Willie Eldon O'Ree is known for being the first black player in the NHL. He played for the Boston Bruins and made his NHL debut in 1958.

The youngest of thirteen children, O'Ree was born and raised in Fredericton, New Brunswick to parents Rosebud and Harry. **His grandparents came to Canada via the Underground Railroad to escape slavery in the United States.**

Growing up, the O'Rees were one of only two black families in Fredericton. O'Ree played hockey in New Brunswick and Quebec as a young man before making his debut in the NHL.

# Racist remarks were much worse in the U.S. cities than in Toronto and Montreal...

## FANS WOULD YELL

"Go back to the South"

"How come you're not picking cotton?"

"It didn't bother me. I just wanted to be a hockey player, and if they couldn't accept that fact, that was their problem, not mine".