

# North American Black Historical Museum holds Emancipation Day celebration

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North American Black Historical Museum president Monty Logan speaks at the museum's Emancipation Day celebration at the Giovanni Caboto Club on August 1. Logan encouraged attendees to use their smart phones to post the hashtag #august1FREEDOM across social media platforms. Photo by: Adam D'Andrea

By Adam D'Andrea

The North American Black Historical Museum celebrated 180 years of freedom with an Emancipation Day celebration last Friday.

Held at the Giovanni Caboto Club in Windsor, the event was held in accordance with the anniversary of the Slavery Abolition Act 1833 which came into effect on August 1, 1834. The act led to the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, which included Canada.

"It was through that historic legislation that our ancestors sought to come to Canada to seek freedom and safety in our nation," said NABHM president Monty Logan. "Today what we're doing is we're celebrating that freedom that was given to

Canadians, and given to so many people by coming to Canada."

Logan, who encouraged those with Smartphone's to post about the event using social media and the hash tag #august1FREEDOM, said Amherstburg played a significant role in allowing access to freedom during this time.

"Geographically, if you look at where Amherstburg's situated, as people made their way from the southern states in the US up through Canada, Amherstburg happens to be one of the closest points," said Logan. "So you ended up with a lot of people crossing into Amherstburg."

The event included entertainment from Motown band KGB, an exhibit of paintings depicting various aspects of black history from the Artists of Colour and Natasha Henry, author of *Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada*, who spoke about the history of Emancipation Day celebrations across Canada.

"So much can be learned from tracing the history of this remarkable cultural tradition," said Henry. "We can gauge how far blacks have come in the struggle for equality and human rights, we can see how Emancipation Day has evolved over time, and we can also see that not all Canadians enjoy the same equality and therefore there's much work to be done."

Those attending also received a sneak preview of *The Greatest Freedom Show on Earth*, a documentary by Orphan Boy Films about African American communities in Windsor, Essex County and Detroit. The film largely revolves around Walter Perry, who organized early local Emancipation Day celebrations, and is set to air on TVO in October 2014.



Attendees take a closer look at the Artists of Colour exhibit during the North American Black Historical Museum's Emancipation Day celebration on August 1 at the Giovanni Caboto Club. Photo by: Adam D'Andrea