

Integrating local Black History into the Region of Waterloo History Museum

Four Interesting Facts

1. In areas of Waterloo Region, Black settlement predates White settlement (The Maple Leaf Journal, 1983)
2. Black Americans introduced tobacco cultivation to Ontario (The Maple Leaf Journal, 1983)
3. 4 roads in the Township of Wellesley are named after 19th century Black families who settled there (Ron Hackett, 2009)
4. Robert Sutherland, the first Black person to qualify as a lawyer in British North America, practiced law in the 1850s in Berlin, ON--now Kitchener (Globe and Mail, 2009)

Timeline (African Hope Renewed: Along the Grand River, 2004; The Queen's Bush Settlement, 2003; Adrienne Shadd, 2009)

1800s	The Queen's Bush was the name given to a large, 800 000 hectares swat of unsurveyed land which included Waterloo and Wellington Counties.
1828	November, Paola Brown and a group of Black Ohio emigrants petition the Executive Council of Upper Canada for a township to be set aside for their settlement. They are unsuccessful.
1829	James Charles Brown and a group from Cincinnati send a delegation to Upper Canada to request asylum. Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne acquiesces.
1830-1837	Paola Brown and his group settle on Crook's Tract in Woolwich Township. They name it Colbornesburg Settlement in honor of Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne. 34 Blacks known to have settled there. By 1837, most had moved away.
1835-1840	Queen's Bush Settlement is growing in numbers.
1841 February	John and Eliza Little, fugitive slaves from Madison County, North Carolina arrive in the Queen's Bush Settlement. The Littles later become one of the most prosperous farmers (White or Black) in Wellington County.
March	John Dorcey, an African Methodist Episcopal Church Minister answers call for a pastor in the Queen's Bush.
May	Black residents erect a church south of the Conestogo River
1842 Autumn	Most of the Queen's Bush settlers are in fact squatters. The area is officially opened for settlement. Better off European immigrants are moving into the area. Threatened with expulsion from the land, Queen's Bush settlers write James Durand, MP for Canada West.
1843	At lease 51 Blacks petition Governor General Sir Charles Metcalfe
1844	Mount Hope Mission School is built
	Fidelia Coburn, a White, female missionary arrives in Queens' Bush to educate and minister to fugitive slaves there
1846	Mount Pleasant Mission School is built
	2000 Blacks reside in the Queen's Bush (of which 295 kids attend school)
July	African Methodist Episcopal Church's Canadian Conference is held in the Queen's Bush—this illustrates the prominence of this Black settlement. Delegates assert right of Blacks to control own destiny.
1848	Many Blacks, unable to pay the land installments, move from the area.
	1500 Blacks reside in the Queen's Bush
October	The decreasing number of Blacks does not bode well. The American Missionary

	Association continues to only give limited support to the missionaries in the Queen's Bush.
1851	237 Blacks identified in the Census of Wellesley and Peel Townships.
1852	700 people (mostly White) reside in Berlin (now Kitchener)
	Decreasing enrollment in the 1 remaining school as many Black families lose their land. Others enroll their kids in the common schools. (10 Black kids enrolled)
	AME Church in Peel Township has 49 parishioners.
1853	The 1 remaining school closes. Missionary running it leaves.
1856	Peter Edward Susand, a Black person, who formerly lived in Wellesley Township, runs for Berlin town councillorship. Lost.
1861	Census states 42 Blacks in Wellesley Township, 281 in Peel Township. Figures most likely inaccurate.
1861-1865	US Civil War.

19th Century Contributions of Blacks to Waterloo Region and Canada

1. Blacks were enthusiastic British Citizens (Canada did not exist yet).
2. Many took the oath of allegiance to become British Citizens.
3. In 1855, formed a wholly Canadian Christian denomination (the British Methodist Episcopal Church) by severing amicably from the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.
4. The improvements made on the land by the Queen's Bush Blacks raised the economic value of land.
5. Formed self-help societies, valued education, independence and hard work.

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What you can do

1. sign the petition and get others to it, too (mail completed petitions to: Museum Campaign, 2 Marion Way, Cambridge, N1R 1P8)
2. join us on our Sat., Apr. 4.09 meeting with museum officials (2pm, First Mennonite @ 800 King St. E. (near Stirling), downtown Kitchener)
3. write/phone/email/visit the museum officials (www.region.waterloo.on.ca/museum)
4. attend our planning meetings

Organizations who have endorsed this campaign

African-Canadian Association of Waterloo
 United Caribbean Association of Cambridge
 Congress of Black Women

Mansfield Lambert 519-740-0901	Atinuke Bankole atinbank@hotmail.com
Clarence Mascoll 519-650-1067	Marie Hurst 519-653-0659