



Black History Month

A guided learning journey

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Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

ccdi.ca

Guided learning on Black History Month

Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and the diverse contributions of Black communities in Canada, and beyond. [This month-long observance was officially recognized in 1995 through the efforts of Honorable Jean Augustine](#), and highlights the unique history and impact of Black Canadians within the nation's social, political, and cultural fabric.

The guide highlights three impactful initiatives that reflect the essence of Black History Month and its ongoing significance: *A Black People's History of Canada*, *British Columbia Black History Awareness Society*, and *the Nova Scotia 3D Heritage Project*. These initiatives exemplify the efforts to preserve, celebrate, and educate about Black Canadians while fostering deep engagement with this rich history and experience.

This resource guide was made and curated with a labor of love, passion, and storytelling that centers Black Stories and experiences. This guide, collectively, aims to illustrate the influence of Black communities, and fostering a deeper understanding of systemic challenges and the ongoing pursuit of equity, equality, and solidarity.

As we celebrate Black achievements, the guide acknowledges the need to confront the systemic and historical barriers that persist today. As you go through and read what this guide offers, we encourage and invite you to immerse yourself in the themes of this guide – attend events, engage in conversations, support initiatives that celebrate and honor Black history and drive meaningful change.

Learn more about the [history of Black History Month from BC Black History Awareness Society](#). Additionally, CCDI offers actionable toolkits in support for Black History Month, including [Sustaining the Black Lives Matter movement in the workplace](#), as well as the [Glossary of terms](#) for more information on key terms used in this guide.

A Black people's history of Canada

“Why isn't there more Black history in Canadian schools?”

This is a question posed by this research project led by Dr. Afua Cooper, an award-winning historian and author. Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and Dalhousie University, the projects' purpose is to conduct new research into Canada's rich African Canadian history and heritage, as well as filling the gaps in Black Canadian history education. Dr. Afua Cooper has assembled a team of schools and graduate students designed to answer and solve the generations-long problem of “why isn't there more Black history in Canadian schools?”. She is a multidisciplinary scholar, author, artist, and has put Black studies on the map. She launched the Black Canadian Studies Association, as well as founding and coordinating the Black studies program at Dalhousie University. Her engagement with Black studies, anti-racism, DEIA, and epistemic disruptions in the Canadian academy has been noted for its significant contributions nationally and internationally. Undertaking this project, Dr. Cooper's vision is foundational to creating a new classroom in educating Canadians about the century's long history of African Canadians, the research honors the resilience and struggles of Black communities and offers a comprehensive narrative that is crucial to understanding Canada's broader history.

Learn more about this project and about Dr. Afua Cooper:

- [A Black People's History of Canada Project](#)
- [Dr. Afua Cooper's Biography – University of Toronto Scarborough](#)
- [Government of Canada Invests in African Canadian History Education](#)
- [“A Black People's History of Canada” set to produce seismic shift in education about Canadian history](#)

BC Black History Awareness Society

The British Columbia Black History Awareness Society plays a pivotal role in commemorating Black History Month by fostering awareness and celebrating the contributions of Black people in British Columbia. Since its inception in 1994, the society has worked to raise visibility around the achievements and challenges faced by Black Canadians, both historically and in the present. Much like *A Black People's History of Canada*, the Society aims to highlight the impact of Black communities in amplifying Black Canadians across the nation. Celebrating Black history, not only in February, but year-round, these efforts gain more prominence by providing a platform for diverse events, educational workshops, presentations, and cultural events connecting individuals to the rich heritage of Black Canadians. In doing so, the Society makes Black History Month not simply just a commemoration, but a catalyst for year-round dialogue, growth, and learning.

Their purpose is:

- Advancing education by researching, documenting, and disseminating information to the public about the past, present, and future contributions and achievements of Black people in British Columbia to increase understanding and awareness, promote diversity, and overcome stereotypes
- Benefit the community by advancing knowledge, preservation, and displaying of items of historical significance concerning Black British Columbians
- Benefit the community through promoting racial diversity by offering education, assistance and opportunities for Black people in British Columbia who face unique and economic barriers to incorporate into the multicultural society of Canada.

Learn more about this project:

- [British Columbia Black History Awareness Society](#)
- [British Columbia Black History Awareness Society – History and Purpose](#)
- [British Columbia Black History Awareness Society – BC's Black Pioneers: Their Industry and Character Influenced the Vision of Canada](#)
- Canadian Race Relations' Glossary – Definitions of key concepts relevant to race relations, the promotion of Canadian identity, belonging, and the mutuality of citizenship rights and responsibilities
 - Select definitions [in English here](#) with these and additional terms [in French here](#).

Nova Scotia Heritage 3D:

The Nova Scotia 3D Virtual Museum is an innovative digital initiative created by the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia in partnership with Halifax-based Smarter Spaces. This virtual platform brings decades of Black history to life, offering an interactive and immersive way to explore the province's rich cultural history from anywhere in the world. Upon opening the website, users are greeted with the options of visiting different museums: Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, and Africville Museums. These museums each offer unique exhibits and resources that showcase and illustrate the depth and diversity of Black Nova Scotian history.

Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia:

Dedicated to preserving the history and culture of African Nova Scotians, this museum is the central hub of the virtual experience, and it includes:

- Displays tools, photographs, and personal items from early Black settlers
- Explores the arrival of Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, their contributions, and challenges
- Oral history and multimedia exhibits that capture the voices of Black Nova Scotians
- Educational panels and comprehensive overviews of events such as the abolition of slavery, Civil Rights Movement, and local contributions to these efforts

Black Loyalist Heritage Centre:

This exhibit highlights the arrival of Black Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution:

- The Virtual Journey of Migration chronicles the perilous journey of Black Loyalists to Nova Scotia
- Detailed displays of Birchtown, one of the largest free Black settlements in the world in the 18th century
- Digitized records including the Book of Negroes that documented the names of the Black Loyalists
- Explores the challenges of resettlement, discrimination, and resilience

Africville Museum:

Africville was a vibrant Black community in Halifax who were forcibly displaced in the 1960s, and this museum honors that legacy. It offers the opportunity to explore the story of Africville, its cultural importance, and its enduring impact on Canadian history:

- A virtual reconstruction of Africville that shows interactive models detailing what Africville looked like
- Artifacts, photographs, and letters documenting daily life, celebration, and the community spirit

- The museum also details the governments forced removal of Africville residents and their subsequent fight for justice and reparations

Learn more about the Nova Scotia Heritage 3D Project by visiting their website: [Nova Scotia Heritage 3D](#)

Additional Resources in English

Here is a way to stay connected to news centring Black Canadians:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/beingblackincanada>

<p>Books to explore</p> <p>Sister Outsider (Audre Lorde)</p> <p>The Book of Negroes (Laurence Hill)</p> <p>The Hanging of Angelique (Afua Cooper)</p> <p>Black Ice: The Lost History of the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes, 1895 – 1925</p>	<p>Visual experiences</p> <p>The Myth of the Black Woman</p> <p>Interviews with Black settlers:</p> <p>Remember Africville</p>
<p>Podcasts</p> <p>BlacktoCanada:</p> <p>Historica Canada – Strong and Free series:</p> <p>Teachers like Us: Black History Month 101 (just one episode):</p> <p>Code Switch</p>	<p>Articles to learn more</p> <p>Here’s the story behind Black History Month – and why it’s celebrated in February – NPR</p> <p>Knowing the Past Opens the Door to the Future: The Continued Importance of Black History Month – The National Museum of African American History and Culture</p> <p>Here’s the History of Black History Month... - BC Black History Awareness Society</p>

Please note: There may be a cost associated with viewing or listening to some selections. We encourage you to contact your local library or book seller for availability. Some of the selected visual choices may showcase authentic experiences and stories, while others may focus on fictionalized retellings.

Additional Resources in French

<p>Livres à explorer</p> <p>Le ventre de l'Atlantique</p> <p>La pendaison d'Angélique (The Hanging of Angelique) - Afua Cooper</p>	<p>Expériences visuelles</p> <p>Kanaval</p> <p>Le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs avec Sarahmée</p> <p>Ressource pédagogique Mois de l'histoire des Noirs</p>
<p>Balados</p> <p>Portrait de Noirs au Canada – episode 1</p> <p>Fort et libre</p>	<p>Articles pour en savoir plus</p> <p>Mois de l'histoire des Noirs... en chiffres</p> <p>L'histoire des Noirs et l'antiracisme au Canada</p> <p>Engagement collectif 2024 : progrès et perspectives antiracistes dans le secteur de la coopération internationale au Canada</p>