Name: _____ Date: _____

VIOLA DESMOND



Read the biographical passage about Viola Desmond and answer the questions.

Viola Desmond was born on July 6, 1914, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Growing up in a large family, she became a successful businesswoman, owning her own beauty salon. Desmond's life took a pivotal turn in 1946, during an incident at a movie theater in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. At that time, racial segregation was a harsh reality, and black people were expected to sit in a separate section. Viola, challenging this norm, chose a seat on the main floor, which was unjustly designated for white patrons only. When asked to move, she courageously refused and was subsequently arrested.

This incident marked a significant moment in Canadian history. Desmond's defiance was not just a personal stand against an unjust act; it became a symbol of the struggle against racial discrimination. She took legal action against the charges, highlighting the broader issue of racial segregation in Canada.

Although she faced challenges in her fight, Desmond's determination and courage inspired others and contributed to the growing civil rights movement in Canada.
Viola Desmond's legacy extends beyond her lifetime. Her story of resilience and bravery in the face of injustice continues to inspire. In recognition of her significant role in Canada's civil rights movement, Desmond was posthumously honored in several ways. Most notably, she became the first Canadian woman to be featured on a regularly circulating banknote, appearing on the ten-dollar bill.

Viola Desmond passed away on February 7, 1965, but her impact remains a powerful testament to the importance of standing up for one's rights and fighting against discrimination.

Use the image

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 What was Viola Desmond's profession, and how did this reflect her status in society?

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2 What social issue did Viola Desmond's theater experience highlight, and how did she respond to it?

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3 How has Viola Desmond been commemorated in Canada, and what does this signify about her impact on Canadian history?

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Use the Village