



BLACKS IN CANADA: TRUTHS, TRIUMPHS & EXCELLENCE
Presented by Gregory Birkett and Coleen Birkett
SummerUp 2021
Program Description

Program Name

Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs & Excellence

What

Black Canadian doctors in the 1800s? The first female police officer in Canada was Black? Black Canadian athletes invented shadow boxing and the slapshot in hockey? The first talk show host in all North America was a Black woman from Vancouver? Why don't we know any of this and where can we go to find out more? *Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs and Excellence* is a 4-week multi-media, interactive course that uses videos, spoken word, guest speakers, and more to teach you all about the Black Canadian experience in a way that you will never forget! You will learn about the Black Canadian identity (language, culture, music), how long Black people have been in this country, and how they came to be here, as well as the amazing contributions that Black people have been making in Canadian society for hundreds of years. You will learn about things that will surprise you and inspire you to become confident leaders now and in the future. Register and get ready to learn things that you did not know, and things that you did not know that you needed to know. *Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs and Excellence*- let's do this!

Why this Matters

For many students, growing up Black in Canada is to be unaware of the rich history of Black persons in Canada. Invariably, the substantial contributions Black persons have made to the development and growth of this country are not often told and rarely are celebrated. So, why not be proactive and act to discover Black history...to discover the many stories of Black triumphs and excellence that contribute to the fabric of your country? SummerUp's *Blacks in Canada* program is a great way to continue your journey of discovery and self-empowerment. Want to reinforce your self-pride? Want to shed those confidence-bleeding moments of feeling like you don't belong? Want to be the one in your social circle who can articulate the importance of Black Canadian history? Want to lead a Black history Club at your school? This program is for you. Then too, you get to share this journey with other youth and also build peer relationships. What a way to SummerUp!

Your Blueprint to Discovery

SummerUp's *Blacks in Canada* program is centred around three themes: truth, triumphs, and excellence.

I. Truths—This section brings to light the many truths about Blacks in Canada and acknowledges their longevity and identity in this country. It also illuminates truths that have been excluded from the narrative of Canadian History.

Topics

1. First Arrivals
 - Mathieu da Costa
 - Enslaved Blacks

- Black Loyalists
- Jamaican Maroons

2. Canadian Blacks: From the Underground Railroad to the Coal Mines of Nova Scotia
3. Waves of Immigration: The Growing Caribbean and African Presence
4. Canada's History of Anti-Black Racism

II. Triumphs—This section focuses on the many triumphs that emerged in spite of hardships and racism, and the legacy that shapes the Black Canadian identity and contributions today.

Topics

1. Diversity in Historic Black Canadian Communities
 - Amber Valley, Hogan's Alley, Africville, Elgin Settlement, Little Burgundy, Little Jamaica
2. Cultural Diversity in Current Black Canadian Populations
 - "Toronto slang"-Is it slang or is it language?
 - Hair Politics
3. Black Canadian Resistance and Civil Rights Movements
4. Trailblazers: Past Black Canadian Contributions and Achievements

III. Excellence—This section highlights the fact that Black Canadians continue to shine and make significant contributions in all areas, reinforcing the fact that the media representation is largely based on stereotype.

Topics

1. Current Black Canadian Achievements in The Arts, Sports, and Business
2. Current Black Canadian Achievements in Science and Medicine, Law and Politics, and Education
3. Current Black Canadian Achievements in Writing, Journalism, and Media

Admission Details

Who: You are a Black youth, Ontario resident, and are enrolled in Grades 8 to 12 during the 2020-21 academic year. You are keen to deepen your knowledge about Black Canadian history and to do so with other like-minded students. You have the required equipment to learn online. You are willing to commit to attending all scheduled learning sessions (see dates and times below).

Start/Stop Dates: SummerUp will offer one section of *Blacks in Canada: Truth, Triumphs and Excellence*. The program spans four weeks starting on Wednesday, July 14 and ending on Thursday, August 5. Each class is two-hours duration. Classes will run from 1.00 – 3.00 p.m.

Meeting Pattern: This program will meet for two hours (1.00 – 3.00 p.m.) on each of the following ten days.

Week 1: Wednesday, July 14; Thursday, July 15

Week 2: Tuesday, July 20; Wednesday, July 21; Thursday, July 22

Week 3: Wednesday, July 28; Thursday, July 29; Friday, July 30

Week 4: Wednesday, August 4; Thursday, August 5

Mode: Online. Students must have a suitable computer device and internet access.

Admission: To be considered for admission, candidates must attend a program orientation session at 6.30 p.m., Wednesday, June 23. Parents are invited to attend this orientation. This orientation will be co-hosted by the Leadership by Design program and program leaders Gregory Birkett and Coleen Birkett.

Register for the orientation using the following

link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1gQw8cJrSiiv3YAt1AlpWA

Program Leaders

Gregory Birkett

Greg Birkett is a published co-author (*Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas* – Emond Montgomery Publications, *The Great Black North Poetry Anthology-Frontenac House Poetry*), poet, and recognized educator (Governor-General Award for Teaching Excellence Finalist, 2011, A.H.E.N. Excellence in Teaching Award winner, 2016). He has served as a curriculum consultant for the OBHS (Ontario Black History Society) and has written curriculum for the Ontario Ministry of Education. He has also written freelance for the *Toronto Star*, and was featured in an article in *Sway Magazine* highlighting his innovative approach to classroom teaching and education. Two plays that Greg wrote, *Do You Remember Me* and *Pieces of a Black Woman's Soul*, were performed at the Toronto Fringe Festival, Toronto's largest theatre and performance festival, and for sold out audiences at the Sandbox Theatre in downtown Toronto respectively. Greg is the founder of G.I.A. Productions, a youth-focused organization that uses the artistic mediums of spoken word, drama, dance, and music to stage original productions that promote education, history, and positivity in the community. He is a Senior Writer for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Kids website and the co-developer and co-presenter of *See Us, Learn Us: Teaching the Black Canadian Experience*, a nation-wide webinar for educators in partnership with Nelson Education.



Coleen Birkett

Coleen Birkett is an educator with the Toronto District School Board. She has over twenty years of classroom experience. In addition to teaching, Coleen has, as a freelance writer, written many articles for community publications. She has also co-authored the textbook *Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas*, which is in use in school boards throughout the GTA, Nova Scotia and Bermuda. She has been involved with the Ontario Black History Society as a curriculum writer and consultant. Additionally, Coleen is instrumental in providing leadership in the development, organization and facilitation of very successful educational forums for youth during Black Heritage month.



Coleen's experience as an educator is quite diverse as she has taught in Central America, Toronto and Bermuda in both public and private schools. She has developed and presented workshops to educators in West Africa and Bermuda. Additionally, Coleen was selected to be a member of an evaluation team to assess the eligibility of a private school in New York for accreditation. In 2009, she was a recipient of the Award for Excellence in Teaching for her work in Bermuda. Miss Birkett has also worked as an Instructional Coach for the Toronto District School Board's Literacy and Numeracy initiative. Coleen is a co-developer and co-presenter of *See Us, Learn Us: Teaching the Black Canadian Experience*, a nation-wide webinar for educators in partnership with Nelson Education.

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