

Black History Month: A Deputation to the Mayor of the Town of Newmarket

Speaker: Jerisha Grant-Hall
Chairperson
Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA)

Resources Prepared by Pauline Jones - Board of Director (at Large)

1/20/2020

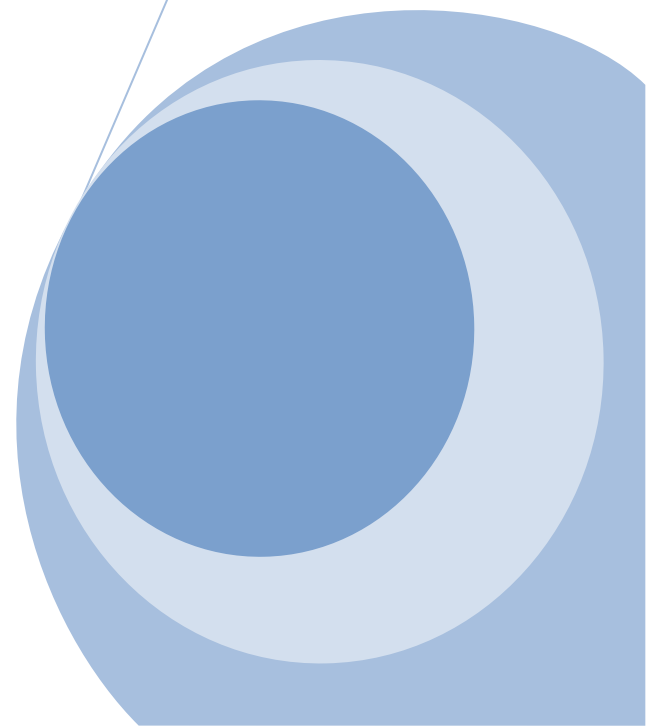


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1. Proclamation and Rationale

The Corporation of the Town of Newmarket

Office of the Mayor

Proclamation

Whereas: Black History Month recognizes the contributions that People of African and Caribbean descent have made to Canada, shaping its identity; and

Whereas: Black History Month was first recognized in Ontario as February 1993, marking the 200th anniversary of the passage of legislation prohibiting the importation of slaves into Upper Canada; and

Whereas: The United Nations proclaimed 2015-2024 the Decade for people of African Descent, an important step in the international community recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected; and

Whereas: Black History Month continues to provide the Town of Newmarket with the opportunity to celebrate the contributions and vital role that Canadians of African descent have made to strengthen the social and cultural mosaic of our community, province and country; and

Now, Therefore: I, John Taylor, Mayor of the Town of Newmarket, do hereby proclaim

February 1 - 29, 2020

As

Black History Month

In the Town of Newmarket and do commend its thoughtful observance to all citizens of our municipality.

Dated this ____ day of _____

His Worship, Mayor John Taylor

NACCA

est.2018

NACCA

est.2018

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www.naccacommunity.ca

C/o Ms. Lisa Lyons Director, Legislature Services Town Clerk

Corporate Services Commission, Town of Newmarket, Ontario

October 31, 2019

Dear Ms Lyons:

In 1995 a Federal proclamation declared February as Black History Month in Canada.

On Behalf of the Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association, I would like to respectfully request that the month of February 2020 be proclaimed Black History Month in the Town of Newmarket. The period is from February 1, 2020 to February 29, 2020.

The purpose of Black History Month:

- To provide opportunity for the Town of Newmarket to formally commemorate and recognize the past and present contributions that African Canadians make to the life of Canada in such areas as education, medicine, art, culture, public service, economic development, politics and human rights.
- It also essentially seeks to level the imbalance in historical perspective. Few Canadians know that slavery once existed in Canada, or that many of the British Loyalists who came here after the American Revolution were Black.

Enclosed you will find a composed proclamation which we hope the Mayor will sign to memorialize this proclamation in the town of Newmarket.

As indicated in the application, we seek to have a lighting ceremony on February 13, 2020.

NACCA is prepared to host a variety of arts and cultural exhibitions to coincide with this period.

A schedule of events and activities will be available on November 30, 2019.

Sincerely,



Jerisha Grant-Hall
Chairperson, Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA)

2. Press Release - BHM 2020



est.2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 2020



KICK OFF NEWMARKET'S MONTH OF BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATIONS WITH ACTOR, MUSICIAN AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST, SEAN MAURICETTE

The Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association (NACCA) is hosting a series of events for Black History Month 2020 in partnership with the Town of Newmarket.

Order of Canada recipient, Dr. Rita Cox, a popular cultural story teller will provide joy and laughter at the Aurora Public Library on February 1, 2020 at 2:00.

Following the Town of Newmarket's inaugural proclamation of February as Black History Month, NACCA is hosting *The Heart of Africa: Retracing Our History* at the Newmarket Old Town Hall located at 460 Botsford Street, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m on February 8, 2020. The month of celebrations will centre on pre-colonial Black History contributions and achievements.

The main event will feature a keynote speech by Canadian actor Sean Mauricette (aka SUBLIMINAL). Mauricette is the recipient of the 2012 Medal of Appreciation from the United Nations Association of Canada for his work with youth in Canada and abroad.

Sandra Whiting renowned speaker and storyteller is the Master of Ceremonies for the day's event. Visitors will have the chance to enjoy steelpan music, Afro-Caribbean Cuisine and spoken word poetry, while participating in traditional drumming, and shopping the Black-owned marketplace.

Featuring the work of Toronto-based artists, Ekow Nimako, Adeyemi Adegbesan the gallery exhibit will be on display from January 29 – February 22, 2020. The work of a

contemporary African and Caribbean dance choreographer and dancer, Collette Murray from Coco Collective, will accompany the exhibits official launch on February 8, 2020.

On Thursday, February 13, 2020, Riverwalk Commons and the Fred A. Lundy Bridge, located on Water Street, will be illuminated in yellow to commemorate Black History Month.

On February 21 registrants will join Chef Maxine Knight RHN, Culinary Program Director for York Region Food Network in an interactive cooking demonstration featuring Pre-colonial African food to modern day Caribbean Cuisine.

On Thursday, February 27, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., the Nemarket Public Library will host author Zalika Benta-Reid, a Giller Prize nominated Toronto-based writer. Her most recent work *Frying Plantain*, set in Toronto's Little Jamaica, is comprised of 12 stories that highlight the difficulty of growing up as a second-generation Jamaican-Canadian.

For more information about NACCA events go to www.naccacommunity.ca

About NACCA:

The Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association is an emerging association in the Newmarket area, providing strong leadership for the resident Black community, especially focusing on opportunity for Black youth. An aspect of NACCA's framework is to build bridges that promote intercultural understanding.

-30-

For more information including media and interview requests, please contact:

Jerisha Grant-Hall, OCELT, MA

Chairperson

Newmarket African Caribbean

Canadian Association (NACCA)

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www.naccacommunity.ca

3. A History of Black History Month in Ontario and Canada

Around 1950, Black History began to be celebrated by railroad porters within Toronto's Black community. The porters had learned of it on their travels in the United States. The Canadian Negro Women's Association hosted Negro History Week and petitioned the City to create Black History Month in the 1950s but it was not until the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) was founded in 1978, and petitioned the City of Toronto to have February proclaimed Black History Month that the celebration started to make inroads into the entire community. In 1995, the OBHS successfully lobbied the federal government to have February declared as Black History Month.

In December 1995, the Parliament of Canada officially recognized February as Black History Month, following a motion introduced by the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, the Honorable Jean Augustine.

Black History Month is celebrated in February in the United States and Canada, while in Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom it is observed in October.

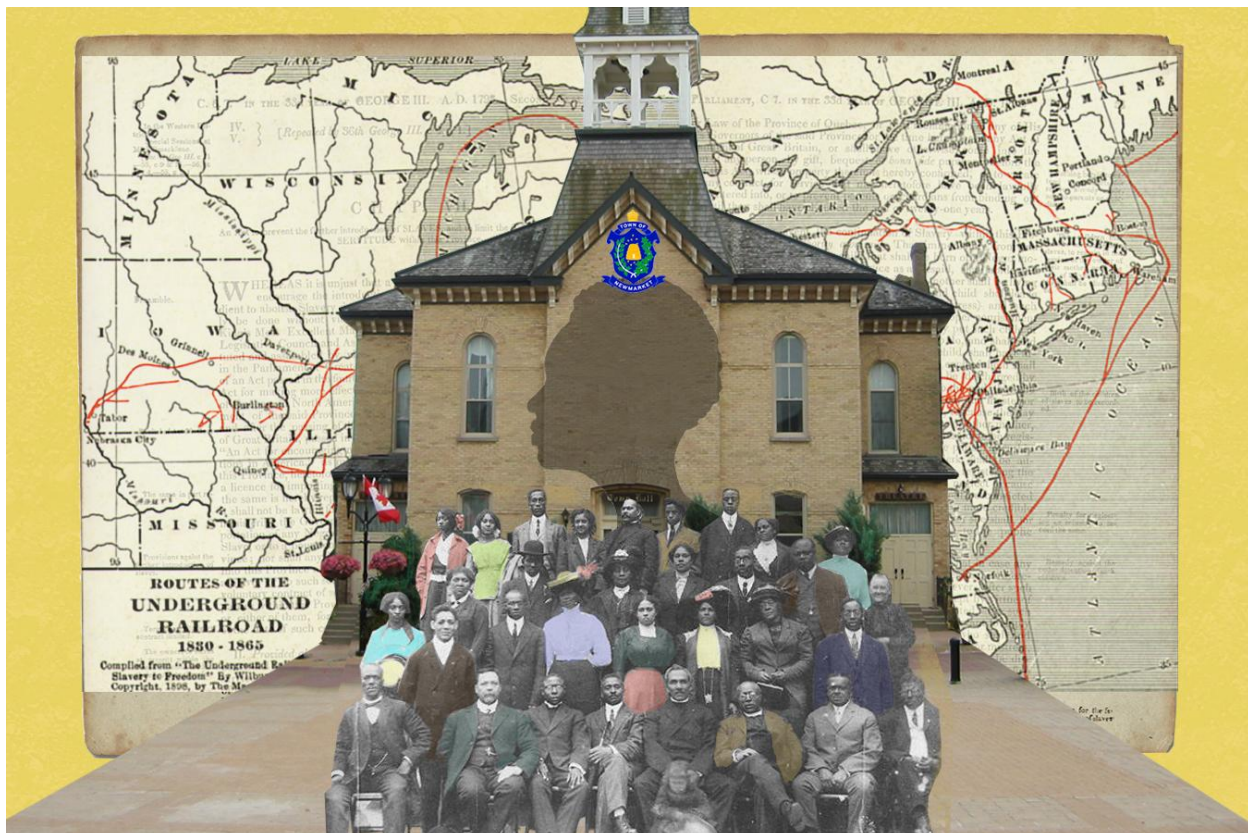
4. Focus on York Region

The people and milestones that shaped one of the province's most diverse regions

BY TIFFANY CRAWFORD

When it comes to Black history, Canadians are sometimes more aware of contributions made by American icons, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Rosa Parks, than our own heroes. (We should also acknowledge that sometimes we're more aware of anti-Black racism in the United States than our own biases.)

From the earliest Black settlements in the Maritimes to the Chatham-Kent region of Ontario, which played an important role in the Underground Railroad, to smaller settlements in British Columbia and Alberta, to modern role models, there's plenty to learn about Black Canadian history. But maybe it's best to start close to home—so, here's what you should know about the Black history of York Region, one of Ontario's most diverse communities.



HENRY HISSON'S ROAD TO AFFLUENCE

After escaping to Canada through the Underground Railroad in the 1800s, Henry Hisson, his wife and other former slaves founded a settlement for Blacks in East Gwillimbury. The settlement provided refuge to several men and their families, many of whom were hired to work on a nearby sawmill owned by William Cane, Newmarket's first mayor. Hisson, who later purchased land from Cane, became the most affluent Black man in the area due to his successful charcoal company.



WALTER ROLLING EDUCATES GENERATIONS

King Township's first Black educator, Walter Rolling, shaped young minds for 41 years. Rolling, who started teaching at SS #23 Kinghorn in 1895, earned less than white teachers at the school during his first year. But, 15 years later, when he was offered a senior teaching position at another school (and a significant raise), he turned it down in favour of staying at Kinghorn, where he'd sometimes end up teaching the children of his former students.



THE MYSTERY CABIN IN RICHMOND HILL

In the 1990s, archaeologists uncovered the remnants of a cabin near Yonge Street and Elgin Mills Road in Richmond Hill. Broken pipes date back to between 1843 and 1871—but for years, no one knew who had lived there. Now, thanks to York University researcher and librarian Guylaine Petrin, we might. Apparently, several Black families took refuge in Richmond Hill after fleeing the United States to avoid being captured and sold into slavery. Historians still aren't certain why the families chose Richmond Hill, but they believe the distance from the U.S. border and the opportunity to work might have played a role.

<https://locallove.ca/places/7-things-you-should-know-about-the-black-history-of-york/#.XhoOnshKgdW>

Although not in York Region, but in proximity:

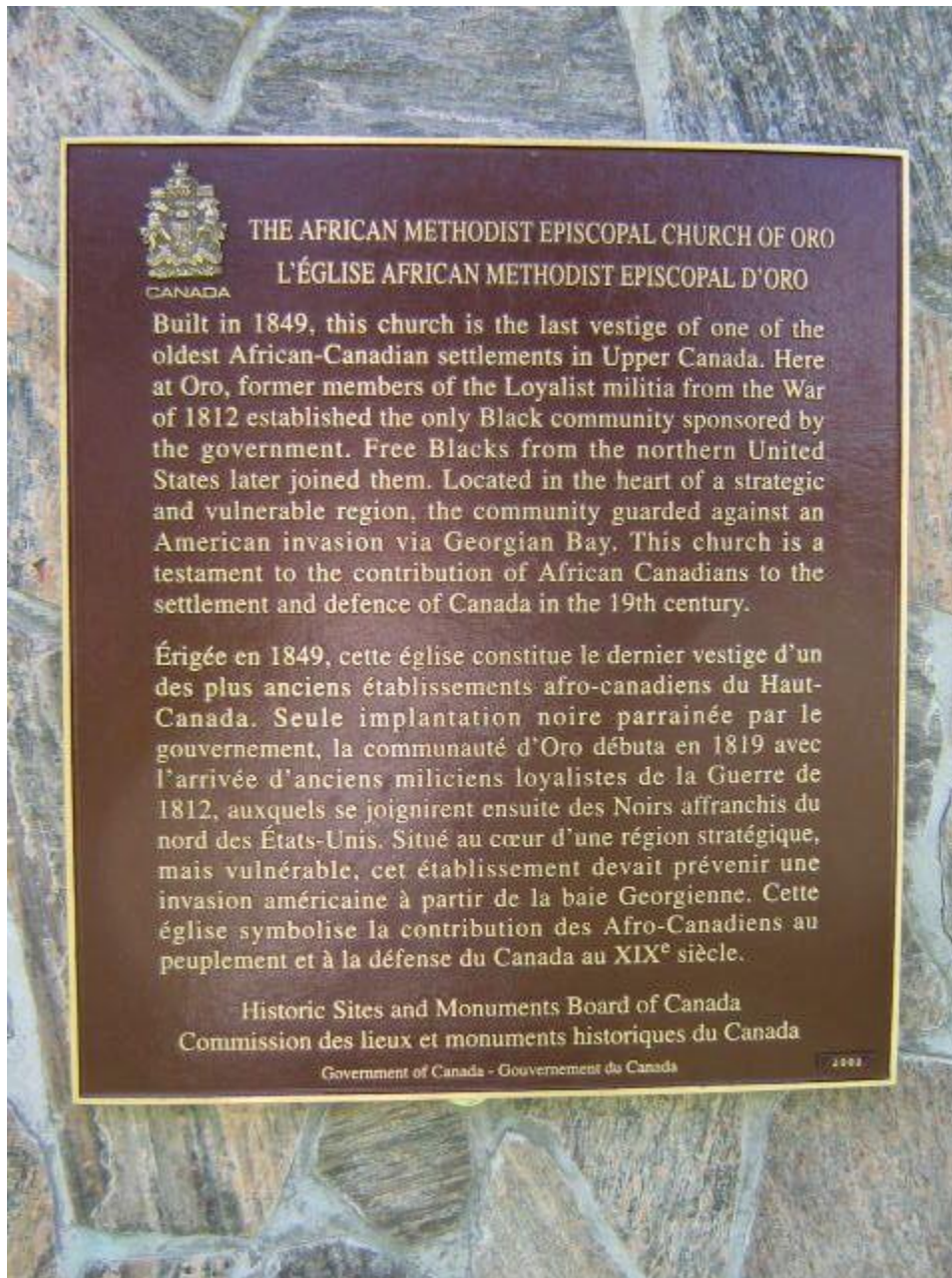
ORO AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH - National Historic Site of Canada

The Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church, built between 1846 and 1849, is a designated National Historic Site. It is one of the last extant buildings erected by a community of African Canadians whose roots were uniquely anchored in the history of United Empire Loyalists and represents the important role that Black militiamen played in the defense of Upper Canada. The Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church is one of, if not, the oldest African log church still standing in North America. This Church stands as a testament to both the Black Settlers who carefully crafted and cared for it for nearly 75 years and passionate community volunteers who have worked diligently to preserve it since its abandonment in the 1920's.



CONSTRUCTION DATE(S): 1849/01/01

LOCATION: 1645 Line 3 N., Oro-Medonte



The Oro Black settlement was a unique approach to integrating African Canadians into a farming community. The idea for an African Canadian community originated in 1783 with Sir Guy Carleton, Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America. During the American Revolution, Carleton had promised that the slaves of non-Loyalists who

joined the British Army would have their freedom and protection from re-enslavement. Black soldiers not only fought with the British during the American Revolution, but also as the “Coloured Corps”, a trusted unit of the Upper Canadian militia during the War of 1812. Between 1819 and 1826, the British granted 25 plots of land in Oro County to Black settlers, eleven of them former soldiers who received their grants in acknowledgement of military service. Although the area had strategic value, the land was both remote and agriculturally poor. Only nine of the original grant recipients took up their plots, settling along an area of the Penatanguishine Road known as Wilberforce Street. In 1829-1831, the settlement was augmented by thirty more families. They built Oro Church in 1847, and it remained active until around 1900 when the community itself faded away. The British Methodist Episcopal Church declared the building abandoned in 1916. Local residents rallied to preserve it in 1947, in 1956, and again after vandalism in 1981.

Source: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes, June 2000.

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12100>

5. African Canadian Key Historic Events

The first recorded person of African heritage to set foot in what would become Canada arrived on our shores some 400 years ago. It is believed that, in 1604, Mathieu Da Costa arrived with the French explorers Pierre Du Gua De Monts and Samuel de Champlain. Da Costa, a free man, worked as an interpreter, providing an invaluable link with the Mik'maq people encountered by the Europeans.

Slavery existed in Canada from 1628 until it was abolished in Upper Canada in 1793 and throughout the entire British Empire in 1833.

The first known enslaved African, Olivier LeJeune, was recorded in 1628. He was brought to Canada from Africa as a young child and given the name of one of his owners, a priest.

In 1779, in an effort to win the War of American Independence (1775-1783), the British invited all Black men, women and children to join the British cause and win their freedom for doing so. Many accepted the invitation, and as a result 10 percent of the United Empire Loyalists coming into the Maritimes were Black.

In 1793, the *Abolition Act* was passed in Upper Canada, now known as Ontario. This law freed enslaved Africans aged 25 and over and made it illegal to bring enslaved Africans into Upper Canada. Consequently, Upper Canada became a safe haven for runaway enslaved Africans. The *Abolition Act* also made Canada the first jurisdiction in the British Empire to move toward the abolition of slavery.

In 1807, the [Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade](#) received Royal Assent and became law throughout the British Empire. It was the result of a long and arduous campaign in the British Parliament by an alliance of Evangelical Anglicans and Quakers led by William Wilberforce, M.P. (1759-1833).

In 1833, the *British Imperial Act* [abolished slavery throughout the Empire](#), including Canada. Between 1800 and 1865, approximately 20,000 Black people escaped to Canada via the Underground Railway.

Historica Canada has a more comprehensive timeline of Black History in Canada:

During the War of 1812, the Coloured Corps fought in the Battle of Queenston Heights, a decisive engagement with the Americans. The Corps had been established thanks to Richard Pierpoint, a Black Loyalist and true Canadian hero.

<http://blackhistorycanada.ca/timeline.php?id=1600>

<http://blackhistorycanada.ca/timeline.php?id=1700>

<http://blackhistorycanada.ca/timeline.php?id=1800>

<http://blackhistorycanada.ca/timeline.php?id=1900>

6. ABOUT NACCA



Image: looking ahead

Our Framework

As an association, we operate within an Anti-Oppression and Anti-Black Racism paradigm to:

- Build bridges that promote intercultural understanding.
- Create opportunities for community engagement that support a sense of belonging.
- Increase awareness of issues affecting and relating to Black youth and culture.
- Embrace prospects within the community to address racism, inequality and discrimination.
- Seek opportunities for positive interaction that will foster pride in Black history, culture and identity.

Who We Are

Mission

A group of like-minded individuals who are committed to sharing and celebrating our stories– the stories that form the foundation of our collective history.

Vision

To be a community that is strong and connected, where Black youth are connected to their past while firmly stepping into their future, and where the town of Newmarket and environs are welcoming and supportive.

Contact Us

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Follow [nacca newmarket](#)



Web: www.naccacommunity.ca



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NEWMARKET
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(NACCA)

*Preserving our culture and
history, one story at a time*

A non-profit organization, that brings people together in a positive way.

What we offer:

1. **Mentorship and support programs** for Black youth and students around culture, education and entrepreneurship.
2. **Arts program** that showcase the creativities and talents within the Black community.
3. **Educational programs** for the entire family that teach, share and celebrate Black history.
4. **Legal, holistic health and family counseling referral services.**
5. Skills development **summer camp, summer student volunteer and employment program** for Black youth.
6. Annual **scholarship program.**
7. **Mental wellness program.**
8. **Seniors outreach program** and so much more!