

# BLACK HISTORY RESEARCH GUIDE

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With a commitment to acknowledge, value, and celebrate Black History, the Archives of North Vancouver has created this research guide to support your discovery of the stories, experiences, accomplishments, and contributions of Black individuals and families to the history of North Vancouver.

## About the Guide

MONOVA does not have any specific fonds that are dedicated to Black History, these histories instead appear across a vast array of archival records. This means that in order to locate these records, you need to know the names of the individuals or families that you are searching for.

In this guide, we provide information that might help you locate those names, as well as organized collections of MONOVA records, records from other archives, and other sources, that tell the stories of Black individuals and families of note in the history of North Vancouver.

While this guide is an important resource, it does not represent the complete story of Black History in North Vancouver—new histories of individuals and families can always be uncovered in the archives!



Harry and Valerie Jerome, MONOVA:14861.



# START YOUR RESEARCH

This section of the guide outlines methods for locating and tracing the names of individuals and families through Canadian censuses, City Directories, and newspapers. If you are searching for a specific individual or family, this is the best place to start your research.

## + Canadian Census Records

Canadian Census records were used to collect information of individuals and families for determining parliamentary representation based on population. Information you may find on the census records includes details such as country and/or province of birth, age, occupation, marital status, and religion.

Using census records to trace Black History illustrates the complexities of race in the historical record. While census records can help you locate and trace Black individuals and their families in Canada, as well as where they originated from and even when they arrived, quite often their "race" is listed as "Irish". An example of this can be seen in the 1881 census entry for the Sullivan family.

Currently, digitized census records are available up to 1921 for Canada and up to 1926 for the Prairie Provinces. The 1931 Canada Census will be available at some point in 2023. You can search these records via the [Library and Archives Canada database](#) which provides digitized PDFs and JPEGs for you to look at.

NAME	AGE	SEX	RELATION	EDUCATION	PROFESSION	RELIGION	PLACE OF BIRTH
Sullivan, James	25	M	Head	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, Mary	22	F	Wife	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, John	15	M	Son	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, Mary	12	F	Daughter	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, John	10	M	Son	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, Mary	8	F	Daughter	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, John	6	M	Son	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, Mary	4	F	Daughter	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, John	2	M	Son	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish
Sullivan, Mary	1	F	Daughter	None	Farmer	Irish	Irish

Above:  
This is a page from the 1881 census from British Columbia that shows the Sullivan family entry.

**Search: Census of Canada, 1881**

Enter one or more search terms. You don't need to fill in all the boxes.

Wildcard character: \* (e.g. John\* for Johns, Johnsen, Johnson, Johnston, etc.)

Keywords:

Surname:

Given Name(s):

Age:

Province:

[Hide/Show Advanced Search Options](#)

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The search page for the Library and Archives Canada census database.

## + Newspapers

Newspapers are a useful source for accessing information when searching for specific individuals or families, particularly through marriage announcements and obituaries. For example, you may be able to determine the married name or maiden name of a woman you are looking for through the announcement of a marriage, while through obituaries, you can often track the names of children or other next of kin.

See our [Newspaper Research Guide](#) for information on how to access various North Vancouver newspapers and British Columbian newspapers.



## + City Directories

City Directories are an excellent source for tracing known individuals and families. While similar to telephone books, the City Directories provide access by address as well as by name.

In each City Directory, there are two sections: an alpha-numeric street guide and an alphabetical index of names of individuals and businesses. Once you know the name of an individual, you can look them up in the index of names, which usually lists their occupations, where they worked, if they were the homeowner (h) or resident (r), and often the names of their spouses.

You can view the [City Directories online](#) from the Vancouver Public Library's website from 1860 to 1955, or in hard copy at the Archives up to 2001.



# FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS OF NOTE

This section of the guide is made up of organized collections of MONOVA records, records from other archives, and additional sources, that tell the stories of Black individuals and families of note in the history of North Vancouver.

## + The Sullivan Family

### Family Biography

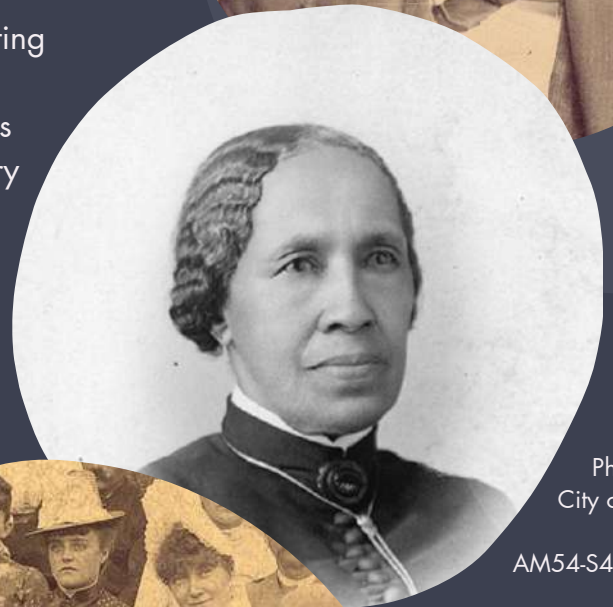
Josephine Sullivan (nee Bassette) was born in the United States, ca. 1820, and Philip Sullivan was born in the West Indies, ca. 1817. They arrived in British Columbia in 1859 and by the 1870s the family had settled in Moodyville, where Philip worked as the steward in charge of the eating department at Moodyville Sawmill Co. Their son Arthur Willis Sullivan, born in 1860, also worked alongside his father in the cookhouse, before becoming a dealer in dry goods, groceries, and stationaries. Their second son, Charles, born in 1867, was a musician.

The family later moved to Vancouver, where they built Sullivan's Hall on Cordova Street, which housed early Methodist meetings and trade union meetings. At this time Arthur ran a general store, where Charles worked as a clerk.

Philip died in 1886, and Josephine died in 1894. Charles Sullivan died in a tragic drowning accident in 1906. In 1909, following the death of his wife, Arthur Willis Sullivan returned to live in North Vancouver, where he later died in 1921.



Top:  
Philip Sullivan.  
City of Vancouver  
Archives,  
AM54-S4: Port P858.



Middle:  
Josephine Sullivan. City of  
Vancouver Archives: AM54-  
S4: Port P67.3.



Bottom:  
Arthur Willis Sullivan at a  
Church Picnic in Lynn  
Valley, 1888. City of  
Vancouver Archives, AM54-  
S4: Port P334.



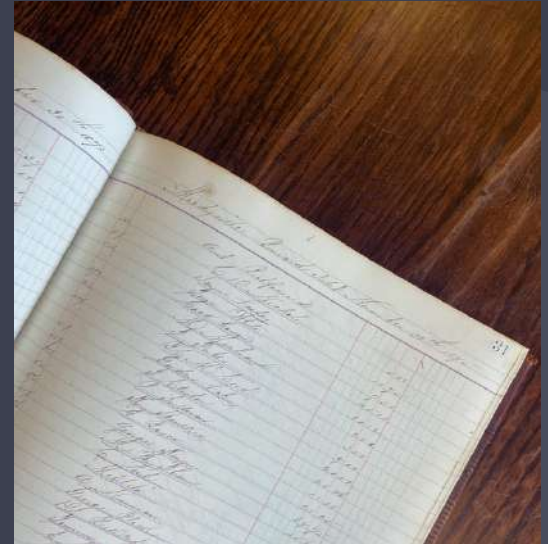
# What does MONOVA have?

## Textual Records

- "Moodyville Sawmill Co. Sales Book, 1875-1879". MONOVA: F19-S4 (pictured on the right).

## Photographs

- "Cookhouse, Moodyville", MONOVA: 4449.
- "Moodyville and Sawmill" [1870], MONOVA: 187.
- "Moodyville Sawmill Co." [After 1882], MONOVA: 6604 [Photo description states, "House with looped white fence enclosing garden, Philip Sullivan, cook (afterwards of Cordova St.)].



## Additional Sources

### Newspapers

- *The British Columbian*, 2 December 1882.
- *The British Columbian*, 27 February 1886.
- "A Lady Pioneer's Death," *The Vancouver Daily World*, 23 August 1894.
- "Here they Are – Our Real Pioneers In 1882 Before City Was Born," *The Sunday Province*, 8 September 1929.

### Archival

- Sullivan of Moodyville & Granville, *City of Vancouver Archives*: AM54-S17-M9032.

### Books

- Early Vancouver: Volume Three
- Early Vancouver: Volume Four
- *These Sixty Years: 1887-1947*

### Photographs

- Josephine Sullivan, *City of Vancouver Archives*, Major Matthews collection, AM54-S4-: Port P67.3.
- Phillip Sullivan, *City of Vancouver Archives*, Major Matthews Collection, AM54-S4-: Port P858.
- Church Picnic at Lynn Valley, *City of Vancouver Archives*, Major Matthews Collection, AM54-S4-: Port P334.

### Online Articles

- "A. W. Sullivan: Black Pioneer and Hall Builder," *Vancouver As It Was*.
- "Gore Avenue and East Cordova Street," *Changing Vancouver*.
- "Women," *BC Black History Awareness Society*.

# + The St John Family

## Family Biography

William Fitz Clarence St John Sr., known to many as "Fitz" or "Old St John," was born in Barbados in 1876 to William and Rebecca St John, members of a prominent Barbadian family. He arrived in Victoria in 1897 as a stowaway and found work in the lumber camps in Chemainus, before eventually moving to North Vancouver in 1909 to work as a longshoreman.

In these early years on the docks, Fitz mostly worked alongside other racialized men, including those from Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as Hawaii and Chile. Alongside these men, he played a central role in the formation of one of the first longshoreman unions on the waterfront, which was comprised largely of Indigenous workers: IWW Local 526. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, Fitz took part in strikes by waterfront workers, demanding union recognition, including the Battle of Ballantyne Pier in 1935.

In 1911, Fitz married Ellen (nee Lockley) and the following year their only child, son Fitz Clarence St John Jr., known as Clarence, was born in North Vancouver. Clarence became a well-known barber and ran St John's Barber Shop, located at 23rd and Lonsdale. In his spare time, he volunteered as an organ player at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, where he met his future wife Edna.

Fitz worked as a longshoreman for over fifty years, and remained a staunch union man until his death in 1970. Clarence ran his barber shop for over forty years before he passed away in 1992. Both men are buried in North Vancouver.



Top:  
Fitz, outside of his  
house at 24 21  
Western Ave.  
MONOVA: 7613.

Middle:  
Clarence Jr outside  
his barber shop, ca.  
1930s.  
MONOVA: 6990.

Bottom:  
Fitz on Pensioners  
bus trip.  
From: "Man Along  
the Shore!"



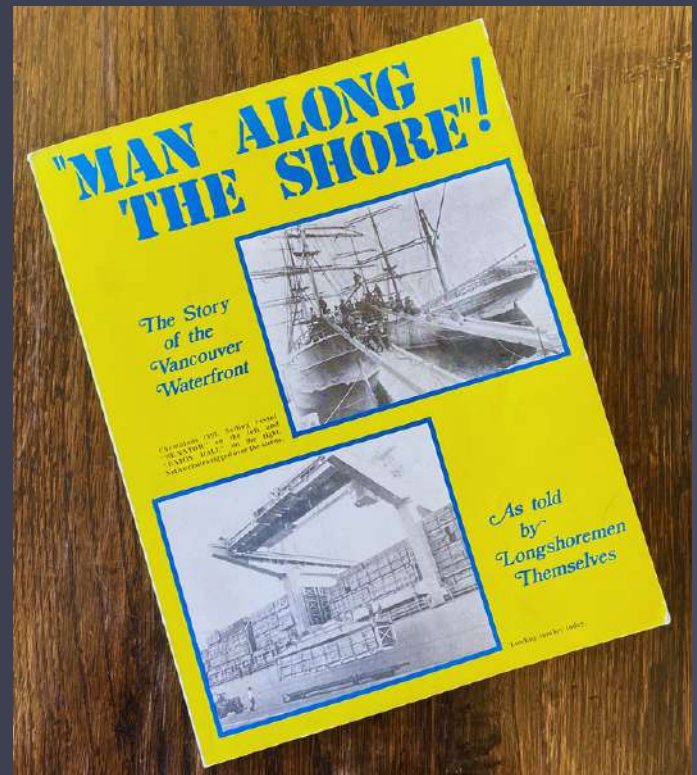
# What does MONOVA have?

## Textual Records

- "Man Along The Shore" The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront as Told by Longshoremen Themselves. MONOVA: F5849.V3 M35.

## Photographs

- Mr. Fitz Clarence St. John, Sr. in front of his house at 2421 Western Ave, MONOVA: 7613.
- Clarence St John and Jim Golazo in front of St John's Barber Shop [1934], MONOVA: 6990.
- Clarence St John and Howard Holley between St John's Barber shop and Holley's Meat Market [1934], MONOVA: 6989.
- 23rd Street and Lonsdale Avenue, 1969, MONOVA: 2309.



Clarence St John in 1934, MONOVA: 6989.

## Additional Sources

### Newspapers

- "Here's to BC Workers." *The Vancouver Sun*, 30 August 1947. "Far Cry from Tough Old Days as Dockworkers Get Pensions." *The Vancouver Sun*, 1 May 1953.
- [Obituary for William Fitzclarence St. John] *The Province*, 2 September 1970.

### Online Articles

- "'Fitz' St. John: A Longshoreman's Longshoreman," *BC Labour Heritage Centre*.



## + The Jerome Family

### Family Biography

Harry Vincent Jerome was born in 1902 in Boston, USA and Elsie Ellen Howard was born in 1920 in Chiswick, UK. The two met when Harry Sr worked with Elsie's father, John Howard, as a railway porter with the Canadian National Railway. John Howard was a sprinter and in 1912, he became the first Black athlete to compete for Canada at the Olympics when ran the 100 and 200 yard dash at the Stockholm Olympic Games.

Harry Sr and Elsie's first child, Harry Winston Jerome was born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan in 1940. His birth was quickly followed by daughters Carolyn, Valerie, and Louise, and son Barton.

In 1951, the Jerome family moved to the Ridgeway area of North Vancouver. Their arrival in the community was met with a racist petition which tried to block the family from moving into their home. While the petition was ultimately struck down by city council, the Jeromes still faced racial prejudice, including having rocks and stones thrown at them as they attended their first day of school at Ridgeway Elementary.

In 1954 the Jeromes moved from Ridgeway to a house at 17th and Sutherland, and the elder children began to attend Sutherland Junior High. At this time, Harry and Valerie had already begun to show signs of their athletic ability, with Harry excelling at baseball, soccer, and football and Valerie at running track. While attending North Van High, at the urging of close friend Paul Winn, Harry and Valerie turned to track seriously and joined the local track club, "The Optimist Striders".



Top:  
Harry Jerome, 1954,  
MONOVA: 15728.

Middle:  
Carolyn Jerome,  
Sutherland Junior High  
Annual, 1956.  
MONOVA: Item 766.

Bottom:  
Valerie Jerome,  
Sutherland Junior High  
Annual, 1957.  
MONOVA: Item 766..

## + The Jerome Family continued...

### Harry Jerome

In 1959, at the age of 18, Harry Jerome broke the Canadian record for the 220 yard dash. The following year he matched the world record for the 100 yard dash at the Canadian Olympic trials, and represented Canada at the Olympics in Rome. After a series of injury setbacks, Harry won a bronze medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. In 1966, he once again matched the world record for the 100 yard dash, and went on to win gold medals at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games that same year, and the Pan American Games in 1967. He retired from racing in 1969.

In 1962, while attending the University of Oregon, Harry married Wendy Foster. A year later his only child, daughter Deborah, was born. Harry and Wendy divorced in 1971.

Following his racing career, Harry, who had earned both a Bachelor and Master's of Science in Physical Education, worked as a teacher and as an advocate for youth athletes. In 1971, he was awarded the Order of Canada. He died in 1982 at the age of 42 from a brain aneurysm.

### Valerie Jerome

At the age of 15, Valerie Jerome won four gold medals at the 1959 Canadian Championships in track, catapulting her to national fame. In 1960, alongside her brother, she represented Canada at the Olympics in Rome. She retired from racing following the 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games.

In 1962, Valerie married Ron Parker, a fellow member of The Optimist Striders, and began attending the University of British Columbia. In 1964, after earning her Bachelor of Education, Valerie began her teaching career. Her only child, son Stuart, was born in 1972.

Alongside teaching, Valerie has also served as a track-and-field official, as a founder of the Jerome Outreach Society, and as an advocate for youth sport and the environment. In 2010, she was chosen as a torchbearer for the Vancouver Winter Games. She still lives in Vancouver today.



Harry and Valerie Jerome, MONOVA: 14862.



# What does MONOVA have?

## Textual Records

- Sutherland Junior High Annuals 1956-1957, MONOVA: Item 766.
- North Van High Annuals 1958-1960, MONOVA: 43-2-1.
- NVHS Track series, MONOVA: 133-6.
- Harry Jerome's Greatest Races, MONOVA: Und 67.

## Oral Histories

- Valerie Jerome Interview, MONOVA: 201-13.

## Film and Video Recordings

- In Celebration of Harry Jerome, 1940-1982, MONOVA: AV 12.
- CBC Clips re: Harry Jerome, MONOVA: AV 13.

## Additional Sources

### Archival

- Harry and Valerie Jerome fonds, Simon Fraser University Library Rare Books and Special Collections.

### Online Articles

- "Harry Jerome", *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.
- "Harry Jerome", *BC Black History Awareness Society*.
- "Meet Valerie Jerome, Canadian track icon from the first family of fast" *Sportsnet*.
- Alumni Profile, "Valerie Jerome", UBC Faculty of Education.

## Photographs

- Harry Jerome, MONOVA: 15144 to 15156
- Valerie and Harry Jerome, MONOVA: 14861 and 14862.
- Harry Jerome, MONOVA: 5349.
- Induction into North Shore Sports Hall of Fame, MONOVA: 8038.
- "It Runs in the Family", MONOVA: 15930.

## Online Articles

- "Valerie Jerome: Athlete, Educator, Activist", MONOVA: Inlet.



Top:  
Harry Jerome,  
MONOVA:  
15155.

Bottom:  
Valerie Jerome in  
2004,  
MONOVA:  
14863

## + Fred Wilmot

### Biography

Fred Wilmot was born in 1918 in Toronto to Jamaican parents who had immigrated to Canada in 1911. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Fred attempted to enlist in the Canadian military but was turned away because he was Black. He was eventually conscripted as a "zombie", but was later discharged and sent by the National Resources Mobilization Board to work as a holder-on at the Burrard Dry Dock.

During his time working at BDD, Fred wrote a regular column titled "Loose Rivets" in the union newspaper, *The Main Deck*. He went on to work for the CBC and became Canada's first Black daily newspaper reporter with the *Winnipeg Citizen* in 1946.

In 1950, Fred moved with his wife Cynthia and sons back to Jamaica, where he worked and taught in media relations, public relations, and journalism. He was awarded the Order of Distinction, Commander Class, in 1992 and was made an honorary life member of the Press Association of Jamaica. Fred died in 2016.



Fred Wilmot pictured in his Burrard Drydock work gear in a photo taken by Jack Cash for *The Wallace Shipbuilder*.

### What does MONOVA have?

#### Textual Records

- *The Wallace Shipbuilder*, February 1945, [MONOVA: 27-S161](#).

#### Online Articles

- "[Loose Rivets: The Story of Fred Wilmot and the Burrard Drydock](#)", *MONOVA: The Inlet*.

### Additional Sources

#### Online Articles

- "[Unforgettable Fred Wilmot](#)." *The Jamaica Observer*.



## + Hilda Carothers

### Biography

Hilda Carothers was born ca. 1921, and lived with her family in Burnaby. During the Second World War she worked as an asbestos stitcher at the Burrard Drydocks.

### What does MONOVA have?

### Photographs

- North Burrard Shipyard Women's Farewell Banquet, MONOVA: 8072.

### Textual Records

- *The Wallace Shipbuilder*, September 1945, MONOVA: 27-S161.
- *Waterfront to Warfront: Burrard Dry Dock Company During WWII*.



*Camaraderie in the Yard*

Hilda Carothers (centre) pictured with co-workers at the Burrard Drydocks during WWII. From *The Wallace Shipbuilder*, September 1945.

## + Ron Jermana

### Biography

Ron Jermana was born in 1941 in Hammond, BC, and raised on Mitchell Island. He worked at the Burrard Drydocks as an apprentice and then as a charge hand starting in the mid-1960s. In 1981, he moved to Bel Air Shipyard before returning to the Burrard Drydocks until 1989, when he left to work at the Vancouver Shipyards.

### What does MONOVA have?

### Oral History

- Ron Jermana Interview, MONOVA: 201-9.



Ron Jermana in 2011 holding a piece of copper pipe

## + John Braithwaite

### Biography

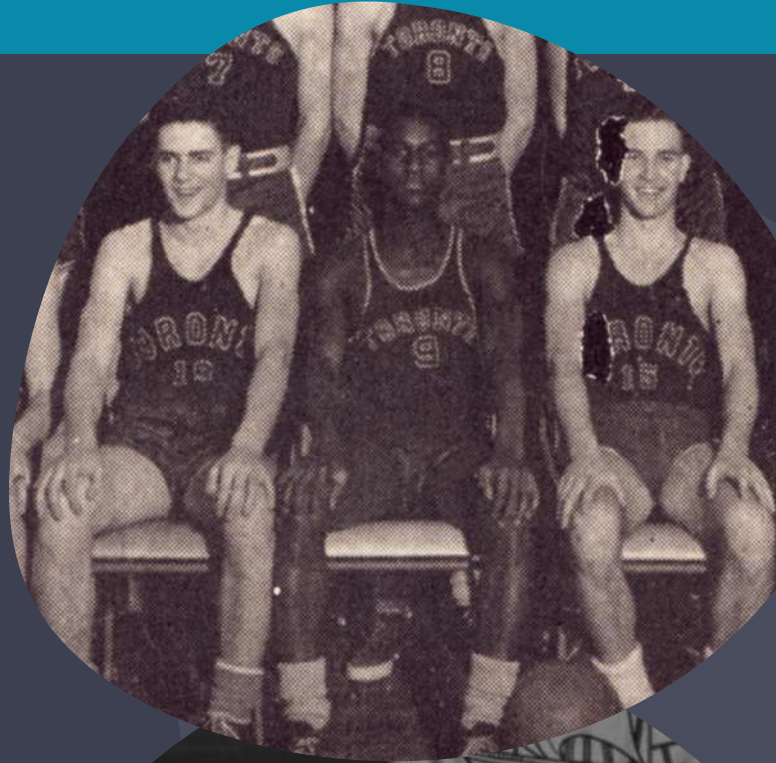
John Bismark Braithwaite was born in Ontario in 1929. He grew up in the Kensington Market area of Toronto and attended Harbour Collegiate and the University of Toronto, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master's of Social Work. While at U of T, John played on the Varsity Blues basketball team, and is believed to be the first Black athlete to ever play for the team.

In 1956 John moved to North Vancouver to work at North Shore Neighborhood House as the director of the male program. The following year he became executive director of the organization, a role which he served in for over two decades.

In 1972, John successfully ran for a seat in the City of North Vancouver council. His election to council made him one of only three Black politicians in BC at the time. He served until 1976, but later returned to politics in 1983 and was continuously elected to city council up to his retirement in 2002.

In addition to his work at North Shore Neighborhood House, John coached the North Van High basketball team in the late 1950s, as well as The North Van Harlems basketball team in the early 1960s. He was also a member of the Black Action Coalition Committee and the National Action Committee on Race Relations.

In 2003, John received The Freedom of the City Award from the City of North Vancouver, and one year later the John Braithwaite Community Centre, named in his honour, opened in Lower Lonsdale.



Above:  
John Braithwaite on the U of  
T basketball team in 1948-  
49. *University of Toronto  
Archives, 2008-71-1MS.*

Bottom:  
John Braithwaite, 1991,  
*MONOVA: 12928*



# What does MONOVA have?

## Textual Sources

- Program for opening of John Braithwaite Community Centre, MONOVA: 2004-6.

## Photographs

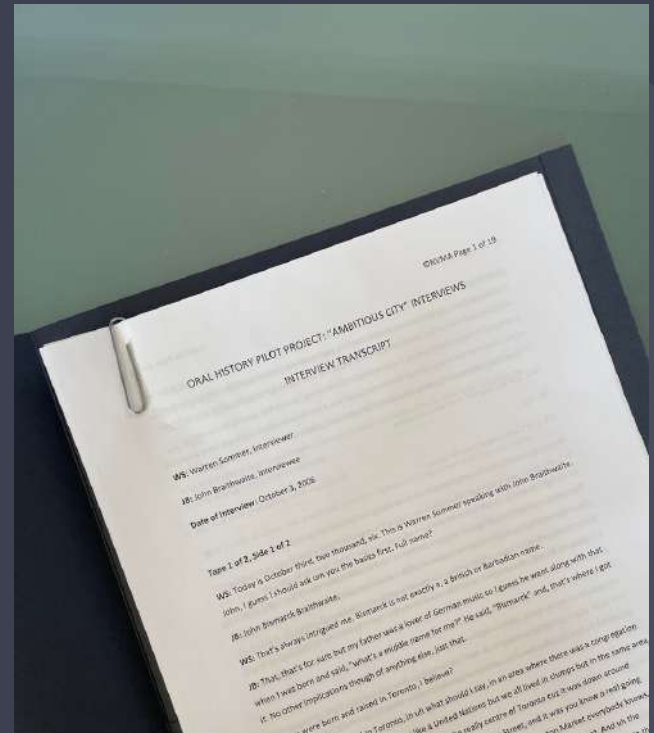
- City Council Photos, MONOVA: 6295, 6424, 12928, 13612, 13613 and 13614.
- John B. Braithwaite, MONOVA: 11310.

## Oral Histories

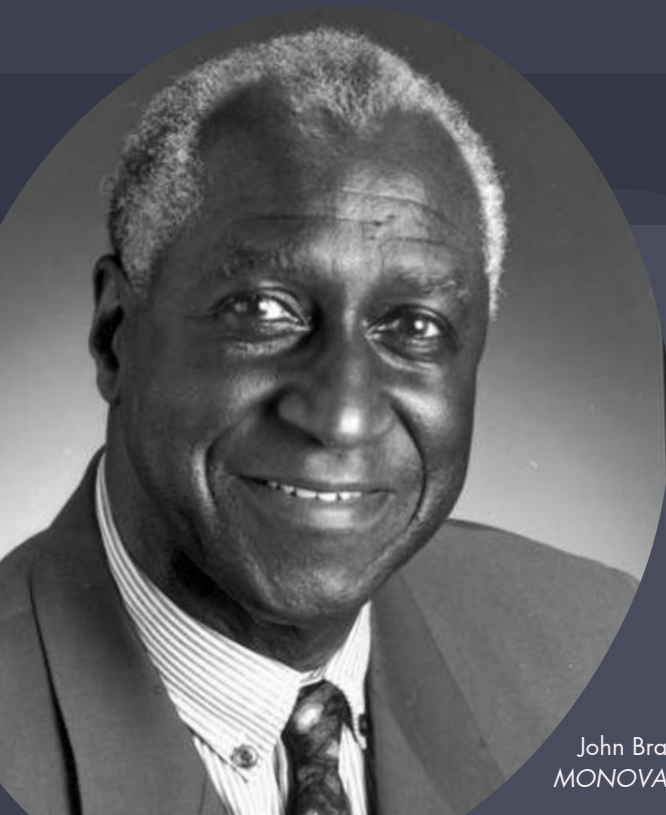
- John Braithwaite interview with Warren Sommer, MONOVA: 206-1.
- John Bismark Braithwaite Interview File 24, MONOVA: 172-24.

## Films

- "Tribute to John Braithwaite", MONOVA: AV-17.



The printed out transcript of John Braithwaite's oral history interview with Warren Sommer



John Braithwaite,  
MONOVA: 11310.

## Additional Sources

### Online Articles

- "Black History Month: Meet John Braithwaite." *University of Toronto Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education.*
- "Former North Vancouver councillor to be honoured as part of Black History Month." *CBC News.*
- "John Braithwaite" *University of Toronto.*

## + Paul Winn

### Biography

Paul Winn was born in 1939, and spent his early life in Toronto before moving to North Vancouver in the late 1950s. He attended North Van High alongside the Jeromes and lived briefly with John Braithwaite.

Following his graduation in 1960, Paul worked as a social worker at North Shore Neighborhood House and played for the North Van Harlems basketball team. He later moved to Nova Scotia where he was part of the Black United Front before returning to Vancouver to pursue a law degree at UBC. In 1980, Paul filed a complaint against the Ku Klux Klan with BC's human rights branch, which was ultimately denied, but served as an impetus for the drafting of the Civil Rights Protection Bill which took effect in 1981.

Paul went on to serve as the host of the weekly CBC Radio show, "The Canadians," as director of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, a group focused on advising the federal government on issues of racism, and as president of the BC Black Solidarity Association. He still lives in BC today.

### What does MONOVA have?

#### Textual Records

- North Van High Annuals, 1958-60, MONOVA: 43-2-1.

#### Additional Sources

#### Online Articles

- "Lawmakers have long tried to make hate a crime — but the law can only do so much, advocates say." *CBC News*.
- "Canadian icon Harry Jerome's legacy extends well beyond the track." *Sportsnet* [features an interview with Paul Winn].



Both photos from  
1959 North Van  
High Annual,  
*MONOVA: 43-2-1*.

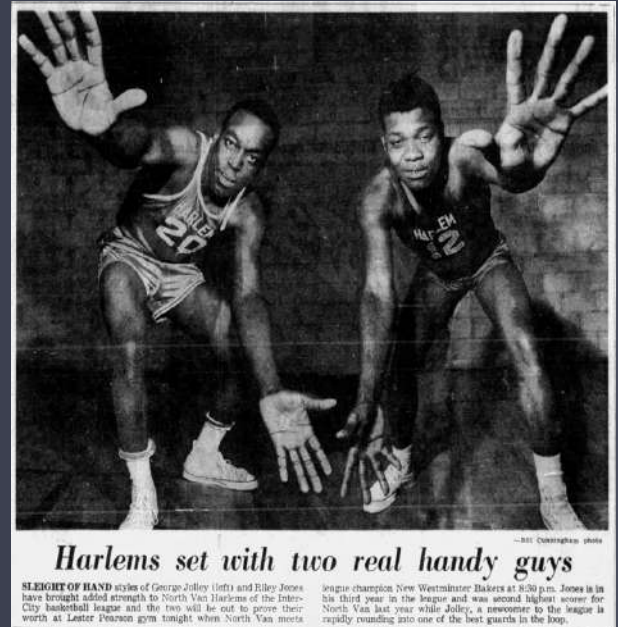


# + The North Van Harlems

## Biography

The North Van Harlems basketball team was formed in 1960 as the Harlem Nocturnes, named after the Harlem Nocturne Cabaret in Vancouver. The name of the team changed to The North Van Harlems in 1962 when the team's home court moved to the North Vancouver Community Centre. The following year, the Harlems won the BC Senior Basketball Championship, but disbanded prior to the 1964-65 season. From 1966 until 1970, the team was reformed as the Harlem Aces.

Known players and people involved with the team include head coach John Braithwaite, manager Ernie King and players Paul Winn, Riley Jones, Emery Barnes, Vince Knight, Billy Joe Prince, Frank Gilliam, George Stulac, Wayne King, Don Boyd, George Henley, and George Nott.



Clipping from *The Province*,  
12 December 1962.

## What does MONOVA have?

- We are currently building a clippings file for the Harlems that will be accessible in the reading room.

## Additional Sources

### Archival

- [Harlem Aces jacket and jerseys](#), *Museum of Vancouver: Online Collection*.

### Online Articles

- ["You Should Know About the Harlem Nocturnes Basketball Team."](#) *Scout Magazine*.



Clippings file for The North Van Harlems

# WHAT OTHER RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

This following list is comprised of resources which can further support your research of Black History in North Vancouver, as well as the Province of British Columbia and Canada.

## + Black History Resources

### Organizations

- *The British Columbia Black History Awareness Society*
- *African Descent Society of British Columbia*
- *Hogan's Alley Society*
- *Black Strathcona*

### Books

- *The New African Diaspora in Vancouver: Migration, Exclusion and Belonging*
- *Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia*
- *North of the Colour Line: Migration and Black Resistance in Canada, 1870-1955*

### Educational Resources

- *Black History in Canada Education Guide, Historica Canada.*
- *Black History in Canada, The Canadian Encyclopedia.*
- *The Story of Black Slavery in Canada, The Canadian Museum for Human Rights.*
- *Black Communities in Canada: A Rich History, National Film Board of Canada.*



+ CONTACT MONOVA

+ BOOK A VISIT TO THE ARCHIVES

+ ACCESS OUR ONLINE DATABASE

+ OTHER RESEARCH GUIDES

Museum of  
North Vancouver

**MONOVA**