

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 26TH, 2021

31 YEARS
OF THEATRE

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We Were Here, a play about lesser-known legends.

Local playwright Clyde A. Wray creates, *We Were Here*, a play that shares stories of Black members of the community.

SAINT JOHN – In the summer of 2020, a partnership with local poet and playwright Clyde A. Wray was formed. Wray had become the first ever SJTC Artist in Residence and was hired to create a play based on the stories of several historic figures from the Black community of Saint John and beyond.

The play is a series of eight monologues that provide a snapshot into the life of a historical legend. The roles have been filled by a team of talent that includes those who are new to the stage as well as some theatre veterans.

- Dr Timothy Christie will play the role of Abraham Beverley Walker, the first Black lawyer in New Brunswick and the second in Canada.
- Joanna Daramola will play the role of Lena O'Ree, an activist, local radio show host and winner of the NB Human Rights Award.
- Olive Ozoemena will play the role of Dr. Constance A Timberlake, a Saint John born activist and professor.
- Neil Clements will play the role of Cornelius Sparrow, a run-away slave turned leader and local businessman in Saint John.
- Tanya MacPherson will play the role of the Ice Lady (Georgina Whetsel), a successful businesswoman who was considered the wealthiest Black woman in North America at the turn of the century.
- Damon Levine will play Eldridge Eatman, aka 'Speed', the world sprint Champion in 1906 who also served in the British Army in WWI.
- Tallas Munro will play the role of Edward Mitchell Bannister (The Artist), a prominent artist who's work is in many fine art galleries and museums to this day.
- Gordi Munro will play Josiah Hanson, a young slave who escaped and went on to open a vocational school in Ontario for fugitive slaves.

"I've often thought when looking at portraits that were hung on the outside wall of Thandi Restaurant building on Canterbury Street, did only Caucasians help build Saint John? Is there not one person of color that is worthy of a portrait? Then come to find out there are those that are more than worthy. Their stories just haven't been told but they lay there

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hidden in some deep dark vault. Well, I believe its time to shine some light on these stories and these too which Saint John can be proud!" Clyde A. Wray, playwright, *We Were Here*

Streaming performances will be offered February 25-27, 2021 at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$20 and are on sale now. Visit <https://www.showtix4u.com> to order.

"I don't think there is any production I've done or can foresee that is as important as this production. There is an inherent responsibility and a weight that must be borne when bringing real historical characters to life. We as close as we can must tell their truth and be faithful to their lives." Clyde A. Wray

Funding for the project has been provided by the Career Development Program of the New Brunswick Arts Board, the Province of New Brunswick, the RBC Emerging Artists Project, the Crabtree Foundation, the Sussex Area Community Foundation the Pannell Family Foundation and the TD Inclusiveness and Community Outreach program. Support has also been provided by PRUDE, CBC New Brunswick and the New Brunswick Black History Society.