

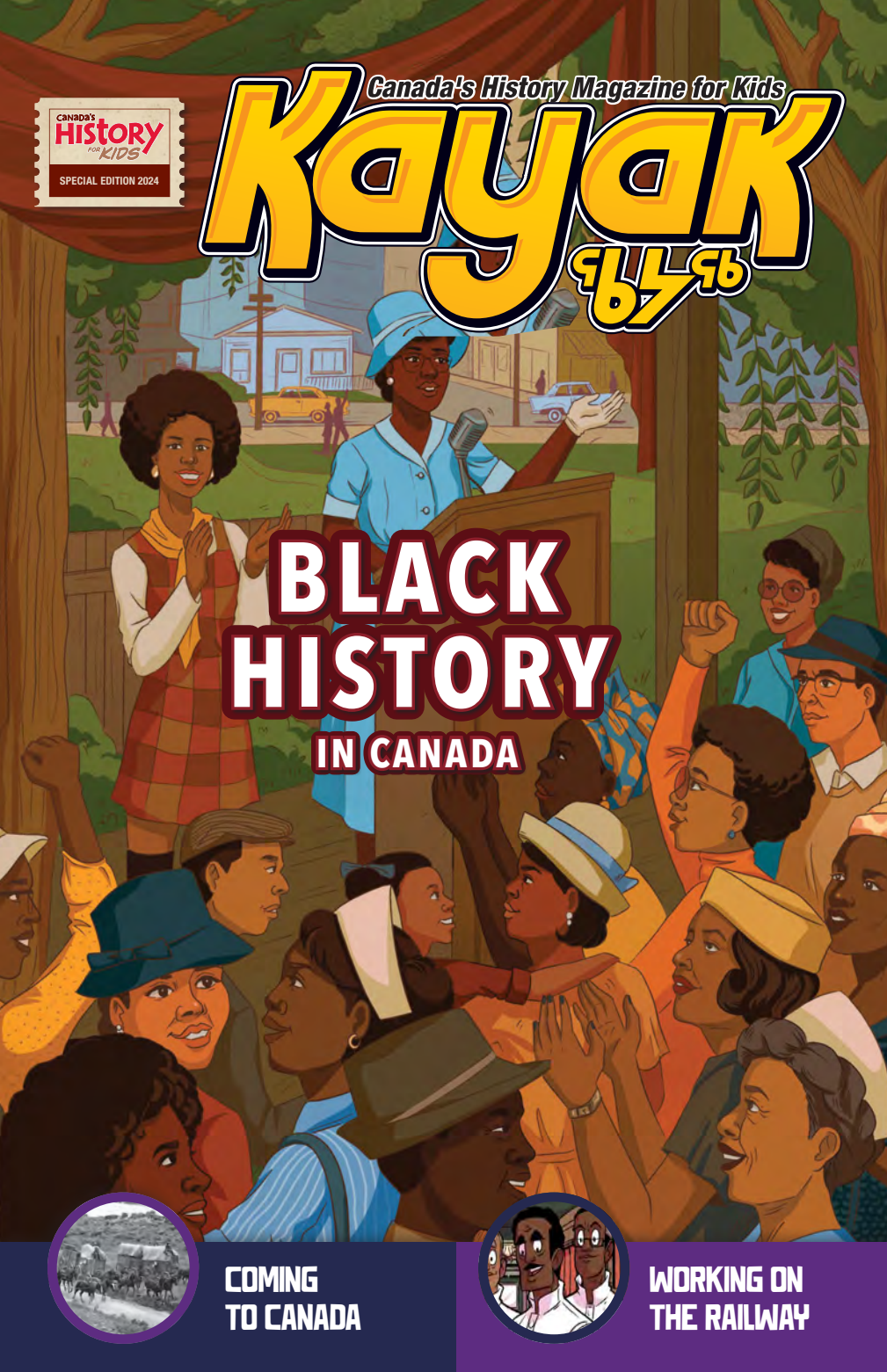
Canada's  
**History**  
for KIDS  
SPECIAL EDITION 2024

Canada's History Magazine for Kids

# Kayak

96496

# BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA



COMING  
TO CANADA



WORKING ON  
THE RAILWAY



**Telling Black Stories**

Chelsea Charles

**Psst!** These symbols spell Kayak in Inuktitut.



Cover illustration: Arden Taylor

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## FROM-THE-EDITOR



Black people have lived in what we now call Canada since the 1600s. From that time until the early 1800s, hundreds were forced to come here as enslaved people. After slavery was abolished here in 1834, thousands of people of

African descent from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa chose to come to Canada at different times for different reasons.

For 400 years, Black men and women have contributed to all areas of society. They have fought for Black people to be treated with fairness and equality in the struggle against

racial discrimination, a fight that has benefited all Canadians. This edition of *Kayak* shares some amazing stories and examples of the ways Black Canadians helped to build and shape this country.

The United Nations' International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 to 2024) encourages us to "promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies" and this issue of *Kayak* helps to do just that.

**natasha**

Welcome to our guest editor for this issue, Natasha Henry-Dixon! Natasha's specialty is Black history in Canada, and helping students learn more about it.

**nancy**



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# PAST AND PRESENT

UPPER CANADA PASSED THE ACT TO LIMIT SLAVERY IN 1793. THIS LAW GRADUALLY ABOLISHED SLAVERY IN EARLY ONTARIO.

In 2016, about **3 out of every 100 people in Canada**, or about **1.1 million people**, identified as Black.

**7** THE NUMBER OF BROTHERS FROM THE CARTY FAMILY OF SAINT JOHN, N.B., WHO FOUGHT IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, FIVE IN THE AIR FORCE AND TWO IN THE ARMY. ALL SURVIVED.

THE FIRST CANADIAN SAILOR AND THE FIRST BLACK PERSON TO RECEIVE THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR BRAVERY WAS NOVA SCOTIA'S WILLIAM HALL, IN 1859.



**Daurene Lewis** became the first Black woman mayor in North America when she was elected in Annapolis Royal, N.S., in 1984.





**Race:** a made-up idea used to group people based on where their ancestors came from, and on things such as skin colour, hair and facial features.

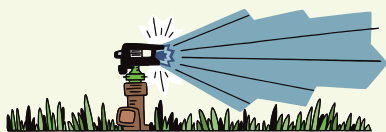
**Racism:** [RAY-sih-zim] the belief that people of other races are not as good; treating them badly for that reason.

Richard Pierpoint fought for Britain during the American Revolution. In 1780, he moved to the Niagara area and became one of its first Loyalist settlers. He suggested the creation of the Coloured Corps, Canada's first all-Black military unit, made up of himself and other Black Loyalists. The Coloured Corps fought bravely in the War of 1812.



**1,500**

The population of Birchtown, N.S., in 1784, making it the largest town of free Black people outside of Africa.



THE EXPRESSION "THE REAL MCCOY," MEANING SOMETHING GENUINE, MAY COME FROM BLACK ONTARIO INVENTOR ELIJAH MCCOY'S DEVICE FOR OILING TRAIN ENGINES. HE INVENTED AT LEAST 50 THINGS, INCLUDING THE LAWN SPRINKLER.

## Discrimination

[di-scrim-in-ay-shun]  
treating people unfairly because of their age, skin colour, religion or gender.

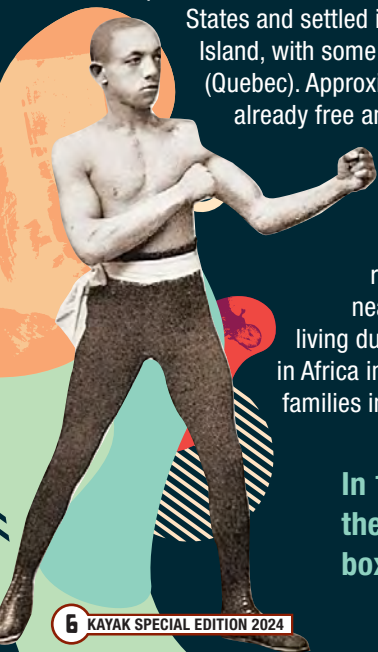
# COMING TO CANADA

A free man named **Mathieu da Costa** is believed to be the first person of African descent to arrive on the land we now call Canada. He was an interpreter for Samuel de Champlain's 1608 expedition that led to the founding of New France and Quebec City. Da Costa spoke French, Dutch, Portuguese and some First Nations languages. Since then, Black people have come to Canada from many different places.

## THE UNITED STATES BIRCHTOWN, N.S.

After the end of the American Revolution in 1783, many people wanted to stay a part of Great Britain. They were known as Loyalists. They fled the United States and settled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, with some going to Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec). Approximately 3,000 Black Loyalists, those who were already free and those who had been freed by Britain in exchange for their military service, were also promised land in their new country. The land they were given — often after waiting for up to five years — was poorer and in smaller lots than the white Loyalists received. Many Black Loyalists settled in Birchtown, near Shelburne, N.S. Because it was hard to earn a living due to racial discrimination, 1,200 left for Sierra Leone in Africa in 1792, but there are still descendants of the original families in the area who stayed.

In 1890, Nova Scotia's **George Dixon** was the first Black person to become world boxing champion.



## SAINT JOHN, N.B.

Many Black Loyalists tried to settle in Saint John, but the city passed a law in 1785 that said Black people were not allowed to live in the city itself (unless they were servants). So they lived nearby in settlements such as Elm Hill and Loch Lomond. They were also not allowed to sell things, catch fish in the harbour or be tradespeople.



**Famous opera singer Measha Brueggergosman from Fredericton, N.B., is the descendant of Black Loyalists who arrived in 1783.**



**Jane Cooper-Wilson is a descendant of early Oro settlers. She played a key role in efforts to restore the Oro African Methodist Church near Barrie, Ontario. Built by Black settlers in 1849, the building is a designated National Historic Site.**



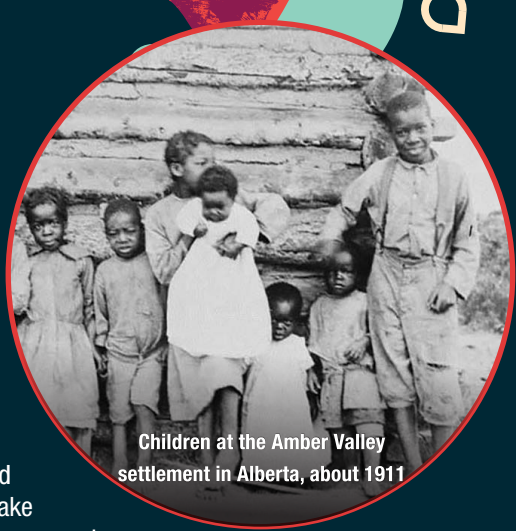
**Read more about life in a Black settlement in Ontario in the book *Elijah of Buxton*.**

## ONTARIO

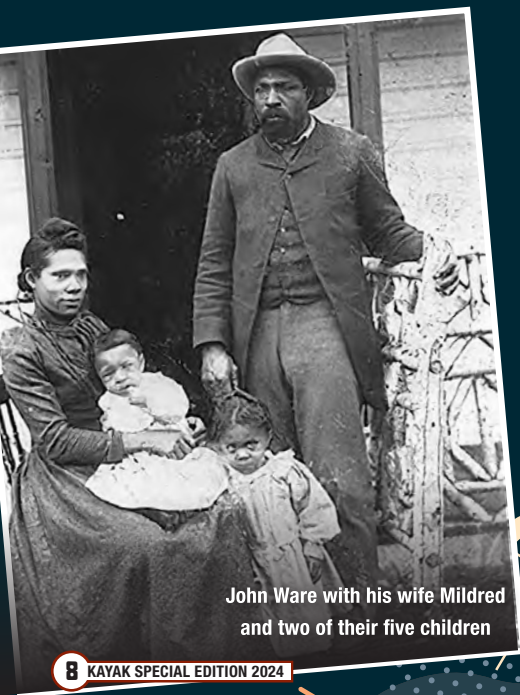
Most of the Black settlements here were in the area between London and Windsor, but the **Oro** settlement was near what is now Barrie. Freedom seekers and Black men who had fought in the War of 1812 were offered land in the area. The soil was not very good, though, and the settlement never had more than about 100 people. A small number of the settlers' descendants still live in the region. The **Wilberforce** settlement just north of London was set up by Black people from Cincinnati, Ohio, with the help of a religious group known as the Quakers, who believed in peace and equality. The settlers bought 800 acres of land in 1830, and soon brought more than 30 families to the area. Within five years, though, most people had left the settlement, which was named after the British anti-slavery activist William Wilberforce. A plaque marks the spot today. Perhaps the most famous of these communities is **Buxton**, near Chatham. Also known as the Elgin Settlement, it was started in the late 1840s and was home to at least 2,000 people by the 1860s. Its outstanding school was open to all, not just Black children. The people of Buxton also ran a hotel, stores, a brickyard, mills and farms. Although many white people hated it, Buxton also had many white supporters, and was one of the most successful settlements of formerly enslaved people in North America. Josiah Henson's **Dawn** settlement near Dresden included one of the first training schools in Canada, the British American Institute, where students could learn work skills.

# THE PRAIRIES

After the American Civil War ended in 1865, many Black Americans headed west, where they could own land in territory that was considered empty, even though First Nations lived there. That changed when the state of Oklahoma was formed and started taking away Black people's rights, including the right to vote. About 1,500 Black people travelled to Alberta and Saskatchewan between 1909 and 1911. Border officials often tried to keep them out by making them take physical exams and asking whether they had enough money to take care of themselves. In 1911 the Canadian government passed an Order-in-Council, a rule that would ban Black Americans from coming in for one year. While it did not become an official law, it shows how our country felt about Black immigrants. Canadians often refused to hire the newcomers or let their children go to school together. The Canadian government even hired people to discourage Black Americans in Oklahoma by giving speeches about how bleak and cold the Prairies were. Some of the larger Black settlements were near Maidstone, Sask., and Amber Valley, Alta.



Children at the Amber Valley settlement in Alberta, about 1911



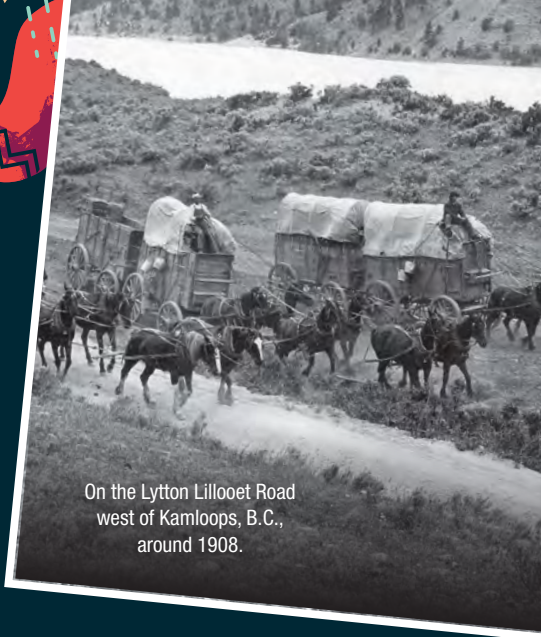
John Ware with his wife Mildred and two of their five children

**Born into slavery in South Carolina, John Ware moved to Alberta in 1882, 17 years after being freed. He was a well-known and well-liked cowboy: smart, brave and an excellent horseman. One description from the time said "The horse is not running on the Prairie which John cannot ride."**

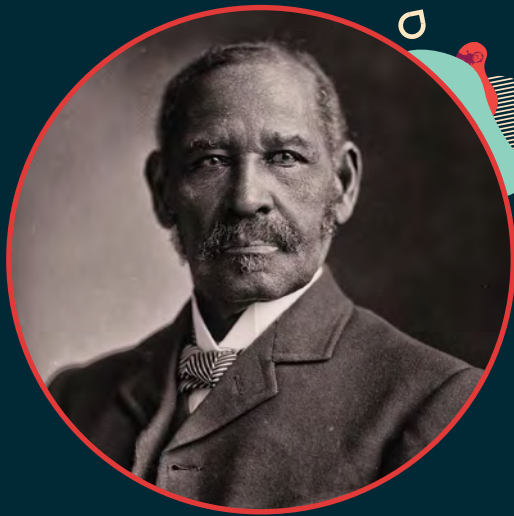


## VICTORIA

In April, 1858, a group of 35 Black Americans arrived in Victoria, B.C., on a ship with hundreds of white men heading for the Fraser River gold rush. But the Black travellers were searching for a different kind of treasure: a place where they could live free and own land. About 800 Black Americans came to Victoria over the next few years. Some moved to Nanaimo or other communities on Vancouver Island, while several became early settlers on Salt Spring Island. The newcomers opened stores and restaurants, and worked as tailors, barbers, teachers and more.



On the Lytton Lillooet Road west of Kamloops, B.C., around 1908.



One of the leaders of the group that came to Victoria, Mifflin Gibbs was also the first Black person elected to any office in B.C., serving as a city councillor in Victoria and taking part in talks that helped bring B.C. into Confederation.

The **Victoria Pioneer Rifles Company**, also called the African Rifles, was formed in 1860. Forty-five Black men volunteered to help defend Victoria from American invasion and other attacks. In 1865, the unit disbanded because of the racial discrimination they faced while trying to protect their community.



# AFRICA

In the days of the earliest European settlers, there weren't many Black people in what would become Canada, and most of those who were here were enslaved people brought by force from Africa. Thanks to changes in Canadian laws, many more Africans came to Canada after 1962. Many came by choice as immigrants, to study or work, while others came as refugees escaping war or government violence. Black Canadians from Africa have come from nearly every country on the continent over the years, first from places such as Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, and more recently from Somalia and Ethiopia. More than 75,000 French-speaking Africans from Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal and other areas have settled in Quebec.

## THE CARIBBEAN THE MAROONS

A group of enslaved Black people who had been taken to Jamaica in the 1600s escaped the Spanish and established a community in the mountains where they and their descendants lived for 100 years, fighting off efforts to recapture them. A woman known as Nanny helped them plan sneak attacks and keep their African ways. The British, who now ruled the island, eventually tricked the Maroons into coming out and shipped about 600 of them to Nova Scotia in 1796. The governor welcomed them, having heard stories of their bravery. They worked to build the Halifax Citadel, shown at right, which still stands. At first, their jobs and homes were paid for by the Jamaican government, but the money started to run out and white people grumbled, saying the Maroons were treated better than they were. Tired of the cold weather where they couldn't grow their favourite foods, most of the Maroons sailed to Sierra Leone around 1800, but quite a few remained in the Black communities of Nova Scotia.



Women who worked as servants under the West Indian Domestic Scheme celebrate one year in Canada in 1959 with Toronto mayor Nathan Phillips and his wife Esther.

In the 1950s, the government encouraged women from the Caribbean to come here and work as servants for a year in some Canadian homes. It was called the West Indian Domestic Scheme. Many eventually brought their families to join them. Between 1962 and the 1980s, more than 370,000 people from Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad came to Canada. There are more Black people from this region in Canada now than from any other background.

## CHANGING LAWS, CHANGING FACES

For decades, Canadian laws had allowed people to be turned away because of their race, religion or anything else immigration officers didn't like. In 1954, a group of Black people started pushing to make immigration laws fairer, and in 1962 the Canadian government finally agreed. That meant people who wanted to move to Canada would be judged only on their skills, education and ability to speak French or English. From then on, many more people were able to move here from countries where not everyone was white.



The first Black person to be a cabinet minister in the Canadian government was **Lincoln Alexander** in 1979. He was also the first Black Canadian to be lieutenant-governor of a province when he was named to that job in Ontario in 1985. His mother was from Jamaica, his father from the island of St. Vincent.



**Jean Augustine** immigrated to Canada from Grenada through the West Indian Domestic Scheme in 1960. In 1993, she became the first Black Canadian female Member of Parliament and in 2002 she was the first Black woman to be appointed a Cabinet minister.

About 140,000 Black people originally from the French-speaking Caribbean country of Haiti now live in Canada, most of them in Quebec. They first arrived in the 1960s, with many moving into an area of Montreal known as Little Burgundy. Former Governor General of Canada **Michaëlle Jean** was born in Haiti.

OP Images, Jean Augustine



Members of a Mi'kmaq and Black  
settlement in Elmsdale, N.S., 1891.



# BLACK AND INDIGENOUS

By Oscar Baker III

Many Canadians have stories  
that wind back to families  
with Indigenous heritage  
in both Africa and what is  
now Canada.







**AFRO-INDIGENOUS IS AN UMBRELLA TERM THAT COVERS A LOT OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS. EACH INDIVIDUAL HAS A UNIQUE STORY AND MAY IDENTIFY MORE SPECIFICALLY WITH ONE PARENT'S HERITAGE OR WITH BOTH. SOME DESCRIBE THEMSELVES AS JAMAICAN AND CREE, OR ETHIOPIAN AND ANISHINAABE, OR BLACK AND MI'KMAQ.**

Oral history — stories passed from parent to child — tells us the first Afro-Indigenous people were children of enslaved Black and Indigenous couples. Others were born of Black freedom-seekers and members of the Indigenous communities that took them in. Their offspring would be considered Afro-Indigenous, having African and Indigenous lineage.

The transatlantic slave trade lasted nearly four centuries before finally being abolished in the 1800s. Millions of African people were captured, forced onto ships and brought across the Atlantic Ocean. European slave traders sold these human beings to wealthy white people. The enslaved Africans worked for no pay in harsh conditions throughout the Caribbean islands and Turtle Island (North America).

Many of these people escaped slavery and sought refuge in Indigenous communities. (Although many Indigenous nations sympathized with the enslaved people, some Indigenous allies of the British were also involved in the kidnapping, trading and enslavement of African people during and after the American Revolution.)

Many formerly enslaved people came to Canada from the United States through a secret network of anti-slavery Americans known as the Underground Railroad. Others escaped slavery here. Some freedom-seekers made their way into Mi'kma'ki (the homeland of the Mi'kmaq) and Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee communities, according to the oral stories. They married Indigenous people and their children became the first Afro-Indigenous people. That blend has existed in Canada for more than 400 years.

The Proclaiming Our Roots website is a great place to learn more about Afro-Indigenous people and their long history here in Turtle Island. It has a collection of stories from those who identify as both Black and Indigenous. It's one of the very few projects studying the history of Afro-Indigenous people in Canada.

Dr. Ciann Wilson and Ann Marie Beals have done a lot to raise awareness of Black Indigenous people in Canada. The lack of research about this group can make them seem invisible to other Canadians. There is more information available about Afro-Indigenous groups in the U.S. like the Black Seminoles. (Indigenous people often did not make strict distinctions between Canada and the U.S. Their focus was on their territories, which could cross borders.)

The Black Seminoles were known as a blend of free Black people and freedom-seekers who settled and lived

with the Indigenous Seminole nation. The communities intermarried and worked together, helping each other try to stop white people from grabbing their land. Eventually the Black Seminoles were forced to relocate west, while some Seminoles hid in the Florida swamps.

Beals writes that in Canada, Indigenous and Black communities would unite to face oppression by Europeans who came here to set up colonies. Beals identifies as an Indigenous-Black two-spirit L'nu. (L'nu means "the people." It is the word Mi'kmaq use for themselves.)

Beals says white Canadians have intentionally made Afro-Indigenous people invisible, even while recognizing the unique heritage of white-Indigenous groups. As a result, many Afro-Indigenous people say they don't feel whole or like they're enough as they are. Some have faced anti-Blackness from Indigenous communities and Canada as a whole.



Members of the Afrométis Constitution Project. They self-identify as "Afrométis," defined as the result of mixing between Canadian Blacks (particularly from Nova Scotia) and Indigenous peoples.



**IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, CANADIANS HAVE STARTED TO HEAR MORE AFRO-INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE MEDIA, ONLINE AND IN THE ARTS. HERE ARE SOME AFRO-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE MAKING THEIR MARK IN CANADA TODAY.**



**ADELINE BIRD** (top left) identifies as Afro-Anishinaabe. She is an author, filmmaker and broadcaster. She wrote the book *Be Unapologetically You: A Self Love Guide for Women of Color*.



**JAHKEEL MARSHALL-RUTTY** (middle left) is a forward for the Toronto FC soccer team. He identifies as being of Jamaican, German and Mi'kmaq descent.



**JULIAN TAYLOR** (bottom left) is a musician who has been nominated several times for Canada's national music awards, the Junos. He describes himself as having Mohawk and West Indian roots.

Library and Archives Canada, Film in Colour, Julian Taylor/Lisa Melnosh

Hi, readers! My name is Oscar Baker III. I'm a writer and a father. I myself am Black and Mi'kmaq from Elsipogtog First Nation, N.B., and St. Augustine, Florida. I've been a working journalist for roughly ten years, mostly from my home in the New Brunswick community of Indian Island. I've won the David Adams Richards award for nonfiction writing and was the first-ever Indigenous editorial intern fellow at *The Walrus* magazine. I hope this article leads you as a reader to question what other histories remain hidden.

Wela'in (Thank you)





# Enslavement and Freedom

Natasha Henry-Dixon

**Before Canada became a land of hope for Black people, it was home to many who were held in slavery by French and British settlers, and even some First Nations people.**

It is estimated that more than 4,000 Black men, women, and children were held in slavery in Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick between 1628 and 1834. Enslaved Blacks were considered personal property. The law did not consider them to be persons, or give them any rights or freedoms. Like other parts of the world, there was a demand for enslaved Black people by settlers from Europe. These settlers saw Black people as free labour they could use instead of paying European workers.

## The Terrible Trade

Millions of men, women, and children from different West African societies were kidnapped and sold into slavery. They were traded for European goods such as guns, alcohol, and iron products. Captured Africans were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean by European traders to be sold again in the Caribbean, South America or North America and forced to work for free.

## Who is Enslaved?

Slavery is when one person owns another person as property that can be bought and sold. Slaves are forced to work without pay. When we talk about people being “enslaved,” that word reminds us that they are human beings who were forced into slavery. But when we talk about them as “slaves,” we make that role they didn’t choose the main thing about them.

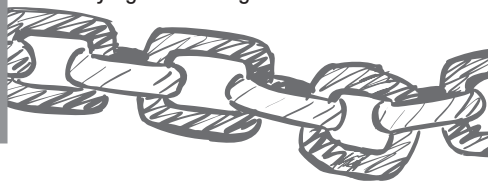
Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant), a Kanien’kehà:ka chief in southwestern Ontario, is known to have held Black people in slavery, including a girl named Sophia Pooley.



Blacks were enslaved by white people in all levels of society in New France and in English settlements. From government officials to nuns, former soldiers, millers, priests, fur traders, merchants, and hotel keepers, slave holding was a common, normal practice for hundreds of years. Enslaved Blacks were bought and sold, hired out, and passed on to family members in wills.

## How Was Slavery Possible?

In 1709, the government in New France gave permission for settlers to purchase Indigenous and African slaves. In 1790, the British government allowed settlers moving to different British colonies, including Canada, to bring their Black slaves with them. While there was no law that said slavery was legal, the courts and the government allowed it to continue by enforcing contracts and agreements that covered the buying and selling of slaves.



## Olivier Le Jeune

The first known enslaved African to live in Canada was a six-year-old boy, brought here as the property of Sir David Kirke. The child was sold several times, lastly to Father Paul Le Jeune, a Roman Catholic priest who baptized the boy with the name Olivier Le Jeune. Father Le Jeune once told him, “all men are one, united in Christianity.” Ten-year-old Olivier replied, “You say that by baptism I shall be like you: I am black and you are white, I must have my skin taken off then in order to be like you.” He died on May 10, 1654. In the burial register Olivier is listed as a servant, a common term used for enslaved people.



Enslaved Blacks cleared land, chopped wood, and built homes. They tilled the land, raised livestock, and planted and harvested crops. Some enslaved men worked as voyageurs, miners, sailors, hunters, fishermen and dock workers. Others were trained to become shoemakers, carpenters, sailmakers and stonemasons. Enslaved women worked washing, making clothes and making candles and soaps.

Many enslaved men and women worked in white people's homes, cleaning, cooking, tending to gardens, and taking care of their owners and their owners' children. Others worked in the businesses their owners operated. They were forced to work long hours, often in bad conditions, for no pay.

Enslaved men and women resisted these conditions. Some left their owners, but returned after a short time. During the time when slavery was still legal in Canada, some ran away in search of freedom, heading south to the United States trying to get to northern states where slavery was limited or even against the law.



## Chloe Cooley Changes Everything

Chloe Cooley was an enslaved Black woman in what is now southwestern Ontario. On Mar. 14, 1793, she was tied up and sold to a new American owner. She screamed and struggled, attracting the attention of witnesses including Peter Martin, a free Black man and former soldier. He and another man told the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada what had happened.









*The Underground Railroad*, by Charles T. Webber, 1893.

## The Underground Railroad

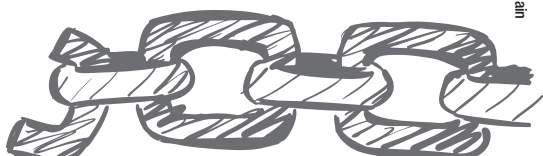
The Underground Railroad was not an actual railroad. It was a network of safe places and help to escaping slaves trying to get to freedom in Canada. Most landed in places such as Windsor and Chatham in what is now southwestern Ontario. Some arrived a bit farther north, near Owen Sound, or in Quebec, Nova Scotia or New Brunswick.



By the early 1860s, there were about 40,000 Black people living in Canada. Many travelled here on their own, but a large number of freedom-seekers made it with help from agents of the Underground Railroad, which made Canada the destination of the largest freedom movement in history.

## Albert Jackson

Born into slavery in Delaware, Jackson's mother escaped with him and six of his siblings with the help of the Underground Railroad and settled in Toronto. In 1882, Albert became the first Black postal carrier in Toronto, a job he held for 36 years.







Emancipation Day events in Windsor attracted people from across Ontario and the United States. This parade was held on Aug. 3, 1954.

## Free at Last!

Beginning in 1834, members of the African Canadian community along with white and some Indigenous supporters gathered at various locations across Canada on August 1 to celebrate the end of slavery throughout British colonies. The occasion is still known as Emancipation Day (“emancipation” means “becoming free”). Celebrants paraded through the main streets and attended church services, speeches, picnics and dances.

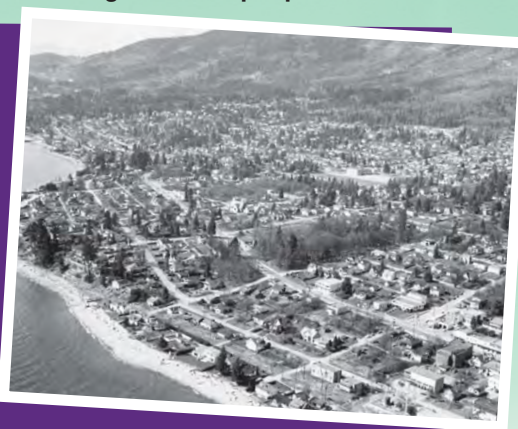
In 2024, the Ontario community of Owen Sound will mark Emancipation Day for 162 years in a row. The first celebrations were organized and attended by freedom-seekers who settled in the town. Today the weekend event celebrates history, family, culture and community through music, art, speakers, literature and other activities. In 2004, the Black history cairn, shown at right, was unveiled and dedicated to Owen Sound’s early Black settlers. The cairn is in Harrison Park, where Emancipation Day events have been held for decades.



# NOT WANTED

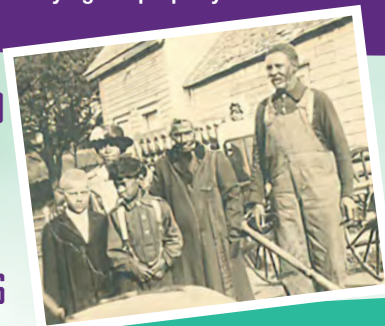
Today, most Canadian cities are a largely peaceful mix of people from many backgrounds. Although things are not perfect now, in the past, some governments and property owners actively, and legally, worked to keep Black people and others of different skin colours out of communities that were seen as being for white people.

Not that long ago, it was very common for homeowners to spell out who they would not allow to buy their houses. In the wealthy area of Vancouver known as the British Properties, for instance, many legal documents clearly stated the house could not be sold to “any person or persons of African or Asiatic race or of African or Asiatic descent.” So you could be a Black or Asian person who was born in Canada, but you’d still be banned from buying the property.



James Croxen and family, near Five Mile Plains, N.S., 1912.

WHY WOULD PEOPLE NOT WANT SOMEONE THEY SEE AS DIFFERENT LIVING NEAR THEM? WHY IS THAT NOT OKAY?



IN 1911, THE *EDMONTON JOURNAL* PUBLISHED THIS ARTICLE STATING BLACK PEOPLE WERE NOT WANTED IN THE PROVINCE.

## WE WANT NO DARK SPOTS IN ALBERTA

Immigration.

"Like the province of British Columbia being called 'Yellow British Columbia,' our own province might be called 'Black Alberta,' and therefore I think the time has come when immigration should be made a subject of personal control. We have our personal rights, but we want not only those that we have got, but also personal rights as to who we want living alongside of us, and of people who come to the country. The first class come and intermarry with us, and of course these are the kind which we want. The second class they will cry out for them. They do not merely come and do not engage in as much activity as the first class. We cannot say anything against this class, and are glad to have them here, but we do not receive them with as much enthusiasm as the others. Then the third class, and here I can refer to Alberta being called 'Black Alberta.' We do not want to have this name attached to us, nor do we want to have the province black in spots. I can only see one way out of this difficulty, and this is to put the present government out of power and bring in one who will listen to our plan. The present government is useless. Any government that will not listen to our plan is useless."

Sometimes Black people chose to live in the same area together. For instance, in Montreal in the 1890s, most Black people lived in the Little Burgundy neighbourhood in the west end around the railway tracks, because many of the husbands and fathers worked as porters on the railways. Living close to each other created a warm sense of community, safety, support, and acceptance.



A group of women in downtown Toronto in 1912.



Africville, N.S., about 1965.

**WHY MIGHT A CITY DEMOLISH A NEIGHBOURHOOD MOSTLY LIVED IN BY POOR PEOPLE AND THOSE WHO WERE NOT WHITE?**

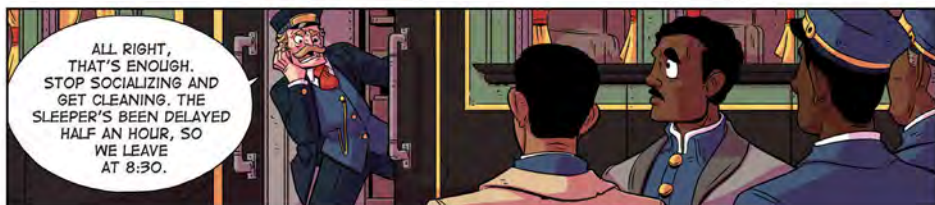
Even when Black people were allowed to live in an area, it was often where the land was poor quality or in areas where apartments and houses weren't in good condition. The Black settlement of Africville, shown above, was close to Halifax, so the bigger city put its dump and a place for people with infectious diseases near there instead of on its own property, but didn't bother to provide clean water, a sewage system, or firefighters. Africville was demolished in the 1960s even though very few residents voted to leave. An area of downtown Toronto known as The Ward, many of whose first residents were Black, was home to many newcomers to the city starting in the mid-1800s. Most people in The Ward were poor, and many were sick because they lived crammed together. It, too, was eventually demolished to make room for buildings such as city hall.

**HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WERE TOLD YOU COULDN'T LIVE SOMEWHERE BECAUSE OF YOUR SKIN COLOUR?**



# RAILWAY MEN

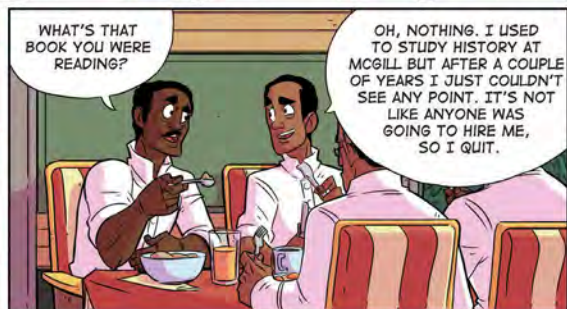
ILLUSTRATED BY ALEX DIOCHON AND WRITTEN BY NANCY PAYNE



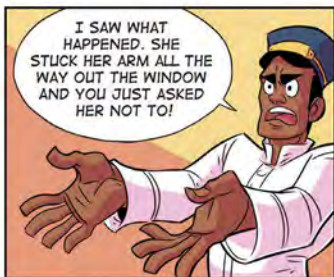






















**LES PORTEURS FERROVIAIRES ET LEURS SYNDICATS**  
**RAILWAY PORTERS AND THEIR UNIONS**

FROM THE LATE 1900S TO THE 1950S, BEING A SLEEPING CAR PORTER ON TRAINS WAS ALMOST THE ONLY REASONABLY WELL-PAYING JOB A BLACK MAN COULD GET IN CANADA. MANY WERE WELL-EDUCATED MEN WHO TURNED TO BEING PORTERS WHEN THEY FOUND OTHER DOORS WERE CLOSED TO THEM. BECAUSE THEY HAD STEADY WORK, THEY WERE LOOKED UP TO AND RESPECTED IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. PORTERS HAD TO DEAL WITH RACIST PASSENGERS, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY THE RAILWAY COMPANIES, LONG HOURS AND LOW PAY. THEY COULD BE FIRED IF SOMEONE COMPLAINED ABOUT THEM, AND DID NOT RECEIVE JOB PROMOTIONS TO OTHER POSITIONS SUCH AS CONDUCTOR. IN 1945, AFTER MANY YEARS OF QUIET WORK, THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS IN CANADA WAS FORMED TO HELP BLACK PORTERS GET BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS. THEY HAD TO CREATE THEIR OWN UNION BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT WELCOMED IN UNIONS WITH WHITE MEMBERS. IT WAS THE FIRST UNION OF ALL BLACK MEMBERS TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WITH ANY EMPLOYER IN CANADA. THE CHARACTER OF STANLEY IN OUR STORY IS BASED ON STANLEY GRIZZLE, A PORTER WHO HELPED FORM THE UNION. (HIS BOOK ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCES IS TITLED *MY NAME'S NOT GEORGE*.) IN 1953 A PORTER NAMED GEORGE GARRAWAY BECAME THE FIRST BLACK CONDUCTOR IN THE COUNTRY. THERE IS A PLAQUE IN MONTREAL AT THE OLD WINDSOR STATION HONOURING BLACK PORTERS, AND ONE IN TORONTO'S ROUNDHOUSE PARK COMMEMORATING THEIR UNION WAS UNVEILED IN NOVEMBER 2017.

pour les droits de la personne, notamment par leur lutte pour  
 éliminer la discrimination dans les emplois ferroviaires.  
 Railway porters played a major role in the struggle for Black

# See For Yourself

Explore the places where Black Canadians have made history



## « The Black Settlement Burial Ground

This cemetery near Saint John, N.B., is dedicated to the Black people who came to the area around Willow Grove starting in the late 1780s. There is also a replica of the church that served the Black community.

## Birchtown »

Just outside Halifax, you can visit several sites that honour the Black Loyalists who came to this area in the late 1700s. Be sure to check out the pit house, an example of the homes built by some Black settlers while waiting for the land they were promised. They dug down to create a room which was then covered by branches for a roof.



## « Amherstburg Freedom Museum

This museum near Windsor, Ont., includes the country's first Black National Historic Site, Nazrey African Methodist Episcopal Church. The church was built in 1848, and was often one of the first stops for those who had escaped slavery and crossed the Detroit River to freedom in Canada. The site includes a log cabin from 1880 that was a common kind of house for newcomers.

## The John Ware Cabin »

Visit the cabin the famous cowboy built for his family on what is now known as Ware Creek. It's inside Dinosaur Provincial Park. You can also learn about Ware at Bar U Ranch National Historic Site, one of the many places he worked in Alberta.



## « Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History

Josiah Henson not only founded the Dawn settlement for freedom seekers who came to southern Ontario, he was also believed to be the person that author Harriet Beecher Stowe based her anti-slavery book *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on. At this site near Dresden, Ont., you can learn more about Henson by looking around his house and the church where he preached.



Flickr Commons, Alamy, Public Domain



## « Buxton Museum

This site near Chatham, Ont., celebrates the achievements of the free people who lived in this planned settlement and preserves their stories. The museum's new permanent exhibit is about the journey of captured Africans to the New World across the Atlantic Ocean. You can tour the only surviving school built by and for those who escaped slavery, and ring the freedom bell for yourself.

## The Gordon House »»

This house devoted to Black history is part of the Kings Landing Historical Settlement near Fredericton, N.B. The house is a recreation of the one Black settler James Gordon and his family lived in during the early 1800s. You can also visit a pit house as part of the village.



You don't have to leave home to visit the Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum. It's online!



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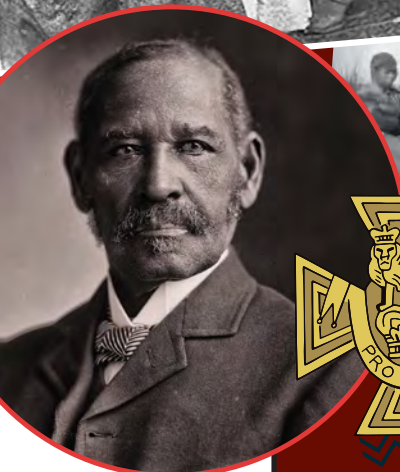


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