



We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island, including the ancestral territories of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We acknowledge and appreciate the ongoing resilience and resistance of the Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island in the face of colonial violence as they strive for self-determination and decolonial futures.

The African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities honour the memory of our ancestors who experienced forced displacement and trafficking to Turtle Island as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, as well as those who migrated to these lands in this generation or earlier generations.

We recognize the impact of racial and colonial violence on African, Caribbean, Black, Indigenous, and Afro-Indigenous Peoples and affirm our commitment to standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities in the process of truth and reconciliation, understanding the importance of being respectful guests on these lands.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





# OUR STORY BEGINS WITH JUDY WILLIAMS

Judy Williams is a lifelong Winnipegger, whose great, great grandmother were one of the first Black families to migrate to Manitoba in 1905. Her father came from Trinidad in 1949 to study in Winnipeg. They were very active community members in the city, supporting the creation of many of the organizations that still exist today.

While going through items in their family home after parents passed away, she found a number of historical documents and photos that demonstrated the history of Black Manitobans; she wanted to learn how to preserve those items safely.

What began as a personal quest to preserve family artifacts has evolved into a vision for Manitoba's first dedicated space celebrating Black heritage. After connecting with other first-generation Winnipeggers who had discovered similar historical treasures, Judy initiated a pilot project in 2024 with Black History Manitoba and culminating in a founding meeting on February 1, 2025, with over 27 attendees, some attendees representing leading Black non-profit organizations across the province.

Today, we proudly introduce the Black Heritage Experience Manitoba - a community-led initiative with over 50 members and eight working committees, each with co-leads driving this vision forward.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Black Heritage Experience Manitoba represents a groundbreaking initiative to address a critical gap in Manitoba's cultural landscape. This museum will serve as a dedicated space that centers the full spectrum of Black histories, stories, and futures—created by Black communities, for Black communities, while welcoming all Canadians to learn and engage.

Operating within a decolonial framework, our community-led organization will create both physical and virtual spaces that showcase the rich tapestry of Black Canadian experiences in the prairies.

This strategy outlines our vision, mission, positioning, and implementation plan to establish this museum as a living, evolving testament to Black Canadian experiences in the prairies, guided by the wisdom of Adinkra symbols and principles.



# THE GAP

- Manitoba lacks a dedicated space that centers Black histories, stories, and futures
- Ongoing erasure of Black contributions to Canadian history
- Limited opportunities for cultural affirmation and preservation
- Missed opportunities for national education, healing, and transformation

# THE OPPORTUNITY

- Create a pioneering cultural institution that addresses historical erasure
- Establish a community-centered space for celebration, education, and healing
- Build a living archive that preserves stories for future generations
- Foster stronger connections within and beyond Black communities

# OUR TAGLINE

The Nyansapo (Wisdom Knot) is a powerful Adinkra symbol that serves as both our tagline and guiding philosophy. This symbol represents:

- Wisdom: Not merely knowledge, but the thoughtful application of understanding
- Intelligence: The capacity to analyze, synthesize, and interpret complex histories
- Patience: Recognition that deep understanding develops over time
- Complexity: Acknowledgment that our stories contain intricate, interconnected threads

The associated Akan proverb states: "Nyansapo wosane no badwenma" - "A wisdom knot is untied only by the wise." This reflects our belief that Black prairie histories contain profound wisdom that rewards those who approach them with respect, patience, and dedication.

As a visual metaphor, the wisdom knot represents how diverse Black experiences in Manitoba—whether African, Caribbean, or multi-generational Canadian—are woven together into a rich tapestry of shared history. Each strand maintains its distinctiveness while contributing to a stronger whole.

Weaving Wisdom, Preserving Legacy

# NYANSAPO



B+IEM

# NYANSAPO

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

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 the Underground Railroad and sought a better life in Canada.

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.

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 write their own history.

**HONOUR THE PAST**

**CELEBRATE THE PRESENT**

**BUILD THE FUTURE**

Through the wisdom knot, we invite visitors to participate in the ongoing process of unraveling, understanding, and reweaving the complex stories that form our collective heritage.



**Spider's Web**

# **ANANSE NTENTAN**



"To create a living, evolving space that centers Black voices, truths, and experiences in Manitoba—fostering community, celebrating resilience and excellence, and educating for justice and joy across generations."

The Ananse Ntontan symbol represents the spider's web—complex, interconnected, and skillfully crafted. Like a web, our mission involves weaving together diverse stories, voices, and experiences into an intricate yet coherent whole that captures the complexity of Black prairie experiences.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**BHEM**

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

# BLACK EXPERIENCE IN MANITOBA

## EARLY SETTLEMENTS (1800'S)

Black settlers including freed slaves and Underground Railroad escapees establishing communities in Manitoba

## THE LABOUR MOVEMENT (1900'S)

In the early 1900's, many Black families came to the Prairies to work on the railroads. They founded the first labour union for Black people in North America

## THE STUDENT MOVEMENT (1940'S)

In the 1940's Afro-Caribbean students migrated to study at the University of Manitoba, setting the foundation for Manitoba's future Black professional community,

## CARIBBEAN AND AFRICAN IMMIGRATION (1960'S)

Waves of immigration from the Caribbean (1960s-70s) and later from African nations

## HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Black contributions to agriculture, railway construction, civil rights movements, and cultural landscapes

## CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITIES

Diverse Black communities including those with multi-generational Canadian roots and more recent immigrants

## CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE (2020'S)

Histories of discrimination, segregation, and systemic barriers alongside stories

# ADINKRA SYMBOLS

as Exhibition Guideposts

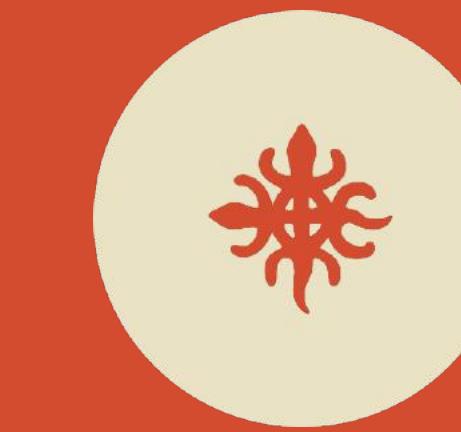
Our museum will use key Adinkra symbols to organize and guide the visitor experience through different thematic areas:

B+I+ΣM



## 1. SANKOFA (RETURN AND GET IT) - Migration & Origins

- Exhibits on the journeys of Black people to the Canadian prairies
- Stories of migrations from the Underground Railroad, Caribbean, and Africa
- Historical documents, maps, and personal artifacts like those found by Judy Williams
- Profiles of Black Manitoban leaders and changemakers
- Documented achievements in various fields
- Stories of endurance and excellence despite obstacles of life expression



## 2. FUNTUMFUNEFU DENKYEMFUNEFU (CONJOINED CROCODILES) - COMMUNITY BUILDING

- How diverse Black communities formed and supported each other
- Community organizations, churches, and gathering places
- Celebrations of unity despite different origins and experiences



## 3. NKYINKYIM (TWISTING) - OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

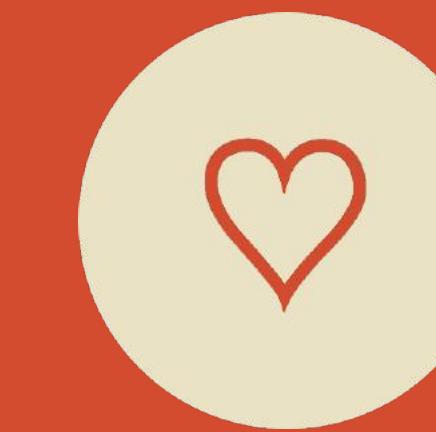
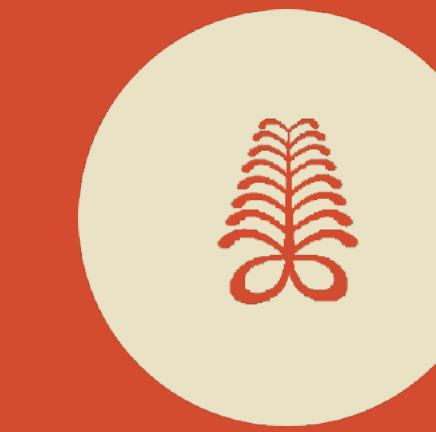
- Documentation of discrimination and challenges faced
- Stories of activism, resistance, and perseverance
- Legal battles, civil rights advocacy, and community organizing

# ADINKRA SYMBOLS

as Exhibition Guideposts

Our museum will use key Adinkra symbols to organize and guide the visitor experience through different thematic areas:

B+H&M



## 4. AYA (FERN) - RESILIENCE & ACHIEVEMENT

- Profiles of Black Manitoban leaders and changemakers
- Documented achievements in various fields
- Stories of endurance and excellence despite obstacles

## 5. NYANSAPO (WISDOM KNOT) - Knowledge & Education

- Historical and contemporary educational initiatives
- Oral histories and knowledge transmission
- Interactive learning spaces for all ages

## 6. AKOMA (HEART) - ARTS & CULTURE

- Music, literature, and visual arts from the Black prairie experience
- Cultural traditions maintained and transformed
- Contemporary creative expressions

## 7. ADINKRAHENE (KING OF ADINKRA SYMBOLS) - LEADERSHIP & FUTURE VISIONS

- Youth perspectives and future aspirations
- Innovation and new directions
- Interactive spaces for community visioning

# MOBILE MUSEUM

Image Deck v2



# MOBILE MUSEUM

## Roots and Routes: Black Journeys to the Prairies

### ELEMENTS

- Interactive storytelling booths capturing migration narratives
- "Living museum" performances embodying historical figures
- Multimedia installations mapping Black presence across the prairies
- Community gathering spaces for dialogue and connection
- Youth-led digital documentation project
- Display of historical artifacts like those found by Judy Williams others
- Introduction to key Adinkra symbols that will guide our museum experience

### FEATURES

- Soundscape with drums and songs that sent messages of freedom
- Handmade quilts and historic documents that led to freedom
- Maps showing migration routes from Africa and the Caribbean
- Video testimonials from community members explaining the importance of this initiative
- Interactive elements for visitors to share their own stories and connections

### LOCATIONS

- Community centers across Winnipeg
- Jamaica Association of Manitoba
- Pilgrim Baptist Church
- Schools and educational institutions
- Cultural festivals and events
- Rural Manitoba communities with historical Black settlements

# WAYS TO GIVE

Convenient pathways to secure your  
Founding 100 status with your \$100 investment

## E-TRANSFER

Send \$100 to [info@ACOMI.ca](mailto:info@ACOMI.ca).  
Include your name and  
Black History Museum in  
message

## MAIL DONATION

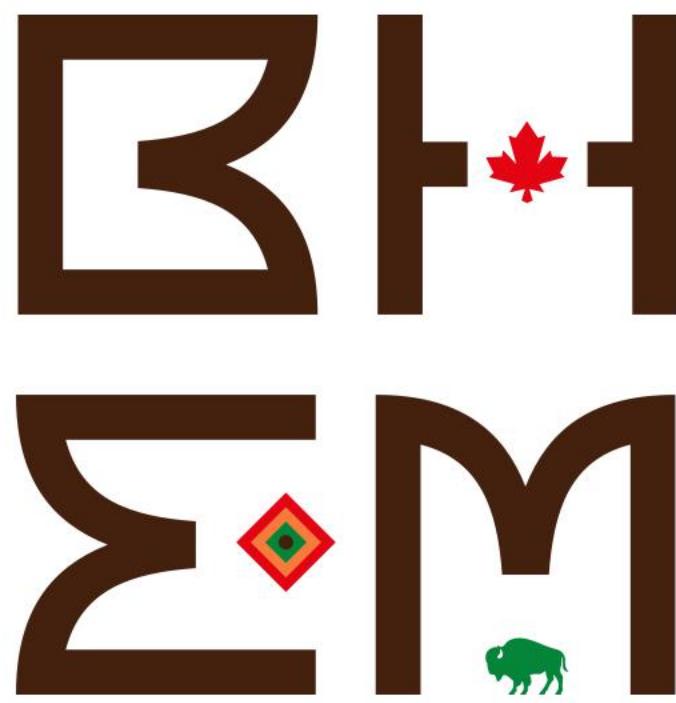
African Communities of Manitoba Inc.,  
200-301 Nassau Street N.,  
Winnipeg, MB R3L 2J5

## ONLINE PORTAL

Canada Helps Portal  
[https://www.canadahelps.org/  
en/dn/3162](https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/3162)  
Select dropdown:  
#7: Black History Museum

## PERSONAL CONTACT

Call (204) 795-7465 or [info@ACOMI.ca](mailto:info@ACOMI.ca)  
for arrangements.  
Cash or cheque welcomed.



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For more information, to stay in the loop,  
or to join us as we bring the museum  
space to life, please fill out the  
**'BHEM.ca Member Contact Form'**  
at the link below.

**JUDY WILLIAMS**

**77**



