

Where was I?

Here are the stories of 10 Black Canadians. Explore [Black Communities in Canada](#) to find out when and where each lived.

Jay Douglas

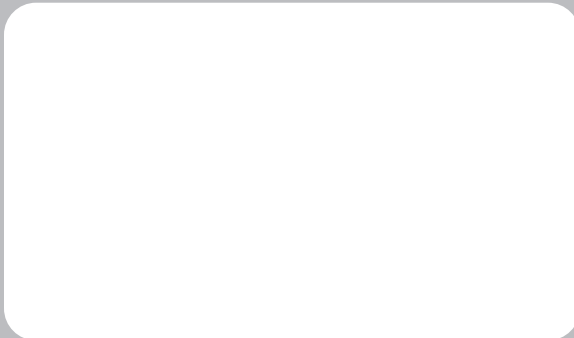
I was born in Jamaica. When I was 10 my mother left to be a domestic worker in Canada. She sent money home to help us out, but I missed her.

In my late teens I moved to Canada to live with my mum. I went to school here and started to get serious about my singing career.

I've worked as a musician all my life and have been nominated for a Juno Award three times.



What's my community?



Hint

Why my mother moved to Canada will help place me in the timeline.



Visual clue

Find the place to buy tasty patties in my community.

John Craven Jones

My brothers and I were born in North Carolina. Our father dedicated his life to educating Black children, I did the same.

I graduated from the first college in the U.S. that accepted Black and later female students. I taught for two years in Ohio, but when I was 25 I moved to Canada with my brothers.

We built a log schoolhouse, called Central School. I taught there three days a week. The other three days I taught at another school five miles away.

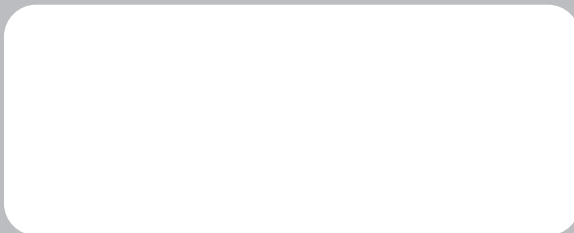
My students were the Black, Indigenous, and white children that lived in the area.

My brother William soon left for the gold rush. In addition to being a gold miner, my brother became the first licensed dentist in the province.

I taught here for 15 years. After the Civil War ended, I moved back to the U.S. where I married and raised a family.



What community am I from?



Hint

Knowing my brother was part of the gold rush will help with the time period.



Visual clue

Find the class photo from the school we built. (It's taken many years after I left.)

Eliza Taylor

I was born on a plantation in Virginia. When I was four years old, I was out with my mother and our owner. A neighbour came by and I was given to him. I never saw my mother again.

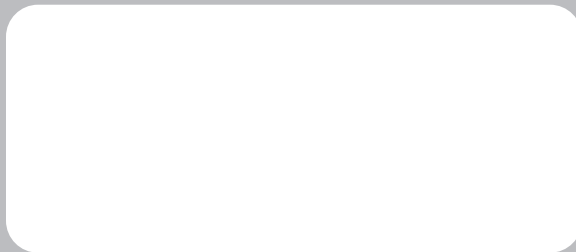
My new owner was a Loyalist, so we ended up in Canada. I worked as a servant in his house. I left at 17 when I married James. We moved to a Black farming community where we lived for the next 40 years.

When James died, I moved into the city to live with my son. When I was his age, I would not have been allowed to live there, but thankfully things had changed.

To make money I had a little stand where I sold things such as berries, chickens, and brooms. I've always loved fashion and became known for my flowing colourful skirts and straw hats. I often carried a parasol.



What farming community did my husband and I live in?



Hint

My community was outside a city that had racist rules about who could live there.



Visual clue

Find the little Baptist church they rebuilt to mark our community.

Rufus Rockhead

I was born in Jamaica and came to Canada when I was 22. I joined the Canadian Army and served in France during WWI.

At the end of the war, I found work as a sleeping car porter. I worked for eight years going back and forth to Chicago. Because of prohibition, I made money on the side by taking alcohol into Chicago on my run.

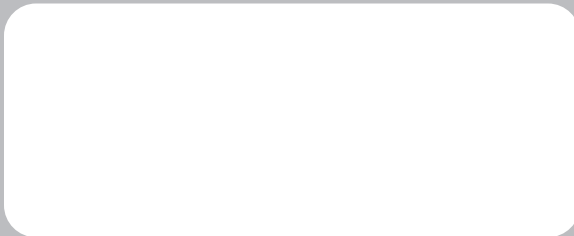


But I always dreamed of owning a jazz club. When I had enough money, I quit my railway job and bought a building.

My nightclub, Rockhead's Paradise Cafe was very successful. Many American jazz greats played there. It also gave local musicians like Oscar Peterson and Oliver Jones a place play.

Sadly, as the area declined, the club had to close after over 30 years in business.

What community was my club in?



Hint

Knowing I worked as a sleeping car porter will help with the time period. My community is one known for its jazz clubs.



Visual clue

Find the photo of jazz great Oscar Peterson and his sister Daisy, they're from my community.

Edith Hester McDonald

I was born in a village in Canada. My mother ran the general store, and I often helped out.

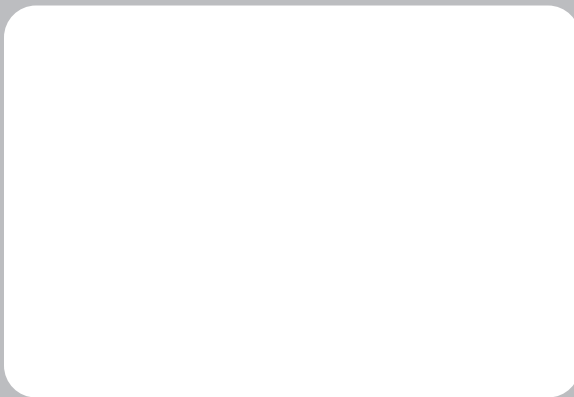
But I also loved drawing and painting. I liked to create still life and landscapes. Perhaps I painted views of Bedford Basin and Tibby's pond. I was fortunate to go to Montreal to study oil painting.

Later, I returned to my home community, married William Henry Brown Jr. and raised our family.

My granddaughter, Geraldine Parker, had four of my paintings, which were discovered in 1998. I'm now considered to be the first Black female artist in Canada.



What community did I live in?



Hint

The subjects of the landscapes I might have painted are in this community.



Visual clue

Find the hockey team that skated on the pond.

Olivier Le Jeune

I was born in Africa. When I was seven, I was kidnapped and brought here on a ship. I never saw my family again.

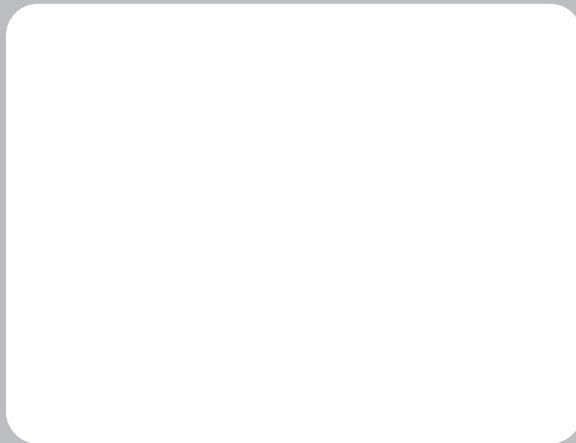
I ended up with Father Paul Le Jeune. He taught me French, Catholicism, and baptized me as Olivier Le Jeune.

I worked for Father Le Jeune all my life. He and I often travelled to meet with Indigenous Peoples. He wanted to learn their languages, music, and cultures. He believed this would help with his mission of converting them to Christianity.



Winter clothing like I might have worn.

What community did I live in?



Hint

What language did I speak?



Visual clue

You'll find settlers wearing similar winter clothes in this community.

Willis Bowen

I was born in Alabama. My wife Jeanie was Cherokee, the daughter of a Chief. We moved from Oklahoma to Canada with our seven children.

We lived in a couple of places in Canada, over the next six years, but eventually homesteaded here. We farmed and raised our 14 children in this community.

We built a log cabin. It became a meeting place for folks to drop by to catch up with each other. Later it became the post office and then had the first telephone.

Times could be hard, so sometimes I worked outside the community on ranches, grain farms, and hauling freight to make a living.

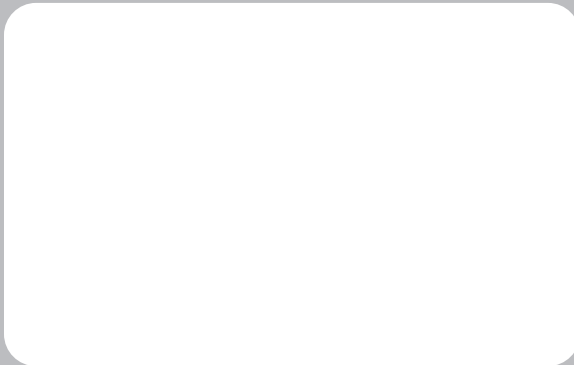
Our two eldest daughters helped too. They were teenagers when we moved here. They lived in nearby cities and worked as domestics to help support the family.

Jeanie and I stayed in this community the rest of our lives.



Schoolhouse in Willis and Jeanie Bowen's community.

What community did we homestead in?



Hint

Knowing we homesteaded and had the first telephone will help place us in the timeline. (Did you know the telephone was invented in Canada?)



Visual clue

Find the poster for Canada West in this time period. Our homesteading community is from this time.

Jupiter Farmer

My wife Venus and I both escaped enslavement and worked for the British army during the American revolution. We came north and were given land by the British.

It was poor land, but we worked together clearing off the rocks by hand and building our log house.

To support our family of four boys and two girls I worked as a labourer. Venus worked as a servant in the next town.



Jupiter and Venus Farmer built a log house in this community.

When most of our community left for Sierra Leone, we decided to stay.

What's our community?



Hint

Venus and I were Black Loyalists.



Visual clue

Find the image of the Black soldier in British uniform in this time period. Our community is from this time.

Vie Moore

My parents came up from California. I was born on an island in Canada, but later moved to the city.

My husband and I lived in a small 2 story house. We used the main floor as our restaurant. I made the best Southern fried chicken in town!

We were an after-hours place for night workers like taxi drivers, police, and newspaper reporters. We opened late afternoon and didn't close until 4 or 5 am.

Lots of entertainers would drop in after their shows. I enjoyed visits with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Lena Horn, and so many others.

Jimi Hendrix also dropped in occasionally as his grandmother, my good friend Nora, helped me out with cooking sometimes.



What community did I run my restaurant in?



Hint

The island community is where I was born. But I'm from the next time period. I stayed in the same province, my community was part of the largest city there.



Visual clue

Find my friend to find our community.

Green Doo

I was born in South Carolina, where my mother was enslaved. As a young man I escaped to Indiana. There I learned to read and write. I met my wife, Abigail there.

When I was 36, Abigail, I, and our seven children moved to Canada. We were one of the first families to settle in this area.

We bought 50 acres of land which we cleared and farmed. As the community grew, I worked as a trustee for both the church and school.

We had 13 children in total, but sadly only six lived to become adults.



Schoolhouse in Green and Abigail Doo's community.

What community did we farm in?



Hint

Venus and I were Black Loyalists.



Visual clue

Find the quilt our daughter-in-law helped sew. It has her name and our community's name in it.