



BREAKING THE CHAINS

# John Tunsley

TORONTO

*Building Possibilities, Hopes, and Dreams*

## ***Grade/ Subject / Strand:***

Grade 3 Social Studies – Early Settlements in Upper Canada; Grade 7 History – British North America; Grade 8 Geography – Patterns in Human Geography

## ***Website***

*Breaking the Chains: Presenting a New Narrative for Canada's Role in the Underground Railroad*

**[www.yorku.ca/tubman/breakingthechains](http://www.yorku.ca/tubman/breakingthechains)**

## ***The Website***

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***Breaking the Chains: Presenting a New Narrative for Canada's Role in the Underground Railroad*** is a groundbreaking new web-based educational project. Its purpose is to develop and share new research about Canada and the brave people who came here in search of freedom in the years before the American Civil War. There is a particular focus on freedom-seekers who settled in the Niagara River and Detroit River borderlands; the Queen's Bush, a vast unorganized territory encompassing much of modern Wellington County; and the Greater Toronto Area.



# *Instructional Objectives*

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- To learn about the daily life and early experiences of a free African American immigrant who lived in Toronto. His name was John Tinsley
- To learn about the technology and tools used by carpenters in the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century
- To gain an understanding of some of the challenges faced by newly-arrived former slaves
- To examine the ways that John Tinsley assisted incoming freedom-seekers

## *The Activities*

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### *Description*

Students will read the narrative about John Tinsley and view the John Tinsley Augmented Reality vignette. They will create a study guide for apprentice carpenters, and then design and build a model of a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house. Students will discuss the forms of aid that John Tinsley gave to newly arrived freedom-seekers.

### *Getting Organized*

#### **PRIOR KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:**

- Students should have an understanding of some 19<sup>th</sup>-century occupations.

#### **ADVANCE PREPARATION:**

- Print out and photocopy the student assignment and activity sheets, historical documents, and articles as needed.
- Review all materials prior to teaching the lesson.
- Book computer time for the class.

#### **PLANNING NOTES:**

- Locate and bookmark suggested online materials and other useful websites.

#### **MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR TEACHER:**

- John Tinsley Narrative
- Historical backgrounder





- Student worksheets
- Supplies to build models of wood frame houses (popsicle sticks, glue, construction paper, paint)
- Images of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame homes

### **ACCOMMODATIONS/MODIFICATIONS:**

- Readings can be done aloud as a class or in small groups.
- Students can be grouped in pairs to complete tasks if needed.

## ***Instructional Strategies for Grade 3 Social Studies - Early Settlements in Upper Canada***

### **REQUIRED TIME:**

Approximately 4 to 8 class periods

#### **First and Second Classes:**

1. Ask students to view the related Augmented Reality vignettes.
2. Read the John Tinsley Narrative.
3. Ask students what they know about carpenters.
4. Read the historical backgrounder and ask students relevant questions to ensure understanding.

#### **Third and Fourth Classes:**

1. Review the steps that men such as John Tinsley had to take to become a carpenter.
2. Discuss how children as young as ten years of age began apprenticeships.
3. To have students understand the role of the carpenter, inform the students that their task will be to create a carpenter's apprentice study guide that would help carpenters-in-training learn about the tools they have to know how to use. Using the list of tools in the historical backgrounder, ask students to research and find descriptions and images of each tool and to create some kind of study resource, such as matching cards or a carpenter's tool dictionary.

#### **Fifth and Sixth Classes:**

1. To gain an appreciation for the work that early carpenters did, inform students that they will be designing and building a model of a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house.





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2. Show the students pictures of early homes and/or show them a model that you have made in advance, so they can see what the end product will look like.
3. Provide students with the necessary supplies for building their models. Allow them about an hour to complete. The students can design the yard of their model homes with grass, trees, flowers, or whatever they please.

### **Seventh and Eighth Classes:**

1. Begin this class by revisiting the issue of how John Tinsley helped escaping slaves who came to Toronto. (He provided shelter, supplied jobs in his construction company, and helped to establish a saw and flour mill that was the source of employment for freedom-seekers in the Buxton/Elgin Settlement, a fugitive slave agricultural settlement located just south of Chatham, in Southwestern Ontario.)
2. Ask students to write a paragraph about the kind of help Tinsley provided, how he may have felt about helping others, and how those who received the support may have benefitted. Give the class time to share their responses.

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION DESCRIPTION:**

1. Active participation in group activities and class discussion
2. Creation of a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
3. Design and construction of a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house
4. A paragraph written response

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES:**

Students will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

- Reading the John Tinsley Narrative
- Completing the worksheets
- Participating in discussions and answering questions
- Creating a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
- Designing and building a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house
- Writing a response paragraph

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:** (if any)

### ***Instructional Strategies for Grade 7 History - British North America***

### **REQUIRED TIME:**

Approximately 4 to 8 class periods



### First and Second Classes:

1. Ask students to view the related Augmented Reality vignettes.
2. Read the John Tinsley Narrative.
3. Ask students what they know about carpenters.
4. Read the historical backgrounder and ask students relevant questions to ensure their understanding.

### Third and Fourth Classes:

1. Review the steps that men such as John Tinsley had to take to become a carpenter.
2. Discuss how children as young as ten years of age began apprenticeships.
3. To have students understand the role of the carpenter, inform them that their task will be to create a carpenter's apprentice study guide that would help carpenters-in-training learn about the tools they have to know how to use. Using the list of tools in the historical backgrounder, ask students to research and find descriptions and images of each tool and to create some kind of study resource such as matching cards or a carpenter's tool dictionary.

### Fifth and Sixth Classes:

1. To gain an appreciation for the work that early carpenters did, inform students that they will be designing and building a model of a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house.
2. Show the students pictures of 19<sup>th</sup>-century homes and/or prepare a model in advance so they can see what the end product will look like.
3. Provide students with the necessary supplies for building their models. Allow them about an hour to complete. The students can design the yard of their model homes with grass, trees, flowers, or whatever they please.

### Seventh and Eighth Classes:

1. Begin this class by revisiting the issue of how John Tinsley helped escaping slaves who came to Toronto. (He provided shelter, supplied jobs in his construction company, and helped to establish a saw and flour mill that was the source of employment for freedom-seekers in the Buxton/Elgin Settlement, a fugitive slave agricultural settlement located just south of Chatham, in Southwestern Ontario.)
2. Ask students to write a short composition that answers the question: "How did John Tinsley help to build the hopes and dreams of freedom-seekers by providing them with assistance?" They should describe the kind of help Tinsley provided, how he may have felt about helping others, and how those who received his support may have benefitted. Give the class time to share





their responses.

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION DESCRIPTION:**

1. Active participation in group activities and class discussion
2. Creation of a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
3. Design and construction of a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house.
4. A paragraph written response

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES:**

Students will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

- Reading the John Tinsley Narrative and/or Report
- Completing the worksheets
- Participating in discussions and answering questions
- Creating a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
- Designing and building a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house
- Writing a response paragraph

### ***Instructional Strategies for Grade 8 Geography - Patterns in Human Geography***

#### **REQUIRED TIME:**

Approximately 4 to 8 class periods

#### **First and Second Classes:**

1. Ask students to view the related Augmented Reality segments.
2. Read the John Tinsley Narrative.
3. Ask students what they know about carpenters.
4. Read the historical backgrounder and ask students relevant questions to ensure understanding.

#### **Third and Fourth Classes:**

1. Review the steps that men such as John Tinsley had to take to become a carpenter.
2. Discuss how children as young as ten years old began apprenticeships.
3. Inform students that their task will be to create a carpenter's apprentice study guide that would help carpenters-in-training learn about the tools they have to know how to use. Using the list of tools in the historical backgrounder, ask students to research and find descriptions and images of each tool and to create some kind of study resource such as matching cards or a carpenter's tool dictionary.





### **Fifth and Sixth Classes:**

1. To gain an appreciation for the work that early carpenters did, inform students that they will be designing and building a model of a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house.
2. Show the students pictures of log or early frame houses and/or prepare a model in advance so they can see what the end product will look like.
3. Provide students with the necessary supplies for building their models. Allow them about an hour to complete. The students can design the yard of their model homes with grass, trees, flowers, or whatever they please.

### **Seventh and Eighth Classes:**

1. Begin this class by revisiting the issue of how John Tinsley helped escaping slaves who came to Toronto. (He provided shelter, supplied jobs in his construction company, and helped to establish a saw and flour mill that was the sources of employment for freedom-seekers in the Buxton/Elgin Settlement, a fugitive slave agricultural settlement located just south of Chatham, in Southwestern Ontario.)
2. Ask students to write a short composition that answers the question: "How did John Tinsley help to build the hopes and dreams of freedom-seekers by providing them with assistance?" They should describe the kind of help Tinsley provided, how he may have felt about helping others, and how those who received his support may have benefited. Give the class time to share their responses.

### **ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION DESCRIPTION:**

1. Active participation in group activities and class discussion
2. Creation of a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
3. Design and construction of a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house.
4. A short composition written response

### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies:***

Students will accomplish the instructional objectives by:

- Reading the John Tinsley Narrative and/or Report
- Completing the worksheets
- Participating in discussions and answering questions
- Creating a tool study resource for apprentice carpenters
- Designing and building a model of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century wood frame house
- Writing a response composition





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# *Instructional Resources:*

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## WEBSITES

- Harriet Tubman Institute *Breaking the Chains: Presenting a New Narrative for Canada's Role in the Underground Railroad* – Online Exhibit

[www.yorku.ca/tubman/breakingthechains](http://www.yorku.ca/tubman/breakingthechains)

- Toronto Then and Now, Images of Houses in St. John's Ward

<http://torontothendnow.blogspot.ca/2010/09/4-saint-johns-ward-and-kensington.html>

## BOOKS

Shadd, Adrienne, Afua Cooper, and Karolyn Smardz Frost. *The Underground Railroad: Next Stop, Toronto!* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2002).

## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS:

### Websites

Pioneers. Museum of Ontario Archaeology.

<http://www.uwo.ca/museum/documents/pioneers.pdf>



# Historical Background:

## EARLY CARPENTERS

Nineteenth-century carpenters were highly skilled artisans and craftsmen. Carpenters built houses and other buildings such as shops, smokehouses, outhouses, and churches mainly using wood, but John Tinsley was a general builder so his company also used stone and bricks in construction. Carpenters also repaired and maintained existing buildings. In addition, the art of carpentry included the design and construction of cabinets, furniture, and other wood products.

Learning to become a carpenter involved three stages. The first training period for a carpenter was called an apprenticeship and lasted for a number of years, usually between three and seven years. An apprentice carpenter trained with a master carpenter to learn about the various tools they had to use, how to cut wood, how to join pieces of timber together, and how to make simple pieces of furniture such as chairs, benches, and tables.

Once a young man gained enough experience and skill level in his apprenticeship, he became a journeyman carpenter. At this stage, the new carpenter no longer needed to work under a master carpenter. He would travel around in search of jobs and hire himself out to other master carpenters or pick up contract jobs in order to support himself in the profession. (Women did not train as carpenters in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, so this was almost exclusively a man's job at the time).

A journeyman became a master carpenter when he earned and saved enough money to open his own shop.

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century carpenter's tools were the following:

- saw
- awl
- scribe
- gimlet
- broadax
- mallet
- drawknife
- hammer
- plane
- froe

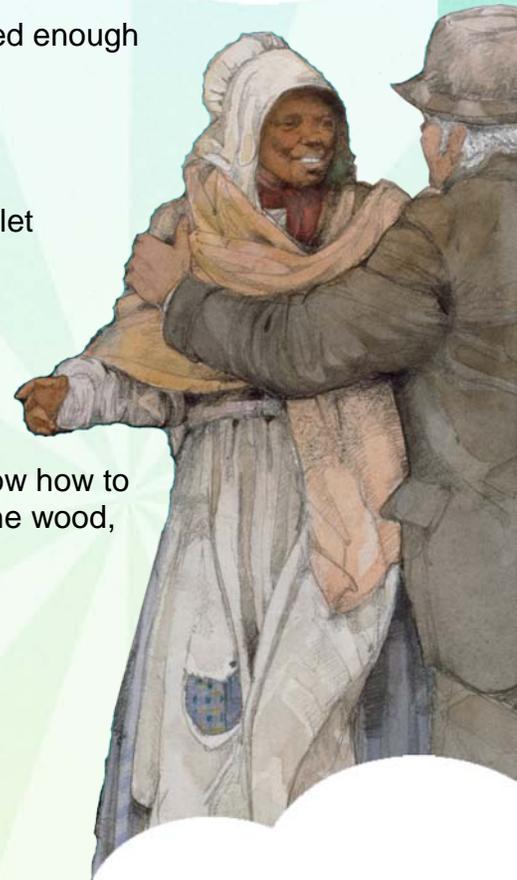
In Canada West (what is now Ontario), the main types of wood or timber used to construct buildings were white pine, oak, elm, and walnut. Not only did a carpenter have to be familiar with these different types of wood and be skilled at his trade, he also had to know how to read, write, and have good math skills in order to measure and cut the wood, and to handle business transactions.

### **Bibliography**

Kalman, Bobbie. *Visiting a Village*. Toronto: Crabtree Publishing Company, 1993.

Pioneers. Museum of Ontario Archaeology.

<http://www.uwo.ca/museum/documents/pioneers.pdf>





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# Ontario Curriculum Expectations

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This lesson plan correlates to:

## ***Heritage and Citizenship:***

### ***Grade 3 Social Studies - Early Settlements in Upper Canada***

#### **OVERALL EXPECTATIONS**

By the end of Grade 3, students will:

- Describe the communities of early Black settlers in Canada West in the 1850s.

#### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

##### *Knowledge and Understanding*

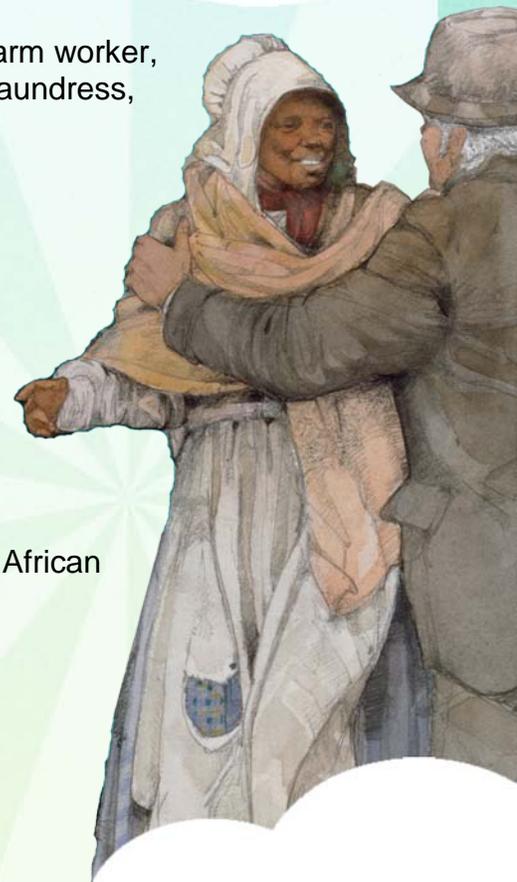
By the end of Grade 3, students will:

- Identify the countries of origin of the people who settled in Canada West in the 1850s (e.g., United States, England, the West Indies, Africa)
- Identify the areas of early Black settlement in Upper Canada (e.g., Essex County, Toronto, the Queen's Bush, and the Niagara Region)
- Describe the major components of an early African Canadian settlement (church, school)
- Describe the various roles of male and female settlers (e.g., farm worker, church minister, teacher, merchant, blacksmith, seamstress, laundress, homemaker)

##### *Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills*

By the end of Grade 3, students will:

- Use primary and secondary sources to locate key information about early settler communities (e.g., *primary sources*: diaries or journals, information at local museums, early settlers' houses, forts, villages; *secondary sources*: maps, illustrations, print materials, videos, websites, CD-ROMs)
- Use appropriate vocabulary (e.g., pioneer, settlers, enslaved, freedom-seekers, free Blacks, settlement, doctor, blacksmith, African Canadians) while making their inquiries and observations





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## ***History: Grade 7 History - British North America***

### **OVERALL EXPECTATIONS**

By the end of Grade 7, students will:

- Explain the origins of English settlement in British North America after the fall of New France, describe the migration and settlement experiences of settlers of African origin, and outline the causes, events, and results of the War of 1812
- Use a variety of resources and tools to gather, process, and communicate information about the beginnings and development of the new colonies of British North America

### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

*Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills*

By the end of Grade 7, students will:

- Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to locate relevant information about how early settlers met the challenges of the new land (e.g., *primary sources*: artifacts, journals, letters, statistics, field trips, interviews, period documents and maps; *secondary sources*: maps, illustrations, print materials, videos, CD-ROMs, Internet sites)
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate historical information (e.g., Why was it necessary for African Canadians to establish community organizations?)

*Application*

By the end of Grade 7, students will:

- Illustrate the historical development of their local community (e.g., its origins, key personalities, and the contributions of various cultural groups) using a variety of formats (e.g., a heritage display, posters, a dramatic skit or role play, a brochure, a web page)

## ***History: Grade 8 Geography - Patterns in Human Geography***

### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

*Knowledge and Understanding*

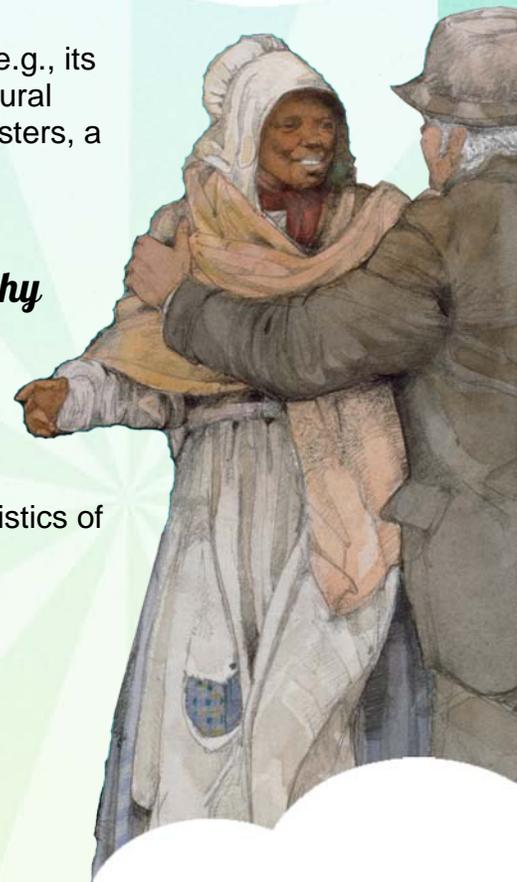
By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Identify key social, political, economic, and physical characteristics of African Canadian communities in British North American colonies/Canada between 1850 and 1870.

*Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills*

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate historical information





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- Communicate the results of inquiries for specific purposes and audiences using media works, political cartoons, oral presentations, written notes and descriptions, drawings, tables, charts, and graphs

## ***Geography: Grade 8 - Migration***

### **OVERALL EXPECTATIONS**

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Identify factors that affect migration and mobility, describe patterns and trends of migration in Canada, and identify the effects of migration on Canadian society
- Connect the real experiences of Canadians to information about the causes and effects of migration

### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS**

#### *Knowledge and Understanding*

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Identify the push and pull factors that influence people to move (e.g., *push*: lack of freedom, discrimination; *pull*: freedom, security, opportunities)

#### *Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills*

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Use appropriate vocabulary (e.g., migration) to describe their inquiries and observations

#### *Application*

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Investigate the migratory roots of early African Canadians and relate them to Canada's cultural development

