

ABOUT US

The Black Canadian Experience Centre (BCEC) represents a groundbreaking initiative to address a critical gap in Manitoba's cultural landscape. Founded in 2025, the BCEC creates dedicated spaces that center the full spectrum of Black histories, stories, and futures – created by Black communities for Black communities, while welcoming all Canadians to learn and engage

Our three core directives remain at the heart of our mission:

HONOUR THE PAST

We recognize the legacy of our ancestors who helped build the prairies and Canada, including the migrations of Canadians of African descent who were freed slaves and those who escaped through the Underground Railroad and sought a better life in Canada.

CELEBRATE THE PRESENT

We hold space for the Elders who are still here to tell their stories and the current generation of leaders who have continued the work of our ancestors to make Manitoba and the prairies better for Canadians of African descent.

BUILD THE FUTURE

To empower the next generation of Canadians of African descent through the stories of resilience of our ancestors and creating spaces for young people to people to write their own history.

Help us build the future. Your contribution will directly fund the completion of our mobile museum template—a groundbreaking portable platform that brings Black prairie histories directly to communities across Manitoba. This innovative approach allows us to reach rural communities, schools, and cultural centers that might never visit a traditional museum.

E-TRANSFER

Send \$100 to info@acoml.ca.
Include your name and
"Black History Museum"
in message

ONLINE

Canada Helps Portal.
Select dropdown #7:
Black History Museum



THE BLACK CANADIAN EXPERIENCE CENTRE



Honour the Past
Celebrate the Present
Build the Future



National Black Canadians Summit 2026

Exhibition Statement

Black Life and Advocacy in Winnipeg: 1900s–2020s

From the early 1900s to the present, Black communities in Winnipeg have built lives, families, institutions, businesses, and networks of care while navigating exclusion, racism, and systemic barriers. This exhibition recognizes **Black presence, achievement, advocacy, and contribution as an essential part of Winnipeg's history**—a history that has too often been overlooked, minimized, or left out of the public record.

Yet much of this history remains missing from our educational systems, museums, archives, and public commemorations. The absence of these stories is not simply an omission—it affects how generations understand who helped build Winnipeg and Canada. **Justice requires that Black history and Black experiences be fully recognized as Canadian history.** Education must include the contributions, experiences, and perspectives of people of African descent, with opportunities for students to learn directly from elders, community members, knowledge keepers, and organizations. Faith communities such as Pilgrim Baptist Church provided spiritual grounding as well as places to gather, organize, and care for one another.

Black communities have also long understood the importance of **telling and preserving our own stories.** Newspapers, newsletters, oral histories, photographs, family records, creative works, and community archives have documented lives and challenged dominant narratives. These records are more than artifacts; they are evidence of presence, achievement, struggle, resilience, and collective memory. Museums, libraries, archives, and other institutions have a responsibility to recognize, preserve, protect, and make accessible these materials in partnership with the communities from which they come.

This exhibition also acknowledges the difficult realities within this history. Black communities have experienced discriminatory employment practices, housing barriers, displacement, racism, and exclusion from institutions and systems of power. Past development and urban planning decisions have sometimes disrupted or displaced established Black communities and their connections to place. These histories must be remembered alongside stories of achievement and resilience.



This exhibition calls for the **recognition, commemoration, preservation, and celebration of the many contributions of Black communities:** economic, social, political, cultural, spiritual, intellectual, and creative. It calls for Black history to be integrated into education and public history, for Black heritage places and collections to be protected, and for museums and cultural institutions to work in meaningful partnership with Black communities.

Most importantly, this exhibition affirms that Black history in Winnipeg is not a story of the past alone. **It is a living history.** It is a history of people who arrived, worked, organized, created, worshipped, raised families, built institutions, advocated for justice, and made Winnipeg home.

We honour the past. We recognize the present. And we build the future.



Railway Porters Band picnic,
Keenora Park, August 2,
1922



The Pilgrim Baptist Church, Winnipeg.
Services were held between 1935–1984.
In 1984, the church was demolished and
rebuilt. Pilgrim Baptist Church was a hub for
Black families and travelling porters. Pilgrim
Baptist Church is now located at 41 Maple
Street in Winnipeg. Pilgrim Baptist Church has
enjoyed both adult and youth choirs through
the years. (Courtesy of: Back Track to Railroad
Ties Collection, Manitoba Museum. Project
Researcher: Patricia Clements)