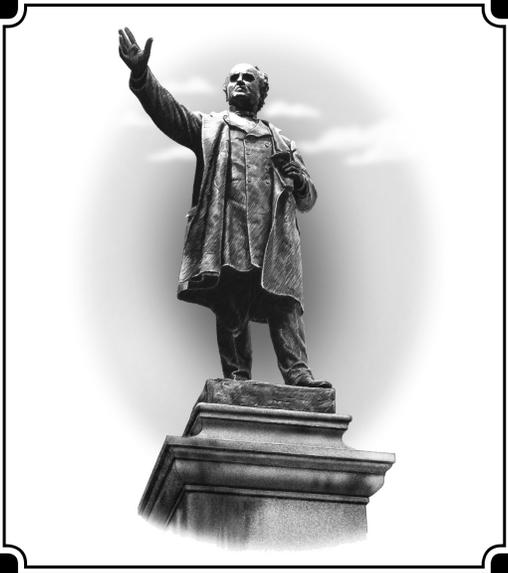


JOSEPH HOWE: VOICE OF FREEDOM

Online Resource

CELEBRATE CANADA
through
READERS' THEATRE

JOSEPH HOWE:
VOICE OF FREEDOM



BY MYRA JUNYK

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A Summary of the Script

Joseph Howe: Voice of Freedom tells the story of Joseph Howe's role in leading the fight for the rights and freedoms of the people of Nova Scotia in the 19th century. As a crusading newspaper editor, Howe wrote about the corruption of the Nova Scotia government which was run by a powerful group of rich individuals. He successfully defended himself in a libel case in 1835 after his newspaper had published a letter exposing political corruption. But Howe realized that the real power to make change was in the Legislative Assembly. As the leader of the Reformers, he helped set up the first responsible government in British North America. When the Confederation debate began in the 1860's, Joseph Howe led the opposition to the union fearing that Nova Scotia's social, political and economic needs would be ignored. Eventually, he represented Nova Scotia in the federal government and came to accept Confederation. He played a key role in negotiating Manitoba's union with Canada in 1870, and later became the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. On June 1, 1873, just three weeks after taking this office, Joseph Howe died in the governor's residence.

Constitutional History of Nova Scotia

On October 2, 1758, the Nova Scotia House of Assembly met for the first time in Halifax. It was an assembly of twenty-two men, some of whom were from as far away as Britain, Germany, and New England. Despite the fact that the majority of citizens were denied the vote, this was the first elected assembly in what is now Canada. From the very beginning, Nova Scotia played a pioneering role in shaping our nation's democratic institutions. In the early 19th century, the colony of Nova Scotia was ruled by the appointed Executive Council which was really just a small group of rich individuals. They appointed their friends and relatives to important posts while the interests of other Nova Scotians were not being represented.

However, the push for a more responsible government for the colony was gaining momentum. By 1837, Nova Scotians no longer accepted the fact that their elected representatives did not have real power. Reformers, led by newspaper editor Joseph Howe, advocated a separation of the Legislative and Executive Councils. The Legislative Council was selected from the elected members of the Legislature, while the Executive Council was still appointed. Lord Durham's Report of 1839 recommended true responsible government for the colonies of British North America. He suggested that the Executive Council should be chosen from the party with the largest number of seats in the Legislative Assembly. Due to the efforts of the Reformers,

led by Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia became the first colony in British North America to achieve responsible government.

Joseph Howe had become a Reformer because of his interest in the politics of Nova Scotia. In 1835, Howe was the owner of the *Novascotian* newspaper and published an unsigned letter claiming that local officials were collecting extra fines from residents. He was sued for libel, but won the case creating a strong precedent for freedom of the press in Canada. In the process, he realized that the real power to make change was inside the political system. Howe later served as Premier of Nova Scotia from 1860-1863. When he lost an election in 1863, he was appointed by Britain as the Imperial Fisheries Commissioner.

However, Nova Scotia politics were changing rapidly. In 1864, Howe's political opponent, Charles Tupper, met with leaders from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, and Canada (Canada East and Canada West) at the Charlottetown Conference to discuss a Confederation of the British North American colonies. Joseph Howe was a vocal opponent of Confederation. He did not attend the Charlottetown Conference and was not involved in negotiating Nova Scotia's role in Confederation. On July 1st, 1867, Nova Scotia became a province in the new country of Canada. Howe continued his opposition to Confederation in the next election, but was unsuccessful in overturning the Canadian union.

As a province of Canada, Nova Scotia became part of a federal system of government. Joseph Howe represented Nova Scotia interests in Prime Minister John A. MacDonalD's cabinet as Secretary of State for the Provinces. He negotiated with the representatives of the Red River Colony, and on July 15, 1870, the province of Manitoba joined Canada. Unfortunately, Howe's health was in decline at this point in his political career. He returned to his native Nova Scotia as the Lieutenant Governor in 1873, but died just three weeks after taking office. In 1904, a statue of Joseph Howe was erected on the grounds of Province House in Halifax to recognize the centennial of his birth. From these conferences emerged the British North America Act and the approval of the British parliament. On July 1, 1867, Queen Victoria signed the British North America Act and the Dominion of Canada was born.

Activities Before Reading

1. The statue of Joseph Howe (pictured on the front cover) was erected on the grounds of Province House in Halifax. Joseph Howe's image also appears on a Canadian stamp (see the top of each page in the script). Ask students if they know why Howe has been honoured in these ways. What other statues do students know about in Canada? Ask students to create a list of criteria for a new statue honouring a famous Canadian. Have them select an individual and write nominations based on the listed criteria. Create a bulletin board display showing all the nominations.
2. Read through the list of characters with your students. Why do you think voters are characters in this script? Which characters are members of Canada's government? Have students discuss what these people might be like.
3. Discuss how students get their news about local and world events.
 - What kinds of media do they use to find out about current events? How do these media differ in their approach? What does the term "freedom of the press" mean? Have students research the role of the press in countries such as: Iran, China, Russia, and North Korea.
4. Show students a map of Canada in 1871. Locate the places mentioned in this script: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Red River, Manitoba, United States, and Ottawa. Based on this research, what challenges did Nova Scotia face when it joined Canada? Create a timeline indicating when each province on the map of Canada in 1871 joined Confederation.
5. Using the website suggestions provided below, have students work in pairs or in groups to list ten facts about Joseph Howe and Nova Scotia. Write a paragraph incorporating all ten facts.

Tips for Voice and Expression

Character	Reading Level	Description
Narrator	Challenging	The narrator provides background information about the history surrounding the events in the script.
Joseph Howe	Challenging	During his life, Howe was a journalist, a poet, a politician, a reformer and a public servant. He fought for the rights and freedoms of the people of Nova Scotia regardless of any personal and professional costs to himself.
Colonist #1	Easy	As one of the residents of Nova Scotia, this colonist is concerned about the lack of democracy in the colony.
Colonist #2	Easy	As one of the residents of Nova Scotia, this colonist is concerned about the lack of democracy in the colony.
Chief Justice Halliburton	Moderate	Halliburton was the judge at the trial of Joseph Howe for libel in 1835.
Jury Foreman	Easy	This province also joined Confederation on July 1, 1867. The character conveys feelings of accomplishment and hopefulness to the audience.
Voter #1	Easy	This is the spokesman for the jury at the trial of Joseph Howe for libel in 1835.
Voter #2	Easy	A member of the electorate in the election of 1847, this voter is concerned about responsible government in Nova Scotia.
Charles Tupper	Moderate	Tupper was the premier of Nova Scotia and political opponent of Joseph Howe because he supported Confederation.
John A. Macdonald	Moderate	Macdonald was the first Prime Minister of Canada.

Extending the Experience

1. At the end of his life, Joseph Howe became the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. During his life, he also had many other political roles. Do some research about one of Howe's political roles. Find out about the responsibilities involved in the role. Pretend that you are Joseph Howe and write a diary entry revealing some of the responsibilities of this role. Perhaps you could include some historical details and Howe's reaction to those events.
2. Create a historical trading card for Joseph Howe or Charles Tupper. The image could be a drawing or an actual photograph. The text should include information regarding birth (date and place), death (date and place), as well as significant events and major achievements.
3. In a small group or with your class, discuss or debate the following statement: "Joseph Howe is a Canadian hero."
4. Draw an event web to illustrate the events in this readers' theatre script.
5. Joseph Howe was sued for libel because he published a letter about a corrupt yet influential political group. Though Howe was found not guilty, it took many years of reform before responsible government actually came to Nova Scotia. What political groups are influential in your own community? Invite a local politician into the class to discuss how decisions and laws are made.

Books of Interest

1867 – How the Fathers Made a Deal by Christopher Moore. McClelland & Stewart Inc. (1997)

Confederation: The Great Enterprise by Don Quinlan. Nelson (2006)

Joseph Howe & The Battle for Freedom of Speech by John Raulston Saul. Gaspereau Press (2006).

Nova Scotia Shaped by the Sea – A Living History by Lesley Choice (1996)

The Penguin Book of Canadian Biography for Young Readers – Early Canada by Pat Hancock. Viking (1999).

Websites of Interest

Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online – Joseph Howe
<http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=39171>

Library and Archives Canada – Confederation – Joseph Howe
<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/confederation/023001-4000.36-e.html>

The Canadian Encyclopedia – Joseph Howe
<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0003874>

The Nova Scotia Legislature – Joseph Howe
<http://nslegislature.ca/index.php/about/joe-howe/>

YouTube – "A Lesser Sort of War" - A Duel to Remember (2007)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MZnxCH58pM>