



# PASSAGES & PROSPERITY

Summer 2014

*In this Issue:*

*African  
Heritage  
Month*

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Rocky Jones*

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Voices*

*Nova Scotia  
Brotherhood  
Initiative*



*Africville Stamp*





Mrs. Hazel Johnson and Krishinda McBride share a moment during African Heritage Month.

*As a founding culture, African Nova Scotian history is deep and storied. Today, there are more than 47 African Nova Scotian communities throughout the province of Nova Scotia. Almost 20,000 African Nova Scotians call this province home, contributing to the rich diversity that defines Nova Scotia.*



# Message from the Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs



*Our newsletters are an opportunity to inform you of upcoming programs, projects or events, showcase partnerships and share our achievements with you.*

Friends and Partners,

Since joining African Nova Scotian Affairs and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, I have been deeply moved by the warm welcome I received. I was fortunate to arrive at the perfect time to take on a meaningful role during African Heritage Month 2014. It gave me the chance to get to know new colleagues and partners, and to participate in African Heritage Month events held in communities across our province. The month was a success, but it is important to keep the momentum going into the summer and beyond. The re-emergence of *Passages and Prosperity* is a way for African Nova Scotian Affairs to reach out to Nova Scotians. It is my hope that the information contained within inspires healthy dialogue while providing opportunities for sharing.

African Nova Scotian Affairs has recently undergone significant change. It has been about a year since ANSA moved its office to the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage on Brunswick Street, and we are all looking forward to continuing to work together in areas such as internet strategies, policy, program development, and communications.

The African Nova Scotian community and the history of its people is a story that has to be told and shared with others across Canada and beyond. Working with our partners to increase cultural tourism is a key priority for African Nova Scotian Affairs. I look forward to the opening of the Black Loyalist Heritage Centre in Birchtown next year and to the opportunities this facility will bring to Southwest Nova Scotia. In addition, the Black Cultural Centre continues to play a pivotal role in educating the wider communities about the achievements of peoples of African descent from every region of the province. I know there is still much work to be done, but I believe recent progress is something to be optimistic about.

Staff at ANSA are working with other divisions in Communities, Culture, and Heritage to bring about more opportunities for all African Nova Scotians.

This year we had a chance to look at our history, as well as our future. The story of people of African ancestry in Nova Scotia continues, and it is something to celebrate. I am thrilled to contribute to this newsletter, and I hope to do the same in many editions to come.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Ince', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

*Tony Ince, Minister  
African Nova Scotian Affairs*



*If you want to go quickly,  
go alone.*

*If you want to go far,  
go together.*

AFRICAN PROVERB

2014

# African Heritage Month in Review

Rising Stars

A Hockey Story

Senior's Tea

Dancing Stories

Quilts: The Thread That Connects The Past With The Present

Stamp Unveiling

UACW Saturday School





# Rising Stars

AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2014



*We salute our youth  
and welcome this  
opportunity  
to highlight their  
achievement.*

The theme for African Heritage Month 2014 was Rising Stars: Celebrating our Youth. Six young people were selected by the African Heritage Month Information Network from nominations across the province submitted by community members. We salute our youth and welcome this opportunity to highlight their achievements in areas such as engineering, entrepreneurship, sports, medicine writing, and film production, to name but a few.

Lindell Smith (Halifax Region), Kayla Fells (Yarmouth Region), Erica Porter (Valley Region), Summer-Joy Upshaw (Northern Region), Tatyana Headley (Cape Breton Region), and Natasha Silver (Strait Region) were the six youth chosen for their outstanding contributions to their communities.

The enthusiasm demonstrated by the youth was recognized as they eagerly responded to the call to participate in many of the numerous events throughout the busy month. Their efforts were appreciated by all across the province.

*Premier Stephen McNeil was joined by Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant and African Nova Scotian Affairs Minister Tony Ince, to unveil the African Heritage month poster. This year's poster features six rising stars from the African Nova Scotian community.  
L-R: Erica Porter, Summer-Joy Upshaw, Tatyana Headley, Premier Stephen McNeil, Lindell Smith, Kayla Fells, Natasha Silver, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs, Tony Ince, Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant.*



**Kayla Fells** from Yarmouth, is an energetic, articulate young woman who has been advocating and supporting others from a very young age. She obtained numerous awards and certificates including the Best Humanitarian Award

and Outstanding Student Award in Grade 6, and the Principal's Award and the Silver Star Award in Junior High School. She maintained an honours grade average while participating in basketball, soccer, and track and field. Kayla is enrolled in the Theatre and Arts Program at the University of Kings College where she serves as executive vice president for the Swing Dance Society.

**Lindell Smith**, from the north end of Halifax, is a strong and creative role model in his community. He was awarded the Lieutenant Governor Award in High School and completed an internship with the law firm Burchills. He worked as a Youth



Ambassador for three years for the Crime Prevention project "Youth Opposing Gangs" and created a DVD called "Speak Up" about the issues of the north end community. Lindell graduated from NSCC's Recording Arts program and used his skills to co-found CentreLine Studio located In Uniacke Square.



**Natasha Silver**, from Antigonish, is an outgoing, empathetic, confident young woman who is always willing to stand up for what she believes in and provide a voice for those who struggle. She volunteers with many community groups and student-led school committees

including Big Brothers Big Sisters, the local Celtic Soccer Club, and the PHAST swim club. Tasha is looking forward to pursuing her post-secondary education and continuing to be a strong voice for her community.



**Tatyana Headley**, from Glace Bay, Cape Breton, is always eager to give back and to serve as an inspiration to youth in her community and around the world. Her volunteer work with the Undercurrent Lighthouse Church and her mission trip to the Dominican Republic

for Habitat for Humanity allowed her to have a lasting positive effect on the lives of others. Tatyana strives to be a leader in her school by participating in the "Me to We" program, Project L.E.A.D. and the Black Educators Association Cultural Academic Enrichment Program.

**Summer-Joy Upshaw**, from Amherst, is a charitable, modest and philanthropic role model with a passion for assisting those who are disadvantaged. She is involved in many school activities including Student Council, prom, yearbook, sports as well as Students Against



Victimization Endeavors. In her community, Summer has been a member of cadets and volunteered at numerous events for organizations such as the Cumberland African Nova Scotian Association, the Kidney Foundation, the Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre, and Maggie's Place Family Resource Centre.



**Erica Porter**, from Newport, is a determined young woman who exudes positive energy and educates and spreads awareness about community and generosity. As a full-time fisherwoman, and the owner/operator of her own business, she works seven days per week at no less than two tides daily.

As a successful entrepreneur at a young age, Erica is empowering those around her to achieve what may seem impossible. To further her success, Erica has begun her post-secondary education in business at NSCC.

Congratulations and best wishes to our 2014 Rising Stars!

*There is no greater  
agony than bearing  
an untold story.*

MAYA ANGELOU

## Capturing our Stories

In February and March 2014 ANSA worked with a team to capture some of the images and stories of African Heritage Month.

This project allowed cultural journalists, videographers, photographers to have access to the myriad of events that make up the month. From afternoon teas, to children's ice hockey events, to musical showcases, and spoken word performances – the month encapsulates the heritage of African Nova Scotians and sheds light on their vibrant culture. Some of these stories are now included in this edition of *Passages & Prosperity*.

## A Hockey Story

In 2006, Wilfred Jackson read the book, *Black Ice: The Lost History of the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes 1895-1925* by George and Darril Fosty. The book outlines the history of hockey in the province and the significant loss of an important piece of African Canadian History: Nova Scotia's coloured hockey leagues, some dating back to 1895. Jackson was intrigued about the origin of these leagues and "wanted to share it with the community."

Before the NHL, there were many coloured hockey leagues in Nova Scotia. There were games throughout Halifax Regional Municipality on lakes and ponds, and various other leagues scattered throughout the province, including Truro and New Glasgow. Teams were arranged for games by formal invitation and within five years the Coloured Hockey League of the Maritimes was created. Hockey was played outdoors with most games happening in the "city of lakes." The league was headquartered in Halifax and is noted as the birthplace of Canadian Hockey, but included leagues in Truro, Africville, Hammonds Plains, New Glasgow, and eventually towns in Prince Edward Island.

At the time, several of the leaders of the league were well known for other achievements. This included Dalhousie Law School graduate and one of the founders of the Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children, James Robinson Johnston.

In the summertime, many young men played baseball. In the wintertime, men worked on lakes as Ice Cutters—selling ice for iceboxes. They were out on lakes and ponds all day long, in the cold making a living, so it was not out of the ordinary for these individuals to play hockey.

According to George and Darril Fosty, African Nova Scotians were the first to invent the slap shot. Similarly, they were the first goaltenders to go down to ice level when stopping shots. While it may not be documented in the NHL, it is clear to Jackson and in hockey research, that African Nova Scotians were the first to introduce both practices.

The demise of the Coloured Hockey League occurred during World War I. After the war, some groups tried to pick up the game again but hockey had moved indoors to rinks and



African Nova Scotians could not get adequate ice time.

After learning the history, Jackson hoped to realign hockey with his community. When researching hockey in the province, he came across a website that said “hockey is Canada’s game, hockey is for everyone.” Jackson challenged this notion and began a discussion with Hockey Nova Scotia about the Black community’s relationship with “Canada’s game.”

Hockey Nova Scotia agreed to provide ice time and help with gear if Jackson could rally 25 children to play—not just once but for an entire season. Through his efforts, a group was able to secure ice time for children to play hockey. Now, previous players are ambassadors for the program, making it easier and easier to find 25 players each year.

*Kaleen is suited up to play at BMO Center in February*







# Dancing Stories

2014

"Dancing Stories" was a unique event held at the community centre in North Preston during African Heritage Month. Families and friends of all ages came together to celebrate their culture and learn more about the history of the communities.

The event presented the opportunity for the elders to answer questions from the youth about what life was like for the older generations. The elders shared their experiences with the youth through storytelling. Many of the elders recounted tales of skating and swimming on Long Lake, which ran along many of the backyards of the homes situated in the community. Playing horseshoes and picking berries were also activities elders did growing up. The stories shared by the elders tied some of the past traditions to the present and were greeted with a warm and welcoming response from the youth.

The evening began with a libation ceremony performed by Wayn Hamilton, Henry Bishop and Khalifa Jallo-Hamilton. Performed in many different cultures and religions, the libation ceremony given for this occasion

centered on promoting conscious remembrance of the community's roots. The trio, Hamilton, Bishop and Jallo-Hamilton, accompanied the Dancing Stories Troupe as it performed dance movements to stories.

One of the elders, Mrs. Alfreda Evangeline Smith spoke to the youth about her experience growing up in North Preston. Her grandmother, Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Kane, called Mama Kane, was a well-known and respected advisor for many in North Preston and the surrounding communities. Mrs. Smith shared with the youth several artifacts that held special meaning, including a string of pearls, a horseshoe and several quilts.

Recognized as the largest and one of the oldest indigenous Black communities in Canada, North Preston has ties to one of the most influential and well known spiritual leaders of his time, Richard Preston (1790-1861), an escaped slave from Virginia who came to Nova Scotia and established several churches throughout the province.

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## Senior's Tea

A sunny Saturday afternoon brought together close to 50 seniors for the 10th annual Seniors Tea. The yearly gathering is put on by the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW)—the only association of its kind in Canada, with some of the founding members present at the event.

ABSW is a volunteer charitable organization consisting of African Nova Scotian social workers and human service workers throughout the province.

The afternoon included a poetry reading, scripture reading, senior tribute, group prayer, live music and attendees coming from Beechville,

to Yarmouth and everywhere in between.

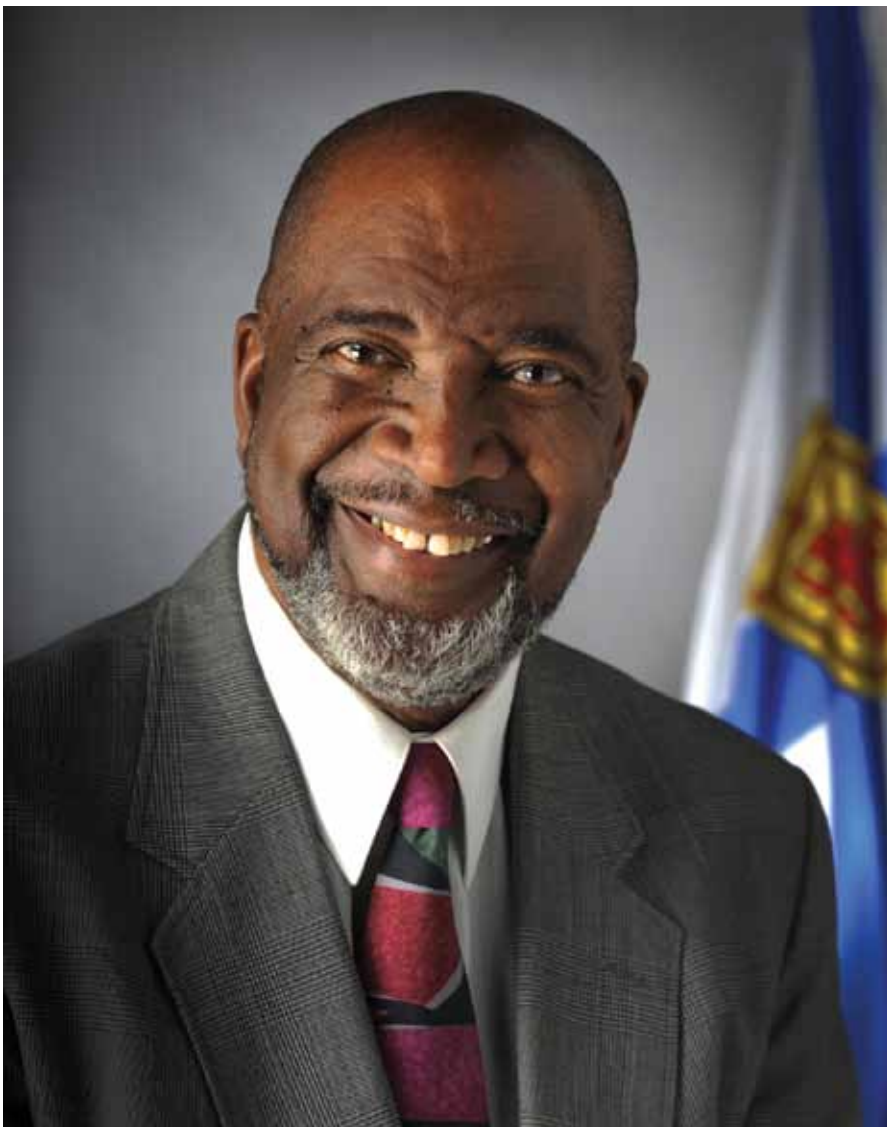
While the afternoon was filled with laughs, music and stories, there was an underlying somber tone reminding us all of the struggle and adversity that many of the seniors faced growing up in Nova Scotia.

# In Memoriam – Rocky Jones

## Blueprint for an Elegy for B.A. (Rocky) Jones

BY GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE

*George Elliott Clarke is a professor of  
literature at the University of Toronto.*



*Rocky Jones, Order of Nova Scotia, 2010*

I don't want to write this elegy—  
not for Rocky —  
not for Burnley Allan Jones —  
because no coffin can frame him,  
no words can take his measure;  
he doth orbit beyond obituaries....

But he was unprecedented Excellence,  
outta all Nova Scotia:  
He lit up even daylight like a flare  
because he had game, had flair,  
like a copper black flame —  
irrefutably black —  
the brilliant epitome of never diminished blackness.....

Spy him spookin the T.V.:  
Shaft gone intellectual.

The very air got impregnated with his black leather—  
never scruffy—  
but indelible, chic —  
suitable to a genius of speech  
as bright and sharp as a knife —  
heroic chrome,  
dazzling, sure, but no mere accessory.

Check:  
When Rocky had to stand up for Justice —  
or had to stand up for us —  
Black (et) Mi'kmaq —  
Africadian —  
he showed the poise  
and took the pose  
of a hammer all set to strike.

Don't deem his bravado merely pantherish!  
His stride was lightning trickling cross our eyes,  
and his rappin struck us upside the head  
with thunderous shocks:

Dude unleashed zingers and zest —  
sound bytes with teeth —  
and handsome laughter—  
vivid, ferocious.



The chap was earthy  
and down-to-earth,  
plain-spoken because  
lying is an abuse of time.

Rocky's talk shot straight stereo to our ears.  
He demanded that we demand that Law  
act Righteous by us.

He couldn't bring any routine medicine:  
He saw that he had to fumigate  
every sanctimonious cranny  
of every legislature and every church.

Job 1 for him?  
Discombobulate the Oppressor!

He took home the Order of Nova Scotia  
for trying to end the disorder of Nova Scotia—  
all the discord and disaster of Bluenose racism.

So Rocky stood his ground—  
on sand or flinty soil.  
Never a bystander,  
he helped us to "overstand"  
right outstandingly.

Helplessly joyous in his hope for us,  
he taught that Hope is a catalyst:  
For the hopeless, can-do's got done-in.

Rocky brought no fleeting gifts —  
he was solid-state,  
down with the People.

He was the true do-gooder,  
rowdy, with steady nerves.

Admit that he was scintillating —  
and terrifyingly tall.  
Casual in his languid nobility,  
but ready to produce Wit  
and induce Delight,

Rocky would step into a room,  
and all the gravity therein  
would prove specific to him.

He was like inimitable poetry,  
perfect in any translation.

Never any atrocious, politic rhetoric,  
his talk leafed through intangible volumes.

Nor would he hobnob with snobs—  
the guys with button-down degrees  
and pointless appointments.

Rocky liked folks to be real—  
as sweet-and-sour, Chinese takeout.

Comin to us live from Truro,  
proud outta Truro,  
he was never confused —  
and not a bit foolish.

Rocky knew the bite of Keith's ale  
and the kick of a rifle,  
and the dip of a fishing line.

We can name the sell-outs:  
They don't represent;  
they front.

Those are dollar signs that were their eyes.

These bourgeois embrace Injustice,  
relax, collect brand-name luxuries —  
Gucci this, Versace that.

They claim that they're "on fire,"  
but all they are is piss with a temperature.

No one can place Rocky in such company.

He never dealt with any stuck-up culture —  
no Parliament Hill or Beverly Hills airs.

He couldn't fit in  
with the 'in' crowd.

He was too good an outsider,  
because he cometh out the Marsh.

I began this poor elegy apologizing,  
dreading this writing.  
I still do.

But poetry revives the cemetery'd,  
and survives the cemetery....

As I write, I see the man himself.  
He could rock a top hat  
while rockin a canoe;  
I see Rocky out there,  
anglin a line and hook  
through a river's dangerous chuckles.

Later, he drowns a cold beer in his belly,  
then fires up a trout,  
enjoying ale and fish  
in the intrepid cold of dusk,  
a fitting finish  
to a day of thought and talk and laughter —  
the dividing line of his face.

Rocky could whistle up  
a salt moon, a sugar moon,  
a moon as weightless as milkweed fluff,  
and he knew how trout look up  
at shaken up stars.

(He heard Nature as Spiritual because —  
To listen,  
One must be silent.)

Misfortune's medals are tears.  
Our eyes have minted them  
and must mint them still.

But Rocky would have us spend  
our silver tears and diamond sweat  
in the struggle  
to make money worthless —  
compared with breath.



# *Children's Cultural and Enrichment Program*

“ The kids, they love the arts. Young to old, they gravitate towards the arts.

The Children's Cultural and Enrichment Program is a school organized by the United African Canadian Women's Association (UACWA). Held at Mount Saint Vincent University every Saturday for two hours, activities are designed to provide students with an understanding of their culture and an education in African history.

Students have the opportunity to be in different classrooms participating in a range of activities. Most recently some of the students were practicing dance, others participated in drum lessons, and others were involved in reading, writing, and mathematics. Elementary and junior high students have an opportunity to be engaged in a wide range of subjects as the curriculum includes math, history, geography, science, music, and dance.

While the program focuses on providing children of African descent with a link to their heritage, it is open to any children who are interested in learning about African culture.





# Quilts : the Thread that Connects the Past with the Present

Quilts are an integral part of African Nova Scotian history. Some quilts directed slaves fleeing to Canada via the Underground Railroad using symbols. Others act as personal memoirs of those who have passed, incorporating scraps of their old clothing. Skills are passed down through families and friends, like the quilts themselves. These pieces of cloth and thread are a tactile and visual reminder of our history, rather than just words in a book easily forgotten.

In the town of Monastery, a group of women gathered over 12 months at a community centre to create their own version of an Underground Railroad quilt. With the guidance of a member of the Quilter's Guild, Mary Desmond, Catherine Hartley, Sabrina Skinner, Katherine

Gero, and Jeanine Gunn lovingly and carefully hand-cut and sewed every piece of the quilt. The quilt was originally raffled off in support of the local church and community centre but through a stroke of sheer luck, or perhaps divine intervention, the winner returned the quilt to the community centre. Today it proudly hangs there—that is, when it's not traveling to local schools, museums, and community centres, telling the story of enslaved people who came to Nova Scotia. The quilt serves as a way to introduce the story of the ancestors of many members of Black communities across the province.

For the women who worked on the quilt, it is much more than history. The group is made up of women spanning three

generations, the youngest in her early twenties and the oldest in her eighties. What made this quilt so important to the group was the death of one of the original sewers, Deacon Everett Desmond, husband to Mary Desmond, who passed away before seeing the quilt completed. The women, who were distraught at the prospect of the quilt leaving them forever following the raffle, cherish his contribution and his memory. This quilt is also symbolic of the inter-generational friendship that sprung up amongst the quilters. They are unified by this project and are truly sisters who have shared experiences, emotions and heritage, despite not being related by blood.



# Sickle Cell Disease

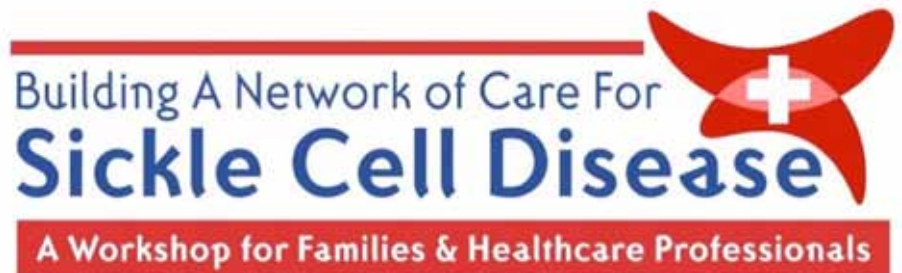
Despite advances made over the years, Sickle Cell Disease continues to be a significant cause of mortality, morbidity, and health disparities in many people of African ancestry. Led by the United African Canadian Women's Association (UACWA), a network of partners and alliances have come together to develop and promote sickle cell awareness.

On Saturday, April 5, 2014, the network conducted a symposium at the Westin Hotel in Halifax. It brought together community members, healthcare professionals, researchers, and those affected by sickle cell disease from across this province and beyond.

One of the goals of the conference was to inform and create a deeper understanding about the biology of sickle cell disease and to develop more effective therapeutic and preventive strategies. Organized by UACWA under the leadership of Rugi Jalloh, the conference also provided an opportunity for those affected by the disease to share personal experiences about their condition and the health care delivery they receive.

Dr. David Haase (QEII Health Sciences Centre and Co-Chair of the Health Association of African Canadian) gave opening remarks. The keynote speaker was Will Njoku, a well-known sickle cell disease advocate. In recognition of their long service for advocacy, several people were honoured including Lillie Johnson, Lanre Tunde, and Sharon Davis Murdoch.

A sickle cell disease conference will be held in Toronto on September 19 & 20, 2014. The Sickle Cell Network of Nova Scotia can be contacted at: [sicklecellnovascotia@gmail.com](mailto:sicklecellnovascotia@gmail.com).





# Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative – Gets at Root of Health Issues for Black Men

A new health initiative for African Nova Scotian men is currently in the final stages and scheduled to be launched in the fall of 2014. Based on a holistic health care model out of Chicago, Illinois, the Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative aims to introduce culturally specific health clinics to help men overcome systemic barriers and the health disparities that exist and which so often play a huge role in hindering black males from seeking the health care they need.

“There have been a number of studies done that show that men of any culture or race are less likely than women to go see a doctor about their health for a number of reasons,” says Wayne Hamilton of African Nova Scotian Affairs. “Now, when you add the systemic issues that African Nova Scotian men have to confront regarding their health and within the health care system, it becomes more challenging to seek the care needed.”

Working with the Men’s Health League, the Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative will operate through a volunteer peer-to-peer support group of African Nova Scotian men that will focus on education and awareness as it provides key health



messages about prostate cancer, health disease, and chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. The Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative began as a concept at the provincial government level in 2009 with the Department of Health and Wellness. It is currently in the planning and implementation phase with Primary Health Care at Capital Health in partnership with African Nova Scotian Affairs. Anthony Riley, past member

of the Southeastern Health Board and member of the Community Development Association of Cherrybrook/Lake Loon, says “the future looks more positive for the health and wellness of black men with the Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative.”

For more information about Nova Scotia Brotherhood or to become involved with the Men’s Health League, contact Colin Campbell at 487-0218 or email him at [colin.campbell@cdha.ns.health.ca](mailto:colin.campbell@cdha.ns.health.ca).

# Community Voices

**Love your community?**

**Let your voice  
be heard!**

What do you think is important for others to know about African Nova Scotians? Is there a person or place in your community you think should be honoured? How about a story about your heritage that should be remembered?

*Community Voices* is your opportunity to make it happen.

The initiative helps communities celebrate events, recognize important places and individuals, honour achievements with awards, and collect information about the history of African Nova Scotian communities to be used in education and promotional activities.

It was developed after consultations with the community on a proposed Viola Desmond Day in 2011. The consultations indicated that many African Nova Scotian communities wanted a way to recognize the many people and places that tell the story of their achievements. The consultations were led by the African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA).

ANSA is inviting African Nova Scotians to define what is important to them and write their own history through a series of five programs for which templates have been developed. These include:

## **Community Profiles**

This program aims to have profiles created for each of the province's African Nova Scotian communities. Profiles can include information such as memorable people, important sites, history and population. Completed profiles should be sent to ANSA for documentation, posting on ANSA's website, and to help promote African Nova Scotian communities when opportunities arise (see Upper Big Tracadie profile in this issue of *Passages & Prosperity*).

## **Community Celebrations**

This program will help communities plan annual events and create new ones. It includes ideas for promotion and fundraising, and checklists for all stages of planning. A completed proposal can be used to apply for funding from ANSA or to have ANSA help promote your event.

## **Sites of Significance for Recognition**

This program will assist communities in identifying and evaluating sites of historical or cultural significance that should be recognized and preserved. This includes possible recognition at the municipal, provincial, national or international level. The guide includes criteria for determining heritage assets, resources, and information about heritage organizations.

## **Community Awards**

This program will help communities recognize citizens through awards and celebration. The guide includes ideas for awards that can be established to honour remarkable African Nova Scotians of today and the past. ANSA will assist in the promotion of awards and recipients.

## **Share Your Story!**

This program is about sharing as many African Nova Scotian stories as possible. Submit a story about something that's important to you or your community. It could be a person, a place, a tradition, or anything else. Stories can be submitted in writing (500-1000 words) with photos, or as a 3-5 minute video or audio recording. Your story may be featured in the ANSA newsletter, on websites, museum displays, promotional material, or other media.

A guide has been designed to help individuals and communities participate in activities--from gathering stories worth sharing to promoting African Nova Scotian achievements and places of cultural or historic importance.

More information on Community Voices and details on how to submit can be found on the ANSA website [ansa.novascotia.ca/community-voices](http://ansa.novascotia.ca/community-voices) or by contacting the office at ANSA\_ [Newstter@gov.ns.ca](mailto:Newstter@gov.ns.ca) or 902-424-5555.

# Community Profile: Upper Big Tracadie

*Community Voices Spotlight.* This edition of *Passages & Prosperity* highlights Upper Big Tracadie.

## **LOCATION:**

Upper Big Tracadie is located in Guysborough County, Nova Scotia, about 30 km from Antigonish, off Highway 104 at Exit 37, south-east 8km on Highway 16.

## **HISTORY:**

Founded in 1813, the name Upper Big Tracadie came from its location high up and overlooking Monastery and Tracadie Harbour. The first settlers to the area were Black Loyalists who fled to Nova Scotia after the American Revolution. In 1787, Thomas Brownspriggs and 74 other loyalist families were granted 3000 acres of land in what is known today as East Tracadie, Antigonish County.

The Black settlers faced many difficulties, including barren land, menial jobs, broken promises from the British, and outright hostility from white settlers. Despite the many challenges, the Black settlers persevered. Upper Big Tracadie celebrated its bicentennial anniversary in 2013.

The history of Tracadie United Baptist Church dates back to the arrival of the first settlers in 1787. Thomas Brownspriggs was one of the most influential Black figures during these early years. He was the preacher and schoolmaster from 1788 to 1790.

David Nutter arrived from England in 1822. With a small group of settlers the church was organized under the direction of the Baptist faith and the structure was moved from its original location to a more central site in the community. In 2012, Tracadie United Baptist Church celebrated its 190th anniversary. The church is recorded as being the second oldest in the African United Baptist Association (AUBA). Today, it proudly serves some 50 families from the communities of Rear Monastery, Upper Big Tracadie, and Lincolnvile.

A one-room school built at the crossroads in Upper Big Tracadie served the community until 1965. At that time children were moved to a larger elementary school serving the Black communities of Lincolnvile and Upper Big Tracadie. Students attended high school in Guysborough. Located next to the Tracadie church, the elementary school now serves as the community hall.

Farming, forestry, and labour were the main source of income for the men during the early 1800s until the late 1970s. Some found work as porters with the railway. The early settlers raised pigs, cattle, sheep, and horses. Oxen were used to pull logs from the woods to be taken to the local mills and cut for lumber. Many family homes in Upper Big Tracadie were built from the lumber from these same forests.

Over the past few decades, young people were forced to leave the community to find work in the major cities across Canada. Some residents still do a little farming by raising cattle and planting crops.

Today, a small number of people of African ancestry have found employment in the food industry and in retail clothing stores, as well in the drug stores and fast food establishments.

## **POPULATION TODAY:**

The population in this Black community has steadily declined over the past 30 years. Today, over 85% of the people are 65 and older.

## **SITES OF MEMORY OR SIGNIFICANCE:**

In 1988 a monument was erected by the congregation of the Tracadie United Baptist Church at the site called the "Old Grave Yard" off Highway 16. It is a tribute to those early settlers buried in the cemetery. The inscription reads:

"In Memory of Pioneers of the Black Community, 1782 – 1931 who are buried in this Cemetery."

## **PEOPLE OF MEMORY OR SIGNIFICANCE:**

Norman Arthur Elms was the pastor at Tracadie United Baptist Church. The son of William John Elms and Sarah MacPhee Elms, Pastor Elms enlisted in the Canadian Army and served in various locations throughout Europe and North Africa from 1941 to 1945.



Married to Marion Ashe, he was a bricklayer by trade and owned his own business. His work can be found in many homes throughout the province. The recipient of many medals for his service as a soldier, Pastor Elms contributed to the development of this community through his church leadership role and his many voluntary services until his death in 2001. He is buried in the Sunnyvale Grave yard next to the Tracadie United Baptist Church.

There were other men from the Upper Big Tracadie community who enlisted and fought for their country over the years, including:

**Private James Benjamin Elms,**  
Served 1939-45.

**Private William Henry Elms,**  
Served 1939-45.

**Private Joseph Thomas Ash,** Born November 13, 1884 and served to 1918.

**Private Lavin Daye,** Born in 1898, enlisted in Truro on September 22, 1916 and served with the #2 Construction Battalion.

**Private Matthew Day,** Born in 1875, enlisted in Truro in 1917 and served with #2 Construction Battalion in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces.

**Private Michael Redmond Elms,** Born in 1896, enlisted in Halifax in 1916 and served with the #2 Construction Battalion in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces.

**Private William Gero,** Born in 1876, enlisted in Truro in 1916 and served with the #2 Construction Battalion in the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces.

#### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

The Awakening Souls Youth Choir was formed in 2007 to showcase and promote the artistic talent of the young people in the community. Nominated at the East Coast Music Award for 2012 African Canadian Recording of the Year for their CD "God is Love," the choir performs uplifting spiritual music combined with modern rhythm and blues.

The Upper Big Tracadie Seniors Action Club is active in the area with members from Upper Big Tracadie, Lincolnville, Rear Monastery, and Sunnyville. Coming together officially in 2011, the group is involved in preserving the culture and heritage of the area and have produced a historical video capturing the stories and life experience of the seniors in the local communities. Among other projects the group is undertaking is a community garden that produces a bountiful crop for over 24 families.

The DRUM is a widely read newsletter produced by the Tracadie United Baptist Church. The popular newsletter circulates in the communities of Upper Big Tracadie, Lincolnville, Monastery, Rear Monastery, Sunnyville, Bolyston, Mulgrave and surrounding areas. The editor of this newsletter is Mary Desmond.

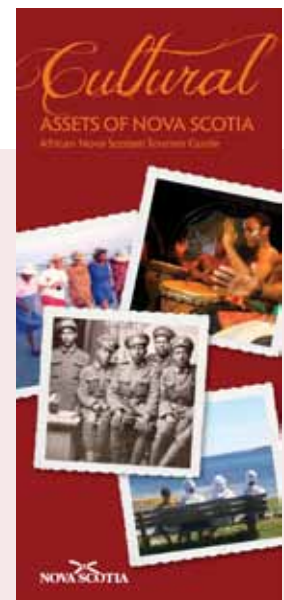
## African Nova Scotia Cultural Tourism

Individuals of African descent have a long and rich history in Nova Scotia and people from many different parts of the world are starting to notice.

For several years various organizations have been working towards developing a cultural tourism industry that would highlight the various communities and sites in the province that reflect people of African ancestry in the province.

Today, that dream is being realized through the creation of the African Nova Scotian Cultural Tourism Association (ANSCTA). Earlier this year ANSCTA created a vision: "Be the leading catalyst in creating a pulsating awareness of the rich influential story of African peoples from Nova Scotia to the globe."

The association is still new, and the mission is to establish a vibrant and progressive tourism association by serving members actively seeking excellence in areas associated with culture and tourism in Nova Scotia. To explore some of what Nova Scotia has to offer, please visit [ansa.novascotia.ca/research-reports](http://ansa.novascotia.ca/research-reports) to view the Cultural



*Cultural Assets of Nova Scotia  
African Nova Scotian Tourism Guide*

Assets of Nova Scotia—African Nova Scotian Tourism Guide or it can be ordered through [novascotia.com/about-nova-scotia/order-travel-guide](http://novascotia.com/about-nova-scotia/order-travel-guide).

# Events, Arts, Culture, Films...

Upcoming events to watch for in Communities across Nova Scotia.

## EVENTS

August 15-17

### **African United Baptist Association Annual Session**

Hosted by Cherry Brook United Baptist Church, "Standing, Striving, Stretching" is the theme of the 161st A.U.B.A annual session being held at Cherry Brook United Baptist Church and Graham Creighton School. Featuring Soloist Anne Johnson MacDonald, North Preston and Guest Speaker: Dr. Tony Baker from Staten Island, NY.

August 15-18

### **Marcus Garvey Days in Cape Breton**

The 100th anniversary of the founding of the Universal Negro Improvement Association will be celebrated in Glace Bay at the UNIA museum and community hall at 35 Jessome Street.

September 24-27

### **Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers Annual Conference**

**Conference time: 9 am – 5 pm**

Ramada Park Place Hotel, 240 Brownlow Avenue, Dartmouth. Featured speakers are Dr. Deborah Haskins and Elizabeth Eckford (USA); Activities include: Black Communities Tour; Youth Sessions; Tradeshow & Exhibitions; and Entertainment.

November 14-15

### **A Provincial Education Conference**

"20 Years Since the BLAC (Black Learners Advisory Committee) Report: Reflecting on the Past, Charting the Future" is being organized by Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, Black Educators Association, Council on African Canadian Education And the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Africentric Learning Institute. For further information contact: 424-7036 or [info@theblackeducators.ca](mailto:info@theblackeducators.ca)

Halifax-based soul singer Cyndi Cain made headlines over the past summer, playing to sold out audiences at the TD Jazz Festivals in Halifax; Rochester, New York; and in Ottawa where she opened for the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. Cain has released two CD's, "Essentially Cyndi" (2009) and "Soul Food" (2013). Nominated for an East Coast Music Award in 2009, Cain has won several awards including best R&B Artist in 2011 and Artist of the Year in 2014 from the African Nova Scotia Music Association. Her powerful voice and strong stage presence are earning her a growing fan base across Canada and the U.S. Cain recently returned from Europe where, in July, she headlined the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Fest in Scotland. Her fans, both old and new, look forward to the release of her next CD early in 2015.



Cindy Cain



Shauntay Grant

Award-winning writer, broadcast journalist, musician and Halifax's third Poet Laureate, Shauntay Grant recently released her latest CD in Halifax. *Say Sumthin'* is a beautiful mixture of melodies, words and songs that leaves the listener wanting more. The author of several books, including *Up Home*, *The City Speaks in Drums*, and *Apples & Butterflies*, Grant's voice is riveting and spell-binding throughout. "Be the Change You Want To See in the World" and "Mama Africa" are two tracks on *Say Sumthin'* that will take your breath away. Shauntay Grant curated and hosted the 2014 Folk Steps Music Conference at the annual Lunenburg Folk Harbour Festival held Aug 7th-10th. Visit Shauntay Grant at her website: [shauntaygrant.com/spoken-word-music](http://shauntaygrant.com/spoken-word-music)

# Events, Arts, Culture, Films...

Upcoming events to watch for in Communities across Nova Scotia.

## ARTS & CULTURE

Two new books launched over the summer include *Winds of Change* by Lindsay Ruck and *And I Alone Escaped To Tell You* by Sylvia Hamilton.

*Winds of Change* is an account of the life of an extraordinary man who left a lasting impact through his work in rural communities in the Halifax area and made a difference in the lives of the young and the old. Calvin Ruck was a social development officer who devoted his entire life to the fight for equal rights for people of African ancestry. Appointed to the Senate in 1998, Ruck remains alive in the memories of many African Nova Scotians. The author Lindsay Ruck is the granddaughter of Calvin Ruck.

Windsor's own esteemed author/writer George Elliott Clarke describes *And I Alone Escaped To Tell You* as a "panorama of Africadian experience and smart introspection."

Several characters you will meet in *And I Alone Escaped To Tell You* include Ambrose Smart and his wife Hannah in 1827 at Cape Negro, near Shelburne; Crazy Black Luce; and Flora, a runaway slave. Hamilton calls runaway slaves "Freedom Runners." A prize winning filmmaker, artist, and writer, Sylvia Hamilton is a professor at University of King's College. This is her first published work as a poet.

## FILMS

### Toussaint Louverture



African Nova Scotian Affairs will be presenting a second screening of the film *Toussaint Louverture* in

the coming months. It tells a riveting account of the battle waged for freedom by slaves in Haiti during the 18th century under the leadership of the great warrior and military strategist, Toussaint Louverture. This would be the first successful Revolution in the new world. It led to the creation of Haiti as an independent country and influenced the institution of slavery across the world. The film is shown in its original French format with English subtitles.

### The Book of Negroes

A made-for-television film adapted from the book of the same name will be shown on CBC and BET in winter 2015. Filmed in 14 cities on two continents including Louisburg, Shelburne, and Halifax, the mini-series follows the story of Aminata Diallo, who is kidnapped from West African in the 18th century and survives a journey across the Middle Passage before securing her freedom and returning to Sierra Leone. It stars Cuba Gooding Jr, Aunjanue Ellis and Lou Gossett Jr.

## HONOURS

Chester Borden received the Tom Miller Human Rights Award at the 2014 African Heritage Month Celebration Gala held in Cape Breton on February 1st. As Executive Director with the Whitney Pier Youth Club/Boys & Girls Club, Mr. Borden was honoured for his work as an advocate for youth development and his commitment and dedication to community service for over 30 years.

Dr. Willie Quinn was awarded a major international recognition in aerospace engineering by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) in January 2013 in Texas. A St. Francis Xavier University engineering professor, Dr. Quinn has been elevated to the grade of Associate Fellow in the AIAA and is one of only two individuals from Canada inducted in the class of 2013. Dedicated to the advancement of science and engineering in aviation, space and defense, the institute has recognized Dr. Quinn's research work in the areas of turbulent jet flows, fluid dynamics and aerodynamics.



## Our Government, Your Government:

# Who's Who at African Nova Scotian Affairs?

### Wayn Hamilton

*Executive Director*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Receiving positive energy from my co-workers.

### Debra Gannon

*Office Manager*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Being able to stay connected with "all" the African Nova Scotian communities!

### Chantel Reid-Demeter

*Community Development Officer*

Office Location: Cape Breton

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Working with individuals and groups to push the African Nova Scotian Community forward in an inclusively effective manner.

### Tracey Thomas

*Senior Policy Analyst*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
The GREAT team that we have developed, it's a supportive and inclusive environment and a fun place to work. I also like sharing the work that ANSA does with other government departments, as well as some of the concerns and positive practices going on within the African Nova Scotian communities across the province.

### Josephine Tommy

*Program Administration Officer*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Great and supportive team. Wonderful work Environment.

### Colin Campbell

*Research & Statistical Officer*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Working with and for the black community in Nova Scotia

### Chavasse Bain

*Secretary*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA: The great working environment and support of coworkers.

### Regina James

*Communications Officer*

Office Location: Halifax

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
That feeling of belonging when entering the office each morning.

### Lillian Marsman

*Program Administration Officer*

Office Location: Cape Breton

Favourite thing about working at ANSA:  
Networking

### Shequinta Clyke

*Administrative Assistant*

Office Location: Cape Breton

Favorite thing about working at ANSA: I get to work with an extraordinary supportive team of professionals and I have an opportunity to become engaged and create positive change within African Nova Scotian communities throughout the province.



[ansa.novascotia.ca](http://ansa.novascotia.ca)

## African Nova Scotian Affairs: New Website

African Nova Scotian Affairs launched a new website during African Heritage Month 2014 that is designed to improve our online presence and service to our clients, while providing up-to-date information about the department.

The site includes a new section called Our Community where Community Voices submissions can be displayed, giving communities a chance to write their own history. It also includes information on ANSA services and programs, newsletters, and upcoming events.

Want your event publicized on the website? Send you event details to [ansa\\_newsletter@gov.ns.ca](mailto:ansa_newsletter@gov.ns.ca) and we'll include it on the website and ANSA Facebook page!



*The ANSA logo incorporates several concepts that relate to the mission of the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA):*

**Birds:** *Represent freedom and fertility and is said to carry the souls of our ancestors.*

**Flower:** *The Mayflower is the official flower of Nova Scotia.*

**Star:** *This stylized star is symbolic in several different ways. The Black Star of Africa has come to symbolize hope and honour, and represents the people of African ancestry. Points of the star – the spokes – represent moving forward as a people.*

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs assists, supports, and enhances the provincial government's delivery of services to African Nova Scotians and is a partner in developing innovative solutions that lead to self reliance and sustainable development for African Nova Scotians and their communities.

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