

Free Pardon
**VIOLIA DAVIS
DESMOND**

WHEREAS Viola Irene Davis Desmond, born July 6, 1914, was convicted of an offence contrary to s. 8(1) of the Theatres, Cinematographs, and Amusements Act, R.S.N.S., 1923, c. 162 on November 8, 1946;

AND WHEREAS Viola Irene Davis Desmond passed away on February 7, 1965;

AND WHEREAS it is considered desirable that Viola Irene Davis Desmond be posthumously granted a Free Pardon from that offence;

NOW THEREFORE it is hereby ordered by virtue of the powers mentioned in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy we do hereby grant a FREE PARDON to VIOLIA (DENE) DAVIS (DESMOND) from that offence on November 8, 1946 for an offence contrary to s. 8(1) of the Theatres, Cinematographs, and Amusements Act.

VIOLIA DAVIS
DESMOND



CANADA



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Viola Desmond was arrested in Nova Scotia on November 8, 1946 for sitting in the “Whites only” section of the Roseland Theatre in Nova Scotia. Dragged from the theatre to the local jail where she spent the night, Desmond was tried without counsel and convicted of defrauding the province of the additional one-cent tax for seats in the “Whites-only” section. She was also fined \$20, which she paid, but went on to fight the charge. Unsuccessful at overturning her conviction, she used her returned fee to fund activities of the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. In 2010, the government of Nova Scotia formally apologized and granted Desmond a posthumous pardon – the first such to be granted in Canada.



The first and only all-Black battalion in Canada's military history.

When war broke out in 1914, Canadians heeded the call to enlist. Black Canadians, however, were less than welcome and many were turned away due to prejudice. On July 5, 1916, faced with protests and a need for manpower, militia officials created a special unit where these proud men could serve their country as part of the Forestry Corps in France.

The men of the No. 2 Construction Battalion harvested, milled and shipped timber to the Western Front. In camp, they faced harsh conditions, segregated accommodations and back-breaking work. Some did not return home. A few found ways to join other units and fought at Vimy Ridge and in other battles.



Africville was an African-Canadian village located just north of Halifax and founded in the mid-18th century. The City of Halifax demolished the once-prosperous seaside community in the 1960s in what many said was an act of racism. The mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality apologized for the action in 2010. For many people, Africville represents the oppression faced by Black Canadians, and the efforts to right historic wrongs.



Abraham Doras Shadd was the first Black person to serve in Canadian public office when he was elected to the Council of Raleigh, Ontario, in 1859.



A popular broadcaster and prominent humanitarian, Kay Livingstone devoted her life to the empowerment of Black women. After founding the Canadian Negro Women's Association in the 1950s, she led an effort to award scholarships to promising Black students. In 1975, Livingstone launched the Congress of Black Women of Canada, an organization dedicated to the welfare of Black women and their families. Raised in London, Ontario, Livingstone spent most of her adult life in Toronto. Besides broadcasting, she held key positions with the United Nations Association in Canada, Heritage Ontario and Legal Aid, and is credited with coining the term 'visible minority.' In 2011, the Government of Canada named Livingstone a Person of National Historic Significance.



Hogan's Alley in Vancouver's Strathcona neighbourhood was an African-Canadian community that became a vibrant destination for food and jazz until it was removed in the 1960s to make way for new construction.

Rosemary Brown fought for her rights and those of other women and minorities throughout her trailblazing career as an activist, feminist, opponent of racism, and champion of human rights. Brown became the first Black woman elected to public office in Canada when she was elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) in the British Columbia legislature in 1972. She also ran for the leadership of the federal New Democratic Party (NDP), making her the first woman to run for the leadership of a Canadian federal political party.





Born in Montréal's Little Burgundy neighbourhood in 1934, Oliver Jones put on his first show at the age of five. By age eight, he was taking formal music lessons. By his early twenties, Jones was a musician for hire. After travelling to Puerto Rico to play in the Kenny Hamilton Review and the Oliver Jones Quartet – a gig he continued for 16 years – he returned to Montréal in 1980, and in 1983, released his first jazz album, *The Oliver Jones Trio*.

Since then, Jones has toured the world, produced more albums and won many awards, including five Junos, four honorary doctorates, and the Ordre national du Québec. In 1994, he was invested as an Officer of the Order of Canada.



John Ware was a cowboy who helped to establish the ranching industry in part of the prairies that would become Alberta. Born into slavery, Ware made his way to Texas after the Civil War where he became an experienced cowhand. In 1882, he drove 3,000 cattle across the border for the North West Cattle Company and then settled in Canada establishing his own ranch in the Foothills. Ware was the ultimate “folk hero” with great stature, adventure and abilities. He pioneered steer-wrestling, winning his first competition at the 1893 Calgary Fair, setting a precedent for what would become a highlight of today’s Calgary Stampede.



Nelson Mandela
1918—2013

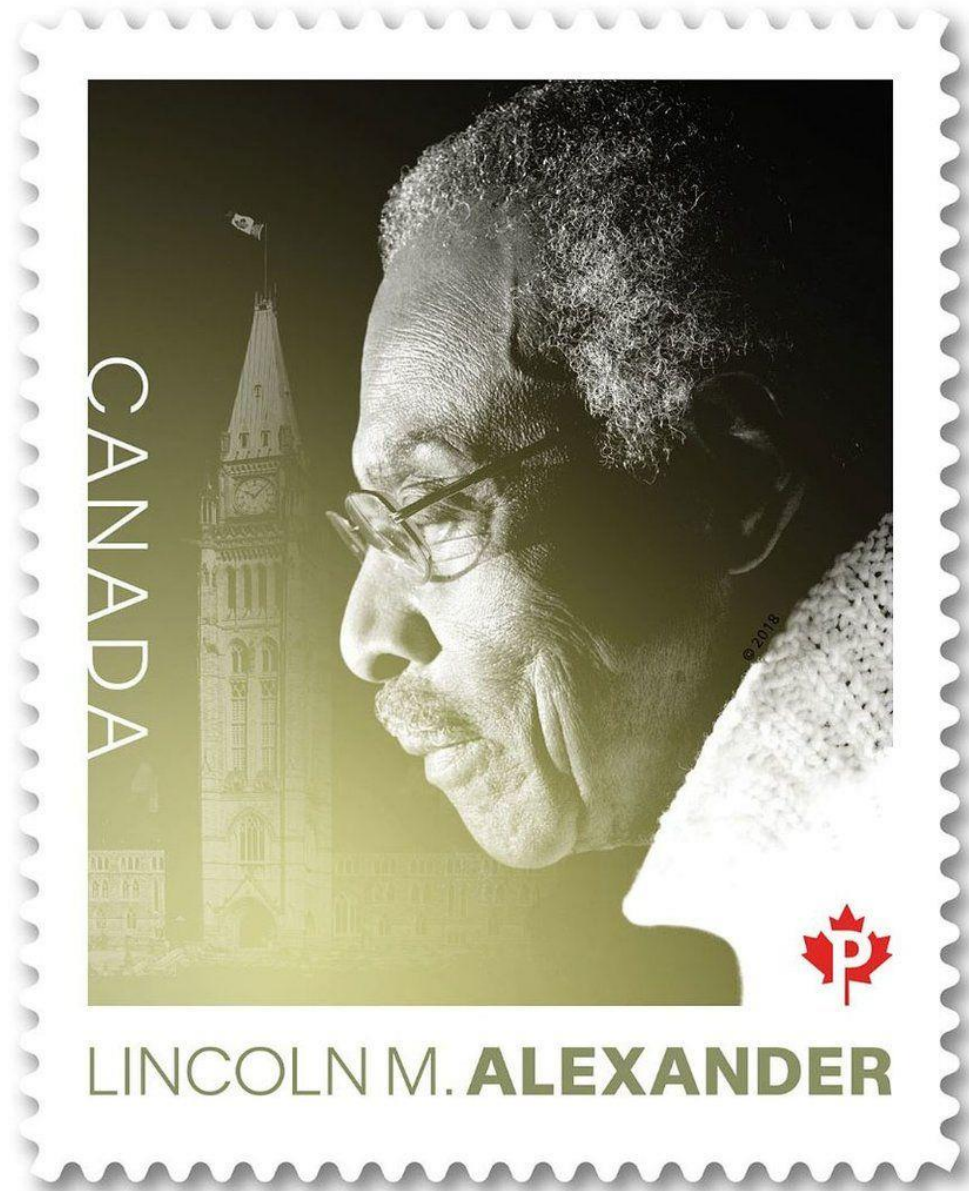


Amid his 27 years in prison, Mandela became a symbol of the moral fight for freedom, equality and justice in South Africa and around the world. His message strongly resonated among Canadians, who were at the forefront of the global outcry over his imprisonment and of the unrelenting demand for his release.

After his release in 1990, Canada was among the first countries Mandela visited. Four years later, as president of South Africa, he specifically drew on Canadian values, policies and practices to build his post-apartheid vision of a multi-racial democracy rooted in equality and governed by the rule of law.

In 2001, on his third visit to this country, Mandela was bestowed with honorary Canadian citizenship. He was the first living person to receive this recognition.

“Nelson Mandela, an honorary Canadian citizen, is an inspiration to everyone who values human rights. As a great champion of freedom, beloved by Canadians, he will forever be remembered as a man whose courage changed not just South Africa, but also the world,” says Chris Alexander, Canada’s Citizenship and Immigration Minister.

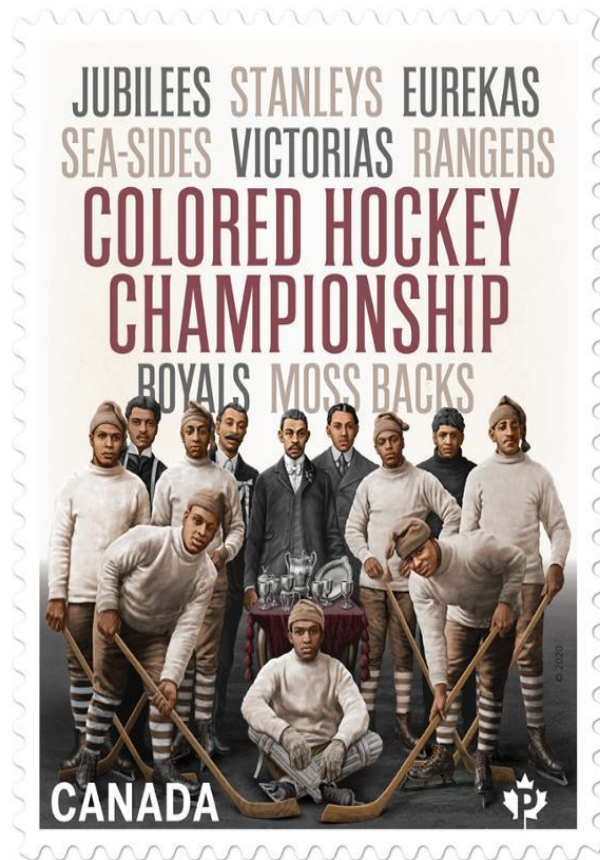


He was the first Black Canadian to be elected to the House of Commons (1968), appointed to the federal cabinet (1979) and named to a vice regal position in Canada, as Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (1985). He encouraged countless youth to pursue their dreams, often telling them: "I did it. You can. You will." In recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments, January 21 has been celebrated as Lincoln Alexander Day across Canada since 2015.



Albert Jackson, a determined postal worker was the first recorded Black letter carrier in Canada.

Born into slavery in the United States, Jackson was just a boy when his family escaped to Canada. In Toronto, he pursued his education and won a position as a letter carrier in 1882. When he reported for work, he faced discrimination from his colleagues, who refused to train him. Debate over the situation raged for weeks until political pressure, especially from Toronto's Black community, triumphed and Jackson was able to walk his route.



Canada Post unveiled a stamp honouring the Colored Hockey Championship and the all-Black hockey teams in the Maritimes that competed for it between 1895 and the early 1930s.

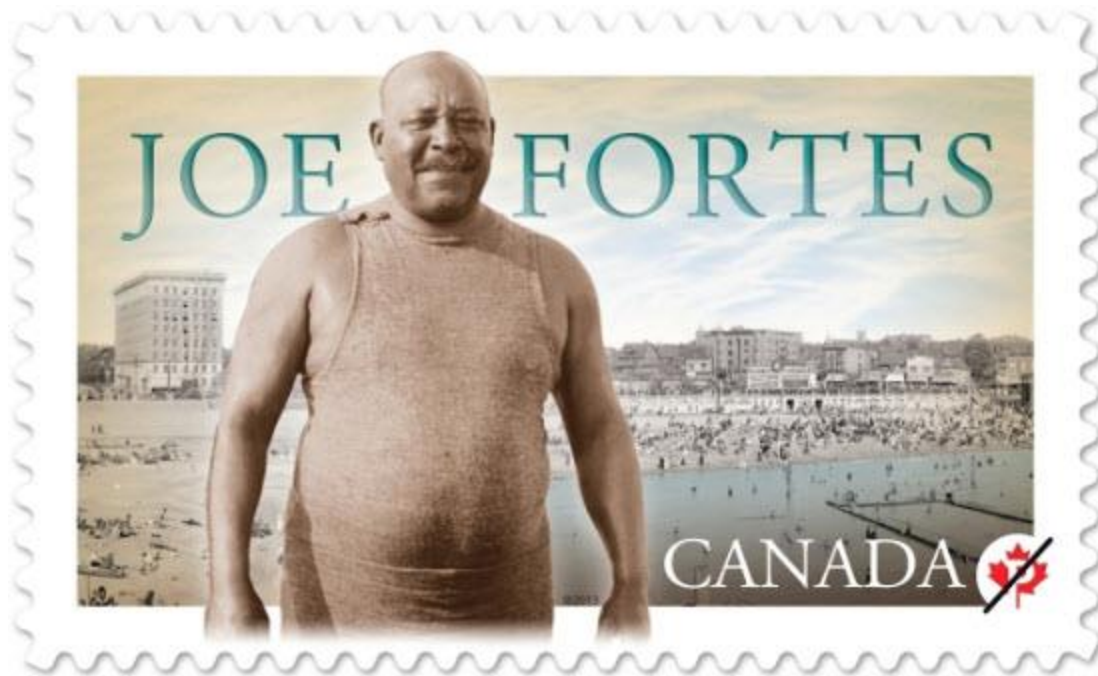
In this little-known chapter in Canadian hockey history, determined organizers and players arranged their own challenge matches, dispelling hurtful misconceptions and changing the game in small but important ways.

The golden era of all-Black hockey was between 1900 and 1905, when games often outdrew those of “White-only” leagues, but teams continued to play for the Colored Hockey Championship until the 1930s.

Canada



Mathieu Da Costa, an explorer and interpreter from the continent of Africa, is believed to be the first person of African descent to reach Canada. Da Costa was a free man who worked as an interpreter for Europeans trading with Indigenous people in the New World. Evidence of this includes a document stating that, in 1608 - the year Samuel de Champlain founded the city of Québec - Da Costa agreed to work for French fur-trader, explorer and governor of Acadia, Pierre Dugua de Mons. Da Costa spoke several languages.



Seraphim “Joe” Fortes arrived in Vancouver from his native Trinidad and Tobago in 1885. Enamoured with the many beautiful swimming locations, he decided to stay, eventually moving into a tent on his favourite beach at English Bay. While there, he taught both adults and children to swim and appointed himself voluntary patrolman.

In 1894, the city formalized Fortes’ volunteer work, making him an official lifeguard. Fortes excelled at the job, reputedly saving many lives. In 1901, he was made an official swimming instructor, receiving pay for the summer months. Fortes became such a beloved citizen that, in 1910, a private committee awarded him a gold watch and a locket – both of which he is wearing in the photograph on the back of the stamp booklet – as well as a cheque for \$472.

When Fortes passed away in 1922, Vancouverites were stricken with grief. The city paid for a public funeral, which thousands attended. In 1927, citizens raised money to install a fountain at English Bay in Fortes’ honour. The inscription reads “Little children love him.”



Born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1903, Carrie Best is known for her work as a poet, author, journalist and fearlessly determined activist who had done much to bring positive change to Black Canadians.

In 1946, Viola Desmond mistakenly sat in the “Whites-only” section of a theatre, and was arrested, convicted and fined. Earlier that year, Best had established *The Clarion*, one of Nova Scotia’s first newspapers for Black Canadians. Together the two women lobbied the provincial government to repeal its segregation laws, which it did in 1954.

In 1954, Best’s radio program, *The Quiet Corner*, hit the airwaves. From the late 1960s to 1975, she wrote a column on human rights for the *Pictou Advocate* and spoke out against, among other things, substandard conditions on Native reserves and discrimination against Black property owners.

Carrie Best, a role model for generations of Black Canadian women, was a Member of the Order of Canada and served on the Task Force on the Status of Woman. She was awarded the Queen Elizabeth Medal, several honorary doctorates, and many other awards.



Ferguson "Fergie" Arthur Jenkins was born on December 13, 1942, in Chatham, Ontario. He is the only Canadian honoured in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY (inducted July 21, 1991). He was inducted to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987. He holds the 12th highest strikeout total in history (3,192). Fergie earned 49 career shutouts, won the Cy Young award in 1971, and in 2000, he established his charitable foundation, The Fergie Jenkins Foundation. In 2004, he received an honorary doctorate from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, and in 2007, Fergie was invested into the Order of Canada.