



BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

EDUCATION GUIDE

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DÉFI DE LA CITOYENNETÉ | CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGE

MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

The teaching of Black history in Canada is an integral part of history education. By learning about and confronting the past, Canadians can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the long, rich history of people of African descent in this country and can begin to address ever-present anti-Black racism. Many of these experiences are shared, or overlap with those of other demographics, and though this guide does not delve into those stories or interconnected narratives, we encourage readers to conduct further independent research on those topics. The *Black History in Canada Education Guide* should be used as a starting point for further research and learning. Teachers are encouraged to further their research and complement the lesson plans contained in this guide through primary source analysis and by engaging with other resources that explore the lived experiences of Black Canadians, historically and in the present day. Canada is a vast country and the legal, cultural, social, and demographic histories of one province do not reflect all - for centuries Canada was composed of colonies and territories that were governed differently.

Historica Canada is the country's largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canada's history and citizenship. The *Black History in Canada Education Guide* is designed to enhance students' awareness of and appreciation for the Black Canadian experience. It explores various aspects of the country's Black history, including enslavement, migration and settlement, anti-Black racism, the Civil Rights Movement, and Black Canadian achievement and present-day experiences. The *Black History in Canada Education Guide* asks students to examine issues of identity, equality, equity, community, justice, and nation-building in historical and contemporary contexts. This guide is aligned with current Canadian curricula, and has been produced for use in middle and high school history and social studies classrooms.

Black history in Canada is a living history. The legacies of enslavement and racism continue to affect Black communities throughout the country, particularly in the form of individual and institutionalized anti-Black discrimination. The topics in this guide should be broached critically and with compassion. Teachers must be sensitive to both individual and group dynamics to ensure the classroom remains a safe environment for all learners. The classroom climate should encourage students to relate to one another in positive, respectful, and supportive ways, and students should be informed on where they can go for help. Establish ground rules for respectful and inclusive discussions, and consult your school support systems for additional support, if needed.

This guide was developed in collaboration and consultation with Dr. Channon Oyeniran, Dr. Natasha Henry, Dr. Dorothy Williams, and Dr. Karolyn Smardz Frost.

Additional resources related to Black history in Canada are available on [The Canadian Encyclopedia](#). For more information, visit [HistoricaCanada.ca](#).

BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA



Stamp with Mathieu da Costa (Andrew Perro and Ron Dollekamp, Canada Post, 2017)

The story of African-descended peoples in Canada is a rich and complex one dating back more than 400 years. The breadth of experiences, narratives, and identities of Black Canadians — from Mathieu da Costa, an interpreter for Samuel de Champlain and the first documented free Black person to set foot on what is now known as Canada in the early 1600s, to the current population of more than 1.5 million people — has been instrumental in shaping the country we know today.

The historical presence of Black people in Canada was characterized by colonial settlers oppressing and enslaving people of African descent in this country, but the whole story — which includes buying and enslaving people of African descent, forced migrations, and the exploitation of their labour — is not widely known or discussed in this country's dominant historical narrative. Instead, Canada's participation in enslavement is often erased from history books in favour of a narrative that centres white voices, silences those of Black Canadians, and emphasizes Canada as a "haven" for its role in the Underground Railroad. This is not only an injustice to those who suffered, but prevents Canadians from understanding the complex histories and lived experiences of the country's many Black populations. It is also a history of how Black people in Canada have surmounted barriers and have prospered despite the ongoing struggle against oppression and discrimination.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE

The term **Black** as a reference to people of African descent has historically been rooted in ideologies of race and racism, but has shifted to reflect identity, resistance, and the shared historical experiences of the African diaspora.

Enslaved person is used instead of "slave" to show the humanity of those who were in bondage, as is "enslavement" in place of "slavery." Similarly, "enslaver" is used instead of "slave owner," unless in direct reference to historical documents. The word "Negro" was historically used to describe Black people and may appear in this guide in references to historical organizations or documents like censuses but is not an acceptable term for use today.

The term **Canada** is used in this guide to indicate the traditional Indigenous lands and former French and British colonies we now refer to as Canada. This guide uses primarily contemporary language to refer to Canada and its provinces and cities. Ontario and Quebec are used interchangeably with Upper and Lower Canada, as well as Canada East and Canada West. Teachers may want to use the terminology of the time for their students.

The **African Diaspora** describes the many communities of people of African descent living outside of Africa, many of whom were scattered throughout the world as a result of historic movements such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The **Transatlantic Slave Trade/Triangular Trade** brought more than 12 million enslaved African people, crops, and goods between Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas, and Europe from the late 16th to early 19th centuries.

Teachers are encouraged to take this opportunity to engage in a broader conversation with their students about the concepts and language around race and racism. Pay attention to grammar, including the use of tenses, articles, and capitalization. When it is appropriate, please discuss the historical language connected to the time frame you are exploring.

SECTION 1:

ENSLAVEMENT IN CANADA

The Transatlantic Slave Trade, also known as the Triangular Trade, was established in the 15th century by various European empires to bring kidnapped Africans to lands colonized by different European countries. From the early 1600s until 1834, settlers in what is now Canada participated in the Transatlantic Slave Trade by buying, selling, and enslaving African people. Enslavement in Canada was legal, with laws that supported enslavers. It was costly to pay European workers, so there was a high demand for enslaved people to work as domestics or in the agricultural sector. French and British colonists also consumed goods such as sugar that were produced in the Caribbean by enslaved people, and exploited the labour of enslaved people to increase personal wealth and to spur the economic growth of colonial economies.

The first known enslaved Black person to be kidnapped and taken to Canada was a young boy, originally from either Madagascar or Guinea. Arriving in New France in 1629, by May 1633, he had been given the name Olivier Le Jeune by the Jesuit Father Paul Le Jeune. When New France came under British rule in 1759, there were more than 3,000 enslaved persons in Canada, around a third of whom were Black.

People of African and Indigenous descent, known as Afro-Indigenous or Black Indigenous Canadians, have a longstanding history in this land and continue to exist as a distinct and culturally rich community. Although the history of Black Indigenous people in Canada is not well documented, a sense of unity and shared struggles have led to cultural exchanges between Black and Indigenous communities going back centuries. For example, many Black Indigenous people in Nova Scotia have heard generational stories of their Mi'kmaq ancestors helping enslaved people and later Black Loyalists. However, discriminatory policies often resulted in people having to choose between identities. These once-lost identities and heritages are more recently being reclaimed through efforts such as the Proclaiming Our Roots Project. Notable Black Indigenous figures include George Bonga, George Elliot Clarke, and Julian Taylor.

Portrait of a Haitian woman, 1786, by Francois Malepart de Beaucourt (M12067 / McCord Stewart Museum)



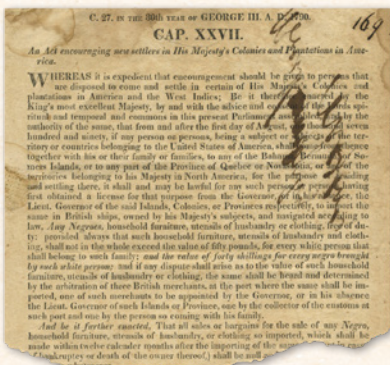
James Murray, the first British governor of Quebec (National Portrait Gallery / NPG 3122)

KEY TERMS

A **chattel slave** was an enslaved person considered the property of their enslaver and legally not a person. The laws of chattel slavery meant that the children of chattel slaves were automatically enslaved as well.

Abolitionists were individuals who advocated for or supported the end of enslavement and the freedom of enslaved people.

Freedom seekers were people who, sometimes with help from abolitionists and the Underground Railroad, sought freedom from enslavement. The term is meant to reflect that though they were in physical bondage, their minds and spirits remained free.



DID YOU KNOW?

Indigenous Peoples made up two-thirds of enslaved peoples in the colony of New France. Most were enslaved women and girls who were forced to work in urban centres like Montreal, and many were also traded to the Caribbean. After the American War of Independence, when British Loyalists migrated to Canada, the number of enslaved persons of African descent grew to represent the majority of enslaved persons in the land we now refer to as Canada.

Imperial Statute, 1790 (TPL Virtual Exhibits)

Indentured servitude existed alongside slavery in what is now Canada. Under this exploitative system, individuals signed a contract that bound them to unpaid labour for a certain period — often years — in exchange for transport, shelter, and food. Many formerly enslaved people were freed only under the condition that they work as indentured servants for their former enslavers. For example, Dembo Sickles, a formerly enslaved Black man in Prince Edward Island, had to work as an indentured servant from 1796 to 1802/03 after being “freed.”

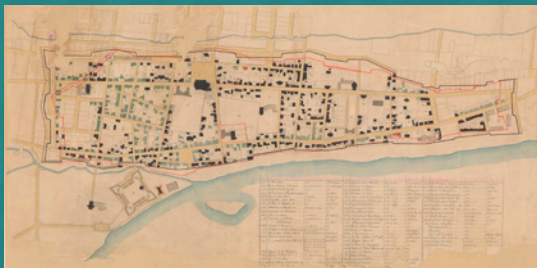
ACTIVITY 1.1

MARIE-JOSEPH ANGÉLIQUE

Marie-Joseph Angélique (also spelled Marie-Josèphe) was an enslaved Black woman charged with one of the most infamous crimes in Quebec's history. In 1734, she was charged with arson after a fire leveled Montreal's merchants' quarter. It was alleged that Angélique committed the act while attempting to escape her bondage. She was convicted, tortured, and hanged. While it remains unknown whether she set the fire, Angélique's story has come to symbolize Black resistance and freedom.



▲ Still from Strong and Free: Marie-Josèphe Angélique podcast (Historica Canada)



▲ Plan of Montreal, 1700 (Library and Archives Canada)

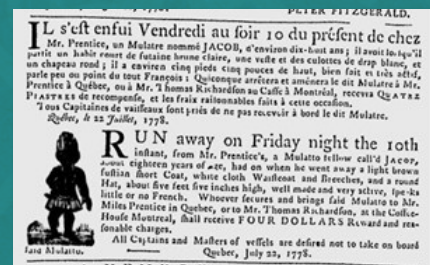
1. As a class, listen to the Marie-Joseph Angélique [podcast episode](#) from the Strong and Free series.
2. Have a class discussion about what you learned:
 - a. What does it mean to be enslaved?
 - b. What does the history of enslavement in Canada reveal about society in colonial New France? What does it reveal about Canadian society today?
 - c. Afua Cooper says in the podcast, "She [Marie-Joseph] was enslaved. It's not like anyone had sympathy for her. No one had sympathy for her." Her status as an enslaved person worked against her in the trial. Can you think of other instances where someone's circumstances may work against them? In a court of law? In a job? In the classroom?
 - d. What does the statement "innocent until proven guilty" mean? What are some barriers today that may affect someone's perceived innocence?
 - e. Are any of these conditions of enslavement present in our modern world?
3. After discussing the above, read the [Marie-Joseph Angélique article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Write a page about why you think Marie-Joseph Angélique was blamed for the fire, rather than another enslaved person or a white colonizer. What does the public's decision to blame her tell us about how enslaved people were treated and expected to behave in New France, and the dangers of challenging this structure? Keep in mind that everything we know about her life comes from the trial condemning her.

ACTIVITY 1.2

ENSLAVEMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Form small groups, and together read the advertisements in the [Primary Source Analysis Worksheet](#). Pay attention to the wording and any accompanying imagery.
2. Once you have examined the ads, answer the following for each advertisement:
 - a. When and where was each advertisement produced?
 - b. Why was this document produced?
 - c. Look at the characteristics the enslavers used to describe the enslaved. What do you notice about how they are described?
 - d. What do you learn about the subjects of each document?
 - e. What can these advertisements teach us about enslavement in colonial Canada?
3. As a class, discuss your answers and share what you have learned from these advertisements. Use these questions to lead the discussion:
 - a. What do these documents reflect about the attitudes and beliefs towards Black people in the colonies that made up Canada at that time?
 - b. What questions do you have about these advertisements? What don't we know about these sources?
 - c. How do these advertisements help contribute to a fuller understanding of the conditions faced by enslaved Black women, men, and children?



◀ Quebec Gazette, 1778

SECTION 2:

BLACK LOYALISTS, MAROONS, AND BLACK REFUGEES IN NOVA SCOTIA

Between 1783 and 1785, more than 3,000 recently freed Black people set sail from the Eastern United States to Nova Scotia and established communities in areas such as Shelburne, Annapolis Royal, Digby, Sydney, and Halifax. While the majority of Black Loyalists fleeing the United States resettled in Nova Scotia, others were transported to and settled in European countries, the Caribbean, and the provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick, and Ontario.

Black Loyalists were considered free people in the eyes of the law, nevertheless they experienced rampant racism, discrimination, and violence in various forms. Many never received the land they were promised, and those who did were often given unworkable plots. White Loyalists were also permitted to import enslaved Africans and Indigenous people with them when they came to the Canadian colonies after the Revolutionary War.

After years of challenging conditions such as unfair distribution of land, racial segregation, a lack of support from the government, low-paying jobs, inequality, and hostility, many Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia petitioned the English Crown to leave. In 1792, the British offered land and an opportunity to create and govern policies in the West African British colony of Sierra Leone, and 1,200 Black Loyalists departed Nova Scotia to settle in Freetown, the capital of the new colony.



▲ A Black Canadian Wood Cutter at Shelburne, Nova Scotia (Library and Archives Canada/Acc. No. 1970-188-1090/W.H. Cloverdale Collection of Canadiana)



▲ An illustration of formerly enslaved peoples arriving in Sierra Leone (Samuel Goodrich, 1839)

▶ Leonard Parkinson, A Captain of the Maroons (British Library)



KEY TERMS

Maroons were groups of formerly enslaved Africans and their descendants who fled chattel enslavement in the Americas and found refuge in remote mountains or dense tropical areas in nearby regions. The word “maroon” comes from the Spanish word “cimarrón” meaning “wild.” Maroon communities were predominantly founded in the Caribbean and throughout the Americas.

Black Loyalists were enslaved or indentured African Americans, and some free Black people who fought for the British during the American Revolutionary War (1775–1783). They were promised both freedom and land in return for their service. Many would end up in Canada.

A few years later in 1796, approximately 600 men, women, and children, called the Trelawny Maroons, were exiled from Jamaica to Nova Scotia. Upon their arrival, the Maroons were settled in places like Halifax and Preston. The men mostly laboured, built, and farmed, while the women and children provided the local market with provisions such as berries, eggs, poultry, pigs, brooms, and baskets. In 1800, after a difficult couple of years of cold winters, unfamiliar foods, and the delayed delivery of supplies and clothing, the majority of the Maroons, like the Black Loyalists eight years prior, departed for Freetown, Sierra Leone. Though the Trelawny Maroons were in Nova Scotia for only four years, they left a legacy that includes the third reconstruction of Citadel Hill and the construction of the Government House for the Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia.

A third wave of migration of Black people to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick occurred after the War of 1812 between the United States, Britain, and their respective allies. These migrants were enslaved people from states such as Georgia, Maryland, and Virginia, who once again

took up the offer of freedom from the British if they fought alongside them. By the end of the war in 1815, 2,000 of the approximately 4,000 enslaved Black persons who had enlisted boarded British ships headed to Nova Scotia. Some went to New Brunswick, and the remainder settled in other British colonies like Trinidad in the Caribbean.

Like the Black Loyalists and the Trelawny Maroons before them, these Black refugees faced hostility, racial discrimination, and economic hardship in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. However, unlike their predecessors, only 95 left the provinces to resettle elsewhere. The majority stayed, building lives for themselves in communities such as Preston, Hammonds Plains, Beechville, Five Mile Plains, Beaverbank, and Prospect Road.



▲ Bedford Basin near Halifax, Robert Petley, 1835 (Library and Archives Canada/Acc. No. 1938-220-1)

ACTIVITY 2.1

A GROWING POPULATION

The period between 1780 and 1820 saw a large growth in Eastern Canada's Black population. This period included many notable events and people that left lasting influences on Canada's story.

1. Select an individual or event from 1780 to 1820 to focus on. Research your chosen topic and create a poster presenting relevant key dates, facts, important moments, and impact.
2. Assemble the class's posters in chronological order around your classroom or in a hallway. For individuals, place them according to when you think the most historically significant part of their life occurred.
3. Take some time as a class to read through the posters. Discuss what trends you see in the timeline. What information can you take away about Black Canadian life during this period?

IDEAS FOR TOPICS

INDIVIDUALS

Boston King (NS)	David George (NS)	Stephen Blucke (NS)
Thomas Peters (NB)	Zimri Armstrong (NB)	Richard Pierpoint (ON)
Peter Martin (ON)	John Baker (ON)	Sarah Colley and George Wentworth Colley (NS)
Gabriel Hall (NS)	Richard Preston (NS)	

EVENTS

The Shelburne Racial Attacks , 1784	1785 Saint John Royal Charter
Arrival of HMS <i>Regulus</i> , May 1815 (NB)	<i>Imperial Statute 1780</i>
1793 Act to Limit Slavery	The Petition of Free Negroes
"Coloured Troops" and the War of 1812	

SECTION 3:

ABOLITION MOVEMENTS AND THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

In July 1793, the *Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada* passed in the House of Assembly. Crucially, the Act decreed that children born after 1793 to enslaved mothers would automatically gain their freedom at age 25, and their descendants would in turn be born free. The Act did not, however, free those who were already enslaved or prevent the sale of enslaved persons either in the province or across the border, though it did ban the admission of enslaved people into Upper Canada — any enslaved persons brought into the province were automatically considered to be free. Though enslavers were required by this new bill to provide security for the enslaved children in their households, and those they had previously enslaved, many skirted the law and few faced legal repercussions.

Refer back to ads #9 and #10 in the **Primary Source Analysis Worksheet** from Activity 1.2. Identify the date of each ad and the ages of the escaped persons. What does this show us about the *1793 Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada* and its implementation?

In 1793 in Lower Canada, a bill was presented in the Legislative Assembly to abolish enslavement. However, some members of the Legislative Assembly (some enslavers themselves) objected to the proposed legislation, and it was not passed. More bills would be introduced across the provinces in attempts to regulate and abolish enslavement, most of which would be denied. Nevertheless, they represented a larger movement, led by Black people and their supporters, to push back against the laws protecting enslavement and enslavers and preventing new bills from passing, thus weakening the institution.

In February 1798, in a court case that set a precedent, an enslaved Black woman named Charlotte was arrested in Montreal after leaving her enslaver and refusing to return to her. Her case was brought before Chief Justice James Monk, who released her because at the time, enslaved persons could only be detained in houses of corrections and not jails. Due to Montreal's lack of a house of corrections, Monk ruled that Charlotte could not be detained and she was let go. There were

other cases similar to this that diminished enslavement in the Canadian colonies, though their success varied by province. While these judicial abolitionist efforts were happening in Canada, larger anti-enslavement efforts were growing in Britain, a key player in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

British abolitionists had been attempting to dismantle the slave trade and slavery since the 1770s, but it was only with the 1807 *Slave Trade Act* that the Transatlantic Slave Trade was abolished by the British Parliament, putting an end to the legal maritime trafficking of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic. However, the Act did not end the practice of enslavement in British colonies. Enslavement itself was abolished throughout the British Empire in August 1833 with the *Slavery Abolition Act*, which took effect on August 1, 1834. That Act made it illegal to own enslaved African people and their descendants. This further emphasized Canada as an important haven for those escaping enslavement in the United States, where it was not abolished until 1865.



In 2021, August 1st was declared Emancipation Day in Canada.

As a result of the American *Fugitive Slave Act* of 1793, it was legal in the United States to capture any escaped formerly enslaved person in the northern states and return them to their enslaver in the South, where slavery was still widely practiced. This caused many formerly enslaved persons to seek freedom in Upper Canada, where the 1793 *Act to Limit Slavery* ensured that any enslaved person became free upon their arrival in the province, and the 1833 *Fugitive Offenders Act* helped protect these persons from extradition back to the United States. The number of freedom seekers crossing the border increased after the United States passed the *Fugitive Slave Act* of 1850, further enforcing that country's 1793 Act at the individual and state level and making it easier for previously enslaved persons to be forced back into enslavement.

While 1793 marked the beginning of Canada's role as a destination for freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad, people enslaved in Upper Canada who were not freed under the Act often sought freedom south of the border in free states like New York and Vermont.

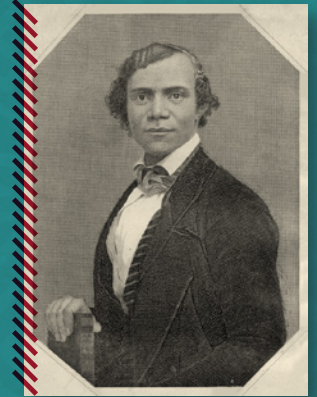
The secret system that helped with the journeys taken by freedom seekers is referred to now as the Underground Railroad: a network of routes, safe houses, and people that aided in the escape of enslaved African Americans, including to Canada and primarily during the mid-19th century. It was the largest anti-slavery freedom movement in North America. Abolitionists came from all backgrounds: free Black people and fellow enslaved persons, white and Indigenous sympathizers, farmers, inhabitants of urban centres, and many others. Together, they helped bring freedom seekers to safety.

It is important to note, however, that many abolitionists still held racist beliefs and engaged in discriminatory practices. Both before and after enslavement became illegal across Canada in 1834, racism against the Black community was highly visible and existed at all levels of society and government. Ideas around racial inferiority were used to justify overt racism, and many Black people in Canada were segregated, excluded from, or denied equal access to various opportunities and services. Some white abolitionists even advocated for settlement schemes in places like West Africa. Racial segregation against Black people was different in each province and territory, as well as between communities. Nevertheless, across the colonies, African Canadians resisted oppression and racial discrimination, surmounting the barriers placed before them and helping build the Canada we know today.

ACTIVITY 3.1

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Freedom seekers found refuge and resided in various places in the eastern portion of Canada. There are countless stories of courageous people who made the journey and settled in Canada, but many have been lost to history. The stories we have reflect a wide range of experiences and showcase the many struggles and triumphs of the Black community in Canada.



▲ Henry Bibb (University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library)

1. Watch the [Underground Railroad Heritage Minute](#) and read the [TCE article](#).
2. Discuss the narrative in the Underground Railroad Heritage Minute, and in what ways it might refute or perpetuate misconceptions and outdated understandings of this period in our history. Consider the role of the white woman, and the way the video ends with an exclamation of "We's in Canada!" What would you do differently if you were to make this Minute today?
3. In small groups, research an individual from the list below, then create a digital or posterboard presentation showcasing what you've found. What do they reveal about the Underground Railroad? What can their story tell us about the conditions and circumstances of Black people in the United States and in Canada at this time? What context does their story provide about the obstacles Black people faced, both individual and systemic? How might their story be representative of other Underground Railroad stories (or why not)?
4. Share your presentation with the class.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FIGURES

Robert Patterson	<u>John Anderson</u>
Jesse Happy	Francis Griffin Simpson
Joshua Glover	<u>Harriet Tubman</u>
Solomon Moseby	Anna Maria Weems
Ann Maria Jackson	Deborah Brown
Mrs. Pipkin, Mary (or Louisa) Pipkin	<u>Josiah Henson</u>
Enerals and Priscilla Griffin	Reverend William Troy
William "Jerry" Henry	William Parker
Henry and Mary Bibb	Shadrach Minkins
Cornelius Sparrow	

ACTIVITY 3.2

THE BLACKBURNS

The story of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn is one of the many from this period that was lost to history, until an archaeological dig revealed their unique story and connection to the Underground Railroad.



▲ Still from Thornton and Lucie Blackburn video (Historica Canada)

1. Watch the [video on Thornton and Lucie Blackburn](#), and read their [biography](#) and the [Black History in Canada until 1900](#) article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. You may also want to do supplementary research.
2. The story of the Blackburns involves three key elements: the Underground Railroad, legal history in Upper Canada, and life as a Black person in Upper Canada. Either in paragraphs or as a chart, write down the ways in which the Blackburns' story intersects with these categories. Consider both how their lives were influenced by the circumstances around them, and how they affected their surroundings in turn.
3. In small groups, discuss what you have learned from their story. What obstacles did they face on their journey to Detroit, and then to Upper Canada? What were some of the laws and practices that influenced their journey? Based on their story, what might a freedom seeker expect from life in Upper Canada? What can we learn about the conditions that Black people faced, and what does it reveal about society at large? Why do you think the Blackburns' story had been forgotten for so long?



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Compare the Blackburns' story with the stories you researched in Activity 3.1. How are these stories similar, and how are they different? What does this reveal about the diversity of experiences that people lived? If their stories involve different provinces or time periods, how did those differing circumstances affect their journeys and experiences?

ACTIVITY 3.3

MARY ANN SHADD GARY PODCAST



▲ Mary Ann Shadd Cary (Library and Archives Canada/C-029977)

1. Listen to the Mary Ann Shadd Cary [podcast episode](#) of Strong and Free, and read the article on [Mary Ann Shadd Cary](#).
2. As a class, discuss Shadd Cary's historical significance (use the [Historical Thinking Concepts](#)). Think about why a Black woman publishing a newspaper would have been revolutionary for this time and place. What might her paper have covered that was left out of mainstream media? Who would this paper have been important to? What people and perspectives might have had a platform for the first time?
3. Think about what Garvia Bailey says in the podcast: "A newspaper is important because it gets things on the record. What you publish in the moment becomes how we understand history." With that in mind, design a newspaper front page covering current social and political issues and interests important to you. Consider your bias and perspective: what is influencing the media you choose to share? See the [Critical Digital Literacy Education Guide](#) for more information about choosing reputable news sources.
4. Compare your page to those of 2-3 of your classmates. Which issues are covered by multiple people? What differences in coverage can you see? Did you find any issues or events that you were previously unaware of?
5. Have a class discussion: based on this exercise, do you think the media landscape in Canada today is representative of the people who live here? How does it compare to representation in the past? Do you consume a variety of media from different perspectives? If not, how can you implement changes in your own news consumption?



▲ Still from the Chloe Cooley Heritage Minute (Historica Canada)

In 1793, an enslaved woman named Chloe Cooley was violently bound by her enslaver and transported across the Niagara River and sold in the state of New York. At the time, the idea of abolition of enslavement was gaining momentum throughout the British Empire, and Cooley's experience became the catalyst for the introduction of the *Act to Limit Slavery in Upper Canada* by Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe. Watch the [Chloe Cooley Heritage Minute](#) and read her biography on [TCE](#). Have a short classroom discussion about what you have learned. Why was her enslaver not punished? Why do you think her story was chosen as the subject of a Heritage Minute? Do you think that she is an important figure in Canadian history? Why or why not? What does her story reveal about the societal conditions for enslaved people in Upper Canada at this time?

SECTION 4: EARLY BLACK IMMIGRATION

Though they were considered free, Black people in what is now Canada were often unwelcome in the predominantly white communities scattered throughout the country. Much of the inherent and systemic racism that freedom seekers had fled in the United States could also be found in their new home.

Both despite and because of this, many Black people built their own communities. Africville, Nova Scotia, was settled in the mid-19th century by formerly enslaved peoples, Maroons, Black Loyalists, and Black Refugees. By 1887, [Little Burgundy](#) housed much of Montreal's working-class, English-speaking Black community. Chatham, Ontario was settled in the early 1800s and later became a haven for freedom seekers from the United States.

In the West, the first Black immigrants to British Columbia came from California in 1858 and settled in Victoria and Salt Spring Island, after being sought out by British Columbia's first governor, James Douglas,

THE LAST BEST WEST

The Canadian government encouraged a wave of western colonization and immigration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Land in the Prairies was advertised to prospective American and European immigrants. This included advertisements placed in Black newspapers in Oklahoma, where state laws had trampled Black Americans' basic rights and freedoms, and increases in events such as lynchings caused many Black families to consider immigrating to Canada. However, the interior ministry (in charge of immigration) prioritized incoming groups by ethnicity, and in descending preference. On top of the list were Britons and white Americans, followed by northern and central Europeans. Jews, people of Asian descent, Romani people, and Black people were at the bottom of the list. Though few Black immigrants entered the country, settlers reacted to those who did with prejudice. Canadian immigration authorities attempted to stop the arrival of Black immigrants from the United States by limiting their access to immigration materials and by subjecting them to harsh medical exams at the border, even meddling with medical officials. When those measures did not work, immigration officials sent two agents to Oklahoma, whose job was to dissuade Black Americans from going to Canada.

Then, on 12 August 1911, the [Order-in-Council P.C. 1911-1324](#) was approved by the Canadian Cabinet. It proposed a one-year ban on Black immigration to Canada, intended to discourage and limit the number of African Americans who settled in the Prairies. Though the order never became law, it joined a long list of proposed immigration bans that reflected Canada's exclusionary and discriminatory ideals.

Then, on 12 August 1911, the [Order-in-Council P.C. 1911-1324](#) was approved by the Canadian Cabinet. It proposed a one-year ban on Black immigration to Canada, intended to discourage and limit the number of African Americans who settled in the Prairies. Though the order never became law, it joined a long list of proposed immigration bans that reflected Canada's exclusionary and discriminatory ideals.

Despite these obstacles, Black settlements grew into thriving communities. The Amber Valley settlement, for example, featured various businesses, a school, a church, and even had its own baseball team. To learn more, watch [The Last Best West](#) video.

Still from Africville: The Black community bulldozed by the city of Halifax (Historica Canada)



the son of a Black Barbadian-Creole woman and a white man. Douglas promised some Black Californians British citizenship after five years of land ownership, and full protection of the law in the meantime. Several hundred Black families moved to the colony, including a man named Miffin Gibbs. Spending just over a decade in Canada, Gibbs prospered in business, advocated for the Black community, and served as the first Black person elected to public office in what is now British Columbia, helping guide the province into Confederation. In the early 1900s, people began moving from Victoria and Salt Spring Island to Hogan's Alley in Vancouver, which became a cultural and social hub and the city's only largely Black neighbourhood. The Shiloh community became Saskatchewan's first Black settlement, around 1910. And in Alberta, the Amber Valley settlement was founded in 1910 by African-American families who migrated from Oklahoma, Texas, and other nearby states in response to the Canadian government's offer of free land.



▲ Athabasca Landing, Alberta (Canada. Dept. of Interior/Library and Archives Canada/PA-040745)

ACTIVITY 4.1

JOHN WARE



▲ Still from Strong and Free: John Ware podcast (Historica Canada)

Of the many settlers and cowboys living in the West during the 1800s, one of the most famous is John Ware (1845/50–1905). Ware was enslaved in the United States before gaining his freedom, working as a cowboy, and moving to Alberta. A successful rancher, he lived with his family on his own ranch near Calgary, Alberta. His wife, Mildred, came from a family of freedom seekers in Toronto. Ware is one of many Black Canadians who were able to prosper despite the widespread anti-Black discrimination they faced at both the public and governmental levels. John Ware is remembered today for his courage, physical strength, and horsemanship.



▲ John Ware, rancher (Libraries and Cultural Resources Digital Collections/University of Calgary)

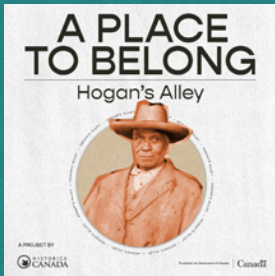
1. Watch the [video](#) and listen to the [podcast episode](#) from the Strong and Free series on John Ware, and read his [biography](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
2. In pairs, create a film proposal about John Ware and early Black settlement in the Canadian Prairies, based on your research. This proposal should include a logline, an act structure, a character list, a target audience, and a mood board using primarily historical images.
3. Keep the following in mind when deciding what events and themes to include in your proposal:
 - a. What parts of his life were considered significant at the time? What about now?
 - b. What impact did he have? Was it widespread?
 - c. What does his life reveal about the larger historical context?
 - d. What personal aspects of his life would you like to reflect? What about aspects that help us understand Canadian society at large at this time?
 - e. In what way does his story add to, or change your understanding of Black history in the Prairies, and Canada more broadly? Why is that the case?
 - f. Is Ware's story reflective of the average Black immigrant experience at the time? Why or why not?

TEACHER TIP

Take this opportunity to discuss the power of perception. Ask students to be mindful of the way John Ware's story is usually told, and how this can be damaging to our understanding of Black history in Canada.

ACTIVITY 4.2

BLACK NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SETTLEMENTS



▲ Still from A Place to Belong: Hogan's Alley podcast (Historica Canada)

1. In class or at home, listen to the **Hogan's Alley episode** from the A Place to Belong podcast series. As you learn about this neighbourhood, pay attention to the storytelling and the type of information being shared. How does the narrator connect the listener to the subject matter? What kind of emotion does that connection elicit from the listener, and how might that parallel the connection people living in Hogan's Alley had to the place? What else would you like to know about Hogan's Alley?

- In pairs, choose one of the settlements from the list below and research its history. Consider significant people, events, buildings, and cultural roots — find the heart of the settlement. Why is this community historically significant? What does it reveal about the context in which these places were settled, and the circumstances the residents faced? What can the stories of the people who settled here reveal about Black life in Canada at this time?
- Pretend you are a tour guide for your chosen settlement and put together a pamphlet or poster showcasing its history and what it is like today. Use what you have learned from listening to the Hogan's Alley podcast episode to help you decide what information to include, and how to present it to your peers.
- Place the promotional materials around the classroom. For the first 15–20 minutes, let one partner from each group explore while the other partner presents and answers questions. Then swap. Each settlement should have a unique stamp that students can receive as “proof of travel.” For your tourists to get the most out of visiting your settlement, consider getting creative with your visuals. Create a town sign, bring a prop, etc.
 - For the presenter: as your classmates come by, welcome your audience and act as a tour guide through the history of the settlement — be prepared to answer any questions they might have.
- As a class, discuss similarities and differences you've noted between these settlements. Did they develop in similar ways? What obstacles did residents face? What does this reveal about the circumstances in which these places were settled? If any settlements stand out to you, why is that the case? Did anything surprise you during your research?



▲ Klondikers Camp, Head of Yukon River (H.J. Woodside/Library and Archives Canada/PA-016157)



▲ Africville (Halifax Municipal Archives/102-16N-0065.E)



▲ Hogan's Alley, 1969 (City of Vancouver Archives)

Locate and map the following communities, which are all places where a Black population settled.

Birchtown, NS	Brindley Town / Digby , NS	Africville , NS	Cape Breton , NS	Willow Grove, NB
Montréal , QC	Buxton (Elgin), ON	Chatham , ON	Toronto , ON	Windsor , ON
Sandwich, ON	Amherstburg , ON	Colchester, ON	Owen Sound , ON	Oakville , ON
Winnipeg , MB	Amber Valley , AB	Maidstone, SK	Victoria , BC	Hogan's Alley (Vancouver), BC
Iqaluit , NU	Preston, NS	Oro Township / Oro-Medonte, ON	Truro , NS	Dresden , ON (Dawn Settlement)

SECTION 5:

IMMIGRATION AND THE CANADIAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Black people have migrated to Canada throughout its history, sometimes by force and other times by choice. In the early 20th century, a small number of Jamaicans and Barbadians migrated as labourers to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. However, immigration by people of African descent — including from the Caribbean — remained highly discouraged and restricted. The *Immigration Act* of 1910 allowed the prohibition of immigrants deemed “unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada,” which effectively allowed immigration officials to block many non-white immigrants. Because of this legislation, very few Black people from the Caribbean were allowed into Canada in the early 20th century.

Various organizations were established by the Black community in Montreal which supported and helped new Black migrants to the country. Some of these organizations include the Women’s Coloured Club of Montreal (founded in 1902) and the Negro Community

Centre (founded in 1927). Not only did these organizations provide support and resources to those in need in the Black community, but they also fought for the rights of Black Canadians decades after their establishment.

Despite Black Canadians migrating, settling, and creating their own communities across Canada, there had long been a strong and deep-seated anti-Black sentiment across the country from white Canadians. This sentiment reached a high in the early 20th century. It was in this period of “negrophobia,” a dislike and fear of Black people, that many Black Canadians across the country united and supported each other through this hostile anti-Black climate. It was also during this period that the fight for equality and basic civil rights for Black Canadians intensified, with various individuals, organizations, and groups dedicating their efforts towards this cause.

During the First and Second World Wars, Black Canadians faced anti-Black racism and resistance from military officials who didn’t want them to serve. The Second World War came in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement in Canada, and the fight for civil rights for Black Canadians continued during and after this war.

Many Canadians are aware of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, but the fight for the rights of Black and racialized communities in Canada is lesser known. Black Canadians have long fought against racism and racial segregation in many areas, including housing, education, and employment opportunities, and have always advocated for their rights. The Canadian Civil Rights Movement was led by a number of strong leaders, including organizer and activist Bromley Armstrong; the National Unity Association’s Hugh Burnett; Donald Moore, the founder of the Negro Citizenship Association; and activist and co-founder of *The Clarion* newspaper, Carrie Best, among others. These advocates and activists led the fight against racism and discrimination and pushed for improvement for all Black Canadians.



◀ Donald Moore pictured in *The Canadian Negro*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (City of Toronto Archives/Fonds 431, File 10, Item 1)

NO. 2 CONSTRUCTION BATTALION

No. 2 Construction Battalion Nominal Roll - 1916 (HC Dodge for Sponagle/States Collection/Nova Scotia Archives/1981-337) ▶



The No. 2 Construction Battalion was established in July 1916, during the First World War. After the outbreak of the First World War, Black Canadians made their way in large numbers to recruiting stations to enlist in the war and follow a long tradition of Black Canadians fighting for their country. However, once there, they were told it was a “white man’s war” and were turned away. There were several appeals and protests that took place to fight against this blatant discrimination, and after two years, the No. 2 Construction Battalion was created. Since the British War Office would not allow a Black battalion into combat, they were declared a labour battalion, which worked in England and along the front lines. Nevertheless, the creation of this battalion was essential for Black Canadians who wanted to serve their country. These men stood up to fight against anti-Black racism and in turn, for the right to serve one’s country. The No. 2 Construction Battalion serves as an important example to other Black Canadians in the fight for human and civil rights. In July 2022, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gave a formal apology to the men of this battalion.

DID YOU KNOW?

Born in Nova Scotia in 1911, Portia White was the first African-Canadian concert singer to win international acclaim. She is one of many Black Canadians who have made strong contributions to the history of arts and culture in Canada.

Watch her video [here](#).

Still from *Portia White: The African-Canadian contralto singer who won international acclaim* (Historica Canada) ▶



ACTIVITY 5.1

WEST INDIAN DOMESTIC SCHEME PODCAST

Racism combined with gender and class inequities created difficult circumstances for Black women. From the time of enslavement until the 1950s and '60s, many Black women in Canada worked as domestics, one of the limited roles available to them.

After the Second World War there was an increased demand for domestic labour, and in 1955 the West Indian Domestic Scheme (1955–1967) was put into place. The scheme encouraged women from the Caribbean to migrate to Canada, where they would become domestic workers. After working for one year, they would be granted permanent residency and would have the opportunity to bring other family members to join them in Canada. The rate of Caribbean migration in the country further increased a few years later after the passing of the 1962 *Immigration Act*. The Act allowed approximately 64,000 Black Caribbean people into the country between 1962 and 1971, fundamentally altering the balance of Black groups in Canada.

The 20th century also saw a rise in immigration from Haiti. The Haitian diaspora in Quebec began in the 1930s, though the first major wave occurred in the 1960s as a result of political changes in Haiti, followed by a second wave in the 1970s. While the first wave of political exiles was well-received and integrated quickly, the second wave was met with discriminatory backlash. Nevertheless, the Haitian community, one of the largest Black communities in Canada, has strengthened and grown over time and has made significant contributions to life in Quebec and Canada as a whole. Listen to the [Haitian Diaspora episode](#) of the Strong and Free podcast to learn more.

After the country's immigration policies became less restrictive in the late 1960s, the number of African immigrants to Canada also began to steadily increase. As immigration ramped up, people arrived from a wide range of countries including Cameroon, Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, and Uganda, among others. Many Continental Africans settled in large cities to join existing Black communities and to pursue better opportunities related to employment, housing, education, and overall quality of life.

Many events and groups of thought in this era were inspired by, or built as an extension of, those in the international sphere, particularly from the United States. Examples include Garveyism and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League, which was a leading international force for Black nationalism, pan-African identity, and self-reliance in the early 1900s and inspired several satellite organizations in Canada.

1. Listen to the Strong and Free podcast episode on the [West Indian Domestic Scheme](#).
2. Read the [West Indian Domestic Scheme](#) article on *TCE* and research how the scheme extended the limited employment opportunities available to Black women in Canada.
3. With a partner, discuss how the program limited immigration into Canada from the Caribbean (then known as the West Indies) while also creating opportunities for female workers. What impact did women who immigrated through the Domestic Scheme have on their local communities? What impact did they have on their communities in Canada? How did their arrival affect Canadian women in the labour force? Think about how neighbourhoods looked, diversity in the cultural scene, food, the labour market, etc.
4. With your partner, research an aspect of a Caribbean culture present in Canada today as a legacy of these women and share with the class in a short presentation. Your presentation should address the questions you considered above.

SLEEPING CAR PORTERS

One job that many Black men could get upon arrival in Canada was as a [sleeping car porter](#) on Canada's railway system. Major railway hubs were in cities such as Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto. Although the railways provided steady work, sleeping car porters encountered poor working conditions and anti-Black racism from passengers and management alike. In 1917, Black porters in Winnipeg established the Order of Sleeping Car Porters (OSCP) which helped secure contracts for the porters. In 1939, Black Canadian porters joined the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters labour union (BSCP,

established in the United States in 1925), where they worked together for fair and equitable treatment for Black Canadians on the railways, and fought against racism and other challenges they faced on the job. At a time when Black people were fighting for their basic human rights, the BSCP was a much-needed group that helped to fight for the rights of Black men in the workplace and had far-reaching consequences for the development of human and civil rights legislation in Canada. Learn more about the [sleeping car porters](#) on *TCE*.

Shirley Jackson, Pete Stevens, Harry Gairey, Jimmy Downs
(Library and Archives Canada/PA-212572) ▶



ACTIVITY 5.2

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Black Canadians have responded to anti-Black racism in many ways. Research a key Canadian civil rights activist, organization, or event in the movement for racial equity in the 20th century from the list below.

OPTION A: SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Choose an individual, organization, or event from the following list. Create a social media page for your selected topic. You may choose which platform you want your person or event to be featured on (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
2. Using whatever medium your platform entails (wall posts, business pages, videos, photos with captions, etc.), indicate the following information to your audience:
 - a. Who or what your subject is and what their goals are;
 - b. What their work entails, and their memberships and accomplishments;
 - c. Connections (friends, affiliated organizations, mutuals...);
 - d. Hobbies, interests, or connected events;
 - e. Their significance to the history of fighting anti-Black racism in Canada.
3. When you have completed your profile/page, 'network' with your class to make connections. Move around the classroom asking questions and looking at each other's posts. Build your network by expanding your group as you find others with shared interests, work, or friends.

OPTION B: TIMELINE

1. Choose one individual and one organization from the following list to research, or another topic approved by your teacher. Try to choose subjects from different communities or parts of the country.
2. Using your research, create a timeline for each subject. Add your subjects to the [Timeline Activity Worksheet](#), which includes some significant events that occurred during this time. Some things to consider when choosing what points to include are:
 - a. Important moments in their personal lives, such as work accomplishments, academic degrees, marriage, moving to a new place...
 - b. Connections with those around them, such as other activists and/or notable figures they may have crossed paths with.
 - c. Their impact on the civil rights movement.
3. Once you have completed your timeline, examine the course of events and take note of how the individual, organization, and significant events that occurred during this time may have overlapped.
4. In small groups, compare your timelines and find out how other individuals and organizations may have overlapped with your own. What were your group's subjects doing during each significant event on the timeline? If some occurred before their time, how might it have influenced them? Did any of your subjects influence each other?
5. As a class, move through the timeline worksheet chronologically. At each significant event, share what your subjects were doing that year or in the period surrounding it.
6. Discuss what the timeline(s) indicates about the scope of the civil rights movement. In what way were these happenings influenced by broader circumstances? Were there any noticeable patterns or progressions between some of these lives, regardless of location? Did the subjects within all three categories influence each other? Has this altered your understanding of the civil rights movement in any way (if yes, how)?

Consider colour-coding your points by subject on the timeline so it is easier to read later.

ACTIVITY 5.3

HERB CARNEGIE PODCAST

Listen to the [Herb Carnegie podcast episode](#) of Strong and Free. As a class, discuss the following questions:

1. What stood out to you the most about Herb's experiences?
2. What do you want to learn more about and why?
3. In the Herb Carnegie episode, Kwame Mason recalls an interview with Herb. One line stood out: "You're good enough to play but you're not white." Discuss how certain jobs (e.g., hockey player, sleeping car porter, or domestic servant) were racialized. Do these racial divides still exist in other jobs? How does race influence employment?
4. **OPTION A:** Write a reflection about privilege.
OPTION B: Have a class discussion about privilege.

Use the following questions as a guide for the discussion or reflection: What is privilege? What does privilege look like in the world? What qualities or traits define privilege or lack thereof? What privileges might you have yourself? What are some barriers that you face in your own life?

VIOLA DESMOND

Viola Desmond, circa 1940
(Wanda & Joe Robson/
Winnipeg Free Press)



Viola Desmond built a career and business as a beautician in Nova Scotia during the 1940s. In 1946, she challenged racist policies when she refused to leave the segregated whites-only section of a theatre, which she had purchased a ticket for. Desmond's courageous fight against segregation inspired generations of Black Canadians. Watch her Heritage Minute [here](#).

INDIVIDUALS

Joseph R. B. Whitney (<i>Canadian Observer</i> newspaper)	Ann Greenup	Fred Christie	Burnley Allan "Rocky" Jones	Dudley Laws
George Morton	Stanley Grizzle	Hugh Burnett	Joanne Bonner Jones	Leonard & Gwendolyn Johnston
Lulu Anderson	John Arthur Robinson	Bromley Armstrong	Al Hamilton (<i>Contrast</i> newspaper)	Wilma Morrison
James F. Jenkins (<i>Dawn of Tomorrow</i> newspaper)	Calvin Ruck	Donald Moore	Marlene Green	Leonard Braithwaite
Reverend Charles H. Este	Ted King	Carrie Best (<i>The Clarion</i> newspaper)	Charles Roach	Kay Livingstone
Lincoln Alexander				

ORGANIZATIONS

Kent County Civil Rights League	Black United Front (BUF)	New Brunswick Association for the Advancement of Coloured People	Coloured Hockey League	No. 2 Construction Battalion
The Hour-A-Day Study Club	Universal Negro Improvement Association	The Canadian League for the Advancement of Coloured People (CLACP)	Chatham Coloured All-Stars	Order of Sleeping Car Porters
Negro Citizenship Association	Alberta Association for the Advancement of Coloured People	The National Black Coalition of Canada (NBCC)	London Coloured Stars	<i>Toronto Telegram</i> in Dresden
The Afro-Canadian Liberation Movement (ACLM)	British Columbia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People	The Black Education Project	St. Catharines Bulldozers	Coloured Women's Club

EVENTS

Multiculturalism Policy, 1971	The Black Writers' Congress, 1968	Sir George Williams Affair	<i>Anti-Racism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards</i> guidelines	West Indian Domestic Scheme
<i>Immigration Act</i> Reforms of '62 and '67	Order-in-Council P.C. 1911-1324	<i>Racial Discrimination Act of 1944</i>	Destruction of Africville, 1964-1967	

TEACHER TIP

Take the opportunity to teach your class about systemic barriers and identifying systems of power. Discuss the impact of language on understanding identities and systems – e.g., referring to racism as a barrier, rather than one's own racial identity. It may also be prudent to remind students that privilege does not necessarily make one's life "easy"; it is an indicator of something that does not make your life more difficult.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Listen to the Herb Carnegie podcast, and read the articles on the **Coloured Hockey League** and **Trailblazing Black Canadian Athletes** on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Research Black Canadian athletes and create a trading card, including a photo, basic facts, statistics, and a short biography of an athlete of your choice.



SECTION 6:

BEYOND BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Bringing the rich history of Black people in Canada into the mainstream historical narrative is an ongoing process. Many Canadians are still less knowledgeable about Black Canadians' contributions to building this country, and learning that Canada participated in enslavement remains a surprise to many. Although many Black Canadians have left indelible, positive marks on the country, the consequences and legacies of enslavement and discrimination have also created systemic barriers that prevent Black Canadians from fully engaging in many aspects of society. Some of these legacies include anti-Black racism; over-policing of Black people; high rates of leaving school prior to graduation; police brutality and violence against Black people; health disparities; the erasure of "Blackness" across Canada; and the over-representation of Black people in Canada's prison and child welfare systems. Another subtle way that racism and discrimination are perpetrated is through racial microaggressions, which can leave targeted people feeling excluded and viewed as second-class citizens.

The erasure of Blackness and Black narratives in Canadian history is manifested in the lack of representation of Black Canadians in all levels of society and across multiple industries, like politics, education, and business, as well as the media. That is why teaching the history of Black people in Canada is so important to the understanding and appreciation of Black Canadians and their narratives.

Black History Month in Canada was introduced to the House of Commons by the Honourable Jean Augustine in December 1995, and was first celebrated across the country the following February. While Black History Month is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about the history of Black Canadians, it is important to take what we have learned about this history, as well as systemic and anti-Black racism, and attempt to address it year-round, whether at school or at home. Movements such as Black Lives Matter have worked with Black communities, Black-centric networks, and allies toward dismantling all forms of state-sanctioned oppression, violence, and brutality, and to redirect money from the police to other services affected by racism such as social housing, education, transit, and food security.



Jean Augustine came to Canada through the West Indian Domestic Scheme in 1960. She would go on to become the first Black woman elected to the House of Commons, and the first Black woman to be appointed to Cabinet. Jean was instrumental in establishing Canada's annual Black History Month in February. Read more about her achievements on [TCE](#).

◀ **Jean Augustine**
(Althea Thauberger/Library and
Archives Canada/R12496)

More recently, apologies have slowly been made from all levels of government to many communities and individuals for harm done and discrimination against them; examples include the federal apology to the No. 2 Construction Battalion, and from the Mayor of Halifax for the demolition of Africville. Yet concrete steps and reparations have not always followed these gestures. In January 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the government's recognition of the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#), which had been declared by the UN as the period between 2015–2024. He committed to allocating money towards local community supports for Black Canadian youth, as well as towards mental health programs for Black Canadians, and to funding various projects that promote, share knowledge, and build capacity in different Black communities.

Black Canadians have achieved so much despite the many systemic obstacles along the way. We as a nation have also made strides in acknowledging and confronting our racist past and addressing it in the present, but we still have more work to do to achieve equity for all Black Canadians. Part of that process includes understanding the essential role Black Canadians have played in building Canada as we know it today.

ACTIVITY 6.1

SUMMATIVE

1. Choose a sector (technology, health and medicine, education, transportation, arts and culture, manufacturing, construction and design, urban planning, real estate, communication, entrepreneurship, farming, hospitality, digital economy, etc.). Research and identify a couple Black Canadians in that field and create a profile of a Black Canadian in that sector.
2. Imagine you are a journalist working at a popular Canadian newspaper and you have interviewed the person you created a profile for. Write a newspaper profile on your interviewee, including what they do and how they contribute to their sector. You may want to include other information about the sector as well as background information about your interviewee. If you found any quotes in your research, use them as appropriate in your article.
 - a. Why is this person notable in their industry? What contributions to the sector have they made?
 - b. What obstacles have they faced in their career?
 - c. Is it important to have representation and to see Black people represented in all aspects of Canadian life, work, and culture? Why or why not? What does it mean to you to see people that represent your own experiences in the media?

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

Begin with a lead sentence that will immediately grab the attention of the reader. Your introduction should establish the context and answer the 5Ws: who, what, where, when, why (and how). Use direct quotes to help frame your story but use them sparingly for the most impact. Your main body should provide evidence to back up your story and you can either sum up your story succinctly in a traditional conclusion or find a suitable and effective closing quotation. Always be sure to review the historical background of your story to highlight relevant facts that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Some ways in which you can work towards confronting systemic and anti-Black racism include, but are not limited to:

- Continue to **educate** yourself about the Black Canadian experience, through books, podcasts, blogs, vlogs, articles, journal articles, educational television programs, etc.
- **Acknowledge** how racism has affected your life.
- **Listen** to the stories and lived experiences of Black Canadians.
- **Volunteer** your time at an organization that is fighting to dismantle anti-Black racism.
- **Write or call** your local town/city councillors to enact change in local policies/laws.
- **Write or call** your Provincial Member of Parliament to encourage change in provincial policies.
- **Write or call** your Federal Member of Parliament to encourage change in federal policies.
- **Vote** for elected representatives who reflect your views, and who are actively working to make positive change.

ACTIVITY 6.2

REFLECTING ON BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

1. What is something new you learned? Which stories resonated with you and why?
2. How have the activities you completed deepened your understanding of Black Canadian contributions and experiences?
3. Did you find it easy or difficult to find the information you needed to accomplish each activity? How did it compare to researching other topics in Canadian or world history? If it was more difficult, why do you think that is?
4. How would you describe the historical legacies of anti-Black racism? What are some of the legacies of this history in your community today?
5. What is one action that you have been motivated to take as a result of what you learned through studying Black history? What steps can be taken – individually, as a class, and as a country – to address racial oppression and systemic discrimination? How can we better recognize the successes of Black Canadians as we reconcile with these histories and ongoing legacies?

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FINANCÉ PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA



ON THE COVER: Viola Desmond, circa 1940 (Wanda & Joe Robson/Winnipeg Free Press); Mary-Ann Shadd Cary (Library and Archives Canada/C-029977); Still from A Place to Belong: Hogan's Alley podcast (Historica Canada); Still from Strong and Free podcast (Historica Canada); Still from Portia White video (Historica Canada); Still from Strong and Free: John Ware podcast (Historica Canada); Bedford Basin near Halifax, Robert Petley, 1835 (Library and Archives Canada/Acc. No. 1938-220-1); Stamp with Mathieu Dacosta (Andrew Perro and Ron Dollekamp/Canada Post, 2017); Still from Africville video (Historica Canada); Leonard Parkinson, A Captain of the Maroons (British Library); Athabasca Landing, Alberta (Canada. Dept. of Interior/Library and Archives Canada/PA-040745); Jean Augustine (Althea Thauberger/Library and Archives Canada/R12496); Shirley Jackson, Pete Stevens, Harry Gairey, Jimmy Downs (Library and Archives Canada/PA-212572); Henry Bibb (University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library); A Black Canadian Wood Cutter at Shelburne, Nova Scotia (Library and Archives Canada/Acc. No. 1970-188-1090/W.H. Cloverdale Collection of Canadiana).