

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

With a series of posters, facts, and bookmarks that commemorate our heritage

Viola Desmond's experience helped to galvanize public opinion locally and internationally, and to raise awareness about the reality of Canadian segregation.

On November 8, 1946, Viola Desmond, a successful Halifax beautician and businesswoman, decided to watch a movie at the Roseland Theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia.

Viola was black, and the segregated theatre did not allow blacks to sit in the downstairs seats, only in the balcony. She was given a balcony ticket but wanted to sit downstairs in spite of the rule. She was arrested for allegedly defrauding the government of the 1 percent amusement tax on the higher priced downstairs seats.


She was thrown in jail for 12 hours and eventually fined \$20 and sentenced to 30 days in prison.

Her appeal succeeded on a technicality. The recently formed Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP) helped raise the money to pay the fine and bring the law to public attention. Viola's efforts were not in vain, and the publicity that her case gained helped put an end to this kind of discrimination.

Beginning in 2015 Nova Scotia will institute a new statutory holiday which will celebrate individuals who have contributed to the provinces history. Kelly Regan, Minister for Labour and advanced education, explained how it will work: "Each year, we'll celebrate a different contribution to Nova Scotia's storied past and diverse culture and learn more about our history in the process." The first holiday will celebrate Viola Desmond.



Viola Desmond

 Cut here for your black history bookmark



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