

2024

BLACK HISTORY

IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA



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PROJECT



For Black History Month, the Edmonton Heritage Council (EHC) and our initiative Edmonton City as Museum Project (ECAMP) have created this document as a resource to bring together just a small sample of the EHC-supported programming that enriches our city in February and throughout the year. See also: ECAMP's recent blog post.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2024

This year, the City of Edmonton, Africa Centre, Edmonton Community Foundation, and Edmonton Heritage Council partnered to provide resources to amplify and support the efforts of organizations that work to uplift Black communities.

The [Anti-Black Racism Plan](#) recommended that the City of Edmonton work with community to institutionalize the month-long commemoration of Black History Month. Black History Month is a special moment for Edmonton, recognizing the legacy of African, Caribbean, and Black Canadians and their communities in our city.

To learn more about the projects funded through the Black History Month Initiative and to sign up for Black History Month events, please visit <https://www.nbccedmonton.ca/black-history-month/>.

ECAMP PODCAST

The Points System, Caribbean Immigration & Neighbourhoods as Corporate Artifacts – Season 2, Ep. 9

This episode includes a conversation with Donna Coombs-Montrose as she shares her experience of immigrating to Canada and getting involved with the Cariwest Festival.

Do It Together: DIY Art and Music Organizing in Edmonton, Season 2, Ep. 10

Brown, Black & Fierce Collective is among the projects discussed in this episode focusing on Queer arts spaces in Edmonton

FILM/VIDEO WORK SUPPORTED BY HERITAGE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM (HCIP)

Coaching While Black (dir: Alex Eskandarkhah)

The story of Texas-born basketball coach Don “Tex” Phillips and the impact his work has had on those involved with Edmonton-area programs including NAIT Ooks.

My Body Is a Poem/The World Makes With Me (dir: Brandon Wint)

A personal documentary about belonging, familial love and Canadian colonial histories.

Beyond Curls & Kinks (dir: Osas Eweka-Smith)

This documentary reveals some of the ways Black women challenge beauty standards and explore the complex relationship they have with their coily kinky curly hair (and its connection to questions of identity).

ECAMP VIRTUAL EXHIBITS

Edmonton Living Rooms

The permanent virtual exhibition of *Edmonton Living Rooms* expands upon the previous in-person exhibitions developed in partnership with the Multi-cultural Health Brokers Co-op and funded by the Government of Canada. The exhibition highlights the stories of seven refugee and newcomer communities, including compelling narratives from African diaspora communities (such as those of Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Eritrean backgrounds). This rich online resource welcomes visitors to explore stories of celebration, grief, and beauty.



[Watch this video to learn more about the Eritrean Coffee Ceremony, as shared by Tigist for the exhibit.](#)

And Still We Rise – A Black Presence In Alberta, Late 1800s to 1970s

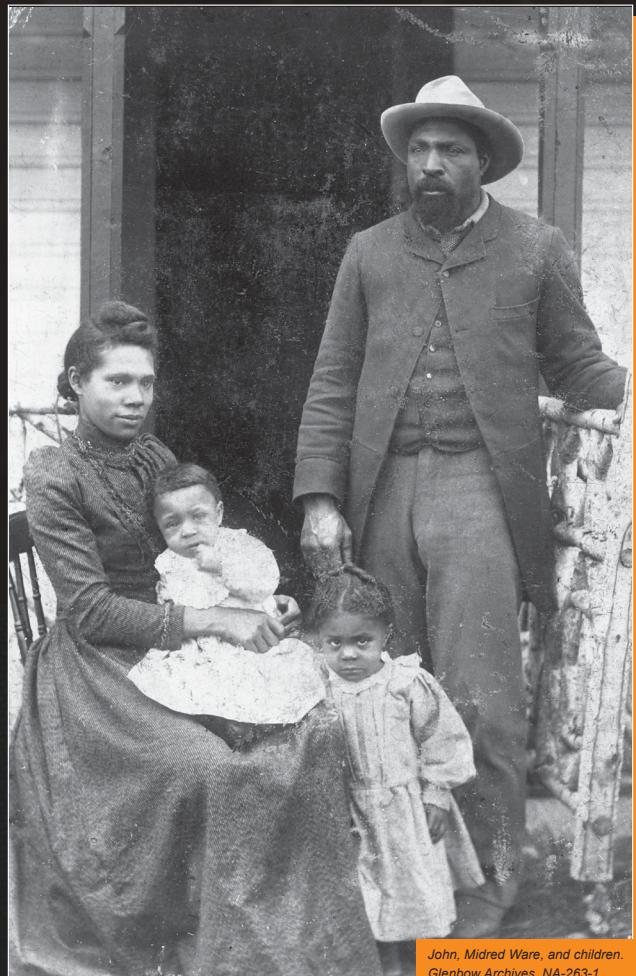
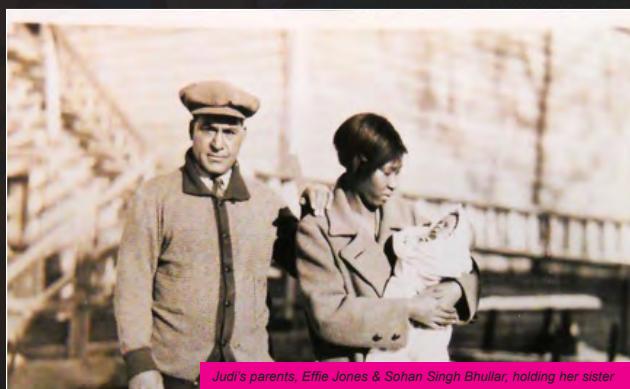
And Still We Rise explores the stories of Black Settlers to Alberta, starting in the late 1800s through to the early 1970s. The exhibition explores themes including arrival, changing social conditions, and challenging stereotypes, illustrating that Black Albertans are woven into the fabric of Alberta. Originally a physical exhibition developed and written by Dr. Jennifer Kelly, this virtual exhibition makes the photos, videos, and stories accessible to a wider audience.

Explore the exhibit through these timelines:



1900 – 1920

[AN EARLY PRESENCE: INDIVIDUALS AND SINGLE FAMILIES](#)



1921 – 1945

[COMMUNITY FORMATION, ACTIVISM & CITIZENSHIP](#)

1945 – 1970

[IMMIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE](#)

BLACK HISTORY IN ALBERTA STORY COLLECTION

Edmonton's Gospel Music Scene by Anmarie Bailey

Since the mid-20th Century, Edmonton has enjoyed a rich, vibrant gospel music tradition with roots dating back to the early 1900s, when Black American immigrants came north seeking escape from the oppression of the Deep South.

Judi Singh: A Black & South Asian Musician from 1950s-70s Edmonton by Poushali Mitra

The story of a respected and pioneering figure in Edmonton's music scene whose musical partnership with Tommy Banks is only the most public of her many achievements.

Cariwest Festival by Donna Coombs-Montrose

Since its founding in 1984 by Western Carnival Development Association (WCDA), CARIWEST – Caribbean Arts Festival has played an essential role in maintaining and advancing the legacy of the Caribbean-Canadian immigrant community.

Once a Teacher, Always a Teacher by Jeannette Austin-Odina

The personal recollections of a longtime educator in Edmonton, tracing back to her early years in Trinidad and Tobago.

Vivacious Caribbean Teachers by Etty Shaw-Cameron

A profile of several educators and school staff who came to Alberta from the Caribbean in the 1960s in response to calls for teaching talent from afar.

Edmonton's Caribbean Journey by Donna Coombs-Montrose

Insights into the newcomer experience during significant streams of migration from Caribbean countries to Edmonton.

BLACK HISTORY IN ALBERTA STORY COLLECTION (CONTD.)

The Last Black West: Oklahoma Freedmen Seek Refuge in Alberta, Part 1 by Dr. Russell Cobb

The Last Black West: Oklahoma Freedmen Seek Refuge in Alberta, Part 2 by Dr. Russell Cobb

The Last Best West: Hattie's Place, Part 3 by Dr. Russell Cobb

A rich three-part story covering the often unexpected ways communities are formed.

The Porter: Building a Better Canada for All by Donna Coombs-Montrose

A glimpse into what life was like for the thousands of Black men who worked as porters for the Pullman train companies.

Roads of Misery: Following an Afro-Indigenous Family from Oklahoma to Edmonton (And Back Again) by Dr. Russell Cobb

An intriguing portrait (marked by the perennial themes of oil money and fake news) of one remarkably resilient family's challenges and their continuing legacy.



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