

# Josiah Henson (born June 15, 1789, in Maryland and died May 5, 1883, Dresden, Ontario)

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Born into slavery, Josiah Henson was sold three times before reaching the age of 18 (Tikkanen, 2014). In those years, Mr. Henson was no stranger to the brutality of slavery once seeing his father whipped 100 times for protecting his mother. However, he was a hard worker and soon became entrusted with tasks that allowed many opportunities for escape though he never took them. By 1830, Henson had saved up to purchase his freedom, but after giving his master the money he was told that the price had increased to \$1,000, more than double the original price. Not only did he not have the money, but he soon learned that his owner had plans to sell him pushing Henson to escape with wife and children through the Underground Railroad to Canada. In Canada, he founded a community for fugitive slaves and taught other formerly enslaved people how to be successful farmers. He also became a Methodist preacher who spoke as an abolitionist in Canada and the U.S. He served in the Canadian Army and led a Black militia in the Canadian Rebellion of 1837. His autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*, is often credited as the inspiration behind American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe's powerful and controversial novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. "Josiah Henson is the first Black man to be featured on a Canadian stamp. He was also recognized by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1999 as a National Historic Person. A federal plaque to him is located in the Henson family cemetery, next to Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site" (Josiah Henson, 2021, para. 7).

## Reference

Josiah Henson. (2021, October 22). In *Wikipedia*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah\\_Henson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josiah_Henson)

Tikkanen, A. (2014). Josiah Henson: American labourer and clergyman. In *Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Josiah-Henson>

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