



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Dark period of Nova Scotia history recognized by the Town of Amherst

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – A dark period of Nova Scotia history that has often been overlooked in history books is being recognized by the Town of Amherst.

“It is important for reconciliation and inclusion that we recognize all aspects of our history, especially those that have been left in a vacuum of erasure,” Mayor David Kogon said recently, as he signed a proclamation recognizing the 230th anniversary of 15 ships, carrying Black Loyalists, departing Halifax for Sierra Leone.



MAYOR DAVID KOGON, ON BEHALF OF THE AMHERST TOWN COUNCIL, SIGNS A PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 230TH ANNIVERSARY OF 15 SHIPS, CARRYING BLACK LOYALISTS, DEPARTING HALIFAX FOR SIERRA LEONE. (TOM McCOAG / TOWN OF AMHERST)

“I would encourage our residents to learn about this exodus and why it happened, for it is only through understanding stories such as these that we can truly develop a healthy, prosperous, inclusive and environmentally sustainable community in which people of all ages, abilities and cultures are engaged and proud to live, work and play.”





The proclamation, requested by students from Auburn Drive High School in Cole Harbour who established the #1792Project, notes that 1,196 self-liberated Black Loyalists left Halifax in 15 ships on Jan. 15, 1792, for Sierra Leone at the height of the transatlantic chattel slave trade, one of the cruelest chapters in the history of humanity.

It also notes these Loyalists left Nova Scotia as a result of the abject institutional racism they faced while in this province that resulted in the promises of secure housing, land and supplies given them being broken.

In the proclamation, the Town of Amherst recognizes that people of African descent have been a part of Canadian society since the early 1600s, that their enslavement occurred on this land for centuries and the Black Loyalists' departure is linked to the failure of institutional, political and societal will to fulfill the promises made to the Loyalists who ultimately chose to go to Sierra Leone.

In addition, the town recognizes the ongoing significance of the United Nations' Decade of African Descent, the importance of the history of Black Loyalists in Nova Scotia and how all communities in Nova Scotia continue to be affected by the historic rift of the Black community.

The town also committed itself to promoting histories, such as the 15 ships to Sierra Leone, that have often been left in a vacuum of erasure and acknowledged that the support of the Mi'maq was key to the survival of the Black Loyalists during their first winters in Nova Scotia.

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