

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 1) *The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander*

**The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander** was born in 1922 in Toronto. He served with the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War, between 1942 and 1945. He was educated at Hamilton's McMaster University where he graduated in Arts, and Toronto's Osgoode Hall School of Law where he passed the bar examination in 1965. Mr. Alexander was appointed a Queen's Counsel and became a partner in a Hamilton law firm from 1963 to 1979. He was the first black person to become a Member of Parliament in 1968 and served in the House of Commons until 1980. He was also federal Minister of Labour in 1979–1980.

In 1985, Lincoln Alexander was appointed Ontario's 24th Lieutenant Governor, the first member of a visible minority to serve as the Queen's representative in Canada. During his term in office, which ended in 1991, youth and education were hallmarks of his mandate. He then accepted a position as Chancellor of the University of Guelph. In 1996, he was chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and was also made Honorary Commissioner for the International Year of Older Persons Ontario celebrations.

The Honourable Lincoln Alexander was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada and to the Order of Ontario in 1992, and in June 2006, he was named the "Greatest Hamiltonian of All Time."

Mr. Alexander died on October 19, 2012 at age 90.

## 2) *Marie-Joseph Angélique*

While Canada did become a safe haven for runaway slaves, this country does have its own history of slavery. Marie-Joseph Angélique was a slave owned by François Poulin de Francheville in Montreal.

In the spring of 1734, a fire that started at the Francheville's home destroyed forty-six buildings in the colony, including the Hôtel-Dieu hospital. It is alleged that Marie-Joseph set the fire "out of wickedness" to cover her plan to escape slavery and travel to New England with her white lover.

She was captured, brought to trial and, under torture confessed to the crime. The evidence, however — the testimony of 20 witnesses, none of whom saw her commit the crime — was circumstantial. Her sentence, death by hanging, was carried out on June 21, 1734, in front of the burned remains of the Francheville's home.

## 3) *Donovan Bailey*

Donovan Bailey is one of the greatest sprinters of all time. As someone who held the world record for the 100 metres, and the title of World Champion and Olympic Champion, it is not surprising that *Track and Field News* named him "Athlete of the Decade" in the 100 metres, and that the rest of us knew him as "The World's Fastest Man."

Canadians were proud when this Jamaican-born athlete dominated the field at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, winning gold in the 100 metre and the 4 x 100-metre relay. After retiring from competitive racing in 2001, he began a successful career in the business world.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 4) Carrie Best

Carrie Best was born on March 4, 1903, in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, to James and Georgina Ashe Prevoe.

In 1925, she married Albert T. Best and had a son, J. Calbert Best. Later, she became a foster mother to Berma, Emily, Sharon and Aubrey Marshall.

During the 1940s, Mrs. Best and her son Cal were arrested for sitting downstairs in the whites-only seats at the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow. Consequently, the pair was charged with disturbing the peace, convicted and fined.

In 1946, Mrs. Best founded *The Clarion*, the first Black-owned and published Nova Scotia newspaper. In 1952, her radio show, called *The Quiet Corner*, went on the air. It aired for 12 years and was broadcast on four radio stations throughout Canada's Maritime Provinces. In 1968, she was hired as a columnist for the *Pictou Advocate*, a newspaper based in Pictou, Nova Scotia. The column ran until 1975 under the heading of "Human Rights."

The following are some of Carrie Best's most important achievements:

- Member of the Order of Canada in 1974
- Awarded the Queen Elizabeth Medal in 1977
- Officer of the Order of Canada in 1979
- Awarded an honorary doctor of civil laws (DC.L.) from the University of King's College, Halifax, in 1992
- Founded the Kay Livingstone Visible Minority Women's Society of Nova Scotia in 1975
- Inducted into the Nova Scotia Black Wall of Fame in 1980
- Received the Harry Jerome Award in 1986
- Received the Harambee Membership Plaque in 1987
- Received the Black Professional Women's Group Award Certificate in 1989
- Received the Minister's Award of Excellence in Race Relations—Minister of State for Multiculturalism, in 1990
- Received the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Award in 1991
- Received the Town of New Glasgow Award for work in race relations in 1992
- Received the Congress of Black Women Certificate in 1993

Carrie Best died in July 2001 in New Glasgow.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 5) Thornton and Lucy Blackburn

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, like many of the Underground Railroad refugees, headed for the towns and cities where they could find work and where they would help mould the character of their new homes.

The Blackburns were fugitive slaves from Kentucky who originally settled in Detroit. However, their former owner tracked them down there and tried to return them to slavery. In a highly publicized escape that left Detroit engulfed in riots, the Blackburns were able to make it to Canada. The Canadian Courts defended them against the threat of extradition. This was seen nationally and internationally as a symbol of Upper Canada's role as a safe haven for black refugees.

The Blackburns settled in Toronto and, in 1834, built their home on what are now the grounds of the old Sackville Street School. Thornton operated the first cab in the young city of Toronto. The Blackburns worked tirelessly in their new community for the abolition of slavery and to help other Underground Railroad refugees settle in Canada.

In 1985, archaeologists in downtown Toronto discovered what would become the most highly publicized dig in Canadian history: the remains of a house belonging to the Blackburns.

Karolyn Smardz Frost spent years researching this era of the Underground Railroad. Her book, *I've Got a Home in Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*, which recounts the saga of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, from slavery in Kentucky to freedom in Ontario, won the Governor General's Literary Award for non-fiction in 2007.

## 6) Rosemary Brown

Rosemary Brown came to Canada from her native Jamaica in 1950 to attend McGill University in Montreal. First elected to the British Columbia legislature in 1972, she served until her retirement in 1986. She also ran for the leadership of the federal New Democratic Party in 1974.

A feminist and public advocate, Rosemary Brown dedicated her life to helping others. Over the years, she served her fellow citizens as the Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (from 1993 to 1996), and was a founding member of the Vancouver Status of Women Council and the Canadian Women's Foundation. In the course of her career, she was also a member of the Judicial Council of British Columbia and sat on the Canadian Security Intelligence Review Committee. Rosemary Brown died in 2003, at the age of 72.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 7) Senator Anne Clare Cools

**Senator Anne Clare Cools** was born in 1943 in Barbados, West Indies. She was educated at Queen's College Girls School, Barbados, Montreal's Thomas D'Arcy McGee High School, and McGill University, from which she holds a Bachelor of Arts.

Senator Cools is a Senator from Ontario. Recommended by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, she was summoned to the Senate in January 1984, becoming the first black person in the Senate of Canada. She is the first black female senator in North America. In June 2004, after 20 years as a Liberal Senator, she briefly joined the Conservatives. She now has no party affiliation.

Senator Cools was a social worker in innovative social services in Toronto. A pioneer in addressing domestic and family violence, in 1974 she founded one of Canada's first women's shelters, *Women in Transition Inc.*, and was its Executive Director.

Senator Cools currently serves on the Senate Special Committee on Aging and the Senate Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament.

Her many recognitions include:

- *Women of Distinction* in the African-Canadian Community, 2009, Black Business & Professional Association, Toronto, ON;
- *10 Top Women*, Toronto Sun newspaper October 25, 2004. This poll overwhelmingly chose Senator Cools as Canada's top woman;
- *The Greatest Canadian*, CBC TV, 2004: Chosen as one of the 100 greatest Canadians of all time, Senator Cools was the only serving member of Parliament so chosen;
- Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, 2004, Canada Christian College, Toronto, Ontario;
- Certificate of Recognition as Canada's first black senator, 2001, Ralph J. Bunche International Affairs Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.; and
- *Spiritual Mother of the Year*, 1997, NA'AMAT Canada, the International Jewish Women's Organization that supports battered women's shelters in Israel.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 8) Viola Davis Desmond

Viola Davis Desmond (1914–1965) was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was an African-Canadian who ran her own beauty parlor and beauty college in Halifax. On November 8, 1946, while waiting for her car to be repaired, she decided to go see a movie in the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow. She refused to sit in the balcony, which was designated exclusively for Blacks. Instead, she sat on the ground floor, which was for Whites only. She was forcibly removed and arrested.

Viola was found guilty of not paying the one-cent difference in tax on the balcony ticket. She was sentenced to 30 days in jail and paid a \$26 fine. The trial mainly focused on the issue of tax evasion and not on the discriminatory practices of the theatre. Dissatisfied with the verdict, the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, with Viola's help, took the case to the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia. The conviction was upheld.

Eventually, Viola Desmond settled in New York where she died.

More recently, on April 15, 2010, the province of Nova Scotia granted an official apology and a free pardon to Viola. Lieutenant-Governor Mayann Francis, the first black person to serve as the Queen's representative in the province of Nova Scotia, presided over a ceremony in Halifax and exercised the Royal Prerogative of Mercy to grant a free pardon to her. Viola's 83-year-old sister, Wanda Robson, was there to accept the apology. Premier Darrell Dexter also apologized to Viola's family and all black Nova Scotians for the racism she was subjected to in an incident he called unjust.

## 9) Mifflin Wistar Gibbs

Born into a free black family in Philadelphia, Gibbs moved to San Francisco in 1850 and became one of that city's most prosperous black merchants. Concern about the racial climate in the United States prompted him and other African Americans to head north and seek the protection of British law in Victoria. As a politician, businessman, and defender of human rights, Gibbs was the recognized leader of the black community on Vancouver Island during its early years between 1858 and 1870, and is still a revered historical figure in the black community of British Columbia. Through his political abilities, Gibbs made black residents a force in colonial politics and was elected to Victoria City Council. He acted as a spokesperson for the West Coast's African Canadian community, encouraging their integration into Vancouver Island society and intervening repeatedly when efforts were made to segregate them in the churches and theatres of Victoria. In 1870, Gibbs returned to the United States and enjoyed an equally significant political and business career in the American South before his death in 1915. Gibbs was recently deemed by Parks Canada as a person of National Historic Significance.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 10) William Edward Hall

Victoria Cross recipient William Hall was born in 1827 in Horton, Nova Scotia, the youngest of seven children. His parents, Jacob and Lucy Hall, were former enslaved Americans who had come to Nova Scotia as a result of the War of 1812. Hall grew up on the family farm beside the Avon River, and it is believed that he received some training in navigation, a subject that was being taught to young black males in Halifax at the time.

William Hall launched his seafaring career at the age of seventeen, first joining the crew of an American trading vessel in 1844 as a merchant seaman. In 1852, he enlisted in the Royal Navy in Liverpool as an Able Seaman. Before long, Hall was decorated with British and Turkish medals for his service in the Crimean War.

In 1857, while serving on the HMS *Shannon*, Hall volunteered with a relief force sent to Lucknow, India, where a British garrison was besieged. Two survived the attack, Seaman Hall and Lieutenant Thomas Young, but only Hall was left standing, and he continued to fight until the relief of the garrison was assured. For this outstanding display of bravery, he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

William Hall was presented with his Victoria Cross on October 28, 1859, on board the HMS *Donegal* while the ship sat in Queenstown Harbour, Ireland. With this award, he became the first black person, the first Nova Scotian and the first Canadian sailor to receive this outstanding honour.

Hall died on his farm in Avonport on August 27, 1904, and is buried in Hantsport, Nova Scotia, where his grave is marked by a monument at the Baptist church. His Victoria Cross is preserved at the Nova Scotia Museum.

## 11) Josiah Henson

Josiah Henson was born a slave on June 15, 1789 in Charles County, Maryland. He was sold three times before he reached the age of eighteen. By 1830, Henson had saved \$350 to purchase his freedom. After giving his master the money he was told that the price had increased to \$1,000.



(1789 - 1889)

• Parks Canada •

Cheated of his money, Henson decided to escape with his wife and four children. After reaching Canada, Henson formed a community where he taught other ex-slaves how to be successful farmers. American abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe read his autobiography, *The Life of Josiah Henson* (1849), which inspired her powerful and controversial novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 12) Ferguson Arthur Jenkins

Ferguson Arthur Jenkins was born on December 13, 1942, in Chatham, Ontario. He is considered to be one of the most talented pitchers to ever play baseball. He grew up in Canada and excelled in baseball, basketball and hockey, competing in Canada's highest amateur hockey league.

While playing in the minor league in Chatham, Mr. Jenkins was drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies in 1963 and went on to the Chicago Cubs in 1966. In 1967, he began a six-year string of 20 or more wins per season.

Ferguson Jenkins also became only the fourth pitcher in history to win more than 100 games. In addition, his six consecutive 20-game winning seasons as a Cub were rare accomplishments in the majors. Mr. Jenkins retired in 1983 with the best finesse record in 128 years of organized baseball.

After coaching minor-league pitchers for the Texas Rangers and the Cincinnati Reds, he was named the Chicago Cubs' pitching coach for the 1995 and 1996 seasons.

Among his many achievements, Mr. Jenkins accomplished the following:

- He won the Cy Young Award for pitching excellence in 1971;
- He won the Lou Marsh Trophy as Canada's outstanding athlete in 1974;
- He became Canadian Male Athlete of the Year four times;
- He was inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987;
- He was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1979 and was invested into the Order in 2007, over 27 years after he was appointed; and
- He received baseball's ultimate honour when he became the first Canadian inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, in 1991

## 13) Sam Langford

Sam Langford, born in Weymouth Falls, Nova Scotia, is considered one of the finest heavyweight boxers of all time. After moving to the United States at the age of 14 and fighting out of Massachusetts, he became known as the Boston Terror.



He was one of many top black boxers denied a chance to fight for a championship largely because of racial discrimination. This led to his being called the unofficial World Champion. In 1906 he fought American Jack Johnson who shortly thereafter became the first Black person to hold the title of World Heavyweight Champion. In the years between 1902 and 1923, Langford is believed to have had approximately 642 fights. Small in stature, he consistently went up against larger men. An injury in 1917 caused him to lose the sight in his right eye, and led his manager to suggest he give up boxing. A proud man, Langford refused and continued to fight until he finally succumbed to blindness seven years later.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## **14) Michael Lee-Chin**

Michael Lee-Chin first came to Canada in the early 1970s to attend McMaster University in Hamilton. After earning a civil engineering degree he returned to his native Jamaica to work, but was soon back in Canada working on his Master's degree. In 1977, he began selling mutual funds. In 1987, he bought Advantage Investment Counsel, now AIC Limited, one of the country's biggest mutual-fund companies with assets of more than 12 billion dollars.

Michael Lee-Chin is also known as a philanthropist. In 2003, he made headlines when he donated \$30 million to the Royal Ontario Museum

## **15) Elijah McCoy**

Born in Colchester, Ontario, to former slaves who escaped to Canada from Kentucky via the Underground Railroad, Elijah McCoy showed an early interest in machines and tools and an aptitude for mechanics. At a time when it was difficult for black people to obtain training in the United States, his parents sent him to Edinburgh, Scotland to study mechanical engineering.

Upon his return to North America, he took a job as a fireman with the railroad in Michigan. The "fireman" was the person who shovelled the coal to power the locomotive and who lubricated the moving parts during frequent stops. Elijah soon saw that he could put his knowledge and education to work by improving this lubricating process. He developed and patented a particular type of lubricating cup that dripped oil onto the moving parts of a train while it was in motion. While the origin of the expression is probably somewhat older, it is said that buyers of the lubricating oil cup asked specifically for the "Real McCoy" because it was extremely reliable and they wanted no substitutes.

That was just one of the products he developed and patented. For example, in response to his wife's desire for an easier way to iron clothes, he invented and patented the portable ironing board.

Elijah McCoy held more than 50 patents, not just in Canada and the U.S. but also in France, Austria, Germany, Great Britain and Russia.

## **16) James Mink**

In the 1840s, one of Toronto's most successful business people was James Mink, owner of the Mansion Inn and Livery. Mink, the son of former slaves, owned stagecoaches that carried people and mail between Toronto and Kingston.



# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 17) The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.

**The Honourable Donald H. Oliver, Q.C.** was born in Wolfville, Nova Scotia in 1938. A graduate of Acadia University and Dalhousie University Law School, he was summoned to the Senate of Canada on September 7, 1990.

Mr. Oliver has been active in the Conservative Party for more than 50 years. He has had a distinguished legal career as a civil litigator and a legal educator, having taught at the Technical University of Nova Scotia, St. Mary's University and Dalhousie University Law School. He is a member of the Canadian Bar Association and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society.

Donald Oliver is President of Glen Moir Holdings Ltd.; Pleasant River Farms Limited; Dolin Fisheries; and is a Consultant, Advisor and Director of a number of companies. He is a speaker on a wide range of topics, and author of a gourmet cookbook. His community work includes service as President and Chairman of the Halifax Children's Aid Society, and Director of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Currently, Senator Oliver is Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures and the Rights of Parliament and a member of the Standing Committee on Banking, Trade and Commerce.

Among his many awards are:

- Honorary Doctorates from the University of Guelph, Dalhousie University, and from Acadia University; and,
- Recipient of the Harry Jerome Award for Community Service; the African Canadian Achievement Award in Politics; and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission Human Rights Award.

Senator Oliver is married to M. Linda Oliver, a telecommunications consultant. They have one daughter, Carolynn.

## 18) Willie O'Ree

On January 18, 1958, Willie O'Ree stepped on the ice at the Montreal Forum to play his first game in the NHL for the Boston Bruins — and made history.

Like any Canadian kid, as a young boy Willie played hockey with his friends. And out there on the ice, he probably pretended to be his favourite player, deking around the defence taking shots, scoring goals. Actually playing in the NHL was something most of these kids only dreamed about. For O'Ree that dream came true. In fact, he became the first black player in the NHL. Known for his speed and checking abilities, his career was cut short by an injury.

Today, Willie O'Ree is the director of the NHL's diversity program. He travels across Canada and the United States promoting and teaching the game of hockey to children from all cultural backgrounds.

In January 2008, fifty years after his NHL debut, Willie O'Ree's home town of Fredericton, New Brunswick, named its new hockey arena Willie O'Ree Place, in honour of his achievements.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 19) Richard Pierpoint

Richard Pierpoint was a lad of 16 in Senegal, Africa when he was seized and sold into slavery in 1760. He was purchased by an English officer named Pierpoint who had settled in New York's Hudson Valley. Richard became this officer's servant and adopted his surname. The officer and Richard were mustered during the 1763 Aboriginal uprising in British North America, but likely saw no action.

After the outbreak of the American Revolution, Richard was given his freedom and eventually became a soldier, joining John Butler's corps of Rangers operating out of Fort Niagara. When the war of the revolution ended in 1783, Butler's Rangers were disbanded and the men were provided with land grants in what would become the Niagara region of Ontario. Richard received 200 acres of land in present-day St. Catharines and became somewhat of a community leader among Niagara's Black population.

When the War of 1812 broke out Richard Pierpoint petitioned Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, proposing the formation of an all-Black company of militia to fight alongside the British during the war. Brock agreed with the proposal and ordered the formation of what was known as the "Coloured Corps," a small company of about 40 men from the Niagara and York districts mustered under white officers. The 68 year-old Richard Pierpoint served as a private in the corps and served on active duty throughout the conflict, including the Battle of Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812 when the corps was mentioned in dispatches as having played a key role in that British victory.

The Coloured Corps fought at the Battle of Fort George in May 1813, and were active in the Niagara campaign of 1813. In 1814 they worked on construction of fortifications, many of the men of the company having skills in carpentry and masonry.

When the war ended, the British offered land grants to the veterans of the Coloured Corps, establishing settlements in Oro and Garafraxa Townships. He petitioned the government to provide passage for him back to Senegal in Africa but this was never granted. He was given another land grant of 100 acres in Garafraxa in 1822 and was able to build a house and clear a few acres there but he was too old to farm it properly. Pierpoint died there in 1838.

## 20) Mary Ann Shadd Cary

Mary Ann Shadd Cary arrived in Canada at the time of the Underground Railroad to teach the children of arriving refugees and distribute anti-slavery materials. She was a woman of many talents. Mary Ann Shadd Cary earned her law degree at the end of the American Civil War and worked as a lawyer, teacher, lecturer, suffragist and publisher. She was the first woman in Canada to become a publisher, starting the *Provincial Freeman* in 1853



# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 21) Bruny Surin

Bruny Surin is one of the best sprinters in the world. He has won many national and international titles throughout the years including a gold medal in the 4 x 100-metre relay at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

His activities and interests are broader than track and field. After seventeen years of competition, Bruny Surin has drawn on his experiences as a top-level athlete and started a career in public relations. He has created a foundation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of children, physically and emotionally. He is also a highly valued guest speaker and a first-class ambassador for Canada.

## 22) Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman, a runaway slave from Maryland, became known as the “Moses” of her people and the “conductor” who led hundreds of slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad. In 1850, when the far-reaching United States Fugitive Law was passed, she guided fugitive slaves further north into Canada. When angry slave owners posted rewards for her capture, she continued her work despite great personal risk.

St. Catharines, Ontario (a town close to the border with the United States) was on the route and offered employment opportunities, making it a common destination for the former fugitives, including Harriet Tubman, who lived there from 1851 to 1857. Many of the people she rescued were relatives of those already in St. Catharines including her own parents, brothers and sisters and their families.

Later, Harriet Tubman became a leader in the Abolitionist movement. During the Civil war she worked as a nurse and served as a spy for the Union forces in South Carolina.

## 23) Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré

Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré was born in Verdun (Montréal) in 1942. After receiving her law degree from the Université de Montréal and a doctorate from the *Université de Paris*, she began practising law in 1970. From 1979 to 1983, she was a member of the *Office de protection des consommateurs du Québec*. In 1985, Ms. Westmoreland-Traoré became the first chair of Quebec’s *Conseil des communautés culturelles et de l’immigration*. In that capacity, she worked diligently to build bridges between Quebec’s diverse communities.

Between 1996 and 1999, she was the dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Windsor, the first black Canadian to hold such a post. Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré is now a judge in Quebec, and is also the first black Canadian to be appointed to the bench in that province.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 24) Portia White

Portia White embarked on her stellar singing career at her father's Baptist Church in Halifax. Before she began singing professionally, she supported her musical career by teaching in rural black schools in Halifax County, and eventually made her professional debut in Toronto. Soon afterwards, she performed in New York City to rave reviews.



Portia White went on to international success, performing more than 100 concerts, including a command performance before Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

## 25) John Ware

John Ware was born into slavery on a South Carolina cotton plantation in 1845. After gaining his freedom in the emancipation, he moved to Texas and learned the tough life of a cowboy. In 1882, he settled in Alberta where he was immediately hired by Fred Stimpson of the Bar U and Quorn ranches.

Mr. Ware started his own ranch in 1891 in the Millarville area and became a successful rancher and farmer. By the end of the 19th century, he was one of the most well known and respected ranchers in Western Canada. It is said that his skills at bronco and busting were legendary. He created "steer wrestling" 20 years before the Calgary Stampede—an event that has now become an integral part of the western festival.

Mr. Ware met the former Torontonians Mildred Lewis and they married, settling on a ranch just north of the village of Duchess along the Red Deer River. They had five children. In 1902, his home was washed away in a flood. He rebuilt the cabin on higher ground overlooking a stream, referred to today as the Ware Creek.

John Ware continued to operate a ranch in southern Alberta until his death in 1905 from a horse-riding accident.

Interestingly, Mr. Ware's two sons joined the No. 2 Construction Battalion, the only segregated Battalion in Canada's history. The Battalion celebrates its 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 26) Rose Fortune (1774-1864) and Peter C. Butler III (1859-1943)



Rose Fortune image provided by Nova Scotia Archives

### *First black police officers in Canada*

Born into slavery, Rose Fortune relocated to Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, after her family escaped the British colony of Virginia during the American Revolution. She developed a successful business transporting luggage from the ferry docks to Annapolis hotels and homes via wheelbarrow and providing wake-up calls for travellers. Over time, Fortune became known as the first female police officer in Canada – an unofficial title she earned by maintaining order and safeguarding property at the town's wharves.

The grandson of an escaped slave, Peter C. Butler III (not pictured) became the first black police officer in Canada in 1883. His career spanned 50 years, during which he was known as a peaceful man. He sometimes kept local offenders and drunks in his home to keep them off the streets, instead of tossing them into jail. Butler rarely carried a gun; he preferred to keep the peace with only a baton and his large hands instead.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 27) Alton C. Parker (1907-1989)



*First black police officer in Windsor and first black police detective in Canada*

Alton C. Parker joined the Windsor Police Service in 1942, at a time when it was rare for black Canadians to be in positions of authority. Parker gained the admiration of his colleagues and in 1951 was promoted to the rank of Detective – making him not only the first black police officer in Windsor but also the first black police detective in Canada.

After serving the Windsor Police Service for 28 years, Parker continued to be engaged in his community and held a big party for the community's children each year. During and after his police career, Parker received many awards and honours including having both a public park and a street named after him in Windsor.

## 28) Lawrence “Larry” McLarty



*First black police officer in Toronto*

Larry McLarty came to Canada with experience as a Jamaican Constabulary Force officer, but after arriving in Toronto, he worked various jobs as a railway porter, a catalogue book packer, a night cleaner, and in a hospital kitchen.

When McLarty applied to the Toronto Police Service, he was disappointed to be told he was one-eighth of an inch too short. Then two months later, while being measured for a new suit, he discovered he met the height requirement after all. Mr. McLarty reapplied to the force and was hired in 1960 – the first black officer in Toronto. He rose to the rank of Detective Sergeant and retired after 32 years of service.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## 29) Édouard “Eddie” Anglade (1944 – 2007)



*First black police officer in Montreal.* A Haitian immigrant, Édouard Anglade joined the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal in 1974 as the first black officer on the force. For several years he was the only black officer in Montréal.

During his 30-year career, he fought crime on the streets of Montréal and earned the respect of his police colleagues. Anglade’s perseverance and professionalism led him to eventually become the highest-ranking black officer, of 130 at the time, in Montréal.

His autobiography, *Nom de code: Mao*, recounts his experiences on the police force.

## 30) Devon Clunis



First black Chief of Police in Canada

Devon Clunis moved to Winnipeg from Jamaica at age 12. Wanting to make a difference, he joined the Winnipeg Police Service in 1987, where he has performed all manner of duties over the course of 25 years, including: patrols, traffic duty, investigations and community relations.

In November 2012, Clunis was sworn in as Chief of Police of the Winnipeg Police Service, becoming the first black Canadian to hold the position.

Read a [speech delivered by Devon Clunis](#), Chief of the Winnipeg Police Service, at the Black History Month 2013 launch reception.

# NOTABLE PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT:

## ***31) Craig Gibson : First black commanding officer in the RCMP***



Photo provided by Chief Superintendent Craig Gibson, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Craig Gibson grew up in a small community in Nova Scotia. He joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1980, and has spent more than 30 years working across the country in five different provinces, performing all kinds of policing and leadership duties.

Recognised for excellence and a commitment to helping small communities, Gibson officially assumed command of the RCMP in Prince Edward Island in July 2012, becoming the first black commanding officer in the RCMP.

## ***32) Lori Seale-Irving : First black female commissioned officer in the RCMP***



Lori Seale-Irving was born and raised in Ottawa. Her father was a Royal Canadian Air Force Officer (retired Major), so she grew up on a military base. Wanting a career that would allow her to help people in her community, Seale-Irving joined the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1990. Her career has included many postings, including some in sections devoted to general duty policing, war crimes, marine security, Prime Minister's protection and management support.

Seale-Irving was promoted to the rank of Inspector in 2007, making her the first self-identified black female RCMP member to become a commissioned officer.