



**BCC**

# WORD SEARCH

M	X	M	O	N	T	H
L	U	D	U	E	C	N
H	I	S	T	O	R	Y
B	B	K	E	N	T	E
C	G	I	H	U	O	B
W	S	Z	E	Q	M	P
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Words to find:

Kente

History

Month

Museum

Black

# BLACK WAVES – MICROHISTORY



## ~ 1605 : MATHIEU DA COSTA

Mathieu Da Costa was the first recorded person of African descent to arrive in Nova Scotia. We know admittedly little about him. However, from what records remain, we can puzzle together a broader sense of his life. Da Costa was a free man, who served as a translator between the French and the Mi'kmaq for Dugua de Mons. It is assumed that after his contract with Dugua de Mons expired, he still continued to work with both him and Samuel de Champlain during one or more of their voyages in Acadia, which is made up of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

## 1783 : THE BLACK LOYALISTS

When the American Revolution ended in 1783, over 3000 Black Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia. Roughly half settled at Birchtown (near Shelburne). Birchtown was an instant town, the largest settlement of free Black people in the world outside of Africa. They received a percentage of the free land and rations as they had been promised, though the parcels of land given to Black Loyalists were undesirable compared to the land given to white Loyalists - rocky soil and frigid winters made agriculture all but impossible, leaving Black Loyalist communities to fight to survive and persevere. Along with an influx of free Black people, this time period also saw an influx of more than 2000 enslaved Black people to what would become Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and PEI.

Within less than a decade, many Black Loyalists had become disillusioned with the conditions in Nova Scotia. Over 1000 took up an offer to resettle in Sierra Leone in West Africa. Those who stayed in Nova Scotia built communities such as Birchtown, Annapolis Royal, and the Prestons, and made an important mark on the history of Atlantic Canada.

# BLACK WAVES – MICROHISTORY



## 1796 : THE JAMAICAN MAROONS

The Jamaican Maroons were a determined group of freedom fighters who, for nearly a century and a half, waged a war for independence and against enslavement with the British administration of the island. In 1795, the administration in Jamaica decided to remove the Maroons. Three ships brought 543 men, women and children to Halifax in late June 1796, where they were met with harsh winters and the expectation of physical labour without proper wages. Still unwilling to acquiesce, the Maroons were clear about their wishes to return to Africa, where their ancestors had been stolen from generations prior. Eventually, Lt. Gov. Sir John Wentworth - in accordance with the demands of the Maroons - concluded the best resolution would be to arrange for the majority (but not all) of them to migrate again from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone, where they settled in the city of Freetown.

## 1783 : THE BLACK REFUGEES

Similarly to the story of the Black Loyalists, a second group of Black Nova Scotian ancestors arrived following a war. The Refugees from the War of 1812 is the name given to people who fled enslavement in the US aboard Royal Navy ships. Another commonality between the Black Loyalists and the Black Refugees is that, like the Loyalists, the name Black Refugees is a bit misleading. Rather than finding a place of refuge in Nova Scotia, the Refugees were met with discrimination and harsh conditions, similar to the earlier arrivals. In spite of much adversity, the Black Refugees settled in or established communities such as the Prestons, Upper Hammonds Plains, Five Mile Plains, and Beechville, where they built churches, schools, and organizations dedicated to bettering conditions for African Nova Scotians.

## 1833 : THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 ended the legal enslavement of over 800,000 people of African descent in British colonies across the world, including in the Caribbean, parts of Africa, South America, and what would become Canada. The law came into effect on August 1st, 1834, marking the first Emancipation Day, and marking the beginning of the end of legal slavery in the British Empire.

# BLACK WAVES – QUESTIONS



**1. WHY WAS MATHIEU DA COSTA HIRED BY DUGUA DE MONS?**

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**2. WHY DID THE BLACK LOYALISTS DECIDE TO RESETTLE IN SIERRA LEONE?**

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**3. LIST THREE COMMUNITIES WHERE THE BLACK REFUGEES SETTLED**

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