



BC Black History Awareness Society
OUR ROOTS RUN DEEP



ROYAL BC MUSEUM

August 3, 2021

**Written, Told and Designed by Black Voices:
New Pocket Gallery Exhibition Reclaims BC Black History**

VICTORIA, BC – At a time when many British Columbians are already re-examining the province’s history and who gets to write it, the [BC Black History Awareness Society](#) (BCBHAS) and Royal BC Museum (RCM) have partnered to produce a new pocket gallery exhibition that reclaims and retells the complicated history of Black “British Columbians.”

Opening August 14, [Hope Meets Action: Echoes Through the Black Continuum](#) traces an unbroken line of strength and resistance from the distant past to the present and into the future by highlighting the contributions of Black leaders whose actions echo across the centuries.

“With this exhibition, we not only want people to learn about the history of Black settlers and their legacy but we also want people to know that contemporary Blacks in BC are very proud of this legacy,” explains BCBHAS President, Silvia Mangue Alene. “We will extend and grow this legacy through resilience, hard work, creativity and leadership, with the humbling acknowledgement that we are not Indigenous of these lands.”

The exhibition follows the seldom-told stories of Black women such as Sylvia Stark, who was born an enslaved person in Missouri, taught herself to read by secretly listening to her master’s children’s lessons and eventually became a pillar of the Black pioneer community on Salt Spring Island. Her daughter Emma Stark would later become the first Black teacher on Vancouver Island.

It also features audio recordings of Black British Columbians calling in from around the province to lend their voices to this history, and—with a focus on decolonization—artwork by young Black artists speaking to the history of the Hogan’s Alley community in Vancouver, BC.

“This pocket gallery marks an important moment in time for BC,” says Royal BC Museum acting CEO, Dr. Daniel Muzyka. “Right now, many British Columbians are re-examining the province’s history and challenging its longstanding bias toward European settler history. We’re indebted to the BC Black History Awareness Society for leading the way on this long-overdue retelling of Black history in BC.”



Hope Meets Action was created by the BC Black History Awareness Society in partnership with the Royal BC Museum; it was curated and written by Josh Robertson and designed by Rodney Hazard.

Access to the Royal BC Museum's Pocket Gallery, located in Clifford Carl Hall on the main floor, is always free. Visit rbcm.ca/pocketgallery to learn more.

The BC Black History Awareness Society has been working diligently for more than 25 years to keep BC's Black history from being erased. This exhibit is an important step to recognize the role Black history has played in the province by highlighting the past and present contributions of BC's Black communities.

- 30 -

Note to editors: images available at
<https://www.flickr.com/gp/36463010@N05/322u30>

Media contacts:

Silvia Mangué Alene
President
BC Black History Awareness Society
(250) 216-3039
silvia.mangué@shaw.ca

Wesley MacInnis
Communications Specialist
Royal BC Museum
(250) 208-8846
news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

 [RoyalBCMuseum](https://twitter.com/RoyalBCMuseum)  [royalbcmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/royalbcmuseum)  [RoyalBCMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalBCMuseum)