

# An introduction into black history month history essay



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Black History Month lets the people who have stood up to this and strived for a difference in the way black and white man is treated be remembered and appreciated. In history further back and during the time of change, blacks had gone through slavery, Africville tragedy and other unjust acts. They had been discriminated, ignored, and overall suffered through oppression from whites who had placed them below their own. But what they never realized was how they were all equal, and those who did know this had spoken out. Leaders, artists, sport players, and even regular black inhabitants have helped to change their lives for the better, and it took them great courage to do so.

Although Black History in Canada is not as commonly recognized as the history of the US is. True it that parts of the history of both countries is connected to each other, but this newsletter is written to further express what us Canadians should reflect on for our history. The voices that live here express just as much as what Black History Month is all about, and will now be spoken from history to me to you.

## **The Slaves' Experience of Oppression**

Back in the US when slaves were being used and sold, freedom for blacks seemed almost a fantasy. Almost.

From where they were found from, most were captured and sent from Africa against their own will, while others were born into the life of enslavement. Any owners who had promised freedom to their slaves spoke nothing but a mere fable. This left them with only a choice to either stay to die of slavery or attempt to flee for a better life. Canada was surely the place they should

resign to for free life, and the only way to reach there was the Underground Railway.

This was not as simple as it may sound, for fear was one main obstacle that stood in their way. With the chance of being spotted when escaping, the price could mean their life. And who was to say that Canada would bring a better life? They didn't have the confirmation that they were headed for the right place, so confidence was not as strongly reliable. Though those black slaves who escaped and taken the risks knew that this was not the way of life. They strongly believed that they should be free for their own choices and be treated with the same treatment as any white man or person for that matter. This is what gave them strength during the times their thoughts were ignored and their lives used.

As a result, those blacks who were determined and healthy enough to make it to Canada was able to search for a new, better life. Generosity from local families had greeted them, along with the promise of hope in their life from Canada's grounds.

## **Africville- The Disaster...**

### **... And A Late Apology?**

From 1848 - 1969, at the edge of Halifax city stood the small town of Africville, a place for black citizens to reside in away from criticism and acts of oppression. Despite the poor conditions, the people lived happily in their peaceful lives, with generations of their families living and prospering in their own ways, and all were pleased with their free ways of life. But

Unfortunately, some white Halifax people had other ideas and made a move to make sure all of Africville and what it meant wouldn't last longer.

The Government of Halifax had sent out an order to destroying Africville for the purpose of being able to construct a bridge. The declaration had angered the people of Africville greatly, but whatever they said had gone unheard and ignored by the Halifax citizens. Because the people of Africville had been parted from the white Halifax people, no discriminations or oppressions had been shown. It was as though they were just being targeted still by the acts of oppression after being out of reach, their say meaning much but ignored as they were forced out of their homes and their own town got destroyed. As it came crashing down, their fear of being left alone and abused, again for some who had once been slaves, were confirmed and all that they cared about, including their happy freedom, went down with the rundown houses.

It wasn't until 40 years later, in 2010, did the government of Halifax announce an apology for the destroying Africville. They paid a great price to try and make up for the disaster, but not all were pleased with it. Due to the severity of the situation way back then, to give an apology now is not exactly acceptable and feels carelessly thrown for image. There had been plenty of people affected by the past breakdown of Africville and there should not be any tolerance in accepting an apology that happens many years later after the oppression had been shown. To finally listen and apologize years later will never truly feel satisfying, especially after the damage was done. For it was their voice, the people of Africville, that hadn't been heard when should have been the most listened to.

## **Martin Luther King along with Other Canadian Faces**

The 'I have a Dream' speech of Martin Luther King had been announced in the US and ever since has inspired people. Change to the treatment of blacks and the freeing of slaves had begun and people were finally beginning to realize the truth that blacks should also have the same rights. King hadn't let who he is, a black, stop him from speaking his mind and in what he believed in with determination to make a change for the better. Everyone was needed to be treated equally and he fought to bring this justice come true for all blacks and whites.

This motivation was for a good change, and it spread out to include in Canada as well. After his encouragement, other blacks began to step up and act to make change. Such as is Rosemary Brown who was a Canadian Politician that helped establish Black History Month in the OBHS (Ontario Black History Society). She had worked hard and fought to bring recognition and her contribution to accomplish this is still remembered today. There is also Herb Trawnyck, who is the first African American to be part of Canadian Football team and didn't let the whites discourage him.

Many other people, such as Viola Desmond, Josiah Henson, Elijah McCoy, and plenty of other people had great determination and with their striving to accomplish their goals all helped bring justice to the treatment of blacks so that everyone was equal. Simply by speaking out their minds, despite being black, and stepping up to what they believed, they were able to make a change that affects the future for the better of everyone.

## **In a Conclusion...**

In the end, Black History Month was established and everything, from the first black settler to come to Canada, through the struggles of slavery and Africville, all the way through to today is respected and remembered. Now, in our present time, every person is heard and treated equally. The Canadian history played an important role, and after reading this we, as Canadians, know how it worked. Black History means a lot to us all, and it shouldn't only be remembered for a month but all year round because the people who had suffered and stood up in the past deserve the respect. They had experienced fear, anger, oppression, freedom and courage, which through the past changed how blacks had been treated then to they are now, so that everyone is looked upon as an equal human being.

## **Special points of interest:**

**Black History Month reminds us that every person is equal.**

**Canada, in history, was not always the best place for blacks, but was still a better one for it promised freedom.**

**Every voice should be heard. The ignorance of black citizens had effected as an act of oppression.**

**Speaking out your mind, despite who you are, will help bring a change.**

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