010 to contact the Canadian Human Trafficking Team which is also monitored 24/7.

The enslavement of human beings is a cruel and inhumane practice reliant on the ignorant belief that one group is fundamentally superior to another. These skewed values are found in all aspects of our societies, communities, and policies that, over time, have made it increasingly more difficult for folks of all marginalized identities to flourish. It is vital that, as a community and community members, we work to address our subconscious beliefs and bias in support of the Municipality's vision of being "a community of communities where all people belong." The Municipality of Kings rejects racism in every form and commits to reparations, reconciliation, and the process of decolonizing the Municipality, community, and policies.