

Blacks Education and the Dilemma of Culture and language

Black Community Resource (BCRC) in
collaboration with the Black Studies
Center and the Quebec Board of Black
Educators

The human social system

- The human being has developed systems of continuous search for food, shelter, security and for meaning/an ultimate truth.
- The satisfaction of our physical and biological needs are accomplished by systems of organization, production, distribution and consumption:
- some systems can be classified, hunting, gathering, various types of mercantile capitalism, perfectly competitive market parliamentary economies, centrally controlled economies: in all forms human labour and skills are central.
- While human labour is an important source of value creation, through the creative imagination we can produce and experience a non-material world, a spiritual existence.

Not Sufficient to Prove Blacks in Canada

- We take the position that it is not sufficient to say that Blacks were here in Canada before 1600 or to try ad nauseam to prove that there was slavery in Canada and Quebec.
- We believe that we can learn more by exploring the systems of organization and search by human beings to perpetuate life and improve the quality of life.
- What set of behaviours and relationships best achieve these objectives for all peoples and the environment that sustains that quality of life.

Our Primary Concern and Objective

- The spiritual self is revealed through the arts, the religious and the normative belief systems in the social human system.
- In this panel my colleagues Tyrone and Nigel will deal with the psycho-social side of fitness: the quality of life; the right and freedom to search and have access to justice; and
- the right to freedom of expression of the spiritual self. We consider this a human right.

What Determines the Situation of Blacks in Canada

- But while it is true that man shall not live by bread alone, it is interesting and informative to understand how he goes about securing bread.
- to understand how the need to eat, for shelter/security, and for transport (capacity to search) may have created a very uneven fitness landscape where the highest peaks are like the classical Canadian Mosaic, likened by Porter to a Vertical Mosaic, a sort of Totem Pole hierarchy where it is shown that the WASP occupied the top levels of the occupational and reward structures of Canadian society;
- Where opportunities for education and social mobility were unevenly distributed, with the French and other minorities generally at the bottom of the fitness hill (totem).
- Why today, in Quebec there is an inverted vertical Mosaic with the French mostly at the top and Blacks and other visible minorities and immigrants at the bottom; and those of British ancestry above but in the lower rung.

A legacy of Mercantile Colonialism and Race Superiority Doctrines

1. The Black community in Quebec and in particular the English Speaking Black Community finds itself in a position of exceptional disadvantage: being Black and speaking English
2. It is part of the legacy of the mercantilist triangular trading system from which Quebec and the Maritime benefited as hinterlands of settlement linking them to the plantation economies of the West Indies (Capitalism and Slavery, Eric Williams);
3. This system of slavery and colonial capitalism was supported by doctrines of race superiority that considered Blacks and other non-European peoples as savages incapable of being civilized or creating civilizations.
4. This, according to Howard Palmer in his paper “Reluctant Host : Anglo-Canadian View of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century” explains the evolution of three forms of the emerging Canadian nation state:
5. assimilation based on Anglo-conformity (a vertical Mosaic); the “melting pot” theory of assimilation (a new emergent culture based on the biological blending of immigrant groups); and “cultural pluralism” or “multiculturalism” (Multiculturalism as State Policy, Second Canadian Conference on Multiculturalism, Ottawa, February, 13-15, 1976

Arrival of Blacks in Canada

Black arrive in Canada largely as part of the Trans Atlantic and African trade in slaves:

1. The early Blacks were explorers and freemen (example :Mathieu DaCosta)
2. The largest early arrivals were as slaves (Oliver Le Jeune and Marie-Joseph Angelique) and servants of Loyalist fleeing North.
3. As refugees from American Plantation Slavery
4. As workers in the fur trade (George Bonga), and immigrants

Mathieu Da Costa and Champlain 1606



Oliver Le Jeune from The Kid Book of Black Canadians
written by Rosemary Sadlier and Illustrated by Wang
Qijun (Kids Can Press Ltd , 2003 Wang Qijun)



Marie-Joseph Angelique Defiance and Resistance

A painting by the Artist Richard Horne Commissioned by and in the
Archives of the Black Studies Center



People of African descent were active in the fur trade as entrepreneurs, traders, guides and interpreters, voyagers, servants and cooks. Image of George Bonga son of Jean and Jeanne Bonga free persons at the debt of Daniel Robinson. (Dr Leo Bertly)



Mathieu Da Costa and the Resistance of Marie-Joseph Angelique

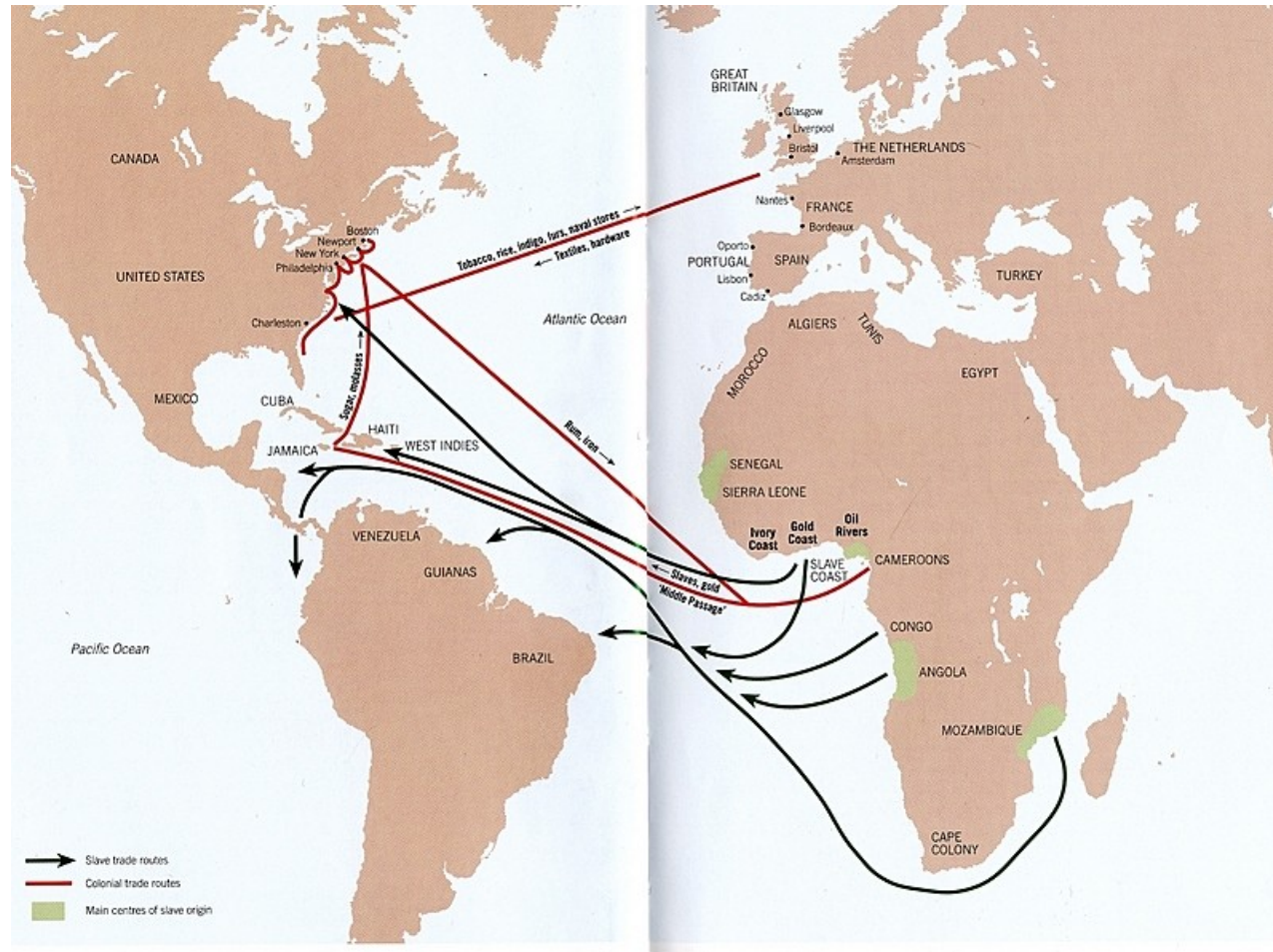
1. The Mercantilist system of production and trade based on unpaid labour of African slaves denied Black their human rights and human dignity.
2. Notwithstanding the important role that Mathieu Da Costa played in the European settlement of Quebec and the Nova Scotia; and in spite of the resistance and defiance symbolized by Marie-Joseph Angelique successive generations of French and British settlers and their governments have ignored Black contributions to Quebec.

In the British and French hinterlands Colonies of “Canada” Blacks were subjected to pervasive system of social and economic exclusion and racial discrimination, generously described by Robin Winks (Blacks in Canada, 1971) as “benevolent neglect” and by the Canadian scholar and Historian James W. St. G. Walker as the “colour line” (A History of Blacks in Canada, 1980).

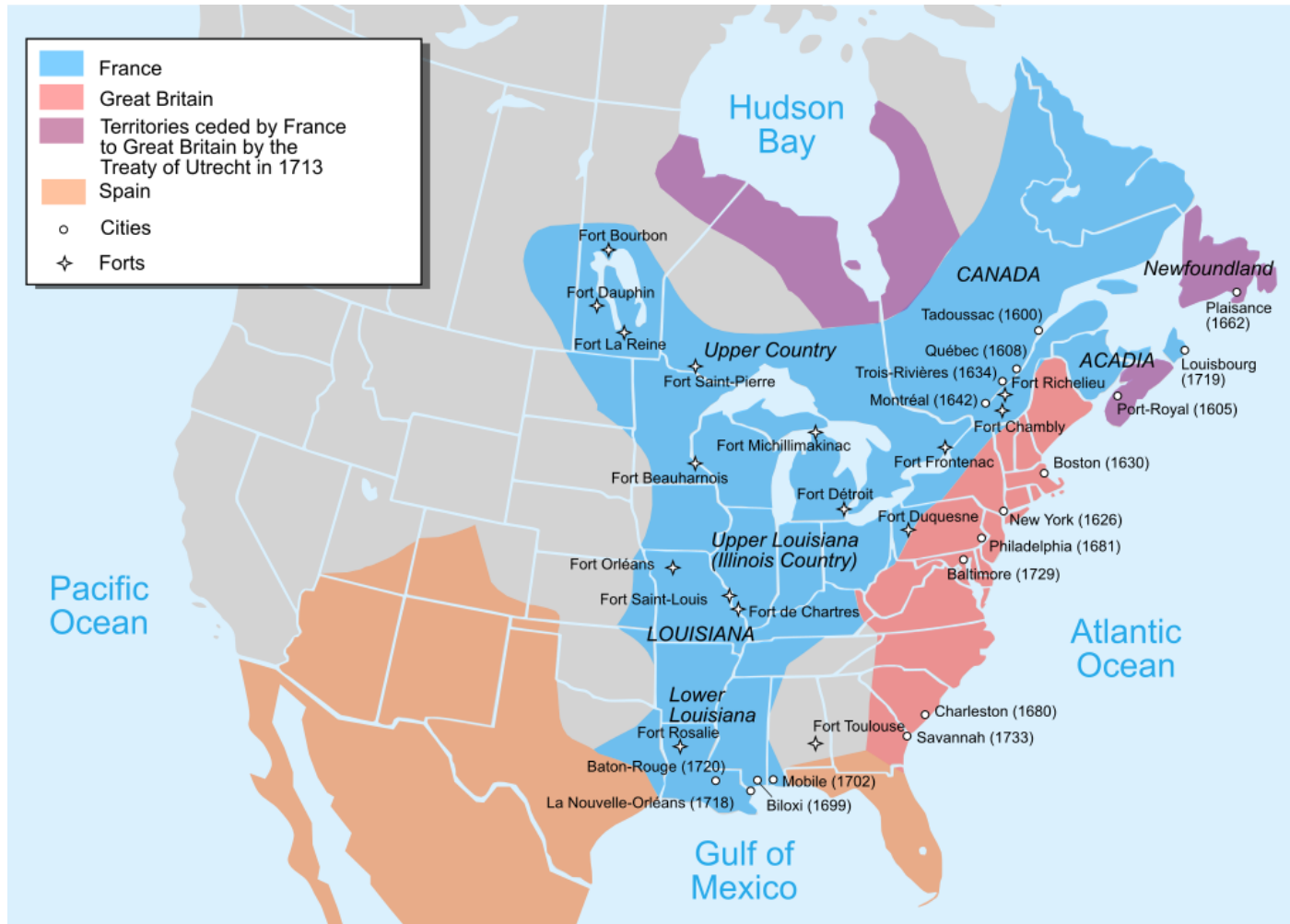
**MAPPING OF THE NON-INDIGENOUS
CONTROLS OVER NORTH AMERICA
THE SLAVE TRADE AND COLONIAL
TRADE ROUTES**

Slave trade and colonial trade routes c. 1650-1850.

with the permission of Dr Charmaine Nelson, McGill University



Map of North America in 1750 before the French and Indian War, the North American theater of the Worldwide conflict known as the Seven Years' War (1750-1763)



A Triangular Trade Supported the Colonies



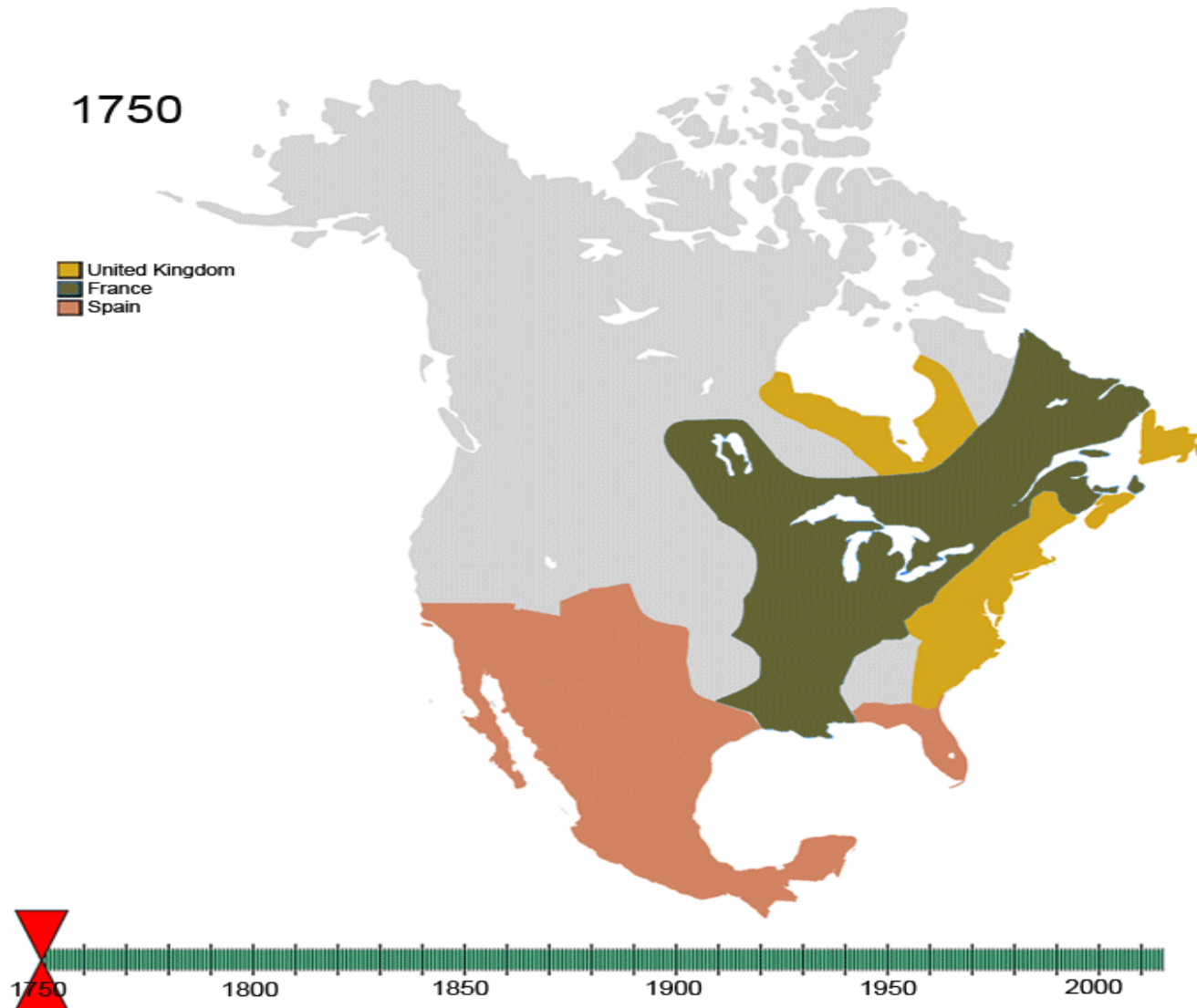
Triangular Trade of Slaves, Sugar, and Rum with New England (Red) and the British Colonies (Yellow)



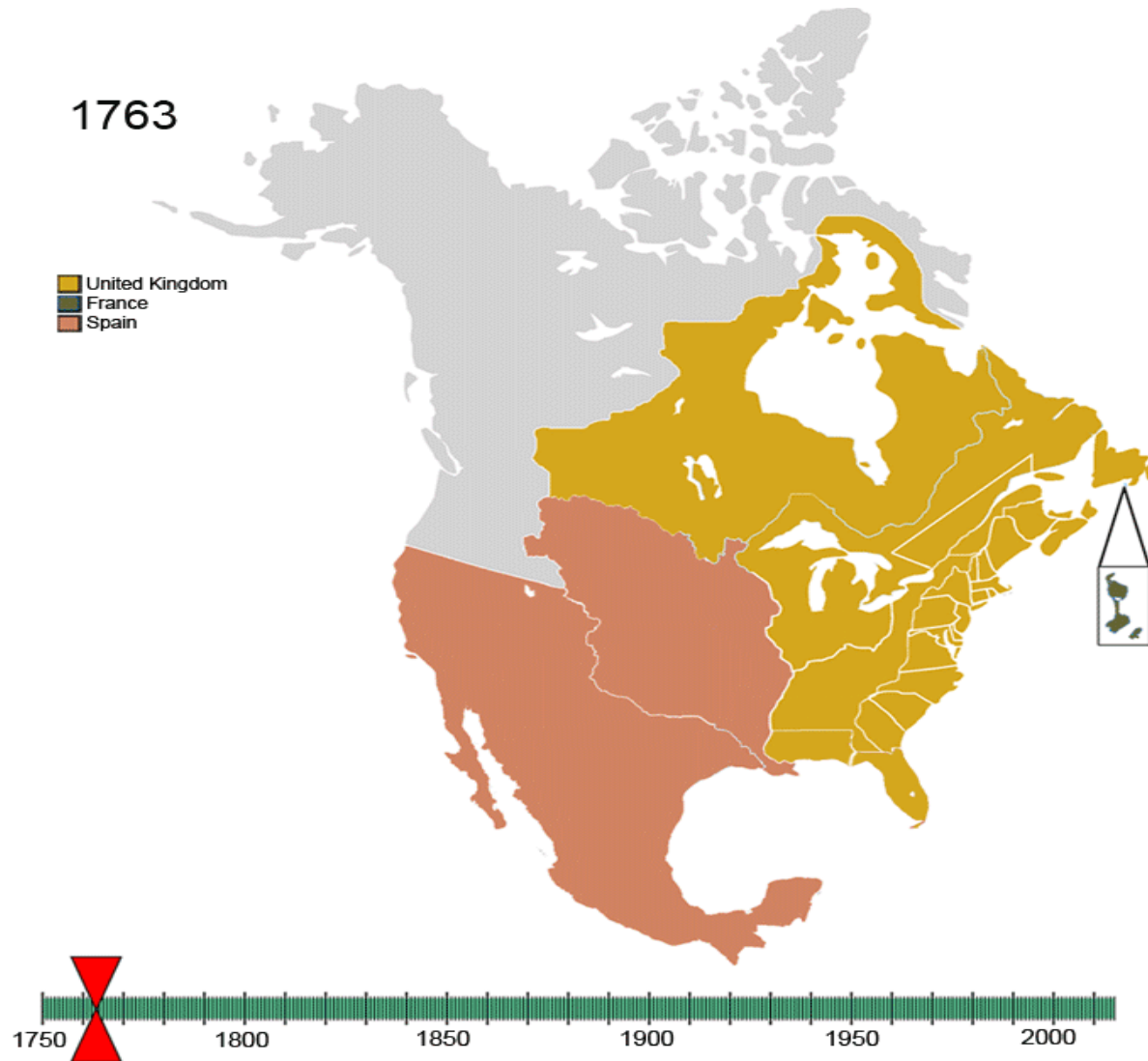
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Non-Native_American_Nations_Control_over_N_America_1750-2008.gif

NON-Native American Nations Controls over North America : The Colonial Colonies 1750-2000

Map of 1750 before the Capitulation of France Colonies to Britain



Map After the Capitulation of Montreal to the British 1760



The Underground Railroad and Freeman

Blacks came to Canada in the pre-emancipation years (prior to 1865) as Loyalists, freemen and run away slaves.

Nigger Rock: Several Loyalist families leaving the United States brought slaves with them when they settled near Saint-Armand, Que., around 1784. Saint-Armand is about 83 kilometres south of Montreal.

Montreal Black Leadership Active in using the Arts and community engagement to Educate community and Canadians about Black history and contributions

THE POWER OF HARRIET T



by **Michael A. Miller**
directed by **Thomas Morgan Jones**

A powerful story based on the life of Harriet Tubman, who led hundreds of slaves to freedom and inspired hope for thousands more. Playwright Michael Miller uses fact, speculation, music, and drama to tell the riveting story of the Underground Railroad's most famous "conductor".

Une histoire percutante inspirée de la vie d'Harriet Tubman, qui a mené des milliers d'esclaves vers la liberté et est ainsi devenue un symbole d'espoir. À l'aide de faits réels, de spéculations, de musique et de théâtre, le dramaturge Michael Miller raconte l'histoire captivante de la « contrôlée » la plus populaire du Chemin de fer clandestin.

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Economy

- Black slaves were used as a source of free labour to meet the demand of developing a new colony.
- They worked in towns and cities not only as domestic servants, but also as fur traders, miners, fishermen, wharf workers, and sailors.
- African slaves also worked in skilled jobs as blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, and coopers.
- They cleared and farmed land, and toiled in hotels, taverns and other businesses.
- Their coerced labour brought economic benefits to this country and helped to meet the needs of their local communities.
- Canada was further connected to the Transatlantic Slave Trade through the trading of products like timber and salted cod with slaveholding Caribbean colonies for slave produced goods such as rum, molasses, tobacco, and sugar.

Black rights group wants to formally recognize 'Nigger Rock'
President of the Black Coalition of Quebec, Dan Philip, wants a Quebec cemetery where black slaves are believed to be buried to be formally recognized as a historic site. (Graham Hughes/The Canadian Press)



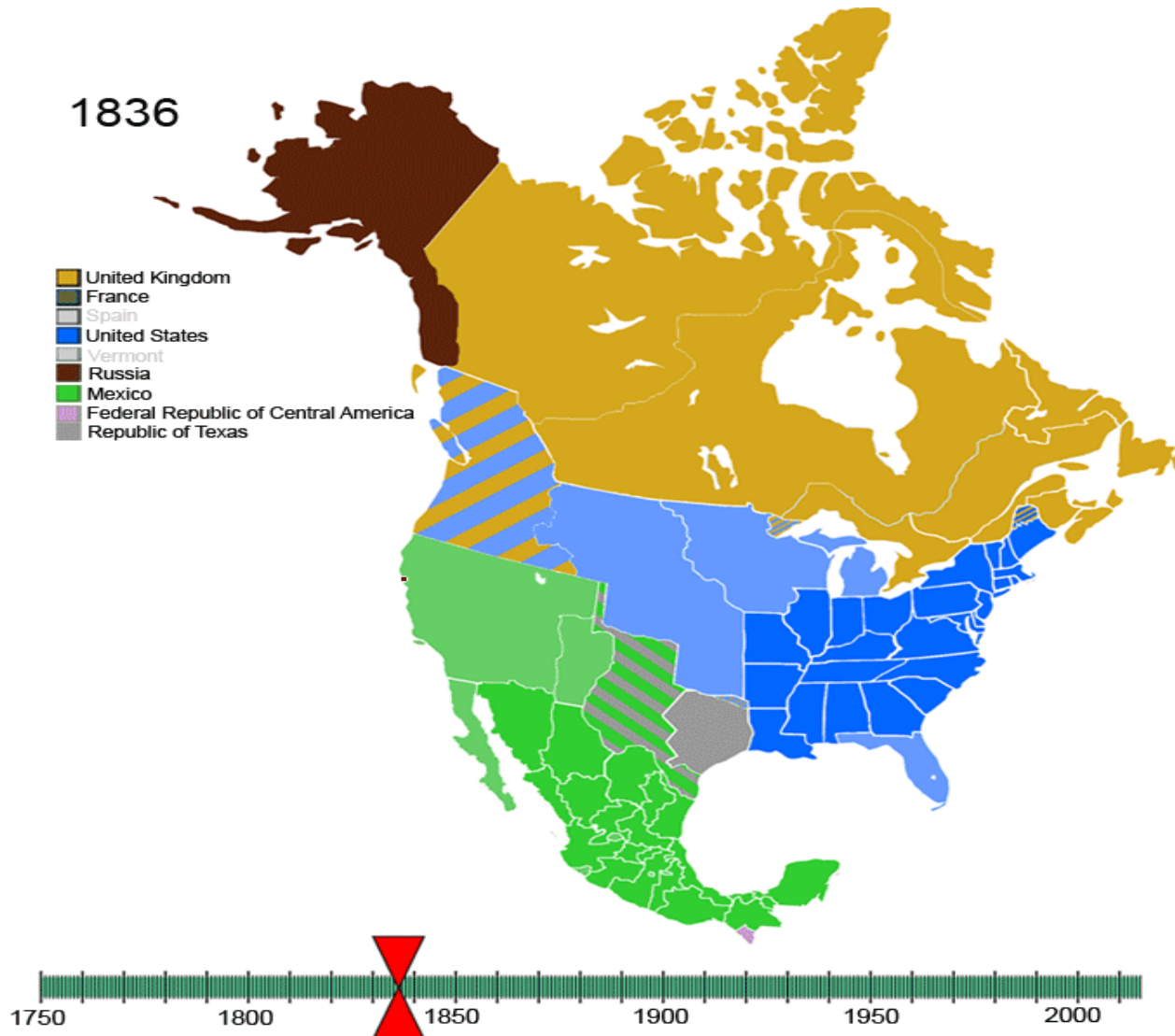
Cemetary of Slave Owners at Nigger Rock



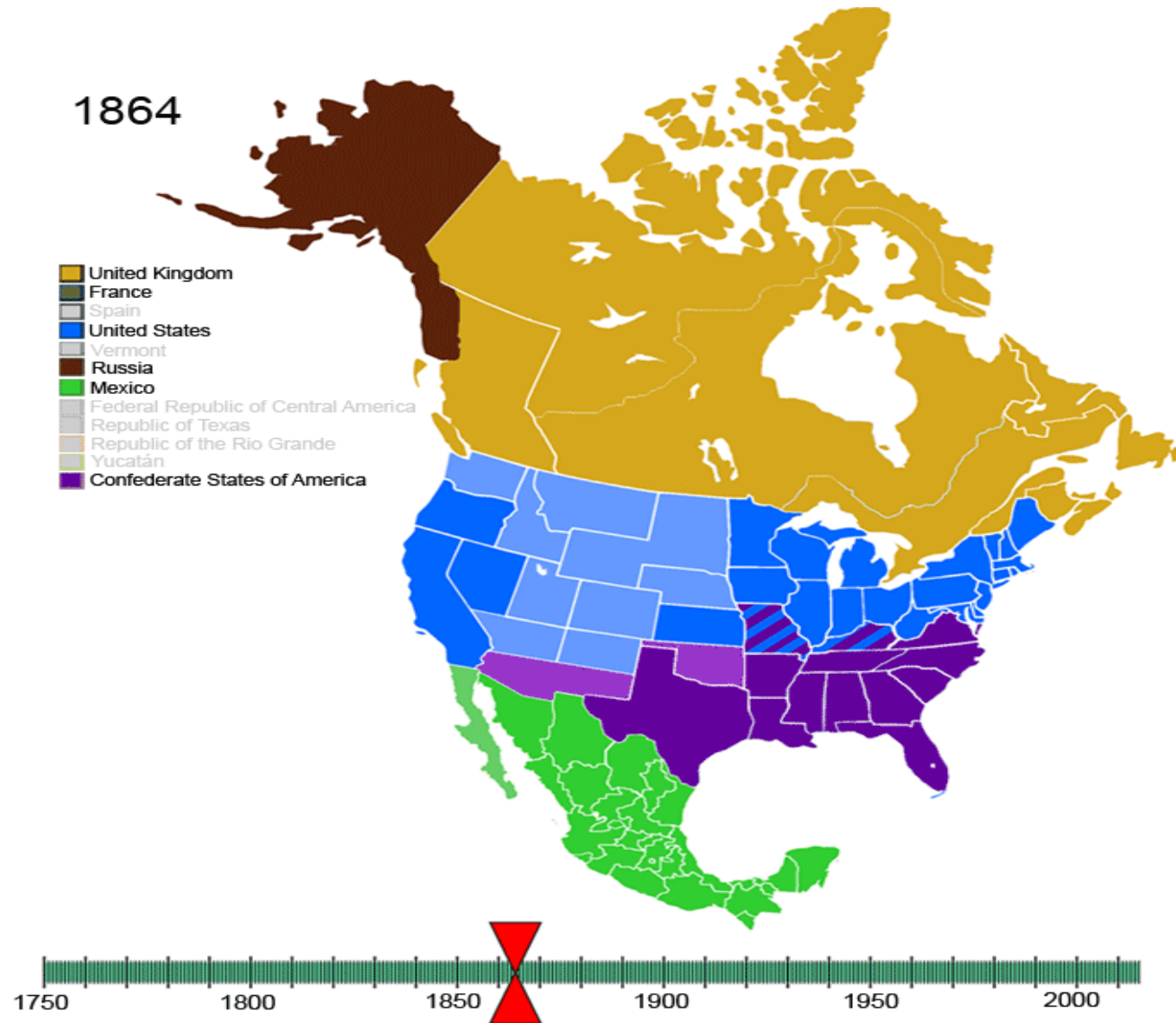
A Pilgrimage to Nigger Rock



After Abolishment of Slavery in the British Empire



A Year after Declaration of Emancipation in the USA 1863

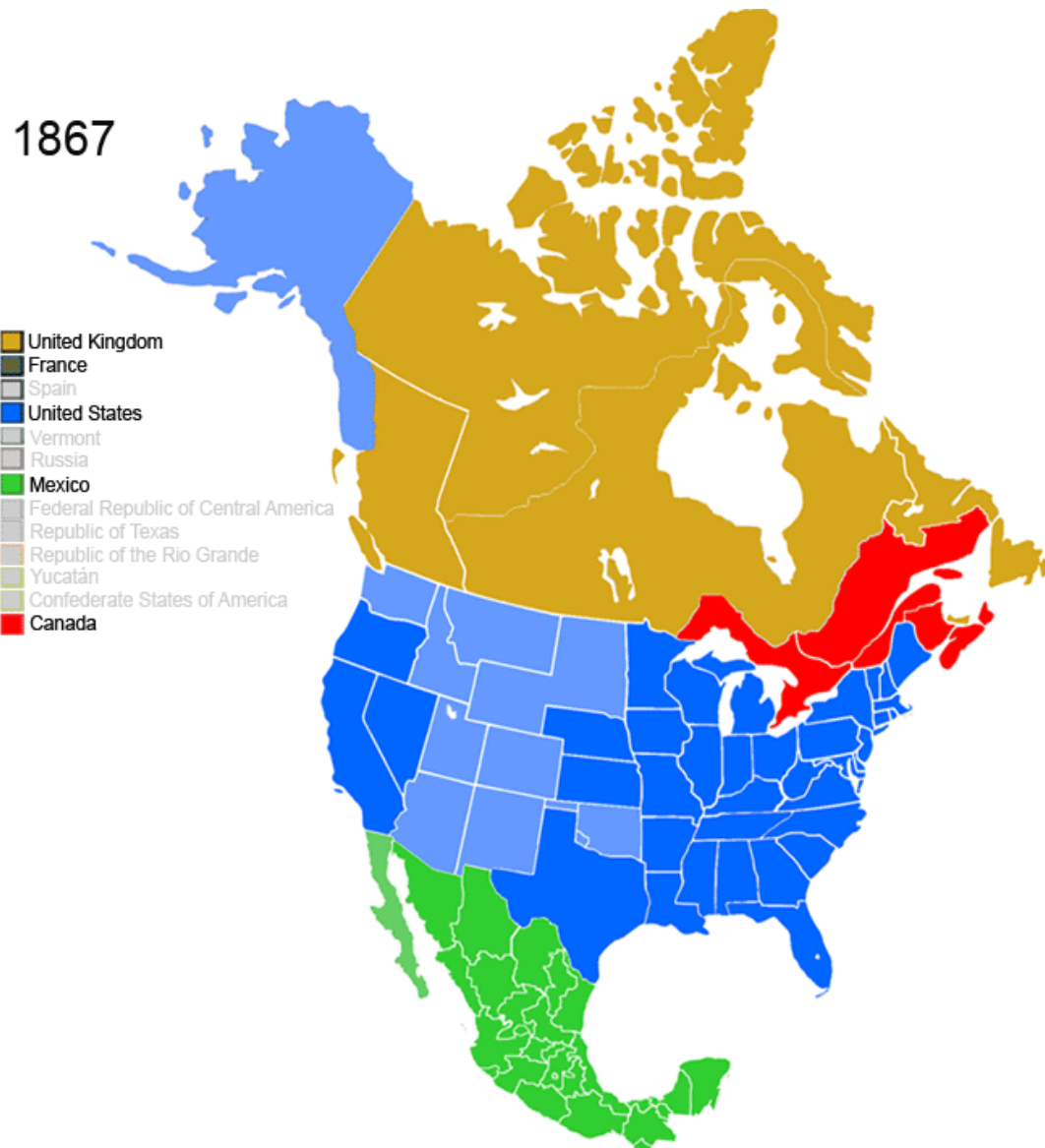


British Conformity and Policy of Keep Canada White

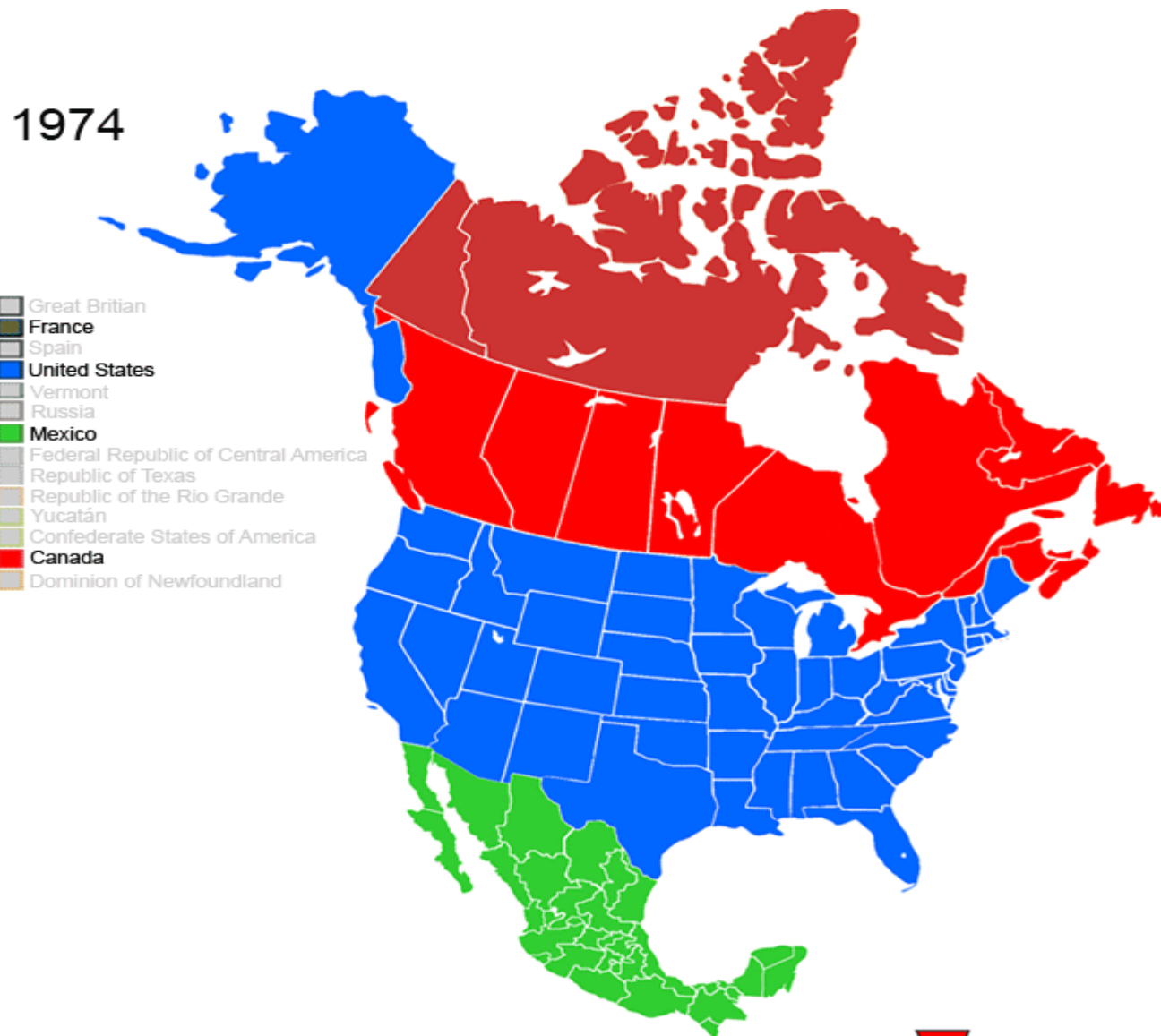


After Emancipation in USA 1865 and The World

The Creation of Canada the Constitution BNA



Multicultural Canada the Charter of Rights and freedom



Repatriation of the Constitution

In 1982 Canada "patriated" its Constitution, transferring the country's highest law, the British North America Act, from the authority of the British Parliament — a connection from the colonial past — to Canada's federal and provincial legislatures.

The Constitution was also updated with a new amending formula and a Charter of Rights — changes that occurred after a fierce, 18-month political and legal struggle that dominated headlines and the agendas of every government in the country.

Repatriation More than a Question of Uninform national pride

- Repatriation was part of a continuation of the war between two settler “nations” for control of Canada
- All the provinces included Quebec wanted to wrestle more powers from the Federal Government to manage their own affairs; but Quebec wanted more. Quebec wanted an independent state in Quebec.
- Quebec called a referendum on 20 May 1980 that would have given Quebec the political mandate to separate. The Party Quebecois lost the referendum .
- This prompted Levesque to demand that Trudeau fulfil his constitutional promise to repatriate and revise the constitution.

The Kitchen Accord, The Gang of Eight, and the Quebec Delegation

- Gang of eight: The dissident provinces mounted court challenges a resolution to repatriate the constitutional with amend the charter of rights
- Legally, in 1980, any change required the approval of the British Parliament.
- By political custom and convention, however, the more provincial governments that supported the federal partition process, the better.

Trudeau's people's package vs the Premiers Expanded Provincial Powers

- Trudeau wanted a “people's package”- including a new charter of Rights and Freedoms-entrenched in the constitution.
- This was attractive to the non-charter groups such as Blacks, and other visible minorities.
- This opened up the possibility for a more inclusive Canadian society and economy
- But it was angrily opposed by the premiers who saw the opportunity to expand provincial powers under the old constitutional arrangements.

The Constitutional Resolution with the Charter of Rights as its centre piece

- The proposed new Charter redrafted five times during the deliberations
- Included the incorporation of provisions on aboriginal rights, sexual equality and equal rights for the disabled.
- The plan was strongly opposed by the gang of eight: Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba, PEI, Newfoundland, BC, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.
- However the Supreme Court ruled that no legal limit “to the power of the Houses to pass resolutions” existed.
- But the court also ruled that whenever amendments were proposed that would reduce provincial powers, the presentation of a joint resolution by Ottawa without a "consensus" of the provinces would be a breach of constitutional convention

"Constitutional convention plus constitutional law equal the total constitution of the country"

- Clearly constitutional convention did not offer as much promise for change that would offer partnerships and full participation of Blacks and other visible minorities into the building of a new Canada.
- After four dramatic days the gang of eight and the Kitchen accord motivated by Chretien began to engage in shaping a possible deal that became acceptable to all except Quebec.
- Lévesque claim that he was not appropriately consulted, that he was betrayed by the English-speaking premiers, who, he said, plotted against him on what became known in nationalist Québec circles as the "night of the long knives."

Queen Elizabeth signs Canada's constitutional proclamation in Ottawa on April 17, 1982 as then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau looks on. Michael Pitfield (in glasses) shows the Queen where to sign. The government of Quebec, then led by Rene Levesque, never formally approved the deal. Wayne Cuddington / The Ottawa Citizen



The Night of the Long Knives For Whom

- In 1974 (Bill 22) was passed by Bourassa Liberal using the making French the sole official language of Quebec and the language of business in Quebec. And in 1977 the PQ passed Bill 101 the Charter of Quebec
- In 1982 The principal federal negotiator, Chrétien, had committed to a compromise that included a "notwithstanding clause" to limit the force of a new *Charter of Rights*.
- In 1984 Bourassa was confronted by Black leaders from the Montreal English speaking community about the unfairness and contradictions of the “notwithstanding clause” and the possible impact on Black minorities: His response was:
- “We did not ask for the “notwithstanding clause”... I understand the problems faced by Blacks....But Mr. Trudeau gave it to us. We would be foolish not to use it to protect the culture and language of French Quebec.
- He made it clear to us that French Canadians, their language and culture came first.
- Thus, for the French and English speaking citizens of Canada left stranded in these two colonial spaces created by early mercantilism and the slave trade the long knives were about to be stuck into their backs. `

Dilemma of the New Mercantilism

- In 1760 under the Old Mercantilism system France lost all its North American hinterlands of settlement to the British.
- In the articles of Capitulation of Montreal (1760) to the British the French were allowed to keep their chattel and slaves
- 1863-1963: Black excluded from Canada using a series of administrative practices and immigration requirements. They were victims of the “keep Canada White and British” policies: the early British conformity assimilationist view of Canada and policies on immigration.
- 1982 Constitution Act terminated the pure Mercantilist ties to Britain and introduced multiculturalism as a state policy. However the intent to create a “peoples package” is restricted by the embedded constitutional right of the provinces to discriminate against its citizens and to defy the rule of law in the interest of mainstream values.
- Blacks are put in a situation in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada where they must unintentionally discriminate against other Blacks that speak the other official language if they wish to benefit from the linguistics protections in the Constitution and the OLA.
- The dilemma is that English and French are inherited by Western Blacks through a system of British and French imperialism, the Transatlantic trade in African slaves; and the denial of their human rights. Blacks/Africans were considered better off under slavery because they were believed to be incapable by virtue of their nature of being civilized (Arthur De Gobineau, An Essay on the Inequality of the human Races, 1853-1855)
- Thus in America and Canada Blacks have a problem independent of what language they speak. Therein lies the dilemma in Quebec for Blacks.

Heritage and the Official Languages Act

- Multiculturalism Act 1988. The Canadian Department of Heritage (1995) responsible for Multiculturalism as a government policy (1971), promotion of rights, freedom, arts, culture, the advancement of the official languages, etc. OLA is a compensating policy for the uneven burden placed on citizens stranded in the wrong linguistic spaces
- Bill 101 (1977), the Charter of the French Language , and the notwithstanding clause ignore conventional law and has the power to deny citizens certain constitutional right.
- The not withstanding clause was intended to ensure that White Settlers of British ancestry and the Settlers of French ancestry retain control of their colonial negotiated territories, properties and the supremacy of their “values”, cultures and heritage.
- All “others” are required to conform to the laws, practices, educational and other institutional arrangement for which the two settler nations claim dual responsibility
- Bill 101 makes Quebec French and distinct from the rest of Canada (English). All other rights not specifically protected in the constitution and in the OLA are negotiable and can be denied.
- Immigrants have no freedom choice of education systems; nor do those whose parents have been educated in the French system.
- French is the official language and the language of work. But the constitution states that Canada is a bilingual country and multiculturalism is the state policy.

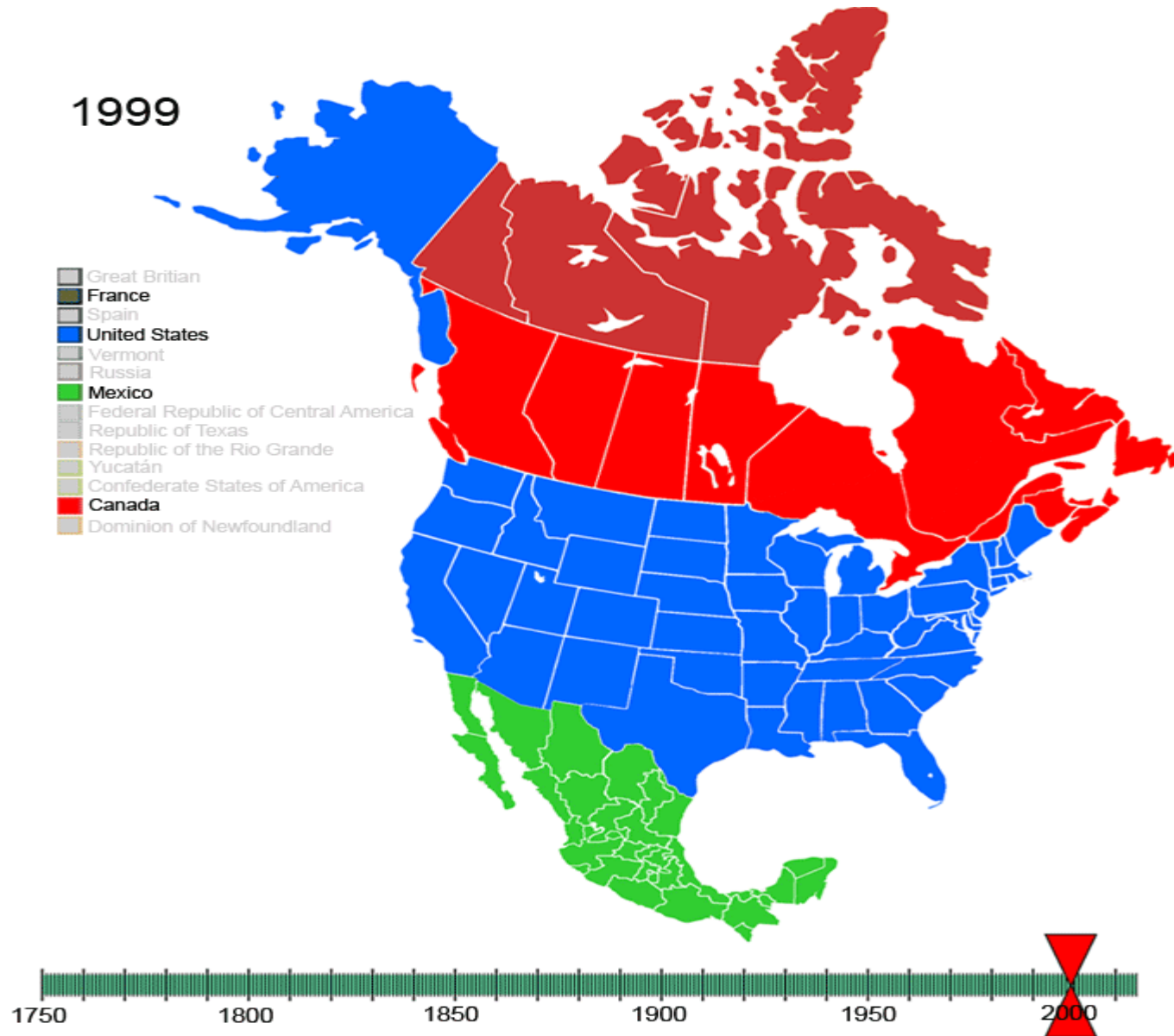
The Duality of the New Canadian System

1. Special arrangements have been put in place to protect the rights and institutions of the two “founding peoples” of Canada. Blacks and other visible minorities and immigrants do not have institutions that are protected in the constitution.
2. In particular, this applies to the Official languages Acts of 1969 and 1988 (http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/en/language_rights/act)
3. Some scholars point to the fact that the Acts and the quasi-constitutional arrangements between the Federal Government and Quebec, essentially seem to divide Canada up into two spaces “designed to develop and maintain Canada in a racial hierarchy as solely a White settler society (In Search of Community Identity, by Buster C. Ogbuangu, Department of Integrated Studies, Ph D Thesis , 2007, McGill, p 5”)

Two Vertical Mosaics

- We are persuaded by John Porter cogent arguments and definition of Canada (1965) as a vertical Mosaic I conclude:
- There are two vertical mosaics in Canada: one English (English Canada) and one French (Quebec)
- Within Each of these Mosaics there are layers of inequality based on class and kinship interests, and racial exclusion (inherent and learned discrimination).
- De facto, Black are considered a sub-class of either the Mosaic dominated by the French (Quebec) or the Mosaic dominated by the White English speaking settlers (English Canada).
- In both cases Blacks are at the lower end of the economic and social index of the Mosaic

Current 1999 and Beyond



Teaching History of African Slavery

1. In 1980 , historian James Walker stated in his book “*A History of Blacks in Canada: a Study Guide for Teachers and Students*” that “[w]e cannot understand early pioneer history unless we acknowledge that slavery existed”. We have tried to make that point so far
2. HISTORY HELPS US TO RECORD QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA AND DETECT PATTERNS, DEVELOP AN UNDERSTANDING THAT ENABLES US TO MODIFY BEHAVIOURS AND CONTROL NEGATIVE PREDISPOSITIONS.
3. It Teaches us the Roots of Racism and systemic discrimination; helps in formulating strategies for correcting or addressing the ills of such predispositions in the population; with an aim to further social justice
4. Incorporating African slavery in the Quebec curriculum provides a more complete historical narrative of the African Canadian pioneer perspective.
5. Teaching and learning about Canadian slavery deflates the not us myth that persists, the false notion that Canada did not enslave Africans like our American neighbours; or the strange argument : “ In Quebec French Canadians are not subject to this irrational racism that has done so much wrong to the workers, white and black, of the United States. They can take no credit for that, since in Quebec there is no “black problem.”(Vallières, 1970, p210).
6. It helps to mute the claim by La Muette that they are not racist ,that they are standing up for the rights and values of Quebec which they believe are threatened by non-French immigration.
7. Hopefully it will help to better inform the immigration policies and strategies of present and future Quebec Governments