| TO: | Chair and Members  
    Emergency & Community Services Committee | WARD(S) AFFECTED: | WARD 6 |
|-----|---------------------------------|----------------|--------|
| COMMITTEE DATE: | April 7, 2010 | SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Little Africa Plaque (Early Black Community on Hamilton Mountain) (CS10032)  
(Ward 6) (Outstanding Business List Item “A”) |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Joe-Anne Priel  
    General Manager,  
    Community Services | PREPARED BY: | I.A. Kerr-Wilson 905-546-2424 Ext. 1747  
    Anna M. Bradford 905-546-2424 Ext. 3967 |
| SIGNATURE: |  | Council Direction: | At its meeting of October 11, 2006, Council referred Item 2 of the Community Services Committee Report 06-009 back to the Hamilton Historical Board’s Joint Plaquing Sub-committee to allow for further consultation with the Black History Committee, the African Workers’ Project Committee and other Historians of African descent, respecting the Little Africa plaque, for a report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee”. |
|  |  | Information: | In 2004, the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee submitted a number of commemorative plaque suggestions to the Community Services Committee for approval. The recommendation of a commemorative plaque about an early black community on the mountain known as “Little Africa” was approved. This approval directed the members of the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee to begin research and submit suggested wording for the commemorative plaque and report back to the Emergency & Community Services Committee for consideration. |
|  |  |  | The Hamilton Spectator, the Hamilton Mountain News, View Magazine and CATCH UPDATE all wrote articles about the upcoming “Little Africa” plaque. In addition, radio interviews were conducted with staff as to the process for developing the wording for the plaque. Staff also received telephone calls from the public about the plaque primarily asking the date of the plaque unveiling. In response to this media coverage, Lincoln Alexander, Chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT), expressed a desire to assist and committed funding for the plaque. |
Attached as Appendix A to Report CS10032 is a list of the research sources used to determine the commemorative plaque wording. In addition, members of the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee conferred with Anita Tolliver, Archivist, Stewart Memorial Church (founded c. 1835 as St. Paul’s African Methodist Episcopal Church, Stewart Memorial Church represents the longest surviving predominantly Black congregation within the City of Hamilton), Anne Jarvis, Volunteer Coordinator and Programmer, Griffin House and Hamilton Representative – Black History Network (Provincial) and Wayne Kelly, Plaque Program Coordinator, Ontario Heritage Trust.

As per the process for approving commemorative plaques, the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee presented the wording of the “Little Africa” plaque to the Hamilton Historical Board and the Municipal Heritage Committee for approval. Approval was received from both the Sub-committees and the Board. In addition, the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee sent the wording to staff at the OHT. The OHT approved the wording in October 2006.

On October 10, 2006 the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee presented the wording for the “Little Africa” plaque to the Community Services Committee. The original words of the plaque and research sources are attached as Appendix B to Report CS10032. The Community Services Committee approved the wording for the “Little Africa” plaque.

After Community Services approval, however, some concerns were expressed to the City Manager about the level of consultation with the local Black community and therefore at the Council meeting on October 11, 2006 staff was directed to hold further consultations with the Black History Committee, the African Workers’ Project Committee and other Historians of African descent respecting the Little Africa plaque.

Staff worked with Dr. Gary Warner, a professor at McMaster University and a well respected Black community leader, to develop a further review committee, as directed by Council. Dr. Warner suggested the following individuals:

- Black History Committee – Co-Chair, Evelyn Myrie
- African Canadian Workers’ Project - Adrienne Shadd, Curator
- Historians of African descent, - Rosemary Sadlier, Ontario Black History Society and Evelyn Auchinvole, Stewart Memorial Church.

Reviewer packages, attached as Appendix C to Report CS10032, were developed and sent to the above individuals for review and comment. The packages contained the plaque wording and all research sources. Staff and the reviewers agreed that if consensus was not met, the plaque would not go forward as written.

Adrienne Shadd provided staff with four minor changes to the original text. Rationale for the changes attached as Appendix D to Report CS10032. In brief, the changes were as follows:
1. Original sentence - During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery.

Revised sentence - During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery \textit{and oppression.}

2. Original sentence - Escaping slaves came to Hamilton from the United States, by the Underground Railroad.

Revised sentence - Escaped slaves \textit{and free Blacks} came to Hamilton, \textit{some by way of} the Underground Railroad.

3. Original sentence - The winters were harsh and with the difficulty of finding full-time work, many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere.

Revised sentence - The difficulty of finding full-time work \textit{meant that} many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere.

4. Original sentence - Many of those that remained adopted new surnames to avoid tracking and recapture.

Revised sentence - The families that remained were named Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry.

The revised text was sent to the reviewers with agreement received from Evelyn Myrie, and Adrienne Shadd. Evelyn Auchinvole did respond, but did not actually confirm agreement with the proposed revisions. Rosemary Sadlier did not respond to repeated attempts to receive her comments.

Although some agreement appeared to be reached, staff was not comfortable that true consensus was achieved. The Review Committee agreed that in order to tell the complete story of the early Black community, significant historical research was required beyond any known research done to-date. A number of important questions could not be answered with the available known data, such as:

- What were the actual boundaries of the Black communities on the Mountain?
- Who lived there?
- Did they purchase or were they given land?
- Did they farm the land?
- What happened to the community?

In 2008, staff contracted Adrienne Shadd, a highly respected local authority on Black History and Curator of the African Canadian Workers’ Project, to conduct this research on “Little Africa”. Ms. Shadd completed her research and submitted a paper “Little Africa: Where Do We Go From Here?” (attached as Appendix E to Report CS10032).
The most interesting conclusion of her report was that all previous sources of information regarding “Little Africa”, including Daniel Hill’s authoritative book on early Black history in Canada, *The Freedom Seekers*, were based on the reminiscences of Mabel Burkholder. Burkholder authored a book titled *Barton on the Mountain* (1956), which stated that a community of Blacks was established on Hamilton Mountain through the generosity of William Bridge Green, who donated land free of charge to destitute fugitive slaves who had no where to go and who had recently escaped from slavery in the American South. She claimed that the community was known as “Little Africa,” and that ultimately, the community disappeared because the winters proved to be too cold for these “children of the sun”. It also appears that the reference to the community name being “Little Africa” did not occur until the 1930’s.

To review and comment on this research paper a larger community group was formed. This group included the original members suggested by Dr. Warner, as well as Vince Morgan, Stewart Memorial Church, as a replacement for the late Anita Tolliver; Doctor Bonny Ibhwahoh, Director, Centre for Peace Studies and Associate Professor in the Department of History, McMaster University; and, Tracy Warren, a McMaster Black history doctoral research student. In addition to the community group, Ian Kerr-Wilson, Manager of Museums and Heritage Presentation and Anna M. Bradford, Director of Culture, contributed as technical staff.

The group reviewed Ms. Shadd’s paper and, although robust in content, agreed that further study on the early black community on the Mountain was still warranted. The community committee recommended that the additional research should focus on where the community went and why it left. The community committee also recommended that all previous attempts at wording the plaque on the early Black community be discarded. Ms. Shadd agreed to continue her research on this early Black community and trace their movements after the end of the Civil War. This research would be able to determine if they remained in the Hamilton area or moved elsewhere.

Ms. Shadd’s second report, “Little Africa Revisited: Tracing Hamilton Mountain’s Black Community”, received March 2010, is attached as Appendix F to Report CS10032, is currently being reviewed by the community group. The paper demonstrates that the full history of the early Black community on the Mountain was richer and more diverse than previously known. Ms. Shadd provides general information about the Blacks who were living in Canada West in the 1850s-1860s, their backgrounds and what compelled them to leave the United States (the origin of the vast majority), in addition to their condition and activities in their adopted home. This information pointed to the diversity of stories and backgrounds of Blacks living in Barton Township and the City of Hamilton. Some

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2 Burkholder, Mabel, *Barton on the Mountain*. Hamilton, no publisher indicated possibly Davis-Lisson, Ltd, 1956 p. 28
3 The Hamilton Spectator, July 15, 1936, Former Coloured Colony on Mount Dubbed Little Africa
had not come directly from slavery, but had been living in freedom for some years, prior to their arrival in Canada. Others were educated freeborn individuals. In looking specifically at Blacks living on the mountain in those years, evidence unearthed by the Culture Division, City of Hamilton revealed that numerous Black families purchased plots of land in Concession 4 on the mountain. Often they would then sell part of their property or rent out to other Blacks. William Bridge Green was still the key landowner who sold land to people of African descent, but the main point is that he was not giving land to them free of charge, but rather selling it to them at the going rate.

Using this extensive research, Ms. Shadd has agreed to develop a draft commemorative plaque text, which will be reviewed and approved by the community group and the Joint Plaquing Sub-committee. The recommended text will be submitted to the Emergency & Community Services Committee for consideration in late 2010. In addition, the community committee sees the development of this plaque as the beginning of a larger interpretative program about Hamilton’s Black history.
Sources - Bibliography

Primary Source Documents:

Barton Township Land Transaction Records. Available at: Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1851: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at: Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1861: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1871: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1881: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.


Books and Journal Articles:


**Newspaper Articles and Online Resources:**


“Coloured Refugees Formed Settlement.” The Hamilton Spectator, 15 July 1946.


Wayne, Michael, “A Historian Faces the Facts,” The Ottawa Citizen, 2 August 2006


Members of the Joint Plaquing Sub-Committee and Hamilton Historical Board who contributed to either the development of and/or approval:

Joint Plaquing Sub-Committee (JPSC)  
(Please note this list reflects the JPSC membership during the development of the Little Africa Plaque)

Reverend Dr. John Johnston, Chair (deceased)  
  -Retired, local historian, archivist for the Presbyterian Church, author

Reverend Dr. Melville T. Bailey (deceased)  
  -Retired, published author of several local history books including the Dictionary of Hamilton Biography, Volumes 1-3

Robert Williamson  
  -Retired school principal, author of several local history books, Past President of Mountain Heritage Society
Brian Henley
- Retired, former Head of Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library, author of several local history books

Donna Reid
- Special Projects Assistant to Councillor Bob Bratina, Founder, Historical Perspectives, contributor to Vanished Hamilton Volumes 1 and 2

Robin McKee
- Audio technician at CHCH TV, President, Historical Perceptions (Hamilton Cemetery Tours), web author www.hamiltonhistory.ca

Bill Manson
- Retired school teacher, author of several local history books

Sylvia Wray
- Retired school teacher, President of the East Flamborough - Waterdown Heritage Society

Jim Green
- Retired from Conservation Authority, local Ancaster historian

Kathy Wakeman
- Member of Municipal Heritage Committee – Hamilton LACAC

Hamiton Historical Board (HHB)
(Please note this list reflects the HHB membership during the development of the Little Africa Plaque)

Dr. Water Peace, Ph.D., Chair
Professor, Geography & Earth Sciences
McMaster University
Author

Dr. Nancy Bouchier, PH.D.
Professor, Kinesiology
McMaster University
Author

Dr. Mary Anderson, Ph.D.
Retired, Author local history books

Evelyn Myrie
Status of Women Canada
Co-Chair, Hamilton Black History Committee
Co-Chair, African Canadian Workers Project
Brian Henley, Vice Chair
Retired, former Head of Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library, author of several local history books

Bill Manson
Retired school teacher, author of several local history books

Reverend Dr. John Johnston,
Retired, local historian, archivist for the Presbyterian Church, author

Robert Williamson
Retired school principal, author of several local history books, President of Mountain Heritage Society

Elizabeth Shambrook
Heritage Materials Conservator

Arthur Bowes
Retired school principal, local historian, past President – Ancaster Township Historical Society, regular contributor to Ancaster News

Robin McKee
Audio technician at CHCH TV, President, Historical Perceptions (Hamilton Cemetery Tours), web author [www.hamiltonhistory.ca](http://www.hamiltonhistory.ca),

Jane Evans
Retired, member of CATCH (Citizens at City Hall), member of Heritage…comes Home committee

Lorraine Marshall
Social Worker, Children’s Aid Society

Richard Lockley
Retired

Patricia Saunders
Retired, Co Chair – Heritage…comes Home committee, past President – Mountain Heritage Society, past President – Century Manor Committee, Chair – Ward 8 Citizen’s Advisory Committee
Plaque Approval Process (any plaque)

Hamilton City Council (Final Approval)

Community Services Committee
(Approves both the development of plaques and content)

Municipal Heritage Committee

Joint Plaquing Sub-Committee

Hamilton Historical Board
Little Africa (1)

During the 19th century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery. Escaping slaves came to Hamilton from the United States, by the Underground Railroad. (2) W.B. Green and the Burkholder families donated land located along the Stone Road, now Concession Street on the sparsely populated Hamilton Mountain, (3) establishing the close-knit community known as Little Africa. The area was bounded by present day Upper Wentworth Street, Concession Street, Upper Sherman Avenue and Fennell Avenue. (4) The settlement developed around ‘The Mission’, a multi-purpose one room building, built in 1860 by Richard Bray, and donated as a school and church to any Protestant denomination. (5) (6) The winters were harsh and with the difficulty of finding full-time work, many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere. (7) Many of those that remained adopted new surnames to avoid tracking and recapture. Some chose the names Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry. (8) By 1865, over 200 Blacks had built homes, planted gardens and found work on farms or with the railway industry. (9) The Berry family maintained the tollgate that stood near the corner of Concession Street and Upper Wentworth. (10) ‘Daddy’ Nelson and Henry Johnson were gravediggers. (11) Many of the Black settlers were buried in unmarked graves in the Burkholder Cemetery. (12) Hamilton expanded and by the 1920s the descendants of the original Little Africa settlers prospered and moved elsewhere. The community of Little Africa simply faded away. (13)

Hamilton Historical Board
City of Hamilton
with the assistance of the Ontario Heritage Trust, 2006.

249 words

Sources:

(1) Little Africa – Reference to Name

Burkholder, Mabel. *Barton on the Mountain*. Hamilton: no publisher indicated possibly Davis- Lisson Ltd, 1956. p. 27


(2) **Seeking freedom – Underground Railway**

Burkholder, Mabel. *Barton on the Mountain*. Hamilton: no publisher indicated possibly Davis- Lisson Ltd, 1956. p.28


“Many refugees arrived in Canada via the Underground Railroad system. Approximately 3000 fugitives found freedom in Canada within three months after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act…Some black visionaries believed the development of prospering of black agricultural communities would aid the cause of abolition in the United States.”


“The first refugee Blacks from the U.S. arrived in 1812, in the early days of the underground railway.” (103)


Wayne, Michael, in *The Ottawa Citizen*, 2 August 2006

“There were good reasons for free blacks to leave the United States during the 1850s. They were, the great majority of them, denied the vote and confined to segregated institutions. In the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857 the Supreme Court ruled that no black could be an American citizen. On the eve of the Civil War, nearly every slave state was considering legislation to relegate some or all of its free population to bondage.”

(3) Green Donates Land


“There occurred an influx of escaping slaves before, during and after the American Civil War, 1861-1865. The authorities decided to settle them in a group on small lots provided by W. B. Green who owned the farm to the east of the Mission. They built homes and put in gardens.” (31)


“…and the generosity of the White Hamiltonians, notably the Green family.” “One of the most prominent White families on the mountain was one headed by Ab Green who owned a 100 acre farm “in the fourth concession.” (95)


“The shores of Lake Ontario also had its refugees. There were Blacks in the village of Hamilton during the 1820s and ‘30s, and at about the same time Black squatters settled on Hamilton Mountain under the protective eye of two of Hamilton’s oldest families, the Burkholders and the Greens. In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest pioneer cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some of their graves were made as early as 1820.” (48-59)

“For many years Black families has been squatting in small shacks dotted along the Mountain. Between 1851 and 1853 William Bridge Green, who owned considerable land there, gave small lots to eight heads of Black families: William Nelson, George Washington, Isaac Davis, Washington Scott, Henry Johnson, Edward Johnson and David Nelson. Green and Jacob Thomas Nottle gave land to another Black, William Jaggard.”

*Census records for 1851 and 1861 do not record a William Jaggard although the 1871 Census does. Interestingly, it does not specify that he was black. This may have been an error in recording although it lists him as being born in England and that he was an Anglican (Church of England). We cannot assume that he wasn’t black because the censuses do record other black citizens as being born in England. All of the land transactions for William Jaggard take place between 1856 and 1860. It is not unreasonable to assume that he was not present during the 1851 or the 1861 censuses or was missed.


“The property donated by William Bridge Green became the heart of Little Africa.

Between 1951 and 1853, W. B. Green subdivided his property along Concession Street between Upper Sherman Avenue and East 23rd Street and gave small lots to eight heads of Black families.” (104)


Quotes Daniel Hills work “By the 1850’s there was an established Black community, commonly called, “Little Africa”, on Hamilton Mountain. For years Black families has been squatting in small shacks dotted along the Mountain. Between 1851 and 1853 William Bridge Green, who owned considerable land there, gave small lots to eight heads of Black families... The only condition was that the new owners must farm the land. The property donated by Green became the heart of “Little Africa”. (24)
“Coloured Refugees Formed Settlement.” The Hamilton Spectator, 15 July 1946.


“Frame Church.” The Hamilton Spectator, 15 November 1947


(4) Geographical Location


“One of the most prominent White families on the mountain was one headed by Ab Green who owned a 100 acre farm “in the fourth concession” which laid between Concession Street and Fennel Avenue and was bounded on the east by Sherman Avenue and on the west by 24th Street.” (95)


Notes to Chapter 4 – Refugees and Their Havens “This area is bordered by the present Concession, Fennell, Upper Sherman and Upper Wentworth Streets. In early time Concession Street was called the “Old Stone Road”. (44)

(5) Burkholder donates land


“Land was also donated by the Burkholder family. In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some as early as 1820.” (104)
(6) **The Mission**


“The Union Mission was built on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bray on the south side of the Stone Road, now Concession Street, between what is now 22nd and 23rd Streets…the adults who had no previous schooling were allowed to attend the school in the mission with their children.” (31)


“Many of them got a smattering of education in the “Mission”, a union church and school building erected in 1860.” (27)


“Serving the Mountain during this era was the small red brick Mountain Union Mission, familiarly known as “The Mission”, which for years doubled as an undenominational Protestant church and school.” (161)


“Little Africa was centered around a church and a school which was called the Mission. This school was actually a one-room brick house as a place of worship for the use of all Protestants” (95)


“…in 1860, a non-denominational Christian school was built on Concession Street in the heart of Hamilton’s “Little Africa”; most of its pupils were Black, and …”the dark skinned children sat with the white ones conning over their lessons.” Former slaves eager for the education
denied them in childhood, attended evening classes there, particularly in the winter. They “…laboriously traced out verses from the Bible in hope of learning to read the Gospel’s message.” White Hamilton citizens made no objection to Black children’s attending the Mission school….” (103)

(7) Leaving the Colony – Reasons why


“The relative stability of the Black population in Hamilton was soon undermined by a number of factors. For one thing, the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 was accompanied by a dramatic decline in the Black population of Hamilton and other areas of Canada. As a result of the continuing emigration of Blacks to the United States – for reasons which included racial discrimination, unemployment, and the desire to return to the U.S. after slavery was abolished there in 1865 – the Black population of Hamilton declined from about 800 in 1852 to about 700 at the turn of the century.” (96)

Wayne, Michael, in The Ottawa Citizen, 2 August 2006

Professor Wayne recounts research conducted by reporter Chris Lackner that common held beliefs do not always hold true according to the 1861 Canada West census. Such as “Nor did most blacks return to the United States after the Civil War, as had long been believed. They remained in Canada, intent on building a new life here. We can take the sentiments of Alexander Hemsley, born in Maryland, as representatives. He settled in the St. Catharine’s area where he acquired five acres and took up farming.”


Regarding the problems facing newly resettled former slaves: “To any extent they have not been accustomed to plan for themselves, others laid out the work, and they have performed it. In this respect they are like children. A large portion of them never cleared up land. Hence, after they planted themselves in Canada, and commenced clearing a piece of land, no one need be surprised when he learns that some of them become discouraged, and give it up as hopeless. Most of the coloured people are wanting in firmness and independence. This is owing to the crushing influence of slavery upon them.”

(8) Adopting Names

“They who stayed adopted new names to avoid tracing and recapture. Many chose Johnson, Atkins, Murdoch, or Green.” (31)


“They had to find themselves surnames, for to use names of their masters might lead to identification and recapture. For some unexplained reason many negro families on the mountain favoured the name Johnson.” “There were also families called Atkins, Murdoch and Green. Apart from the others, on the brow of the mountain dwelt old Peter Carey.” (28)


“In an attempt to avoid easy identification and recapture, they generally adopted new surnames, notably Johnson.” (96)


“Family names include Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry.” (104)

(9) **No. of Black Citizens and Occupations**


“.an area of the city where more than 200 Blacks made their homes in the 1850’s. Known as Little Africa…”

“This thriving city, by actual count in 1854, contained two hundred and seventy-four colored persons, namely, St. Lawrence’s Ward – 51, St. George’s War – 37, St. Patrick’s Ward – 12, St. Mary’s Ward, 34, St. Andrew’s Ward – 140. The public schools of Hamilton contain about one thousand seven hundred pupils, of whom twenty-five are colored.” (118)


“Since most of the Blacks who escaped to Canada in the late 18th and early 19th centuries had worked as slaves on slave plantations in the southern United States, farming was the occupation of which they were most familiar…Many of the first Blacks who lived in the area now known as Hamilton, especially those who lived on the escarpment, were farmers who typically grew fruits and vegetables. Others generally worked as unskilled labourers in road construction and land clearance; handymen; maids; “shoe-shine boys”, or in other low-paying jobs.” (98)


“There were 208 Blacks living in Hamilton in 1853; by 1856 Blacks numbered 274.” (59)


“For the American-born, the group which included most Blacks, dominated only one traditionally black trade; in 1851 they composed 67 percent of the barbers, increasing their share to 75 percent a decade later.” (64)

(10) Berry Family operating Toll Road


“The Berry family kept the toll gate, near the corner of Concession and Wentworth streets.” (28)

“At that time, Concession street, which was a major road on the mountain, was known as the Cow-Path and had a toll gate just east of its intersection with Wentworth Street – a gate that was manned for many years by a Black family named Berry.” (95)


“The Berry family, which was among the new residents fleeing slavery, operated the toll gate located at the corner of Concession and Wentworth Streets.” (13)


“The Berry Family kept the toll gate, which stood near the corner of Concession Street and Upper Wentworth.” (104)

(11) Daddy Nelson and Henry Johnson


Notes to Chapter 4 – Refugees and Their Havens – 14: “Burkholder family records show that two blacks, William Nelson and Henry Johnson, were gravediggers, and Nelson is referred to as Hamilton’s first public gravedigger.” (220-59) (note in Appendix A)


“Daddy Nelson and Henry Johnson were gravediggers…” (104)

(12) Burkholder Cemetery

“The cemetery in connection with Burkholder Church may have been started as one to serve the family after which it took its name. However, no one was ever refused who applied for permission to bury the dead of the adjoining countryside.” (28)


“In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some as early as 1820.” (104)

(13) Disappearance of Little Africa


“Wealth the end of slavery in the United States in the 1860’s, the black community in Ontario became more integrated. As the 18th century passed, the descendents of these original settlers moved into the occupations and professions existing elsewhere in the province at the time.”


“The little African colony on the mountain was not a permanent success. The cold of the winters chilled the blood of these children of the sun, so one family after another abandoned the home they ad made and were seen no more on the hill-top.” (28)


“But the Black fugitives lacked the necessary financial resources to survive the harsh winter of an unbroken Canadian forest which Hamilton mountain was in the 19th century; thus “Little Africa” essentially ceased to exist by 1900.” (98)

Mulkewich, Jane. “Little Africa – Settlement Goes Back to 1850’s.” In Vanished Hamilton
“By 1920, many of the former fugitives had returned to the U.S., and others had found more accessible places to settle, and Little Africa disappeared as a community.” (104)


“Although many blacks returned to the United States following the legal emancipation of slaves and the end of the Civil War in the 1860’s, many preferred to remain in Ontario and make Canada their permanent homeland.” (15)
Farming in Canada West circa 1860's

“Little Africa”
Commemorative Plaque
Hamilton, Ontario

Reviewers Package
Contents
(In order of appearance)

- A Brief History of Barton Township
- Map of Wentworth Township
- Modern map showing location of Little Africa
- 1875 Map illustrating location of Little Africa
- 1875 Map showing concentration of Black citizens in Barton
- Proposed text for Little Africa Plaque
- Primary and Secondary Source references for text on the Plaque
- A response to concerns voiced by a citizen of Hamilton
- Black Population in Hamilton, 1851 census
- Map displaying toll roads
- Map displaying Black populations in Hamilton wards and Barton, 1851
- Map displaying location of Old Cholera cemetery
- Census information on Black residents in Barton, 1851-1881
- Land Transaction Records on W.B. Green’s property, 1820s-1870s
- Bibliography
History of Barton Township

With the surveying and naming of the townships in Upper Canada after 1788, the area, provisionally known as the Head of the Lake, was the location of a township to be called Barton Township. Named after Barton on Humber, a community in England, located opposite the city of Kingston upon Hull in Lincolnshire, Barton was originally part of Upper Canada's Lincoln Township, established in 1791. Twenty-five years later, in 1816, Barton Township became a part of the newly created Wentworth County.

Barton Township's original boundaries stretched easterly along the harbourfront from the boundary of Saltfleet Township. The township southerly boundary was beyond the edge of the escarpment, stretching as far as the Glenford Township at what is today known as Rymal Road. On the west, the boundary was jagged including areas of the Burlington Heights, between Coote's Paradise and the Harbour, and portions of what are known as Westdale and West Hamilton in the lower city. Above the mountain brow, Barton Township's western limit was a straighter, surveyed line bordering on Ancaster Township.

George Hamilton (1788-1836) was the owner of farm previously operated by the Durand family. Running south to the escarpment from the concession road surveyed by Augustus Jones in the 1790's, the westerly limit of the farm was roughly James Street and the easterly limit was approximately Ferguson Avenue.

Soon after the finalized of the War of 1812-1814, George Hamilton had a town site laid out and registered on the northern portion of his farm along the aforementioned concession road, now known as Main Street. The original streets of the community, which would later bear his name, were labeled in recognition of George Hamilton's family members. Those streets named for Hamilton's family members were James, John, Catherine, Augusta, Hannah (now Charlton Avenue), Maria (now Jackson Street).

Hamilton remained within Barton Township after it was incorporated as a town on January 18, 1833. Hamilton attained city status in 1846. The original boundaries of the city basically extended from Wentworth Street in the east to Dundurn Street in the west. However, the western boundary was stretched to include all of Sir Allan MacNab's Dundurn and the Burlington Heights, the land formation between Coote's Paradise and the harbour.

Along the bay shoreline, the western boundary was extended as far as what is known today as the Valley Inn Road and the Woodland Cemetery located at the extreme west end of the harbour. To the south, the city boundary was the next of Augustus Jones' surveyed concession roads, today known as Aberdeen Avenue, and its easterly extension about the escarpment known today as Concession Street. (Looking at a map, one can see that Aberdeen Avenue and Concession Streets, although having a difference of over 300 feet in elevation, are straight lines.)

Since 1846, the boundaries of Hamilton expanded frequently, annexing portions of Ancaster Township to the west, portions of Saltfleet Township to the east and eventually all of Barton Township. When Regional Government was implemented in 1974, the City of Hamilton was the most populous of all the municipalities, which united to create the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.

Taken from:
http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CommunitiesAndOrganizations/Historical+Hamilton+Barton+Township.htm
Wentworth and Townships

Province of Ontario and surrounding area
Illustrated Atlas of Wentworth County, 1875 portion—showing geographic area where "Little Africa" was located.

Was this the property of Peter Carey, the Toll Keeper? Listed in 1851 Census.

Appendix C to Report CS10032
Page 6 of 51
Appendix A
“Little Africa”
Commemorative Plaque
Hamilton, Ontario

Reviewer’s Package
Little Africa (1)

During the 19th century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery. Escaping slaves came to Hamilton from the United States, by the Underground Railroad. (2)

W.B. Green and the Burkholder families donated land located along the Stone Road, now Concession Street on the sparsely populated Hamilton Mountain, (3) establishing the close-knit community known as Little Africa. The area was bounded by present day Upper Wentworth Street, Concession Street, Upper Sherman Avenue and Fennell Avenue. (4) The settlement developed around 'The Mission', a multi-purpose one room building, built in 1860 by Richard Bray, and donated as a school and church to any Protestant denomination. (5) (6)

The winters were harsh and with the difficulty of finding full-time work, many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere (7). Many of those that remained adopted new surnames to avoid tracking and recapture. Some chose the names Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry. (8)

By 1865, over 200 Blacks had built homes, planted gardens and found work on farms or with the railway industry. (9) The Berry family maintained the tollgate that stood near the corner of Concession Street and Upper Wentworth. (10) 'Daddy' Nelson and Henry Johnson were gravediggers. (11) Many of the Black settlers were buried in unmarked graves in the Burkholder Cemetery. (12)

Hamilton expanded and by the 1920s the descendants of the original Little Africa settlers prospered and moved elsewhere. The community of Little Africa simply faded away. (13)

Hamilton Historical Board
City of Hamilton
with the assistance of the Ontario Heritage Trust, 2006.
Sources:

(1) Little Africa – Reference to Name


Burkholder, Mabel. Barton on the Mountain. Hamilton: no publisher indicated possibly Davis- Lisson Ltd, 1956. p. 27


“Coloured Refugees Formed Settlement.” The Hamilton Spectator, 15 July 1946.


(2) Seeking freedom – Underground Railway


"Almost before the war was well started escaping slaves sought refuge in Canada by way of the "underground railway." As Niagara was one door of entry Hamilton was in line to receive her quota of these destitute people." (28)

"The Underground Railroad was organized and run by a number of both Black and White Americans and Canadians... Its primary aim and achievement was the transportation of Black slaves from the southern United States to freedom in the northern states as well as such Ontario (then Upper Canada) centers as Hamilton, Windsor, Amherstburg, Toronto, St. Catharines, Brantford, Kingston." (94)


"Many refugees arrived in Canada via the Underground Railroad system. Approximately 3000 fugitives found freedom in Canada within three months after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act...Some black visionaries believed the development of prospering of black agricultural communities would aid the cause of abolition in the United States."


"The first refugee Blacks from the U.S. arrived in 1812, in the early days of the underground railway." (103)


"Those blacks who came to Canada in the early 1800s found Hamilton to be a farming community. Blacks coming to Canada via the Underground Railroad sometimes settled in the border towns like St. Catharines but many ended up settling in Hamilton." (24)


"During the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865, Hamilton became a refuge for blacks escaping slavery by means of the "underground railway"

"Former Coloured Colony on Mount Dubbed Little Africa." The Hamilton Spectator, 15 July 936.

"Before 1866 some coloured people had drifted into Canada by the famous 'Underground Railway.'”

Wayne, Michael, "A historian faces the facts," in The Ottawa Citizen, 2 August 2006

"There were good reasons for free blacks to leave the United States during the 1850s. They were, the great majority of them, denied the vote and confined to segregated institutions. In the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857 the Supreme Court ruled that no black could be an American citizen. On the eve of the Civil War, nearly every slave state was considering legislation to relegate some or all of its free population to bondage."
Green Donates Land
(REVIEWERS: PLEASE REFER TO APPENDIX A - please read carefully as it may alter this section depending on your comments)

Green Family – there is confusion amongst historian when referring to the Green Family

William Bridge Green – dies 1862 married to Lucy

William Bridge Green son of above William Bridge Green – married to Charlotte
John Bridge Green son of above William Bridge Green

Albert (Ab) Green – son of either William or John

See Land Transactions Appendix B.


"There occurred an influx of escaping slaves before, during and after the American Civil War, 1861-1865. The authorities decided to settle them in a group on small lots provided by W. B. Green who owned the farm to the east of the Mission. They built homes and put in gardens." (31)


"...and the generosity of the White Hamiltonians, notably the Green family." * One of the most prominent White families on the mountain was one headed by Ab Green who owned a 100 acre farm "in the fourth concession." (95)


"The shores of Lake Ontario also had its refugees. There were Blacks in the village of Hamilton during the 1820s and '30s, and at about the same time Black squatters settled on Hamilton Mountain under the protective eye of two of Hamilton's oldest families, the Burkholders and the Greens. In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest pioneer cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some of their graves were made as early as 1820." (48-59)


"For many years Black families has been squatting in small shacks dotted along the Mountain. Between 1851 and 1853 William Bridge Green, who owned considerable land there, gave small lots to eight heads of Black families: William Nelson, George Washington, Isaac Davis, Washington Scott, Henry Johnson, Edward Johnson and David Nelson. Green and Jacob Thomas Nottle gave land to another Black, William Jaggard." (58-59)

*Census records for 1851 and 1861 do not record a William Jaggard although the 1871 Census does. Interestingly, it does not specify that he was black. This may have been an error in recording although it lists him as being born in England and that he was an Anglican (Church of England). We cannot assume that he wasn't black because the censuses do record other black citizens as being born in England. All of the land transactions between William Bridge Green and William Jaggard took place between 1856 and 1860. Jacob Thomas Nottle supplies the mortgages to Jaggard. In 1871 Jaggard is living in a dwelling house with three other families in the Township of Barton. He has a wife and eight children.

"It was John Green who divided property along Concession Street between Upper Sherman and East 23rd, and gave title to the squatters who settled there. There were approximately 12 families in total. The strip became known as 'Little Africa', clearly illustrating the sympathy felt for the former slaves." (13)


"The property donated by William Bridge Green became the heart of Little Africa. Between 1851 and 1853, W. B. Green subdivided his property along Concession Street between Upper Sherman Avenue and East 23rd Street and gave small lots to eight heads of Black families." (104)


Quotes Daniel Hills work "By the 1850's there was an established Black community, commonly called, "Little Africa", on Hamilton Mountain. For years Black families has been squatting in small shacks dotted along the Mountain. Between 1851 and 1853 William Bridge Green, who owned considerable land there, gave small lots to eight heads of Black families... The only condition was that the new owners must farm the land. The property donated by Green became the heart of "Little Africa". (24)


"Several lots of land were sliced off the bottom of the Green farm extending along the south side of Concession Street from 23rd Street to Sherman Avenue, in order that a lot might be presented free of charge to some coloured family who had nowhere to go."


A traveling New Yorker notices Green's donation: "Abutting on the south side of what is now Concession Street but formerly was just called the stone road, was the farm owned by Ab Green, whose forefather had taken it from the Crown. When the Green family saw the distressed condition of the refugees their desire to help them overcame sober judgment. They began giving a lot to each head of family who had squatted on the stone road."

Note from researchers: William Bridge Green purchased 100 acres from Peter Hunter Hamilton in August 1826. Peter Hunter Hamilton purchased this land from Michael Hess. It was Michael Hess who was granted a lot in 1791. His lot consisted of 100 acres and was composed of Concession 4 – Lot 9.


"By the 1850s, there was a distinct community known as "Little Africa." The nucleus of Little Africa was formed by several Black families who were granted lots by landowner

(4) Geographical Location


“One of the most prominent White families on the mountain was one headed by Ab Green who owned a 100 acre farm “in the fourth concession” which laid between Concession Street and Fennel Avenue and was bounded on the east by Sherman Avenue and on the west by 24th Street.” (95)


Notes to Chapter 4 – Refugees and Their Havens “This area is bordered by the present Concession, Fennell, Upper Sherman and Upper Wentworth Streets. In early time Concession Street was called the “Old Stone Road”. (44)

Note from researchers: Please refer to maps.

(5) Burkholder donates land


“Land was also donated by the Burkholder family. In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some as early as 1820.” (104)

(6) The Mission


“The Union Mission was built on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bray on the south side of the Stone Road, now Concession Street, between what is now 22nd and 23rd Streets...the adults who had no previous schooling were allowed to attend the school in the mission with their children.” (31)


“Many of them got a smattering of education in the “Mission”, a union church and school building erected in 1860.” (27)

"Serving the Mountain during this era was the small red brick Mountain Union Mission, familiarly known as "The Mission", which for years doubled as an undenominational Protestant church and school." (161)


"Little Africa was centered around a church and a school which was called the Mission. This school was actually a one-room brick house as a place of worship for the use of all Protestants" (95)


"...in 1860, a non-denominational Christian school was built on Concession Street in the heart of Hamilton's "Little Africa"; most of its pupils were Black, and ..."the dark skinned children sat with the white ones owing their lessons." Former slaves eager for the education denied them in childhood, attended evening classes there, particularly in the winter. They "...labouredously traced out verses from the Bible in hope of learning to read the Gospel's message." White Hamilton citizens made no objection to Black children's attending the Mission school...." (103)

(7) Leaving the Colony – Reasons why


"The relative stability of the Black population in Hamilton was soon undermined by a number of factors. For one thing, the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 was accompanied by a dramatic decline in the Black population of Hamilton and other areas of Canada. As a result of the continuing emigration of Blacks to the United States -- for reasons which included racial discrimination, unemployment, and the desire to return to the U.S. after slavery was abolished there in 1865 -- the Black population of Hamilton declined from about 800 in 1852 to about 700 at the turn of the century." (96)


Professor Wayne recounts research conducted by reporter Chris Lackner that common held beliefs do not always hold true according to the 1861 Canada West census. Such as "Nor did most blacks return to the United States after the Civil War, as had long been believed. They remained in Canada, intent on building a new life here. We can take the sentiments of Alexander Hemsley, born in Maryland, as representatives. He settled in the St. Catharine's area where he acquired five acres and took up farming."


Regarding the problems facing newly resettled former slaves: "To any extent they have not been accustomed to plan for themselves, others laid out the work, and they have performed it. In this respect they are like children. A large portion of them never cleared up land. Hence, after they planted themselves in Canada, and commenced clearing a
piece of land, no one need be surprised when he learns that some of them become discouraged, and give it up as hopeless. Most of the coloured people are wanting in firmness and independence. This is owing to the crushing influence of slavery upon them."

(8) Adopting Names


"Those who stayed adopted new names to avoid tracing and recapture. Many chose Johnson, Atkins, Murdoch, or Green." (31)


"They had to find themselves surnames, for to use names of their masters might lead to identification and recapture. For some unexplained reason many negro families on the mountain favoured the name Johnson." "There were also families called Atkins, Murdoch and Green. Apart from the others, on the brow of the mountain dwelt old Peter Carey." (28)


"In an attempt to avoid easy identification and recapture, they generally adopted new surnames, notably Johnson." (96)


"Family names include Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry." (104)


"Family names were Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Green, Carey, Atkins and Berry."

Note from researchers: The 1871 Census lists 102 black families with the surname Johnson.

(9) No. of Black Citizens and Occupations

Please refer to Appendix B re: Census information.

Note from researchers:

(1) The challenge of using census information to examine an entire period is that censuses only give us a snapshot of one year, after which another ten years pass before the next census is taken. Much can happen in a ten year period.

(2) There may be some claims that the censuses in question do not take into account squatters residing in the area. In fact, the censuses list hundreds of squatters in Barton Township, all of whom are listed as Irish. These squatters were concentrated along the concession road running parallel to the Port Dover Rail Line. From Michael Katz' work (refer to bibliography for full citation): "It appears that the Irish Catholics fared even worse occupationally than the small Black community – about thirty-eight families in 1851 and thirty-one a decade
later, thought these figures are probably an under enumeration. Although about three-fifths of them were poor, the proportion of unskilled and semiskilled workers among Blacks declined from 47 to 38 percent during the decade; the proportion in skilled trades rose correspondingly from 37 to 40 percent, and those in commerce and the professions increased from 8 to 14 percent. Blacks, in fact, were scattered among a wide variety of occupations, giving them, in all, a more favourable occupational distribution than the Irish Catholics.”(68)

(3): From examining the censuses, it appears that names and ages changed from one census to the next. We were able to trace particular individuals through family members, and occasionally ages. For example, Mary Conway also appears as Marianne Conaway. Her age is also inconsistent in each census. In 1851 she is listed as 50 years of age; in 1861 she is listed as 56, in 1871 she is still listed as 56, and in 1891 she is listed as 90.


“...an area of the city where more than 200 Blacks made their homes in the 1850’s. Known as Little Africa...”


“This thriving city, by actual count in 1854, contained two hundred and seventy-four colored persons, namely, St. Lawrence’s Ward – 51, St. George’s Ward – 37, St. Patrick’s Ward – 12, St. Mary’s Ward, 34, St. Andrew’s Ward – 140. The public schools of Hamilton contain about one thousand seven hundred pupils, of whom twenty-five are colored.”(118)


“Since most of the Blacks who escaped to Canada in the late 18th and early 19th centuries had worked as slaves on slave plantations in the southern United States, farming was the occupation of which they were most familiar... Many of the first Blacks who lived in the area now known as Hamilton, especially those who lived on the escarpment, were farmers who typically grew fruits and vegetables. Others generally worked as unskilled labourers in road construction and land clearance, handymen, maids, "shoe-shine boys", or in other low-paying jobs.”(98)

A quote from a black native Hamiltonian, aged 79, in Etoroms work: “Hamilton had in the stone time many Black families that were living on land up on Hamilton mountain in small one- and two-room houses. They grew fruits and vegetables and raised fowl enough to manage for a while. But to live in this country one would need a job that could buy a home that would be suitable for the winter weather. With decent jobs not being given to these people, they soon found out that they could not stay for too long with what was being offered. Soon they left Hamilton to seek areas that they could at least earn a living. Few stayed, doing work as handymen, maids, shoe-shine boys, and just the very lowest paying work available.”(102)


“There were 206 Blacks living in Hamilton in 1853; by 1856 Blacks numbered 274.”(59)
(10) Berry Family operating Toll Road


"The Berry family kept the toll gate, near the corner of Concession and Wentworth streets." (28)


"At that time, Concession street, which was a major road on the mountain, was known as the Cow-Path and had a toll gate just east of its intersection with Wentworth Street – a gate that was manned for many years by a Black family named Berry." (95)


"The Berry family, which was among the new residents fleeing slavery, operated the toll gate located at the corner of Concession and Wentworth Streets." (13)


"The Berry Family kept the toll gate, which stood near the corner of Concession Street and Upper Wentworth." (104)

Note from researchers: William Berry and his wife are listed in the 1861 Census – Barton Township. Henry and Julia Berry with their children Mary(5), Rachel (3) and Julia C.(1) are listed in the 1881 Census – Barton Township. Interestingly enough Julia is listed a “Toll Keeper”.

(11) Daddy Nelson and Henry Johnson


Notes to Chapter 4 – Refugees and Their Havens – 14: "Burkholder family records show that two blacks, William Nelson and Henry Johnson, were gravediggers, and Nelson is referred to as Hamilton’s first public gravedigger." (220-59) (note in Appendix A)


"Daddy Nelson and Henry Johnson were gravediggers..." (104)

Note from researchers: A William Nelson is shown to have purchased land from William Bridge Green – Concession 4 – Lot 9 over a period of two years (1852-1953). William Nelson sells his property in 1852 to Anne Rosewarn. A Henry Johnson also purchased land from William Bridge Green – Concession 4 – Lot 9 in 1850. He sells his property in 1857 to Charles J. Carter.

Note from researchers: Mrs. Nelson was called ‘Mammy Nelson’ by the local community and was much praised as an excellent housekeeper.
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(12) Burkholder Cemetery


"The cemetery in connection with Burkholder Church may have been started as one to serve the family after which it took its name. However, no one was ever refused who applied for permission to bury the dead of the adjoining countryside." (28)


"In the Burkholder Cemetery, the oldest cemetery on Hamilton Mountain, are buried a number of former slaves; some as early as 1820." (104)

(13) Disappearance of Little Africa


"With the end of slavery in the United States in the 1860’s, the black community in Ontario became more integrated. As the 19th century passed, the descendents of these original settlers moved into the occupations and professions existing elsewhere in the province at the time."


"The little African colony on the mountain was not a permanent success. The cold of the winters chilled the blood of these children of the sun, so one family after another abandoned the home they had made and were seen no more on the hill-top." (28)


"But the Black fugitives lacked the necessary financial resources to survive the harsh winter of an unbroken Canadian forest which Hamilton mountain was in the 19th century; thus "Little Africa" essentially ceased to exist by 1900." (98)


"By 1920, many of the former fugitives had returned to the U.S., and others had found more accessible places to settle, and Little Africa disappeared as a community." (104)


"Although many blacks returned to the United States following the legal emancipation of slaves and the end of the Civil War in the 1860’s, many preferred to remain in Ontario and make Canada their permanent homeland." (15)
A member of the public has inquired about the commemorative plaque and provided a commentary that differs significantly from what has been provided through published accounts. It is important that we review the comments and provide feedback. Please review carefully and make comment. Thank you.

“The plaque refers to donated lands when in fact the act was more one of a sharecropping arrangement and that the lands were appropriated from the people who owned it and worked on it - not abandoned as is suggested. (1) It Researchers Notes that the harsh winters and difficulty finding work caused people to leave the community then also mentions that people stayed and prospered. (2) Not only is this contradictory but it does not reflect the fact that the plaque was introduced to this community by those who were banished to the area because they were new immigrants (mainly Scottish) and had arrived after a long journey by sea and were infected with the plague. (3) It also does not address the fact that Africans developed the footpaths from the lower city to the escarpment (4) and the toll to be paid for traveling down the mountain was introduced as a prohibitive measure to keep the Black community from leaving the area.” (5)

**RESPONSE:**

(1) **Sharecropping**

The plaque refers to donated lands when in fact the act was more one of a sharecropping arrangement and that the lands were appropriated from the people who owned it and worked on it - not abandoned as is suggested.

Sharecropping was a system of farm tenancy once common in some parts of the United States. The institution arose at the end of the Civil War out of the plantation system. Many planters had ample land but little money for wages. At the same time most of the former slaves were uneducated and impoverished. The solution was the sharecropping system, which continued the workers in the routine of cotton cultivation under rigid supervision. Economic features of the system were gradually extended to poor white farmers. The cropper brought to the farm only his own and his family’s labor. Most other requirements—land, animals, equipment, and seed—were provided by the landlord, who generally also advanced credit to meet the living expenses of the cropper family. Most croppers worked under the close direction of the landlord, and he marketed the crop and kept accounts. Normally in return for their work they received a share of the money realized. From this share was deducted the debt to the landlord. High interest charges, emphasis on production of a single cash crop, slipshod accounting, and chronic cropper irresponsibility were among the abuses of the system. Farm mechanization and a marked reduction in cotton acreage have virtually put an end to the system.

There is no evidence that William Bridge Green was operating a “sharecropping” arrangement. We know that he sold land to several Black families (see example of one of the Land Sale registration documents below) which is not a component of sharecropping. In sharecropping the ownership of the land remains with the owner not the people providing labour. Many of the Black citizens had small plots of land with large gardens. Heads of householders probably held other jobs, such as labourers, to pay their mortgages and other expenses. This is why the censuses list many of the Black citizens as labourers, and not farmers, although we have proof that they owned land and had it under cultivation.
Registered this twenty fifth day of September A.D. 1849 at Twelve o'clock noon on the oath of Thomas Allen Blyth, duly sworn before me.

John Stewart
Registrar

A memorial to be registered, of an Indenture of Bargain and Sale, made this the Thirteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord One Thousand, eight hundred and forty eight, by and between William Bridge Green of the Township of Barton, in the County of Wentworth, in the District of Gore and Province of Canada, Yeoman, of the first part, and Lucy Green, wife of the said party of the first part, of the second part and Daniel Johnson, of the same place, Labourer, of the third part. Whereby, the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Fifty Pounds, of lawful money of the Province of Canada, to him in hand, paid by the same party of the third part, the receipt whereof is acknowledged, did give, grant, bargain, sell, alien, assign, transfer, release in full, convey and confirm with the said party of the third part, his heirs and assigns, All and Singular that certain parcel or tract of land, (situate, ?) and being in the Township of Barton, in the County of Wentworth in the Gore District of the said Province containing two acres, be the same more or less, being composed of part of the Lot number nine in the fourth Concession of the Township aforesaid, and may be fully known and described as follows, that is to say commencing in the front of said fourth Concession and at the North Easterly angle of the Lot number nine aforesaid - thence along the front of said fourth concession on a corner north Twenty-two degrees, west four chains, - thence South Eighteen degrees, west five chains - thence South seventy two degrees. East four chains, more or less, to the easterly margin of the original road allowance between Lots numbers eight and nine in the concession aforesaid - thence North eighteen degrees, East five chains, more or less, to the place of beginning.

To have and to hold the said above granted premises, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereof, to the said party of the third part, his heirs and assigns, to his own forever and by the same Indenture it is witnessed that the said Lucy Green, the wife of the said party of the first part, in consideration of five shillings to her in hand paid by the said party of the third part, hath ? releases, and forever relinquishes her Dower in the said premises unto him, the said party of the third part, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators and assigns -- which said Indenture is witnessed by Thomas Allen Blyth of the City of Hamilton, in the District and Province aforesaid, Surveyor and this memorial thereof is hereby required to be registered by me, the said Grantor therein named.

Witness my hand and seal the thirteenth day of September, the year of our Lord, one Thousand eight hundred and forty eight.

Signed William Bridge Green

Signed and sealed in the presence of Thomas Allen Blyth and George Banks.

Researchers Note: Copies of all Deeds of Sales, Mortgage Instruments and Discharges are still available.

(1a) Appropriations

"The plaque refers to donated lands when in fact the act was more one of a sharecropping arrangement and that the lands were appropriated from the people who owned it and worked on it - not abandoned as is suggested."

The Collins English Dictionary defines 'appropriate' as "to take for one's own use, esp. illegally or without permission." In real estate terms, 'appropriate' refers to 'private land being taken for public use'. Land records of the Green property, where Little Africa was located, show
no evidence of appropriation. From the time Green bought the property from Peter Hunter Hamilton until well into the 20th century there are scores of recorded transactions on the property, many by Little Africa residents, which suggest an abundance of buying and selling but no governmental interference or illegality. These records are available to the public at the main branch of the Hamilton Public Library in the Special Collections section. Furthermore, the only public properties that did crop up in the direct vicinity (it should be noted also that neither is directly on the Little Africa area) did so in the 20th century, after Little Africa's residents had dispersed. These are the Henderson General Hospital (Hamilton Health Sciences) and Eastmount Park.

(2) Settlers Lives

It Researchers Notes that the harsh winters and difficulty finding work caused people to leave the community then also mentions that people stayed and prospered.

The plaque Researchers Notes: "The winters were harsh and with the difficulty of finding full-time work, many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere" and that "by 1865, over 200 Blacks had built homes, planted gardens and found work on farms or with the railway industry." It also mentions some of the professions undertaken by the Black settlers. The experiences of the settlers were not uniform, they were fluid, changing from individual to individual, and the outcome for each settler was contingent on any number of ever-changing factors (ability to locate outside work, land conditions for farming, number of dependents etc.). Some were able to reside in the 'Little Africa' area for many years, tending to homes and raising families, while others stayed only for a short period of time before moving on, often to more urbanized areas with better job prospects. Rather than being contradictory, these passages take into consideration the varied experiences of those in 'Little Africa'.

(3) Regarding Epidemics in 19th Century Hamilton

Not only is this contradictory but it does not reflect the fact that the plague was introduced to this community by those who were banished to the area because they were new immigrants (mainly Scottish) and had arrived after a long journey by sea and were infected with the plague.

We are assuming that is in reference is cholera.


"Cholera is a horrific illness. The onset of the disease is typically quick and spectacular; you can be healthy one moment and dead within hours. The disease, left untreated, has a fatality rate that can reach fifty per cent. The first sign that you have it is a sudden and explosive watery diarrhea, classically described as "rice-water stool," resembling the water in which rice has been rinsed and sometimes having a fishy smell. White specks floating in the stool are bits of lining from the small intestine. As a result of water loss—vomiting often accompanies diarrhea, and as much as a litre of water may be lost per hour—your eyes become sunken; your body is racked with agonizing cramps; the skin becomes leathery; lips and face turn blue; blood pressure drops; heartbeat becomes irregular; the amount of oxygen reaching your cells diminishes. Once you enter hypovolemic shock, death can follow within minutes. A mid-nineteenth-century English newspaper report described cholera victims who were "one minute warm, palpitating, human organisms—the next a sort of galvanized corpse, with icy breath, stopped pulse, and blood congealed—blue, shriveled up, convulsed." Through it all, and until the very last stages, is the
added horror of full consciousness. You are aware of what’s happening: “the mind within remains untouched and clear,—shining strangely through the glazed eyes . . . a spirit, looking out in terror from a corpse.”

Hamilton experienced two major cholera outbreaks, the first in 1833 and the second in 1854. It was brought over by immigrants on ships (it was commonly referred to as “ships fever”). If a ship docked and it was determined that some of the passengers had “ships fever” they were not allowed to disembark until health inspectors arrived.

We have been unable to locate any documentation that supports the statement that sick, newly arrived immigrants were sent to the Mountain (where would they be sent?). In fact, the immigrants were sent to the former 1812 barracks located on York Street close to the dock yards. The ‘Old Cholera Cemetery’ was located on the south side of York Blvd., 1 km north of Desjardin’s Canal. (Please refer to map).


“Cholera is caused by a comma-shaped bacterium—Vibrio cholerae—whose role was identified by the German physician Robert Koch in 1883. By far the most common route of infection is drinking contaminated water. And, since water comes to contain V. cholerae through the excrement of cholera victims, an outbreak of the disease is evidence that people have been drinking each other’s feces.”


“Such was the terror the cholera inspired that at the gates of lonely country cemeteries bodies were left unburied, the friends of the diseased arriving under cover of night, then running away, leaving the settlers close at hand to perform the distasteful task of burial. David Burkholder, mountain resident, used to relate how he and his neighbours would cover their faces and hands as well as they could, dig shallow graves in their local cemetery, and haul the victims with long ropes to their last resting place, without benefit of clergy.” (30)

The above reference refers to the dumping of bodies in rural cemeteries. There is no question that this probably happened on an ad hoc basis. For a whole community to be struck with cholera they must be drinking from the same source of contaminated water. The presence of a contaminated corpse, left in a rural cemetery, would not spread cholera. They would have to be buried very close to a water source and this is unlikely. Further, farms have wells. If, by some chance (and we have no references) a well was infected it would have been contained in that area. We do have references of farmers refusing to come down from the Mountain to a contaminated lower city. The Mountain was considered pure and clean.


“Since Hamilton had had no previous experience with the plague and was utterly lacking in health service as we know them, the community became a vast charnel house...In the beginning an abandoned time-ruddled barracks on Burlington Heights, dating from the War of 1812, was used as a hospital, there being no other in town, and the dead were interred in quicklime pits in the adjacent military cemetery.” (67)
"In 1833 the ships again brought cholera, although the visitation this year was less deadly since the town had learned some of the measures necessary to combat the disease. Besides cleaning up the town, disinfecting buildings, and controlling slaughter houses, the board frowned on public meetings and forbade exhibitions of animals and circuses, theatres and shows without board permission." (70)

"The port brought prosperity, but what it gave with one hand it took, as before, with the other. In 1854 again it brought the cholera...To keep immigrants from the city proper, ship captains were notified to discharge their passengers at the Railway depot wharf where the health officer and one or more of the city police supervised landings and hastened aboard trains all who could be forwarded...In the city, shortages developed as farmers refused to visit the city with their produce and the market was deserted." (113)


"In the summer of 1854 cholera arrived in Hamilton and the public panicked. Immigrants were forced to stay in immigrant sheds near the Great Western Railway Depot." (93)

(4) Origin of Footpaths up/down the Mountain

It also does not address the fact that Africans developed the footpaths from the lower city to the escarpment.

In pre-colonial times, the Neutral Indians occupied most of the land but were gradually replaced by the Five (later Six) Nations or "Iroquois" who were allied with British against the French and their Indian allies the Huron. A member of the Iroquois Confederacy provided both the route and name for Mohawk Road on Hamilton Mountain and the route for what would become King Street in the Lower City. Several of the access roads up and down the mountain were originally native footpaths. In a recent Cultural Heritage Landscape study, prepared for the City of Hamilton by Archaeological Services Inc., the consultants note "The first settlers arrived in 1789...these pioneers shouldered their grain down the steep ravine track and took it by row boat to Niagara on the Lake" (p.14). Basically, footpaths were created and used all the communities living on the Mountain.

Notes from researchers: Some toll roads in the Niagara region charged pedestrians to use the roads. Although we have no evidence of this happening on the Mountain it further supports alternate methods, such as footpaths, for accessing the Mountain and the City.


"Here in the days of the Indian, and the 1790's and early 1800's of white settlement, lay the crossroads of the plain below the escarpment - later Highway 8 and King Street - running from the Niagara River at Queenston to the Head of the Lake and westward through Dundas, with a branch-off up the mountain to Ancaster, was joined by the trail from the Humber River and 'muddy York' which snaked through the forest along the course of today's Highway 2." (17)


"It was known initially as the Barton Crossroads, when Upper James was known as the Caledonia Road, and Mohawk Road was the Mohawk Trail." (62) (In reference to its Native roots)

Regarding the 'Mohawk Trail': "Out of Ancaster to the east the trail once more becomes well defined. It takes a sinuous course across Ancaster township and into Barton, where at a curve which once marked the site of old Barton Church (St. Peter’s), and Mackay's Blacksmith shop, it merges into the sixth concession road of Barton township, as it continues across the eastern boundary." (7)

(5) **Toll Roads**

*and the toll to be paid for traveling down the mountain was introduced as a prohibitive measure to keep the Black community from leaving the area.*

The citizen suggests that toll roads were put in place to prevent the Black community in Little Africa from coming down the mountain. In fact, toll roads were a fairly common occurrence at the time throughout Ontario (or Canada West as it was then known). In the years predating strong centralized government and established public works programs, most roads built were funded by private capital and the tolls were charged so as to recoup the costs of building the road and, eventually, turn a profit for the owners.

In 1792, Parliament of Upper Canada at Niagara on the lake (Newark) passed a statute for labour for the building of roads and bridges. This law compelled all able bodied persons to work up to 12 days per year on road and bridge building construction projects in their respective locality without pay.

The time requirement was later reduced from 12 days per year to 2 days per year. Town dwellers and landowners were allowed to pay for substitutes to work in their place.

In 1840, this privilege was granted to all citizens living within a half mile of a macadamized road.

The Baldwin Act of 1849, provided private companies willing to build roads and bridges with their own money, the right to charge others wanting to these roads and bridges a toll for doing so.

The official position on toll roads in an 1849 bylaw: "Twenty Secondly: For raising, levying, collecting and appropriating such moneys as may be required for all or any of the purposes aforesaid, either by way of tolls to be paid on any County Bridge, road or other public work, to defray the expense of making, repairing or maintaining the same, or by means of a rate or rates to be assessed equally on the whole rateable property of such Country liable to assessment, according to any law which shall be in force in Upper Canada concerning rates and Assessments."


"Those who maintained the roads were entitled to collect tolls. Pay roads persisted until the 1920s and included the mountain access roads, the Caledonia Road, Upper Gage Avenue, Concession Street, and Mud Road." (82)


"With the agitation for improved roads came the introduction of tollgates, for fine roads, had to be paid for, and what better way to keep them in repair than by making those who enjoyed the use of them pay toll. Toll gates were placed in strategic positions, to catch all farmers headed for the city with their produce. There were four or five toll gates on the Caledonia Road, as at Ryckman's, at the intersection of the Mohawk road, at the top of the mountain, and also halfway down the mountain to intercept those coming in from the east by way of the Strongman road. If the farmer paid the required fare at the first toll gate he encountered he would receive a ticket which gave him the right to pass through the others. Toll roads were well patronized in the muddy season, but the free mud roads got the traffic in dry weather." (28)


"Because of Hamilton’s situation access had always presented particular problems. In the latter years of the nineteenth century the only passable roads were the universally disliked toll roads, privately owned and maintained." (165)


"There occurred an influx of escaping slaves before, during and after the American Civil War, 1861-1865. The authorities decided to settle them in a group on small lots provided by W. B. Green who owned the farm to the east of the Mission. They built homes and put in gardens." (31)


"The concentration of Blacks in what is known as Little Africa was due to both the ingenuity of the Hamilton civic leaders, who were anxious to find some use for the mountain and its toll gates." (94-95)

"Toll roads were quite common in Hamilton and many other Canadian cities since government officials believed that they would save money by not constructing and maintaining roads while some businessmen rightly believed that they would make money by doing some. Such roads were abolished by King Edward VII around 1903 – shortly after his ascension to the throne." - Footnote to the above quote by Dr. Etoroma

Researchers Note: This was added because it is an example of a historically unverifiable statement that is important to the context of Little Africa. We should remember that the Black population in Little Africa was never greater than a couple hundred at its peak (and this is being generous, as census figures show just over one hundred during the peak time of 1861 or around 3% of the total population). Barton itself had a population of 1735 in 1851 and it grew from there. To make a statement that the only people, who needed to get down the mountain, and thus pay the toll, were the residents of Little Africa is to overlook the reality of the total population on the mountain at the time. As previously mentioned, toll roads were extremely common at the time and it is only natural that there would be some going down the mountain into Hamilton’s core – regardless of the ethnicity of the mountain residents.
The sheer numerical difference between the Black and white populations on the mountain in Barton makes it so that the most reasonable supposition is that whites made up the majority of the toll road traffic. Add to this the terrible poverty of many of the freed and fugitive ex-slaves who moved to Little Africa and the sum is a highly unlikely money-making scheme. In our lengthy examination of primary documents and secondary sources, we have come across nothing that suggests that tolls were installed to keep a certain population contained. The information we have collected points to a more benign conclusion: toll roads were a common occurrence in Ontario at the time and there presence on the Hamilton Mountain did not have an overlapping connection to Little Africa. They were not created due to the Black community nor did they receive their primary economic support from it.


"In 1865 James Jolley moved his Mountain residence "Bellemont", which was located at one concession Street at the southwest corner of East 15th Street: the present site of the Bellemont Apartments. Jolley soon developed a foot path down the Mountain to his business location, but was dissatisfied by the lack of toll-free public roads accommodating Mountain traffic. Jolley soon became determined to build another access route that would be toll-free. Roadways of the day were privately owned and road maintenance was paid for by user fees." (13)

Similar tolls were incurred for each of the access roads. They were:
- Daniels Flock's Mountain Road (Present day “Kenilworth Access")
- Kerr's Road (Descending from Mountain Park, eastwardly to Gage Avenue)
- Strongman's Road (descending from Sam Lawrence Park, westward to John Street)
- Beckett's Road (Present day Queen Street access)


"Little Africa was an isolated community. As there were only two steep winding roads between the Mountain and the City, at John Street and at James Street, and both were toll roads." (104)


"Hamilton Mountain in pioneer days was an unbroken forest, with Concession Street cutting through it no wider than a cow-path. Later this cow-path became a road lined on both sides with a stump fences. Later still it became a privately owned stone road, with toll gates at intervals, so that those who used it might contribute to its upkeep. All other concession roads were left in a natural state and it was at this time that “Barton mud” gained it unenviable reputation."

Planned Community?

Reviewers are asked to comment on the two statements below that indicate that the “authorities” created a planned community on the Mountain for Black citizens. We have not been unable to locate any support materials for these statements nor do the authors below provide any documentation.

"There occurred an influx of escaping slaves before, during and after the American Civil War, 1861-1865. The authorities decided to settle them in a group on small lots provided by W. B. Green who owned the farm to the east of the Mission. They built homes and put in gardens." (31)


"The concentration of Blacks in what is known as Little Africa was due to both the ingenuity of the Hamilton civic leaders, who were anxious to find some use for the mountain and its toll gates."
(94-95)

Green sold his land to both Black and White citizens for the same price. What is interesting is that he does not start selling any land until the late 1840's and nearly all the sales are to Black citizens. When the lots were sold they did contain buildings on them. In the deed of sale it indicates that all appurtenances were included. The 1851 census supports this as each lot is listed as having a minimum of a log cabin on it. Could he have developed a "scheme" to help out? Did he provide a "house" on each lot? We know he held the mortgages, did not charge interest, did not outline payment schedules and did not have a closing date. The discharging of the mortgages varies over time. What we also know is that many of early lot owners further subdivided their lots and sold them to other Black citizens and provide mortgages to them. This is probably why there was a concentration of a Black community on the lots made available by Green.

Questions:

- What authorities?
- For what purpose? We do know the land on the Mountain was more desirable for farming then land below the Mountain. The challenge of the Mountain was access up and down. This was true for all residents on the Mountain.
Appendix C to Report CS10032

Page 30 of 51

Barton Township

(Boundaries of 1875)

Cemeteries of Barton Township

1. Auco Shalom  CEM311
2. Barton Stone United Church Cemetery  CEM310
3. Bartesville Cemetery  CEM218
4. Christ's Church Cathedral Anglican Cemetery  MIS034
5. Burkholder United Cemetery  CEM219
6. Hamilton Municipal Cemetery  CEM272-275, 277-305
7. Hess Family Cemetery  MIS032
8. United (Cheura Kadota) Cemetery  CEM220
9. Rockman Family Plot  MIS032
10. St. George's Anglican (Hallow) Cemetery  MIS034
11. St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Cemetery  MIS034
12. St. Peter's Cemetery  CEM325
13. Young Family Plot  MIS032
14. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery
15. First Methodist Church Cemetery
16. Case Burial Ground (Hamilton Family)
17. Robertson Family Plot
18. Depew/Sipes Family Plot
19. Gage Burial Ground
20. McVeth Plats
21. Barton St. Jail
22. Old Chelms Cemetery
23. Jones Plot
24. Lottridge (Captain John) Plot
25. St. Andrew's Church  MIS034

HEOGS#

389 Lime Ridge Rd, west of Upper Wentworth
On corner of Stone Church Rd and Hwy 6
On King St E at Bell Ave
On east side of James St N between Robert St and Barton St
On Mohawk Rd between Upper Wentworth and Upper Sherman
On west side of York Blvd, 3km west of Dundurn St
On south side of Mohawk Rd, east of Garth St
On Upper James St between Lime Ridge Rd and Stone Church Rd
East of Hwy 6, north of Hwy 33
On north side of Hwy 33
On west side of James St S, and north side of Jackson
On north side of Mohawk Rd, west of Garth
On east side Up Wellington between Stone Church & Hwy 33
On King St W, near Dundurn St (Closed bodies moved)
On King St W, between King St and Main St
On south side of Arisdon Ave near John St
On corner of Barton St and Leeming St
On east of Burlington Bay
On Ottawa St N between Beach Rd and railroad crossing
On north side of York Rd at Dundurn St (Dundurn Castle)
On south side of Barton St, 1.3 km west of Ferguson St
On south side of York Blvd, 1 km north of Desjardins Canal
On Beach Rd
On west side of James St S, and north side of Jackson St

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revised November 21, 1998
## 1851 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wentworth</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Total Pop.</th>
<th>% of Black in Total Pop.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>45</td>
<td>1745</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ancaster</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4358</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glanbrook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1750</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saltfleet</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2870</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flamborough</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3159</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
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### Total City Wards - Hamilton

<table>
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<th>Ward</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary's Ward</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Andrew's Ward</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patrick's Ward</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence Ward</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. George Ward</td>
<td>28</td>
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</table>

**Total Black Pop., 1851 Census**: 412
Blue numbers denote number of Black residents in each ward in Hamilton according to the 1851 census. Also included is Barton, where Little Africa was located.
Appendix B
“Little Africa”
Commemorative Plaque
Hamilton, Ontario

Reviewer’s Package
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Census</th>
<th>1851</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<td>Berry, W.H.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x (37)</td>
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<td>Gardener</td>
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<td>Gardener</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry, Julia</td>
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<td>x (25)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toll Gate Keeper</td>
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<td>x (52)</td>
<td>Sailor - 1871 listed as Bluefoot</td>
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<td></td>
<td>x (48)</td>
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<td>Preacher</td>
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<td>x (49)</td>
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<td>x (69)</td>
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<td>x (8)</td>
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<td>x (17)</td>
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<td>1861</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Toll Keeper/Labourer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>x (16)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>x (50)</td>
<td>x (56)</td>
<td>x (90)</td>
<td>Widow in 1851 census</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>She does own 1/2 acre of land with a large garden under full cultivation.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1861</td>
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Land Transaction Records – 1840-1880 - Lot 9, Concession 4

[Grantor → Grantee]

- Peter Hunter Hamilton → William Bridge Green
  100 Acres, Bill of Sale, 175 BP., 22 August 1826

- Daniel Johnson → William Bridge Green
  2 acres, Mortgage, 37.10 BP., 30 September 1848

- George Washington → William Bridge Green
  ½ acre, Mortgage, 28.2.6 BP., 30 September 1848

- William Bridge Green → Daniel Johnson
  2 acres, Bill of Sale, 50 BP., 30 September 1848

- William Calimere → William Bridge Johnson
  1 acre, Mortgage, 13.2.6 Bp., 30 September 1848

- Henry Johnson → William Bridge Green
  1 acre, Mortgage, 18.15 BP., 8 January 1850

- William Bridge Green → George Washington
  1 ½ acre, Bill of Sale, 37.10 BP., 30 September 1848

- William Bridge Green → Washington Scott
  1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25.00 BP., 18 March 1851

- William Bridge Green → William Calimere
  1 acre, Discharge, 6 October 1851

- William Bridge Green → Henry Johnson
  1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25 BP., 8 January 1850

- William Bridge Green → William Nelson
  2 ½ acres, Bill of Sale, 62.10 BP., 20 September 1852

- William Bridge Green → Lewis Miles Nelson
  1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25 BP., 20 September 1852

- Lewis Miles Nelson → William Bridge Green
  1 acre, Mortgage, 18.15 BP., 20 September 1852
Edward Johnson → William Bridge Green
1 acre, Mortgage, 18.15 BP., 20 September 1852

John Hillcock → William Bridge Green
A.R.P. 2.1.9. South of Bridge St., Mortgage, 43.6.3 BP., 10 October 1852

William Bridge Green → Edward Johnson
1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25 BP., 20 September 1852

John Jones → William Bridge Green
A.R.P. 1.1.9, Mortgage, 23.14 BP., 17 October 1852

Arkle Stokes Newbury → William Bridge Green
A.R.P. 3.3.10, Mortgage, 112.10 BP., 30 September 1853

Lewis Miles Johnson → Charles J. Carter
1 acre, Bill of Sale, 50 BP., 10 November 1853

William Bridge Green → Arkle Stokes Newbury
A.R.P. 3.3.10, Bill of Sale, 30 September 1853

William Bridge Green → John Jones
A.R.P. 1.1.9, Discharge, 11 February 1856

William Bridge Green → John Jones
A.R.P. 1.1.9, 32.15 BP., 12 October 1852

William Bridge Green → Henry Johnson
1 acre, Discharge, 5 September 1856

Henry Johnson → Charles Carter
1 acre, Mortgage, 18.15 BP., 5 September 1856

William Bridge Green → Isaac Davis
2 7/10 acres, Bill of Sale, 135 BP., 10 October 1856

Isaac Davis → William Bridge Green
2 7/10 acres, Mortgage, 108.6 BP., 10 October 1856

John Hillcock → Isaac Davis
A.R.P. 2.1.9., Bill of Sale, 77.10 BP., 10 October 1856

William Bridge Green → John Hillcock
A.R.P. 2.1.9., Discharge, 10 October 1856

William Bridge Green → Lewis Miles Johnson
1 acre, Discharge, 12 November 1856

William Jaggard → Jacob Thomas Nottle
1 acre, Mortgage, 25 Bp., 3 March 1857

William Bridge Green → William Jaggard
1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25 BP., 15 November 1856

Charles J. Carter → Josias Bray
1 acre, Mortgage, 45 BP., 1 May 1857

John Jones → Nelson Mills
A.R.P. 1.1.9., Bill of Sale, 35 BP., 10 February 1858

William Bridge Green → David Nelson
½ acre, Bill of Sale, 12.10 BP., 13 October 1856

David Nelson → William Jaggard
½ acre, Bill of Sale, $150, 6 May 1858

William Jaggard → Jacob Thomas Nottle
½ acre, Mortgage $100, 6 May 1858

Edward Johnson → William Simpson
Mortgage, 5.7.6. BP., 21 May 1858

William Bridge Green → John Hillcock
A.R.P. 2.1.9., Bill of Sale, 57.15 BP, 10 October 1852

John Jones → Nelson Mills
A.R.P. 1.1.99., Mortgage, 15 BP., 9 June 1859

Josias Bray → Charles J. Carter
1 acre, Discharge, 28 July 1859

Henry Johnson → Charles J. Carter
1 acre, Bill of Sale, 75 BP., 16 April 1857

Jacob Thomas Nottle → William Jaggard
1 acre, Discharge, 26 March 1860

Jacob Thomas Nottle → William Jaggard
½ acre, Discharge, 26 March 1860

William Jaggard → Margaret O’Neil
½ acre, Mortgage, $212, 22 March 1860

William Bridge Green → Isaac Davis
2 7/10 acres, Discharge, 13 October 1860

Isaac Davis → William Bridge Green
2 7/10 acres, Bill of Sale, 135 BP., 13 October 1860

William Bridge Green → William Harper
1 ½ acre, Bill of Sale, $350, 13 October 1860

Isaac Davis → George Dantec[?]
A.R.P. 2.1.9., Bill of Sale, $480, 11 April 1861

Margaret O’Neil → Burlington Building Society
1 ½ acre, Asst. of Mortgage, $212, 20 August 1861

William Bridge Green → Arkle Stokes Newbury
A.R.P. 3.3.10., Discharge, 21 January 1862

Arlke Stokes Newbury → William Bridge Green
A.R.P. 3.3.10., Bill of Sale, $450, 23 November 1861

William Bridge Green → Mariann Connaway
½ acre, Bill of Sale, 12.10 BP., 22 October 1851

Robert Johnson Price → William Bridge Green
2 acres, Mortgage, 50 BP., 17 December 1862

George Morton → William Bridge Green
2 acres, Mortgage, 37.10 BP., 17 December 1862

William Bridge Green → George Morton
2 acres, Bill of Sale, 50 BP., 17 December 1862

Sherriff of Wentworth → James Dunbar Pringle
1 acre, Deed, $50, 18 May 1865

William Bridge Green → William Nelson
1 acre, Bill of Sale, 25 BP., 22 December 1853

William Nelson → Anne Rosewarn
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $80, 11 January 1862
[W.B. Green Sr. dies, Will 15 July 1864; hereafter the William Green referred to is his son]

Jane Banks → William Green  
Life Lease, 16 July 1864

George Morton → Henry Griel[?]
2 acres, Mortgage, $80, 7 October 1864

Executors of William Bridge Green → George Morton
2 acres, Discharge, 8 October 1864

William Green → Edward Martin
All, Mortgage, $1000, 18 October 1864

James D. Pringle → Richard Plant
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $150, 3 July 1864

Anne Rosewarn → John Johnson
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $180, 11 March 1869

Charles J. Carter → Josiah Cochran
2 acres, Bill of Sale, $400, 28 August 1869

William Bridge Green → Lewis H. Johnson
2 acres, Assgmt.[?], 37.10.0 BP., 12 November 1856

Emma and Joseph Grimes → Anna M. Bodden
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $300, 28 August 1872

Anna M. Bodden → Emma E. Grimes
1 acre, Mortgage $200, 28 August 1872

Emma E. Grimes → Trustee of James Gage
1 acre, Assgt.[?], $80, 17 June 1873

George Morton → Thomas Morrison and Alex Morrison
2 acres, Bill of Sale, $325, 15 July 1873

William Harper → Thomas Morrison
1 ½ acre, Bill of Sale, $275, 18 November 1873

Thomas Morrison → William Green
1 ½ acre, Bill of Sale, $200, 20 February 1874

Edward Martin → John Forsyth[?]
All except plots 22a and 38p, Assgt., $1010.08, 4 December 1874

Henry Griel[?] → Thomas Morrison
2 acres, Discharge, 25 January 1875

Anna M. Bodden → T.C.W. Haslett[?]
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $50, 12 April 1875

T.C.W. Haslett → Elizabeth E. Grimes
1 acre, Q.L.[?], $10, 23 April 1875

Elizabeth E. and Joseph Grimes → Thomas Morrison
1 acre, Bill of Sale, $190, 13 September 1875

William Gage and Thomas Stock → Anna M. Bodden
1 acre, Discharge, 30 December 1875

William Green → Charlotte Green
80 acres, Will, 26 July 1875

William Mallory → James Gage [Executors of]
2 acres, Receipt, $100, 31 December 1878

Ephraim K. Santee → Rebecca Fox
A.R.P. 2.1.9., Mortgage, $150, 9 July 1875
Appendix C
“Little Africa”
Commemorative Plaque
Hamilton, Ontario

Reviewer’s Package
Bibliography

Primary Source Documents:

Barton Township Land Transaction Records. Available at: Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1851: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at: Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1861: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1871: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.

Canada West Census, 1881: Barton Township. Microfilm. Available at Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Main Branch, Hamilton Public Library.


Books and Journal Articles:


**Newspaper Articles and Online Resources:**

Shapin, Steven. "Sick City – Maps and Mortality in the time of Cholera," in *The New Yorker,* Available at: [http://www.newyorker.com/critics/content/articles/061106crbo_books](http://www.newyorker.com/critics/content/articles/061106crbo_books) Issue: 11 Nov 2006.


Commentary on ‘Little Africa’ Plaque by Adrienne Shadd

Sentence 1

“During the 19th century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery.”

While accurate, this statement refers only to one type of Black migrant to Canada during the 19th century. In fact, however, there were several different types of migrants:
(1) fugitive slaves escaping directly from slavery
(2) people who had been slaves at one time but who had already escaped slavery and were living in freedom for some period of time before coming to Canada
(3) those who had been slaves but had been manumitted and were therefore free before coming to Canada
(4) African Americans who were freeborn and had come to Canada to escape racism and increasingly oppressive Black codes in the so-called free states.

All of the major works on African American migration to Canada before the Civil War mention free Blacks (the Shadd family), manumitted Blacks, those who had been slaves but not come directly from slavery (Henry Bibb, William Parker of the Christiana Riots fame etc. etc. etc. In this regard, Michael Wayne’s article, “The Black Population on the Eve of the American Civil War,” suggests, with some compelling evidence, that free Blacks and those who had been living in freedom before coming to Canada actually outnumbered those escaping directly from slavery.

Proposed revision: “During the 19th century, Canada was a refuge for people seeking freedom from slavery and oppression.”

Sentence 2

“Escaping slaves came to Hamilton from the United States, by the Underground Railroad.”

In light of the above, I am suggesting that sentence 2 read:

Proposed revision: “Escaped slaves and free Blacks came to Hamilton, some by way of the Underground Railroad.”

Paragraph 3, Line 1

“The winters were harsh and with the difficulty of finding full-time work, many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere.”

The reference to harsh winters as a reason why Blacks left conjures up an unfortunate stereotype that should not be reinforced here: that Blacks cannot stand the cold or are unsuitable for this kind of climate. It is the same ridiculous reasoning given by immigration officials in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to keep Blacks out of Canada. The fact is that Black people can survive in this climate as they have been doing so from at least the 1600s.

Proposed revision: “The difficulty of finding full-time work meant that many abandoned the colony and resettled elsewhere.”

Paragraph 3, Line 2

“Many of those that remained adopted new surnames to avoid tracking and recapture.”

This is another overgeneralization. According to the literature on slave naming, while some slaves held their owners’ surnames, many others did not. Further, these names were often not known to the owners, making it unnecessary to change them. From slave narratives such as Benjamin Drew’s North-side View of Slavery and other information (e.g. Josiah’s Henson’s narrative, as well as that of Henry Bibb and others, William Still’s The Underground Railroad etc.), we know that there were some former slaves who did change their names when they arrived here, but again, many others did not. Moreover, there is no compelling evidence that they did so because they wanted to avoid being recaptured. They generally believed they were safe from recapture on Canadian soil, and for the most part, this was true.

Proposed revision: Omit sentence 2 of Paragraph 3. Sentence 3 should read something like: The families that remained were named Johnson, Nelson, Banks, Atkins, Carey, Murdoch, Green and Berry.

I cannot comment on the statements of the person mentioned in Appendix A other than to say that there does not appear to be evidence to support them.

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LITTLE AFRICA:
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

REPORT to:

Ian Kerr-Wilson
Manager, Museums & Heritage Preservation
Culture Division, Community Services Department
City of Hamilton

From:

Adrienne Shadd
Adrienne L. Shadd Consulting
90 Spencer Avenue, Ste 7
Toronto, ON M6K 2J6
The history of Little Africa is one of great interest for those tracing the story of African
Canadians in Ontario and across the country. There has been much written about this
community, beginning perhaps with a piece entitled, “Former Coloured Colony on Mount
Dubbed Little Africa,” that appeared in the Hamilton Spectator of July 15, 1936. In this article, it
stated that slaves escaping from their masters in the American South took a trip on the
Underground Railroad prior to the Civil War, some coming through the Niagara region and on
to Hamilton. It went on to claim that some of these refugees settled along Concession Street on
Hamilton Mountain and that “with meagre possessions... had to be helped in establishing
homes.” The article goes on:

They were illiterate, childish and rather dependent in their attitude
toward life, as was only natural to a people reared in servitude, but
they responded readily to kindness and gave very little trouble.

Obviously drafted in a different era, its stereotypical and patronizing language does not build
confidence that the information is based on solid knowledge or research. The article mentioned
the Mission Church, which also doubled as a school, where adults learned to read enough to
enable them to decipher the Bible. Families that comprised this community were several
Johnson families, the Berry family, who operated the toll gate at Concession and Wentworth,
the Atkins, Green-Murdocks, Peter Carey and Frankie Waters. These family names were said to
be aliases chosen after escape from slavery, so as to elude recapture. Several anecdotes
illustrating the idiotic and silly nature of the Blacks added to the “charm” of the piece.
In a 1947 article\(^1\), there are additional tidbits. For example, we glean that it was the Green farm that donated several lots of land free of charge to some families that had nowhere to go. These lots were located along the south side of Concession Street from 23\(^{rd}\) Street to Sherman Avenue. Additional names added to the list of families were Nelson and Banks, and *Daddy* Nelson and later Henry Johnson were grave-diggers for the community. Ultimately, the community disappeared because the winters proved too cold for these “children of the South.” With slight alterations here and there, this story of “Little Africa” was repeated almost word for word in Mabel Burkholder’s *The Story of Hamilton*,\(^2\) *Barton on the Mountain*\(^3\) and *Out of the Storied Past*.\(^4\) Burkholder never gave a single source for any of the information contained in these various versions of this history of “Little Africa.”

Over the years, a host of authors repeated Burkholder’s account of Little Africa without looking into the basic “facts” of the story. Jerry Johansen, in *Concession Street: In Context. A Chronological History of the Concession Street District*\(^5\), the writer left out the offensive aspects of the story, while reinforcing the main points: that property was given to Black squatters on the Mountain along Concession Street by *John* Green. Approximately twelve families were involved. However, the settlement was short lived and the refugees returned south after the

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Civil War. Bill Freeman, in *Hamilton: A People’s History* states only that Blacks settled along Concession Street on the mountain, and other authors sidestep the issue of Little Africa completely. In fact, judging by the index, Marjorie Freeman Campbell, in *A Mountain and a City*, and Lois Evans’ *Hamilton: The Story of a City* never mention that Africans ever lived on the mountain or in downtown Hamilton period.

Perhaps no one gave the account more credence than respected scholar and human rights advocate, Daniel Hill. Hill noted that William Bridge Green donated small lots to eight heads of Black families: William Nelson, George Washington, Isaac Davis, Washington Scott, Henry Johnson, Lewis Miles Johnson, Edward Johnson and David Nelson. He added that Thomas Nottle gave land to another Black family headed by William Jaggard. These families, according to Hill, were *given* title to the land, the only condition being that they farm it. The property donated by Green, therefore, became the heart of “Little Africa.” Interestingly, Hill did not provide any sources for this information, except to say that the Burkholder family records showed that William Nelson and Henry Johnson were gravediggers. However, it is clear from his bibliography that he used Burkholder’s *Out of the Storied Past* and from the wording of a later discussion of the Mission School regarding the integrated classes for Blacks and whites and the attendance of adults, it is apparent that the *Spectator* article of 1947 was also quoted directly:

> Most of its pupils were Black, and “…the dark-skinned children sat with the white ones conning over their lessons.” Former slaves, eager for the

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education denied them in childhood, attended evening classes there, particularly in the winter. They “...laboriously traced out verses from the Bible in the hopes of learning to read the Gospel’s message.”

Jane Mulkewich, in *Vanished Hamilton II*, edited by Margaret Houghton, reverted back to Burkholder’s account of the main points of the story, repeating the earlier family names mentioned by Burkholder, and the essential ingredients that have been mentioned – that the land was donated for free, etc., etc. Efajemue Etoroma’s Ph.D. Thesis in Sociology, “Blacks in Hamilton: An Analysis of Factors in Community Building,” did the same, but then took it a step further by making the case, with no evidence, that civic leaders planned the “Black colony” because they were anxious to find a use for the sparsely-settled mountain and its toll gate. A. Jeffers Toby et al. repeated Hill’s version for the most part, and included Etoroma’s speculation that the community may not have been an accident. Finally, I must confess that I became part of the problem when I wrote “The Souls of Black Folk: Hamilton’s Stewart Memorial Community” for the Virtual Museum of Canada’s Community Memories Project. I simply quoted from Dan Hill’s version.

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9 Ibid., 103.


In 2006, I provided commentary on some of the statements in the proposed plaque text. At that time, I claimed that while many people escaped to Canada directly from slavery, there were many others who did not. A sizeable proportion of Black migrants had escaped and was living in freedom for some period prior to coming to Canada. Still others had purchased their freedom or were manumitted and hence free prior to coming to Canada. Finally, a proportion was freeborn and was not escaping slavery at all.

There were two main reasons why people living in nominal freedom felt compelled to pull up stakes and leave their country for Canada. First, there were increasing restrictions being placed on free African Americans to discourage them from settling or prospering. For example, in Delaware, repressive codes introduced in the early 1830s prevented free Blacks from holding elected office or voting, and they had to carry proof of their status or risk being jailed or enslaved. Free Blacks from other states were denied entry to Delaware altogether. An ordinance set forth in Washington, D.C. in 1827 decreed that “no free black or mulatto person shall be allowed to go at large through the city ... at a later hour than ten o’clock at night, without a pass from the justice of the peace or respectable citizen.” In Ohio, the Ohio Black Code set out stringent laws that restricted the freedom of Blacks in that state and extracted severe penalties for violations. It was for this reason that a group of African Americans from Ohio organized a settlement called Wilberforce in 1830 near present-day Lucan, Ontario


The second reason that compelled many Blacks living in nominal freedom to move to Canada was the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This Act was an appeasement to southern slave interests and allowed for escaped slaves to be tracked across state lines. Those captured did not have the benefit of jury trials to prove their innocence and their word against that of a slaveholder meant nothing. Thus, many African Americans who had escaped years earlier and were living in freedom in places like Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York suddenly felt as if they could be whisked away down south in chains if they remained in the United States. They flocked across the border into Canada. In fact, thousands arrived in Canadian communities between 1850-1865. One observer estimated that 3000 alone had arrived between September and December of 1850.17

To further illustrate the variety of backgrounds and experiences that people were bringing to their adopted country, I have found additional information about some of the immigrants to Hamilton and Barton Township. For example, George Johnson and his family of fourteen were enumerated in the 1861 census living in Barton Township on 21 acres, although we don’t know the location.18 Fortunately, Johnson was interviewed by the Freedmen’s Bureau of the United States in 1863, the bureau created to deal with the newly-emancipated African American population.19 Johnson stated that he was born a slave in Maryland and escaped when he was 15 years old. He lived in Pennsylvania, a free state, for 21 years before coming to Canada.


18 Census of Canada, Township of Barton, District 1, 1861.

Canada. From the census, we know that he came with a family of eight children plus his wife, and an older relative named Ruth Johnson. They would have also brought some cash and other personal property. Why did he make the move to a new country? “I concluded I would go where I could possess the same liberty as any other man,” said Johnson.  

Johnson reported on his life since coming to Canada: “I have got along very well here, farming and carrying on different businesses for myself. I have one place of 135 acres and another place of 21 acres. I rent both these places. I have had twelve children, but have lost three since last April.”

The information we have from the census corroborates this. In 1861, the family owned 2 horses, 1 cow and 6 pigs, all worth $150. They had five carriages for hire, also worth $150, and farmed spring wheat, oats, Indian corn, hay and potatoes that were sold to the local market. In 1871, the Johnsons were still living in Barton Township on Concession 1 Lot 10, and now owned 11 ¾ acres. The family was considerably reduced to five members, including wife, Harriet, the elder Ruth Johnson, and sons James and Edward, ages 17 and 16, both of whom were attending school. A check of the 1881 census, plus the Directories of Wentworth County for 1875 and 1884-5 do not contain the George Johnson family, so it appears that they may have left the area. However, we don’t know for sure.

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20 Ibid., 426.
21 Ibid., 426-7.
22 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 1861.
23 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 1871.
24 McAlpine’s Hamilton City and County of Wentworth Directory, 1875, Montreal: McAlpine, Everett, 1875; Union Publishing Co.’s farmers and business directory for the Counties of Brant, Halton, Waterloo and Wentworth, 1884-5, Ingersoll, Ont., 1884.
Although the census for Barton Township generally did not list the state in which people were born, in Hamilton it was a different story. Thus we can trace the path that many Black families took to get to Canada over time. In 1851, the Felson family was a typical example. Alfred Felson and his wife Margret and their first-born daughter, Mary, 20, were all born in Washington D.C. Their daughter, Ann Felson, aged 16, was born in Philadelphia. Their last four – Nester, Hanibal, Margret and Louise ages 11, 9, 7 and 4 – were all born in Canada.25 John and Sara Willson (sic) and their family of five were living in St. Lawrence Ward in 1851. John was born in Maryland while his wife, Sarah, was born in Virginia. However, their ten-year-old son, Isaac, was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and children Mary Jane, 8, and John, 2, were both born in Hamilton.26

Some Black émigrés were born in free states, indicating that they were freeborn and not fleeing slavery at all. Daniel Sweet is a perfect example. He was born in New Jersey, and his daughter Rebecca, 15, was born in Sackets Harbour, New York. His second daughter, Charlotte, 11, was born in Pickering.27

Another free African American family who moved to Hamilton in the 1850s was the Aaron Mossell family. Aaron and Eliza Mossell and their eight children were living in Barton Township on five acres in Concession 2 Lot 21, just outside the western city limits below the mountain in 1861. They would later become one of the most prominent African American families of their day. We know this because Dr. Nathan Mossell, who was five years old in 1861

25 1851 Census of Canada, Canada West, City of Hamilton, St. Andrew’s Ward.
26 1851 Census of Canada, Canada West, City of Hamilton, St. Lawrence Ward.
27 1851 Census of Canada, Canada West, City of Hamilton, St. George’s Ward.
when the census enumerator interviewed the family, wrote a memoir in 1946 at the age of ninety years. He shed light on the history of the Mossells and their remarkable journey through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including their brief stay in Hamilton.  

Nathan Mossell’s father, Aaron, was a free Black and brick maker living in Baltimore, Maryland. His paternal grandfather had been stolen from the coast of West Africa, and had eventually purchased his freedom and that of his wife from his master, thereafter moving to Baltimore. Nathan Mossell’s mother was also a freeborn African American. Her family had been involved in a colonization scheme in Trinidad, West Indies. However, after returning to the United States, Eliza met and married Aaron Mossell.

According Dr. Mossell, his father’s exceptional skill as a brick maker enabled him to save enough money to purchase a home for his new wife. However, he decided to uproot his family and move to Hamilton because there were no schools in Baltimore for Black children. “Father disposed of his Baltimore holdings about 1853, from which he secured enough money to buy a small tract of clay-land in Hamilton, Canada. There he established a brickyard of his own.” At that time, the couple had two children, Charles and May.

Nathan Mossell was born on July 27, 1856. His father was engaged in his brick making business, and demonstrated a “strong propensity for mathematics as he was able to estimate the number of bricks he needed for any size contract, with amazing accuracy.” He was also philanthropic, as he donated the brick that was used to build the African Methodist Episcopal

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28 This autobiography is located at the University of Pennsylvania Archives and can be found online at http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/mossell_nathan_f.html.

29 Ibid., 3.
Church in Hamilton.\textsuperscript{30} Nathan also wrote that his father attended night school to learn to read and write. However, according to Nathan, “the young lawyer who supervised father’s purchase of the Canadian property; and father, from a lack of training – overlooked some of the intricacies of the British entail system, causing father to lose his property.” He continued

I recall also the visit to our home of the old British lady who claimed the land on which we built our home and established our business. Had we met the amount of her claim, it would have wiped us out of everything we possessed; for under the law, her claims covered not only the land, but all of the improvements and much of our personal effects.\textsuperscript{31}

As a result, Aaron Mossell secretly sold a horse to the Union Army and used the proceeds of the sale to move to Lockport, New York. After twelve years in Barton Township, the Mossells moved back to the United States.

Dr. Mossell’s account of the reasons behind the family’s move is troubling because it brings up an entirely different reason why some Blacks may have left the Hamilton area. First, the British entail system of inheritance did not apply in Upper Canada (Canada West) so Mossell’s statement is not accurate.\textsuperscript{32} He may have been referring, however, to Upper Canada’s land granting system, which did allow for tenancy, whereby any improvements made by the tenant belonged to the owner. Was Aaron Mossell tricked into believing he owned land that he in fact did not? Or was he unable to meet all the payments on time, and therefore tricked into deserting land that he rightfully could have held onto? This is what happened to numerous

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 7

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 3, 4.

Black squatters in the Queen’s Bush in the 1840s who left after being threatened with having their land sold out from under them. These people lost not only the land, but years of toil and all the improvements they had made.\(^{33}\)

As mentioned earlier, the Mossells went on to excel. Nathan attended university and graduated second in his class at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. He became a prominent physician and surgeon who founded the Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia. He was also, among other things, a member of the Niagara movement and founder of the NAACP chapter in Philadelphia.\(^{34}\) His brother, Charles, became a minister and missionary in Haiti, his younger brother, Aaron Jr., a lawyer in England. Aaron Jr.’s daughter, Sadie Mossell Alexander, became a practising attorney in law with her husband, Raymond Pace Alexander in Philadelphia. Her brother, Aaron, was a pharmacist in Philadelphia and their sister, Bessie Mossell Anderson, Dean of Women at Wilberforce University. Nathan’s younger sister, Alberetta, died while doing missionary work in Haiti, his older sister, Mary, married Professor Parker Denny and her only daughter was the wife of attorney A.T. Walden of Atlanta, Georgia.\(^{35}\)

Not exactly the ignorant, illiterate escaped slaves to which Burkholder was referring.

Another Barton Township resident was John Henry Hill and his family of five. In 1861, they were tenants in Concession 2, Lot 10 and Hill was listed as a carpenter. However, his life was chronicled in the antebellum letters he wrote to William Still in the classic, *The

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\(^{34}\) See Mossell’s biography on the website of “Penn Biographies” at [http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/mossell_nathan_f.html](http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1800s/mossell_nathan_f.html).

\(^{35}\) Memoir of Dr. Nathan Mossell, 8.
Although he had been enslaved, Hill managed to learn to read and write, and his letters described in some detail his hopes and dreams for his new life in freedom. Although first settling in Toronto in 1853, he moved to Hamilton in 1855 and started a tobacco manufacturing business with three other Black men. Hill was also interviewed by the Freedmen’s Bureau in 1863, and commented on his business:

> We employ twelve or fourteen hands now, and have white & black boys at work: there is such a demand for boys, that we have to take anybody we can get.... Our business is paying about $26 a day, and we hope to make it pay $50 a day. We mean to succeed...  

When asked if he suffered from prejudice or racist treatment, Hill maintained that

> As a general thing, our men get pretty good wages... When we came here in 1855, we found no difficulty in getting into the best shops of the city; and after we had worked here a while, I believe we were preferred, because we were steady & stuck to our work. I never heard of any objection being made to taking a colored boy into a shop to learn a trade... There is no difficulty in a good colored mechanic getting work among white men. I think the colored people, after a while, will surmount the prejudice against them.

Hill’s brother, James, and his uncle Hezekiah, named Henry in the 1861 census, also settled in Barton Township below the mountain.

The reason for revealing some of these narratives of Blacks who made their home in Hamilton prior to the Civil War is to put a realistic face on a people who have been portrayed in

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38 Ibid., 428-9.

39 1861 Census, Canada West, Barton Township, District 1; William Still, *Underground Rail Road Records*, 200-203.
a childlike and paternalistic way. These testimonies raise another belief about the Black refugees that needs to be addressed: that they lived in extreme poverty. My reading of African Canadian history in Ontario prior to the Civil War suggests a different reality.

Upper Canada, renamed Canada West in 1841 and then Ontario in 1867, was a frontier economy. Until the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when immigration from Europe, particularly the British Isles, increased markedly, there was much work to be done, and a dearth of labourers. The Blacks who were escaping slavery or fleeing oppressive laws against free Blacks or the Fugitive Slave bill etc., were coming into the province exactly at a time when their labour was needed. Certainly, some had little or nothing upon entry, but were able to find work and thus get on their feet fairly quickly. Fred Landon’s article on the “Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada Before 1865,” published in 1925, still stands as an excellent survey of the observations and opinions of quite a number of people – Black and white – who toured the province to examine the conditions in the various Black communities. For example, he quotes a New York Tribune correspondent who visited the province in 1860 and wrote that “Many of the coloured people are amassing wealth. All parties testify that the coloured man’s condition is as good as that of any other emigrants.”

40 The Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York sent two representatives to Canada West in 1850 who wrote that reports of “destitution and suffering, we find, has been greatly exaggerated. None need assistance of [clothing and other aid] but the aged and the sick.”

41 Quoted in Fred Landon, Social Conditions Among the Negroes in Upper Canada Before 1865,” in Ontario’s African-Canadian Heritage, 176.

41 Ibid., 177.
Many brought skills as shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, seamstresses and coopers. One-half of Chatham Blacks were skilled or semi-skilled workers and entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{42} Likewise, Michael B. Katz’ analysis of Black economic status and mobility in Hamilton indicated that the proportion of Blacks in skilled trades rose from 37 to 49 percent between 1851-1861 and those in commerce and the professions increased from 8 to 14 percent. Katz also looked at home ownership. Twenty percent of Black families owned their own homes in 1851 and 24 percent did so in 1861. Finally, he indicated that 50 percent of Black heads of households remained in the city from 1851-1861, higher than any other ethnic group and illustrative of Black stability and modest prosperity. These indicators, and the fact of relatively low female-headed households was a “sign that the Black community fared relatively well in urban Canada.”\textsuperscript{43}

Finally, I addressed previously the issue of the change of names to avoid tracking by slaveholders. It is a huge overgeneralization. First, the names that slaves gave themselves and the names that their owners gave them could be vastly different. Many slaves did not have the last names of their most recent owner, but of their original owner, or perhaps took the name of their parents or grandparents first owners. Often this was unknown to the slave masters.\textsuperscript{44} Some fugitive slaves did change their names, but many others did not, or they used aliases during the process of escaping, and reverted back to their original names after settling in Canada. Still’s \textit{The Underground Railroad} has numerous examples of this. One person who did


\textsuperscript{43} Michael B. Katz, \textit{The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth Century City}, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975, 68.

change his name was Reverend Jermain Loguen, an escaped slave from Tennessee, who altered his name upon arriving in Hamilton in the 1830s. This is the explanation he gave in his narrative:

His paternal sir name was Logue – but he disliked that name, and added to it the letter n, to suite his taste. The name Jarm, which his master gave him, was an abbreviation of Jarman. His Methodist friends insisted he should adopt the name of Wesley for his middle name, which he did – and from this time forward was known only by the name of Jarmain Wesley Loguen. 45

Having dispelled some of the myths and misconceptions about the Black population in and around Hamilton, the question now becomes, what do we know about the story of “Little Africa”? First, using the censuses from 1851-1881 and the county directories for 1865-6, 1867-8, 1875 and 1884-5, I have taken the list of all the Black residents found in the census and included their locations and as much information as the census and directories revealed about their holdings, whether they were tenants or freeholders (i.e., had purchased their land) etc. (See Barton Township Inhabitants of African Descent, 1851-1881) Those families or individuals located on Hamilton Mountain at any given time during the period and living in the area considered to be Little Africa I have highlighted in yellow. This location is Concession 4 Lots 9, 12, 15 and in one case, 18. I was not able to find out the locations of all Barton Township residents because the census unfortunately did not always provide this information. In fact, the 1861 census did not provide this information for any of the Black residents. This is why I used the directories.

From the census, the heads of household who were living on Concession 4 Lots 9, 12 or 15 at any given time were as follows: William Calamese,* Peter Carey, Malachi Chapel, Mary

Conway or Connaway,* Rhueben Cuff, John Henderson, Edward Johnson,* Henry Johnson,* John Johnson,* Lewis Johnson,* Robert Johnson,* Pomfrey Lewis,* William Nelson,* Ephraim Santee,* John Spellman, John Stewart and Reverend Joseph L. Williams. The asterisked names owned their land, according to the census or directory information, which was obtained through self-reporting. This is corroborated or supplemented by the land transaction records provided by Anna Bradford’s researchers, which show who bought land from William Bridge Green in Concession 4 Lot 9 and later sold all or parts of the land to other Blacks or whites. Thus, additional Blacks whom we know purchased land on this location are Henry Criel* and George Morton.* However, the original owner of Lot 12/15 was not Green, based on the Illustrated Atlas of Wentworth County for 1875 provided in the Little Africa Reviewers’ Package.

What this evidence tells us is that landowners, primarily William Bridge Green, sold land to at least twelve Black families on the mountain. A number of other families were tenants on Green’s land or other lots in Concession 4. We also know that some purchasers of land then divided up their property and sold it to other Blacks. Henry Criel, an escaped slave from West Virginia, settled first in Hamilton (1851 and 1861 census) before buying a 2-acre lot from George Morton. Morton himself lived in Hamilton (in 1861) before purchasing 4 acres from Green in 1862. Therefore, in 1861-5, when the population in Barton Township reached its peak, the number of Blacks living in Concession 4 on the mountain was 52. (Remember that we don’t know the locations of all Africans who lived in Barton Township, so this is likely an undercount.)

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There is no evidence that this was a planned settlement by the authorities. Rather, it appears that Green had no problem selling parcels of his 100-acre plot to African Americans or African Canadians. As Anna Bradford’s team points out, he sold off parcels to both Blacks and whites for the same price, did not charge interest, or outline a payment schedule, and did not have a closing date. They also note that the subdivision of lots and sale to other Blacks would explain why there was a concentration of “a Black community on the lots made available by Green.”

Interestingly enough, the census data also show that there was a concentration of Black landowners who purchased property on Concession 1 Lot 7 below the mountain similar to the area in question on the mountain. We know that Blacks – whether landowners or tenants – held a variety of occupations and means of earning a living and getting ahead. Many of the “Little Africa” residents farmed and sold their produce to the city, as well as holding down other jobs as labourers. Thomas Criel was a sailor and there was one Methodist minister, Reverend Joseph L. Williams. Some inhabitants, such as Lewis Miles Johnson and William Nelson also had carriages for hire that they either rented or drove themselves for people in need of transportation. Julia Berry was the toll keeper for one of the tollgates.

The issue of what happened to “Little Africa” is still unresolved. Mabel Burkholder’s declaration that Little Africa’s inhabitants deserted the community because they could not stand the cold is unconvincing and, in a word, untenable. Regarding the Canadian climate, the testimony of J. H. Bland, another former slave in Hamilton interviewed by the Freedmen’s Bureau in 1863, said it best:

I find the climate agrees with me better than the Southern climate.
I don’t like cold weather, but still this climate agrees with me. My
health has been better since I have been here than it ever was before.\textsuperscript{47}

Over the years, however, historians have repeated the belief that the vast majority of African Americans returned to the United States to reconnect with family and friends. For the educated elite, it was also an opportunity to assist in the education and resettling of newly-freed slaves during Reconstruction.\textsuperscript{48} Michael Wayne’s examination of the 1861 census led him to conclude that this mass exodus of Blacks was grossly overstated, because the Black population in Canada West had often been overestimated by contemporaries. Therefore the figures of those who remained appeared to be considerably smaller by contrast than they in fact were.\textsuperscript{49}

This issue remains unresolved because to date, no one has done an extensive study of the returnees and their actual numbers. However, we have to assume that Hamilton and the “Little Africa” community also lost its share of the Black population due to relocation back to the United States after the Civil War. Still noted, for example, that John Henry Hill, his uncle Hezekiah (Henry in the Barton Township census) and his brother James moved south after the Civil War. John Henry Hill became a justice of the peace in Petersburg, Virginia. Hezekiah moved to West Point (New York) and James went to Boston.\textsuperscript{50} The issue of what happened to the

\textsuperscript{47} John Blassingame, \textit{Slave Testimony}, 429. Bland was listed in the 1851 census as a 29-year-old barber and married to J. A. Bland from “York State.” 1851 Census of Canada, Canada West, City of Hamilton, St. Mary’s Ward.


\textsuperscript{49} Wayne found 17,053 Blacks in the 1861 census (although he estimated that the real number may have been as high as 20,000-22,500). However, the average figure given by contemporary observers was between 30,000-40,000. The 1871 census counted 13,500 Africans, indicating a drop of 3,500 or 20% compared to 16,500-26,500 or 55-66% if the larger estimates are used. Michael Wayne, “The Black Population of Canada West on the Eve of the American Civil War: A Reassessment Based on the Manuscript Census of 1861,” \textit{Social History}, Vol XXVIII No. 56 (November 1995) 470-1.

\textsuperscript{50} Still, \textit{Underground Rail Road Records}, 203.
Mossell family, and whether other families were forced to vacate their holdings needs to be addressed as well. Again, however, a few residents, such as Mary Conway (Connaway) showed considerable staying power over time.

Lastly, there is the issue of the name “Little Africa.” There is no evidence that this name was ever used in the nineteenth century to refer to a community of African Canadians/African Americans on the mountain. No newspaper articles or other archival documents or testimonies that I have read dating from the period in question mention “Little Africa.” The term seems to emanate, again, from the pen of Mabel Burkholder beginning in the 1930s.

A student of history at McMaster also drew the same conclusion. She did note that John Christie Holland’s biography mentioned that Holland’s parents, Tom and Henrietta Shortts Holland, met at the Mission Church on the mountain. However, it was the biographer who used the name “Little Africa,” and cited an article by Mabel Burkholder.\footnote{Tracy Warren, “The Little Africa Controversy, Hamilton, Ontario,” unpublished paper for History 3BB3, McMaster University, October 30, 2007, 12. See also Jessie L. Beattie, \textit{John Christie Holland: Man of the Year}, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956, 26-7.} What does this mean for a plaque proposing to commemorate “Little Africa”? I believe this is a question that the plaque committee will have to grapple with. They will have to decide whether the term has legitimacy given its now widespread usage and acknowledgement in many newspaper articles, books and other resources, or whether some other term for the population that concentrated on the mountain in the mid-nineteenth century should be coined and utilized.
Recommendations for Further Research

1. The Barton Township residents whose locations have not yet been ascertained need to be looked into. Some may be located in Concession 4 on the mountain. I would also recommend tracing the land registry records for Lot 12 Concession 4 as well as the holdings of the Burkholder family to determine if Blacks purchased plots from them.

2. More research should be conducted into what ultimately happened to the residents of “Little Africa” through death records, burials and wills, etc. This would help to answer the question of how the community ultimately disappeared. In that regard, the question of why Aaron Mossell and his family were forced to vacate their holdings may be pertinent. We should attempt to find out if this happened to some of the inhabitants on the mountain. This could be ascertained through the land registry records as well as court records.
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« LITTLE AFRICA » REVISITED:

TRACING HAMILTON MOUNTAIN’S BLACK COMMUNITY

REPORT to:
Ian Kerr-Wilson
Manager, Museums & Heritage Preservation
Culture Division, Community Services Department
City of Hamilton
March 3, 2010

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Introduction

This research report is intended to trace the movements and holdings of the African Canadian inhabitants of Hamilton Mountain in what has been termed “Little Africa.” The objective of the current research is to resolve continuing questions about what happened to these residents over time, and to find out when and why the community eventually disappeared. In the previous report entitled “Little Africa: Where Do We Go From Here?” the preliminary evidence pointed to major inconsistencies in the story of Little Africa that had been put forward by Mabel Burkholder over many years. Burkholder’s main contention was that a community of Blacks was established on Hamilton Mountain through the generosity of William Bridge Green, who donated land free of charge to destitute fugitive slaves who had no where to go and who had recently escaped from slavery in the American South. She claimed that the community was known as “Little Africa,” and that ultimately, the community disappeared because the winters proved to be too cold for these “children of the South.”

Part of the 2009 report entitled “Little Africa: Where Do We Go From Here?” included general information about the Blacks who were living in Canada West in the 1850s-1860s, their backgrounds and what compelled them to leave the United States (the origin of the vast majority), in addition to their condition and activities in their adopted home. This information pointed to the diversity of stories and backgrounds of Blacks living in Barton Township and the city of Hamilton. Some had not come directly from slavery, but had been living in freedom for some years prior to their arrival in Canada. Others were educated freeborn individuals. In looking specifically at Blacks living on the mountain in those years, evidence unearthed by the Culture Division, City of Hamilton
revealed that numerous Black families purchased plots of land in Concession 4 on the mountain. Often they would then sell part of their property or rent out to other Blacks. William Bridge Green was still the key landowner who sold land to people of African descent, but the main point was that he was not giving land to them free of charge, but rather selling it to them at the going rate, just like everyone else. This evidence was a significant departure, to say the least, from Burkholder’s story.

From the available information, the report could not answer the question of what became of the community. Moreover, little was known of the inhabitants of “Little Africa” beyond their names, ages, occupations and family members. The current report, therefore, will try to fill in these gaps wherever possible, and to provide a clearer portrait of the people and their community on the mountain. In so doing, another point of investigation of the current research was to look further at a second location of Black residence on the mountain: Lot 12 Concession 4.

Lot 12 Concession 4

This 100 acre tract of land was originally granted to Philip Crips on August 10, 1801 by the Crown. James Durand, an important figure in Hamilton affairs and provincial politics, purchased the tract from Crips in 1808, and George Hamilton, founder of the Town of Hamilton, purchased it from Durand in 1815. This was in addition to 257 acres which Hamilton purchased from Durand which he surveyed into town lots for purchase and which became the site of Hamilton proper below the mountain.¹

On the mountain, Hamilton split up the Concession 4 property by selling smaller lots to a number of different people, and upon his death in 1836, his son Robert Jarvis
Hamilton inherited the land and continued where his father left off. The latter sold a parcel of land to William Kirkendall in 1844. Two years later, Kirkendall sold 5 acres in Park Lot #1, part of Lot 12 Concession 4, to Joseph P. Williams and his wife Violet Williams, both transplanted African Americans, for £65.12.6. The mortgage on the property was held by Kirkendall and discharged by him in November 1848. Williams then sold 1 acre in the southeast corner of Park Lot 1 to John and Rosanna Spelman (or Spellman) for £25 in June 1849. In 1852, he sold ½ acre adjoining the Spellman property to the African-born Pompey Lewis for £12.10.

Joseph P. Williams was listed as a minister of the Methodist Episcopal faith according to the 1851 census. In 1854, he sold 816 square feet in Park Lot #1 to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church for £6.5. The individuals who signed the Indenture of Sale were William Calamies (Calamese), John Spellman and Henry Johnson, described as the “Trustees of the African and Methodist Episcopal Society of the Township of Barton.” This property bordered on that of Pompey Lewis and John and Rosanna Spellman. A Methodist Church described as a “Wn Meth frame church capable of accommodating 100 persons” was enumerated next to Pompey Lewis’ property in the 1861 census. This is one strong indication that a vibrant Black community was being forged on the mountain. Of the trustees, William Calamese and Henry Johnson were living on Lot 9 Concession 4 and John Spellman, as seen above, lived on Lot 12. This showed that members of the church resided in different locations in Concession 4 and belonged to the same church, another suggestion of the formation of a Black community on the mountain.
In 1859, the remaining member of the original three trustees, William Calamese, took out a mortgage on the property with Joseph Williams for $125. The property was reclaimed by Williams in 1863 for nonpayment of the mortgage. It is not known why Calamese took out the mortgage, nor why he did not repay the loan, and apparently, there was $155.84 owing, more than what the property was worth at the time. What became of the AME Church at this juncture is unclear. Mabel Burkholder herself wrote that the Blacks of “Little Africa” had their own little church that stood where the old Jolley homestead was located at the top of the Jolley Cut. This, in fact, was quite true, for James Jolley ended up buying the land on which the church was built, as well as that of the Williams and Pompey Lewis and in 1864 built a home called ‘Bellemont’ at what is today the corner of Concession and East Fifteenth streets. A Scotsman who owned a successful shop selling saddles and harnesses in downtown Hamilton, he also bought a number of other lots in Lot 12 from various other families. In 1869, Jolley received permission from city council to construct what became known as the ‘Jolley Cut,’ a free road from the mountain to the city, because he did not wish to use the toll routes. This road was donated to the city in 1873.

The other religious sanctuary which African Canadians were said to attend was the Mission Church, built in 1860. The whereabouts of the Mission Church records are not known. However, an article in the *Hamilton Spectator* of October 24, 1941 recounted the history of the Mission Church from interviews of old timers and minute books that still existed at that time.

According to the article, Frederick and Margaret Bray deeded the property 50 feet frontage by 80 feet in depth on 570 Concession Street so that a church or mission meeting
house could be erected “for the use of all denominations of Christians professing the Protestant faith.”

Subscriptions were collected to pay for the building either in donations of money or labour or the use of a team of horses for hauling materials and the like. A public meeting held December 7, 1860 appointed “George Kirkendall,” treasurer, “John H. Green” to hold the communion set for the new church and “William Nelson (coloured)” was hired at $15 a year to be the caretaker, opening the building, providing light and fuel, and cleaning it. Mrs. Kirkendall also donated a bible. The very first service was held Christmas morning 1860. Over the years, many different Protestant bodies utilized the building. The Mission Church probably took over from the AME Church as a primary house of worship of the African population on the mountain after the latter was no longer in operation. In 1867, it was also used to house a school, designated S. S. #3 Barton. Many African Canadians on the mountain, young and old, were said to attend this school, many of the adult students learning to read and write there for the first time.

Overall, Reverend Joseph P. Williams was the catalyst for the purchase of land by Blacks in Lot 12 Concession 4. It was Williams who first bought five acres of land from William Kirkendall in 1846, and it was Williams who, beginning in 1849, sold smaller plots to John and Rosanna Spellman, Pompey Lewis and the AME Church, thereby attracting these families to the location. It would not be unusual for a minister to take such a leadership role in the community, and it was certainly evident that that is what happened in this case.

What became of the families in Lot 12? John Spellman passed away in 1857, leaving his real estate and personal possessions to his wife, Rosanna. She sold the property to butcher Charles William Lemon (spelled Lemin in the documents) in 1861.
and moved to Hamilton proper. A 57-year-old Susannah Spelman was listed in the 1861 census in St. Mary’s Ward working as a huckster. After 1861, Spellman disappeared from Hamilton archival records.\(^{12}\)

Joseph and Violet Williams’ land dealings are more confusing, but ultimately, of their remaining land, they ended up selling 2 1/10 acres to Hamilton grocer James Smith in a series of transactions, and 1 33/100 acres to James Jolley for $350 in 1863, thus ending the extent of their holdings in Lot 12 Concession 4. A Joseph P. William (sic) was listed as a tenant in Lot 9 Concession 4 Barton Township in the 1867-68 directory of Hamilton and Wentworth County published that year. After this record, the tracks of Reverend Joseph P. and Violet Williams are lost. Why they sold out is not known. One possibility is that their land was not very productive. They were an older couple, but could have rented their land out to sharecroppers. They may have died, although provincial death records beginning in 1869 do not yield either a Joseph or a Violet Williams having died in the Hamilton area. Nevertheless, they left an imprint, selling land, one can speculate, to assist other Blacks in acquiring land in the Hamilton area, and causing a church, the most important institution in the Black community, to be built and enjoyed by its congregants on the mountain.\(^{13}\)

The final remaining African Canadian living on Lot 12, Concession 4, Pompey Lewis, stayed on the mountain for over 20 years as well. Lewis paid for his half acre outright in 1852 but took out a mortgage with William L. Simpson of Buffalo, New York on May 21, 1858 for £10.7.6. Simpson discharged the mortgage on June 10, 1869. In 1874, Lewis, who was now a carter living in Hamilton, sold his property to James Jolley
of Hamilton for $310. Lewis did not leave the area, but rather lived in Hamilton for the remainder of his life, passing on in 1877.  

Lot 9, Concession 4

The land transactions that took place in Lot 9 Concession 4 were far more numerous, because many more African Canadians purchased plots in this section than in Lot 12. Based on the Wentworth County Land Registry records in Hamilton, the following known African Canadians/African Americans bought land in this lot during a span of thirty years between 1848-1880: Daniel Johnson, William and Sarah Calamese, Henry and Martha Johnson, Marianne Connaway, William and Mary Nelson, Lewis Miles and Anna Johnson, Charles J. Carter, Edward and Anney Caroline (or Hannah) Johnson, George Santee, George and Elizabeth Morton, John and Rachel Johnson, Josiah and Amelia Cochrane, and William and Ann Elizabeth Mallory. Most owned one or two-acre plots, although the family headed by William and Mary Nelson, owned 3 ½ acres, and Marianne Connaway owned just ½ acre. A number of other individuals and families lived with these families or lived on their plots, and include some the people listed in the ‘Barton Township Inhabitants of African descent, 1851-1881’ inventory of names prepared in 2009.

Although most of these families lived on the mountain on the land they owned, some did not. There is no evidence, for example, that Josiah and Amelia Cochrane, William and Ann Elizabeth Mallory or Charles J. and Ann Eliza Carter ever lived there. They were all living in Hamilton prior to their land purchases, and were there afterwards. George and Elizabeth Morton lived in Hamilton, moved to the mountain for a few years,
and were back living in Hamilton in time for the next census inventory. And George Santee actually lived in Port Clinton, Schylkill County, Pennsylvania.

William Bridge Green provided the main impetus for land ownership by Black families on the mountain, as well as those living in the city and even the United States. Had it not been for Green, there might never have been a community that came to be known as ‘Little Africa.’ The first few land deals were provided at 0% interest on mortgages, but in the early 1850s, Green began charging interest and with a clear cut time frame for repayment of the mortgage. However, as we have seen, Green was not the only white person to sell land to Blacks, although he sold by far the most land to Blacks of any landowner on the mountain. Isaac Davis, mason, and his wife Elizabeth of Barton Township sold 2 acres to George Santee, also a mason, of Port Clinton, Pennsylvania. In addition, widow Ann Rosewarn of Barton Township, resold the one acre she purchased from William and Mary Nelson in 1862 to John Johnson in 1869.

Once Blacks gained a foothold on the mountain through William Bridge Green and others, the door was now opened for additional Black families to buy into the area, just as happened in Lot 12, Concession 4. Charles J. Carter, a dyer turned clergyman living in Hamilton, was one person who purchased an acre from Lewis Miles and Anna Johnson on the mountain, and another acre from Henry and Martha Johnson two years later. Carter, in turn, sold his 2 acres to Josiah and Amelia Cochrane twelve years later. Moreover, several Black individuals also provided mortgages to Black landowners and made money from these transactions. They were Henry Criel, a former escaped slave and mariner in Hamilton, Charles J. Carter, and William L. Simpson of Buffalo New York, whose racial origin is not known but who might very well have been Black.15
One of the interesting findings in looking more closely at the land transactions on the Lot 9 tract of land is the fact that George Santee, a mason in Port Clinton, Pennsylvania purchased 2 acres in Lot 9, but it was his relative (possibly his son) Ephraim K. Santee, Ephraim’s wife Mary Jane, and their six children who actually lived there. This would not be the first time that African Americans purchased land in Canada and their relatives lived on the property. William Whipper, a wealthy African American businessman and banker in Columbia, Pennsylvania, and his business partner Stephen Smith bought numerous lots in Dresden, Ontario prior to the Civil War. Although these men ended up remaining in the United States, some of their relations did settle in Dresden and vicinity and managed businesses including several shops, two mills, a lumber yard and a warehouse, set up by Whipper and Smith there.\textsuperscript{16}

What became of the community? For some families, it is not clear what happened to them. The very first purchase of a plot of 2 acres from William Bridge Green was made by Daniel Johnson in 1848. This property was assigned to Lewis Miles Johnson and what appears to be his second wife Elizabeth, whom the assignment document described as the second daughter of Henry Johnson. This took place in 1856 after Lewis Miles and Elizabeth made a payment of £37.10, which was the original amount agreed upon between Daniel Johnson and William Bridge Green. Daniel Johnson, who was almost certainly related to Henry Johnson if not all the Johnsons on the mountain, may have passed away without heirs and a will.\textsuperscript{17}

Another early family on the mountain was William Calamese and his wife Sarah. They bought two acres from William Bridge Green in 1848, and the mortgage was discharged by Green in 1851. There were no further land transactions recorded for them.
However, they were still on the property as late as 1865-66, for they were listed in the county directory for Barton Township in that year in Lot 9 Concession 4. By 1871, Sarah Callamese, aged 45, was living in St. Andrew’s Ward with Ephraim and Susanna Reddick and clergyman Robert Jones. She likely sold the property after the death of her husband, although there is no record of the transaction in the land registry abstract index books for those years. Her marital status was left blank in the 1871 census record, so it is not altogether certain whether she was widowed or not. Had her husband left to fight in the Civil War and was he still absent at that point? This was the last record found under the name Calamese. A search of the death records for either William or Sarah did not yield any results.\(^{18}\)

Henry and Martha Johnson purchased one acre from William Bridge Green in 1850 and sold that land to Charles J. Carter, a Hamilton clergyman, in 1857. However, Henry Johnson is recorded in the county directory as late as 1884-85 as a freeholder.\(^{19}\) He may not have been a freeholder, but he was evidently still living on Lot 9, Concession 4 as of that date 35 years later.\(^{20}\)

Marianne Connaway purchased \(\frac{1}{2}\) acre from William Bridge Green in 1851, and conveyed the property to John Johnson for $1.00 in 1880 so long as he agreed to support her for the rest of her natural life. She died in 1884 in Barton Township on Lot 9 Concession 4 on the original property she purchased from Green. It is quite possible that Rachel Johnson was widow Connaway’s daughter and John Johnson her son-in-law. In any case, Connaway died on the land she purchased on the mountain.

William Nelson purchased 2 \(\frac{1}{2}\) acres of land from William Bridge Green in 1852 for £62.10 One year later, he purchased another acre from Green for £25. In 1862,
William and Mary Nelson sold one acre to Ann Rosewarn, widow, of the city of Hamilton for $80. This is the last land transaction that was recorded for William and Mary Nelson. They continued to live on the mountain on their plot of land and were still there in 1875. They obviously had passed away by the time the next census was taken in 1881.  

Charles J. Carter, dyer and clothier turned clergyman, of Hamilton bought one acre from Lewis Miles and Anna Johnson for £50 in 1855 and added another acre purchased from Henry and Martha Johnson in 1857. Carter sold his 2 acres to Josiah and Amelia Cochrane for $400 in 1869. The Carters had already moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, however. Ultimately, he was part of that wave of Blacks who moved back to the United States at the end of the Civil War.  

Edward and Anney Caroline Johnson purchased one acre from William Bridge Green for £18.15 in 1852. They took out a second mortgage with William L. Simpson of Buffalo, New York in 1858 for £10.7.6. The county directory of 1865-66 showed Edward Johnson living as a freeholder on Lot 9 Concession 4. However, by 1871, his wife, whose first name was recorded in the census as Hannah, aged 60, was enumerated as owner of the property and head of the household. She was now a widow living with her two adult daughters, Elizabeth and Delsee, ages 20 and 18 respectively. The directories of 1875 and 1884-85 did not record Hannah Johnson (which was sometimes the case in the county directories when it came to women head of households). The last record we have for Hannah was an 1881 census entry of a Hannah Johnson aged, again aged 60 – some people apparently never age! – living with the Allan family in Ward 6 in Hamilton.
George and Elizabeth Morton of the City of Hamilton bought two acres from William Bridge Green in 1862. They took out a mortgage for $80 with Henry Criel in 1867 and George Morton appeared in the county directory as a freeholder on Lot 9 Concession 4 for the year 1867-68. However, they would not remain on the mountain for very much longer. They sold their two acres in 1873 to Thomas Morrison and his son Alexander for $325. They were back in Hamilton with their nine children in St. Patrick’s Ward by 1871 and were enumerated in Ward 3 in 1881 with four of their children still in the household. The Morton family lived on in Hamilton through their descendants. George Morton Jr., for example, became the leader of a movement to form a Black fire brigade in 1889 and died in Hamilton in 1927, having been a respected member of the community and a mail carrier for 36 years.  

The Santee family arrived on Hamilton Mountain thanks to George Santee, who purchased 2 acres, 1 rood and 9 perches from Isaac Davis in 1861 and, as trustee, placed his family Ephraim K., Mary Jane Santee and their six children on the property. Twenty years later, in 1881, Ephraim K. Santee and his children and their spouses, all of whom were living in Hamilton, jointly decided to sell the property after the death of George Santee in 1875. The property was purchased by widow Rebecca Fox of Barton Township, thus ending the Santees’ tenure on the mountain.

In 1869, John Johnson, farmer, of Barton Township purchased one acre from Ann Rosewarn for $180. This was the plot of land once owned by William and Mary Nelson, Black residents on the Green tract on Hamilton Moutain. As mentioned earlier, Marianne Connaway conveyed her ½ acre to Johnson for $1 in 1880 on the condition that he support her for the rest of her life. Two years after Connaway’s death in 1884, John and
Rachel Johnson sold their 1 ½ acres to Thomas Martin of Barton Township for $400. They bought a house and property on Emerald Street in Hamilton and upon John Johnson’s death in 1892, his wife became the sole owner.\(^{28}\)

Josiah and Amelia Cochrane bought two acres from Charles J. Carter in 1869 and there are no further records of the Cochranes being involved in land transactions after that. Josiah Cochrane died in the City of Brantford at the age of “80 or 90” in April 1906, indicating that the family remained in the area for the rest of their lives.\(^{29}\)

William and Ann Elizabeth Mallory also purchased two acres from William Bridge Green’s descendants in 1875 for $200 and took out a $150 mortgage on the property to be repaid in two years with the executors of the estate of James Gage, one of the first directors and stockholders of the Gore Bank in Hamilton. They sold that property to Frank Russell Waddell, a lawyer and prominent local politician. There is no evidence to indicate they ever lived on the mountain, and in 1901, William Mallory and a niece were renting a house at 193 John St. South. William’s occupation at that time was recorded as “book agent,” as he had published his narrative and was obviously trying to make a living from the sale of copies of the book. William Mallory died in Hamilton in 1907 at the age of 99 years.\(^{30}\)

*Property Owners and Residents of Hamilton Mountain*

An alphabetical list of the profiles of Hamilton Mountain residents have been compiled below.

*Julia and Henry Berry*\(^{31}\)
Julia and Henry Berry were living in Barton Township, Division 2 in 1881. There are no records of them having purchased land in either Lot 9 or 12, Concession 4 in the abstract index books. Henry was listed in the census as a labourer, and Julia was listed as the tollkeeper. According to their granddaughter, Viola Berry Aylestock, Julia operated the tollgate at the top of James Street, taking the money of the farmers who travelled back and forth to the city with their produce. They had three young daughters, Mary, Rachael and Julia, ages 5, 3 and 1 year. It has not been determined exactly where on the mountain the family lived, or whether they owned property there. Henry Berry was born in Virginia in 1845 and based on family records of Berry descendants, he was born in slavery and escaped to Canada via the Underground Railroad through St. Catharines. He settled in Hamilton and married Julia Washington, the daughter of George B. and Rachel Washington. The Washington family came to Canada in 1832, according to their descendants, and in 1871, was living in St. Patrick’s Ward in Hamilton. Julia was 15 years old at that time, and she had a brother, Isaac, aged six.

Julia and Henry Berry were married by the mid-1870s, and went on to have a total of ten children, nine surviving into adulthood. In 1912, the family was living in Hamilton at 193 Catharine Street and the property was worth $900.00. Berry was a polisher by trade. Interviews with Berry descendants reveal that the Berrys were staunch members of St. Paul’s AME Church (later renamed Stewart Memorial), in which Henry Berry was a deacon. In 1912, Henry Berry passed away, survived by his wife Julia and their nine children: Mary Lucinda, Rachael Matilda, Julia Charlotte, William Henry, Emma Berry Harrigan, Elizabeth Clayse, Hiram Nelson and Alberta Irene Berry. Julia, the matriarch, lived well into her nineties, and was taken care of in her later years by her daughter Doll.
(believed to be Mary Lucinda Berry), who never married. At that time, they lived at 90 Oxford Street in a two-storey brick house with a verandah.

Julia Berry’s son, William Berry, the father of Viola Berry Aylestock, got a job on the railroad, and they moved to Toronto. Other children left for greener pastures in the United States. However, Doll and Hiram remained in Hamilton and their descendants continue to reside there well into the twenty-first century. They have contributed in a variety of professions, including singing and the entertainment fields, the correctional services, banking, the military, and many other endeavours. Viola Aylstock’s daughter Joan Waite studied at Sarah Lawrence College and L’Ecole Des Sciences Politiques in Paris and became a professor at Sarah Lawrence College. She was also Director of Education at the African Art Museum of the S. M. A (Society of Missions in Africa) Fathers in Tenafly, New Jersey. Many Berry descendants have also made vital contributions to the community and in the area of civil rights both Canada and the United States.

William and Sarah Calamese

The Calamese family was one of the earliest on the mountain. William was a labourer and trustee of the AME Church in Lot 12, Concession 4, and they lived on the mountain in Lot 9 for at least seventeen years. By 1871, Sarah Calamese had moved to the city and it appeared her husband had passed away. She must have sold the property, although there is no record of it in the abstract index.

Charles J. Carter and Ann Elizabeth Carter
Charles Carter was variably described as a dyer, a clothier, and then a clergyman of the City of Hamilton. Although he never appeared in the Hamilton census records, he was found in the 1840 US census for West Brunswig, Schuykill County, Pennsylvania in the section for ‘Free persons of colour.’ At that time he was living with an adult woman – obviously his wife – two boys and two girls. Carter was in Hamilton at least by mid-century and was listed in the 1856 and 1858 Hamilton directories as a clothier at the corner of King and Park. The Carters purchased one acre in Lot 9 Concession 4 for £50 from Lewis Miles Johnson in 1855 and held the mortgage of Henry and Martha’s acre beginning in 1856 for £18.5. They bought that acre in 1857 for £75. The Carters then took out a mortgage for £45 with Josias Bray to be repaid in one year. Twelve years later, they sold their two acres to Josiah and Amelia Cochrane. At that time, the Carters had moved back to Pennsylvania in the city of Harrisburg. An indication of the status of Reverend Carter was that the final indenture of sale of the property was signed by the Mayor of Harrisburg and another city official.

Josiah Cochrane was a well-known barber and important Black community leader of the 1850s-1860s. In 1861, at the age of thirty, Cochrane lived in St. George’s Ward, Hamilton with his wife, Amelia, and two children. The entire family had been born in the United States, and would have come to Hamilton in the 1850s, judging from the ages of their children (12 and 10 years). They lived in a two-storey brick house. Cochrane was Vice-President of the Provincial Union, a Black political and social organization with branches in several centres of African Canadian settlement in the province. He was also a
central figure in the Prince Hall Masons of Ontario, having been elected Grand Secretary of the Widow’s Son Grand Lodge and then District Deputy Grand Master of the Eastern District in a united Grand Lodge in 1872. The Cochrane family purchased two acres in Lot 9 Concession 4 for $400 from Charles J. Carter. This was in August 1869. Cochrane died on April 30, 1906. At the time of his death he was living at 117 Drummond in Brantford.

Marianne Connaway or Conway

Marianne Connaway (also spelled Conway in some documents) is believed to be the widow of Solomon Connaway. Solomon Connaway and Marianne Connaway were born in the United States. They may have been part of a migration of free Blacks from Ohio that settled in Upper Canada in the late 1820s –early 1830s because of oppressive Black Codes or legislation that was enacted against the free Black population at that time. One law, for example, required that Blacks post a $500 bond signed by two white men guaranteeing good behaviour. They first settled in Colbornesburg, Upper Canada in the early 1830s. This was a community of people of African descent in Woolwich Township in northern Waterloo County. This settlement began auspiciously, but disbanded only a few years later. Some of the settlers moved to the Queen’s Bush, others to Hamilton. Solomon Connaway moved with his family to Hamilton. In 1837, he was one of the signatories of a petition to have Jesse Happy, a fugitive slave who Kentucky authorities were attempting to have extradicted for the theft of his master’s horse, released on the grounds that Happy had arranged for the return of the horse. Happy was eventually freed, thanks in part to the efforts of the community on his behalf.
In 1851, Solomon’s widow Marianne purchased ½ acre on the mountain in Lot 9 Concession 4 for £12.10 from William Bridge Green. In that year, a Mary Conway was listed with six children ranging in age from seven to fourteen years of age. Over the decades, most of her children moved away and she lived alone on her property, although for a time, her son, Moses, lived next door. In 1880, Connaway conveyed her property to John and Rachael Johnson for $1. The document revealed that the Johnsons had “supported and maintained [her] for some time past and [have] agreed to further support and maintain her (in the same manner as heretofore) during her natural life.” It is quite possible that Marianne was the mother of Rachael Johnson. She remained on this tract of land until her death at the age of 88 in 1884.

Henry Criel

Henry Criel was an interesting character. He was born a slave in West Virginia in approximately 1817. He escaped to Upper Canada with his brother and two other men in 1837 and arrived in Hamilton in the mid- to late 1840s. As a slave, his labour had been rented out, which enabled him to save money little by little. As a result, he was able to bring $80 with him to his new home. With this money, he purchased a lot at 229 McNab N. This location remained his principal residence for the rest of his life.

Criel worked in a variety of occupations over the years. He was a cook on the boats that plied the Great Lakes for a number of years. He also worked for Sir Allan MacNab at Dundurn Castle, and was a waiter at the Hotel Royal in Hamilton. In the 1881 census, he reported that he was earning a living as a market gardener. Criel never received a formal education, but was nonetheless good at figures. He speculated in real
estate and purchased a number of lots of land over the years. In 1864, Criel provided a mortgage on a 2-acre lot owned by George and Elizabeth Morton in Lot 9 Concession 4. Toward the end of his life he was living comfortably off the income from his rental properties. He was even described as a “gentleman” in some of the and documents, a term used to refer to men whose living was based on rental income.

Criel died in 1904 at the age of 87 at his home on MacNab Street after residing in Hamilton for over 60 years. At the time of his death, he owned four properties, two on the west side of MacNab between Colborne and Barton Streets, which included his two-storey brick home at 229 MacNab, plus a garden and a frame cottage on Barton Street. He also owned a vacant lot at the corner of MacNab and Barton Streets. The combined value of these properties was $4500. He was survived by his third wife, Mary, and adopted son Henry. He adopted Henry during the marriage to his second wife, Barbara.

Edward and Anney Caroline Johnson

Edward Johnson was a labourer who purchased one acre in Lot 9 Concession 4 for £25 in 1852 and took on a mortgage of £18.15 with William Bridge Green at 6% interest to be repaid in three equal annual installments. In 1858, Edward Johnson took out a mortgage with William L. Simpson of Buffalo, New York for £10.7.6. These are the only transactions involving this couple that were recorded in the abstract index books. The family, which included seven children, appeared in the 1861 census and this time the name ‘Anney Caroline’ made way for the name ‘Hannah.’ They were living on two acres in a one-storey frame house and their agricultural output consisted of 50 bushels of Indian corn, 100 bushels of potatoes, and 200 bushels of turnips. In the 1871 census, Edward
had passed away, leaving his wife and two children living on the property. By 1881, a 60 year-old Hannah Johnson, as has been shown, was living in Ward 6 in Hamilton with the Allan family. It is not known exactly what happened regarding their mountain property.

Henry and Martha Johnson

Henry Johnson was a farmer or labourer in Barton Township in Lot 9 Concession 4, and he and his wife Martha bought one acre from William Bridge Green in 1850 for £25 and took out a mortgage with Green for £18.15 to be repaid in equal annual installments until September 1, 1859. In 1857, they sold their plot to Charles J. Carter for £75. Although they sold their plot, they remained on the land. Mabel Burkholder mentioned Henry Johnson as one of the gravediggers for the Burkholder cemetery on the mountain. Tragedy struck the family in 1882, however. A local item in the Hamilton Spectator of January 9, 1882, reported that in the early hours of the previous Saturday, “Henry Johnson, a colored man living on the mountain, was awakened by fire in his house. He barely had time to escape in his night dress. The house and all its contents were entirely consumed, and Johnson is in a destitute condition.” A US-born Henry Johnston (spelled with a ‘t’) died in 1887 in Hamilton.

John and Rachael Johnson

In 1869 John Johnson bought one acre of land outright from Ann Rosewarn of the city of Hamilton for $180. This was the plot Rosewarn had originally purchased from William and Mary Nelson in 1862. This couple first appeared in the 1881 census in Barton Township Division 1, and the 1884-1885 directory of Wentworth County living in Lot 9
Concession 4 as freeholders. They had three girls in 1881, Mary Jane, Mariah L. and Ann E. ages eleven, nine and five. John Johnson was listed as a carter by trade. In 1880, the family acquired the ½ acre owned by Marianne Connaway for $1. She lived beside the Johnsons, and entered into an agreement with them to support her for the rest of her life. As noted above, Mrs. Connaway died in 1884 at the age of 88.

Two years later, the couple sold their 1 ½ acres to Thomas Martin of Barton Township for $400 and jointly bought a house and lot at 317 Emerald Street North Hamilton for $1150. As of 1892 when John Johnson died, the house and lot were unoccupied and their value had decreased to $1000 with a $450 mortgage on the property. Apart from personal effects valued at $50 and a horse worth $30, the house and lot were apparently the only property that they owned at the time of his death according to the letters of administration applied for by his wife in order to take control of his estate.

Lewis Miles and Elizabeth Johnson

In 1861, this Johnson family lived on the mountain on Lot 9 Concession 4 in a one-storey frame house with an additional log house on their two-acre property. They also owned a horse worth $20 and two carriages for hire valued at $20. Lewis Miles Johnson was a labourer aged 40. His wife Elizabeth was reported to be 24, and they had four children, Joseph, age 21, a labourer, Harriet A., age 5, Susan, age 4, and John, age 2 years. They first purchased one acre from William Bridge Green in 1852, paying £25 and taking out a mortgage for another £18.15 with Green. In 1855, they sold this acre to Charles J. Carter for £50. The following year, they were assigned two acres that belonged to Daniel
Johnson after paying £37.10, the original purchase price of the land. In that deed of sale, William Bridge Green described Elizabeth as the second daughter of Henry Johnson. This is the only reference to a familial relationship in these documents, but it raises even more questions than it answers regarding Lewis Miles Johnson’s relationship to the other Johnsons, particularly Elizabeth Johnson. Lewis Johnson was a witness for a number of land transactions on the mountain, perhaps because he was able to write and sign his name. In any case, the Lewis and Elizabeth disappear from the archival record after 1861 and no further land transactions involving them appear in the abstract index.

Pompey Lewis

The only African-born resident of the community, Pompey Lewis, was a 45 year-old carter living on the mountain on ½ acre on Lot 12 Concession 4 in 1851. He was living with Rachel, his American-born wife. Peter Carey, another well-known mountain resident, was a 39 year-old labourer living in the household. As noted above, he purchased the lot in 1852 from Reverend Joseph Williams for £12.10. In 1861, Pompey Lewis was living alone in a one-storey frame house on the same property. He had a horse and a pig valued at $50 and two carriages for hire worth $50. 1871, however, he was recorded as a widower and had moved to St. Lawrence Ward, his wife having passed away. At that time, he boarded with two washerwomen, a widow named Matilda Young and Louisa Diggs, the latter of whom was married to Civil War veteran William Diggs, absent. By 1874, he sold his land on the mountain for $310 to James Jolley, the man who built the Jolley cut. At the time of his death in 1877 at the age of 81 years, Pompey Lewis owned a parcel of land in Lot 15 fronting on Rebecca, King William, John and Catharine
Streets in Hamilton. The proceeds of the sale of his house and lot were bequeathed to the
“Methodist Episcopal Church” of Hamilton of which he was a member (probably St.
Paul’s AME, now Stewart Memorial Church). His personal property and cash were
bequeathed to friends, not having an heir to whom he could pass down his assets.

William and Ann Elizabeth Mallory

William Mallory was born a slave in North Carolina in 1826. At the age of seven, he was
sold to a Louisiana planter named Susten Allen. He escaped about 1860 and after a
harrowing journey of many months on the Underground Railroad, found his way to
Hamilton. Mallory penned his narrative in *Old Plantation Days* (Hamilton, ON: 1902).
He wrote that after joining the Union Army during the Civil War, he returned to
Hamilton, purchased a lot on John Street and engaged in a business in hay, straw and
wood. William and Anne E. Mallory were listed in the 1871 census in St. Patrick’s Ward,
and his occupation was wood dealer. In 1881, the Mallorys were living in Ward 2 in
Hamilton, and their family had increased to five, including Caroline, aged six, Alice,
aged one, and Mary, aged 17. William was reported to be a broker. Finally, in 1901,
William was living in Ward 2, Subdivision 4 at 193 John Street in a rented 6-room
dwelling. At this time, he was living only with a niece, Renna Caficy (sic), who was
widowed. Mallory himself had lost his wife in the previous decade. He became a
naturalized Canadian citizen in 1875.

In his autobiography, William Mallory stated that he was a missionary of the
BME Church, and was a well known man about town. For example, he wrote that he met
and was appointed marshall during the visits of both the Prince of Wales and Princess
Louise. When the Duke of York came to the city, he was selected to represent the Black community on the reception committee. He was reportedly also known for saving the young daughter of another Hamiltonian, John White, from being crushed by a team of runaway horses. As stated above, he and his wife bought two acres of land on the mountain, but never lived there, judging from the censuses and county directories of those years. He died in Hamilton on April 18, 1907.

George and Elizabeth Morton 47

George Morton and his wife Elizabeth were another Hamilton family who purchased land on Hamilton Mountain. George Morton was born in 1809 in Missouri, most likely into slavery. He is thought to be the brother of Thomas Morton, the well-to-do cabman of Hamilton who was a leader in the Black community, although there is no evidence to date which supports this supposition. George Morton worked as a whitewasher and labourer and he and Elizabeth had nine children, one of whom, George Jr., would go on to be a leader of his community as well. In 1861, George Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth, purchased two acres in Lot 9 Concession 4 from William Bridge Green. They sold those two acres to Thomas and Alex Morrison in 1873. However, they had already moved back to Hamilton, as witnessed by the 1871 census records, showing them in St. Patrick’s Ward.

George Morton Jr., as noted above, led the move to establish an all-Black fire brigade in 1889 in Hamilton, citing the lack of job opportunities for Black Hamiltonians in city employment. During World War I, he was among a number of people from across the country who wrote to the Minister of Militia and Defence of the federal government
complaining that Black men in Hamilton who had attempted to enlist in the army were being turned away solely on the grounds of race. Eventually, because of the protest, the Canadian army set up the No. 2 Construction Battalion, an all-Black brigade that was sent overseas during that epic war. When George Morton Jr. died in 1927, his obituary read that he was survived by a sister and a brother, indicating that the Mortons were residents of Hamilton well into the twentieth century.

William and Mary Nelson

The Nelsons owned one of the largest plots of land of any family on the mountain at 3 ½ acres in Lot 9 Concession 4. In 1861, the census reported that they had a one-storey frame house, one horse and two pigs valued at $50, two carriages for hire worth $50, and that they had produced 50 bushels of wheat, 70 bushels of peas and one ton of hay on their farm. In 1862, they sold one acre to Ann Rosewarn. William Nelson, as was mentioned earlier, was hired as the caretaker of the Mission Church in 1860, and Mabel Burkholder stated that he was a gravedigger for the Burkholder cemetery for many years prior to Henry Johnson’s stint in that capacity. The 1875 directory is the last record that exists of William Nelson. He and his wife were elderly by this time, and must have died between 1875 and 1881, although no death record was found for them. Their son George Nelson, who lived on the mountain next to his parents up until at least 1867-68, was discovered in Hamilton’s Ward 2 in 1871. He was a waiter and had a wife, Margret (sic), who was a dressmaker, and two teenage children. Interestingly, his 17-year-old daughter, Livinia, worked as a dressmaker like her mother, and his 15-year-old son, John, told the
census taker that he was a barber. They clearly found city life more to their liking than did their parents.

The Santes

In 1861, the Santee family made their debut on the mountain in Lot 9 Concession 4, thanks to the purchase of two acres by their relative George Santee of Port Clinton, Schykill County, Pennsylvania. Prior to this, however, they resided in downtown Hamilton. In fact, Ephraim Santee was in business with clothier turned minister Charles J. Carter on King Street in the 1858 directory. Once they had moved to the property on the mountain, they remained there for twenty years. As mentioned, the family jointly decided to sell their two acres. It is an interesting deed and includes the names of Ephraim’s and Mary Jane’s children and their spouses. Among the occupations of the sons and sons-in-law were two plasterers, a tinsmith and a tobacconist. However, the 1881 census revealed something interesting. Because we know the first names of the children and their spouses, one can conclude that either the family changed their surname to Keys, or the census enumerator mistakenly wrote this name down. The Santee name, either by design or by error, had become Keys. After 1881, neither Santees nor Keys were found in the 1901 census, so it is not known what became of them.

John and Rosanna Spellman

According to the 1851 census, this couple was born in the West Indies and their daughter, 10-year-old Mary J., was born in Canada West, meaning that they had been in Canada
since at least 1841. They purchased 1 acre in Lot 12 Concession 4 Barton Township from Reverend Joseph Williams in 1849. It was in Park Lot #1 in Kirkendall’s survey of Lot 12 Concession 4. In 1857, John died and Rosanna became the head of household. She sold the property in 1861 and moved to Hamilton. As mentioned earlier, she was living in St. Mary’s Ward and working as a huckster or seller of wares or fruit and vegetables in that year. She was also living with Harriet Johnson, possibly the daughter of Edward and Anney Caroline Johnson, who was said to be attending school at the age of 17 years. It would appear Harriet was attending school in the city and living with Rosanna Spellman. Interestingly, the census also recorded her country of origin as Santo Domingo, the present-day island of Hispaniola where Haiti and the Dominican Republic are located.

Reverend Joseph and Mrs. Violet Williams

The Williams purchased five acres in Lot 12 Concession 4 roughly in the area on the mountain where the Jolley Cut begins. They were the earliest to buy property on the mountain in Concession 4 in 1846, and, as mentioned above, they were the catalysts for the settlement of other families on that five-acre plot in addition to the building of the AME Church there. Reverend Williams would have been the preacher in that church, as well as being instrumental in providing the land on which it was built. The 1851 census reported that they lived in a one-storey frame house and owned one horse valued at $40, two carriages worth $50 and a garden valued at $5.

In 1863, after seventeen years on this property, they sold their last remaining 1 1/3 acres to James Jolley. However, they remained on the mountain and rented from a family in the Lot 9 tract, as confirmed by the county directory of 1867-68. They were in their
seventies at this point, and perhaps needed the income from the sale of their property to live on. They had been leaders in the Black community on the mountain and had remained on the mountain for over twenty years. However, what became of them after that date is not certain, except to say that they probably died on the mountain among the people with whom they had no doubt become very close. No record of their deaths was found in the provincial death registry.

General Conclusions

Judging from the evidence collected on Black property owners on Hamilton Mountain, a number of conclusions are unmistakable. Once again it has to be reiterated that the notion of who these Black residents were is far more complex than the facile stereotypes that have held currency for so long. The research points to the diversity and heterogeneity of backgrounds and conditions in which Black immigrants to Hamilton and the mountain found themselves. We know that some, like Marianne Connaway, Charles J. Carter and Ephraim and Mary Jane Santee had come from free states – Connaway most likely from Ohio and Carter and the Santees from Pennsylvania. Therefore, they were not running away from slavery, but were escaping Black Codes in Ohio and other states, and the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which effectively threatened the freedom of any African American living in the free states. Because of the Fugitive Slave law, thousands opted to move to Canada, and this accounts for the large increase in population between 1851 and 1861. For most of the Hamilton Mountain residents, however, their exact origins are not known apart from the fact that they were American-born.
Another distinction to be made is between those who could sign their names on the land deeds and, one can reasonably conclude, had received a formal education, and those who signed their names with an ‘x’ and therefore, had not received an education. Of those whose names appear as signatures on documents, nine apparently signed their own names, including Lewis Miles Johnson, Charles J. Carter, Josiah and Amelia Cochrane, Anna Mallory, Rachael Johnson, Ephraim Santee and Rosannah Spellman. Fourteen others marked an ‘x’ for their signatures.

In terms of occupational breakdown, many of the men were described as labourers in the land deeds. A couple of them were described as farmers or yeomen. Based on other information that we have, Pompey Lewis and John Johnson were carters; George Morton was a whitewasher, William Mallory was a wood dealer turned book agent, and the well-known Josiah Cochrane had mastered the barbering trade. There were also two clergymen: Reverend Joseph P. Williams and Charles Carter, the latter of whom was previously identified as a dyer and clothier, before becoming a minister. The occupations of the women were, for the most part, not recorded. The practice of omitting women’s occupations, particularly when the husband was present in the home, effectively masked those women who, in addition to their work in the home, were engaged in waged work. The case of Rosanna Spellman (written Susannah Spellman in the 1861 census) working as a huckster provides an interesting portrait of one woman and the work in which she was engaged.

The issue of the names of Blacks on the mountain was addressed in last year’s report, “Little Africa: Where Do We Go From Here?” In response to Burkholder’s statement that Black residents used aliases to avoid tracking and recapture by
slaveowners, it was argued that, in fact, this was a great overgeneralization. In her writings Burkholder seemed puzzled that so many families would choose the name Johnson, but a more obvious explanation is that several Johnson brothers purchased land together in William Bridge Green’s survey. However, this could not be proven from the available evidence.

The question about whether this enclave of Blacks on the mountain could really be considered a community was also raised during the course of the recent resurgence of interest in “Little Africa.” The finding of an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Lot 12 Concession 4 goes a long way toward laying that issue to rest. As the most important institution in the Black community, even to this day, the existence of the church helped to organize the community, provide leadership and a location from which other self-help, political and social organizing took place.

Finally, the Black residents on the mountain did not, for the most part, “take a return trip on the Underground Railroad,” as some have termed it. Rather, they remained in the area. There is evidence to show that some sold their properties on the mountain and purchased houses and lots in downtown Hamilton, and passed their property down to their rightful heirs. This was the case for John and Rachael Johnson and Pompey Lewis, although having no heirs, the proceeds of the sale of Lewis’ property were bequeathed to the church. Marianne Connaway died in 1884 on the land that she purchased in 1851. The Nelsons appear to have done the same, although their son, George, moved to Hamilton and established himself there by 1871. The Santee family, both the parents and their adult children, also moved back to Hamilton, and so did Anney Caroline or Hannah Johnson, after the death of her husband Edward, and Sarah Calamese, after the death of William
Calamese. Charles J. Carter is the only Hamilton Mountain resident that we know moved back to the United States, specifically Pennsylvania, in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Although, the research refutes most of the statements about the nature of the Black community on the mountain and its constituents, there is one statement made by Mabel Burkholder that cannot be contested. In her *Hamilton Spectator* article of November 15, 1947 about “Little Africa,” she ended with the following observation: “A very high percentage of them made excellent citizens.” Of this, we wholeheartedly agree.

2 I could not determine how much land Kirkendall purchased from Hamilton because the original deeds of the land transaction records between 1830-1846 are missing from the Archives of Ontario. They should be available at the Hamilton Land Registry Office on King Street, however.

3 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. A119, A173, C895 for 1848, 1849 and 1852.

4 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed No. B498, in 1854.

5 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 38.

6 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. C632, D348, 1859 and 1863.


8 *DHB* Vol. I, 110.


10 Ibid. George Kirkendall may have been a reference to William Kirkendall or perhaps his son. John H. Green was probably a reference to John A. Green, the grandson of William Bridge Green.

11 Ibid.

12 A search of the death records (beginning in 1869), the census, township and city directories did not yield any further information about Rosanna Spellman after 1861. The sale of the Spellman property can be found in WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed D 117 in 1861.

13 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deeds B 844, C 287, C 579, C 580, D 426, 1846-1863; *Sutherland’s City of Hamilton and County of Wentworth Directory for 1867-1868*, Ottawa, ON: 1867, 65.

14 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deeds Nos. C 895, C 490, 1514, 1815 for the years 1852-1874; Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), Schedule C, Death Registration for the year 1877, #17148, Wentworth County, City of Hamilton.

15 I checked ancestry.com but was not able to determine Simpson’s racial origin from that source. Simpson signed his name with an ‘x,’ however, which some of the people of African origin were forced to do because of their lack of education. Obviously, this is not a definite indicator and merely suggests the possibility of African origin. Almost all of the deeds signed by whites that I have looked at were actual signatures while this cannot be said for many of the Blacks.

WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. A174, 1176, 1848 and 1856.

WCLRO, Barton Township, Deeds Nos. A 215, A 396, for the years 1848-1851; 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 31; *Mitchell and Co.’s County of Wentworth and Hamilton City Directory for 1865-66*, Toronto: 1864, 382; 1871 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. Andrew’s Ward, Div. 1, 22.

*Mitchell and Co.’s County of Wentworth and Hamilton City Directory for 1865-66*, 384; *The Union Publishing Co.’s farmers and business directory for the counties of Brant, Halton, Waterloo and Wentworth, 1884-85*, Ingersoll, ON: 1884, 178.

A Henry Johnston (spelled with a t), born in the USA, died in Hamilton on January 1887 at the age of 65. This may well be the last record of Henry Johnson that exists. Schedule C, 1887, Death registration #18875, County of Wentworth, City of Hamilton. WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. A299, B77, C738 for 1850 and 1857.


WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. B 780, C 58, C 259, C 738, 623, 624, 1176, for the years 1855-1869.


1 rood = ¼ acre

1 perch = 1 rod or 5.5 yards

WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. D 67, 3169, for the years 1861 and 1881.
28 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. 512, 2836, 4626, for the years 1869-1886.

29 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. 623 and 624, in 1869; Death Registration for the year 1906, #5715, County of Brant, City of Brantford.

30 WCLRO, Deed Nos. 2670, 3217, 6476, for the years 1875-1890; DHB, 77-78, 207; 1871 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. Patrick’s Ward, Div. 1, 8; 1881 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, Ward 2, Div. 1, 61; 1901 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, Ward 2, Subdiv. 4, 3; AO, Death Registration #32738 for the year 1907, County of Wentworth, City of Hamilton.


32 “Viola Berry Aylestock. 1910,” No Burden to Carry, 89; Ann Harcus, “A personal search that became a life’s work,” The Teaneck Suburbanite, July 11, 1984, 3, 7 and other information obtained from Viola Berry Aylestock.

33 See endnote 18 above.

34 See ancestry.com for the name Charles J. Carter. The City of Hamilton Directory containing a full and complete List of Householders, Together with Statistical and Other Information and Advertisements of the Principal Business Houses, Hamilton, ON: William A. Shepard, 1856, 89; City of Hamilton Directory Containing a Full and Complete List of Householders, A Classified List of Trades and Professions, Together With Statistical and Other Information, Local and Provincial, and Advertisements of the Principal Business Houses, Hamilton, ON: William A. Shepard, 1858, 160; See also endnote 22 above.

35 1861 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. George’s Ward, District 2, 339; Schedule C, Death Registration #5715, City of Brantford, County of Brant, Ontario; Arlie Robbins, Prince Hall Masonry in Ontario, 1852-1933, 1980, 28, 46; Provincial Freeman, August 19, 1854. See also endnote 29 above.

36 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. D321 and 2836, for 1863 and 1880; Assessment Rolls, District of Gore, Township of Woolwich, 1831, 1832, and 1833. 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1; 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 44; 1871 Census of Canada, Barton Township, Division 2, 21; 1881 Census of Canada, Barton Township, Division 2, 55. Connaway’s son Moses is listed in her stead in the county directories of 1865-66 and 1867-68, and thereafter the Conway or Connaway name disappears from subsequent directories for Barton Township.

37 See, for example, the discussion of Black codes and the decision to establish the Wilberforce colony near present-day Lucan (near Goderich). William and Jane Pease, Black Utopia : Negro Communal Experiments in America, Madison, Wi : State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963,
Chapter 3; Marilyn Bailey, “From Cincinnati, Ohio to Wilberforce, Canada: A Note on Antebellum Colonization,” Journal of Negro History, 53 (October 1973).

38 Linda Brown-Kubisch, The Queen’s Bush Settlement: Black Pioneers, 1830-1865, Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2004, 25-7. Brown-Kubisch believed that the Connaways must have moved to the Queen’s Bush because Solomon Connaway signed the 1843 petition of the inhabitants of the Queen’s Bush. However, the evidence reveals that the family was actually living in the Hamilton area.


41 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. B 132, B 254, C491, in the years 1852-1858; 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 41; 1871 Census of Canada, Barton Township, Div. 2, 16; 1881 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, Ward 6, Div. 1, 79.

42 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. A299, B77, C58, C738, for 1850-1857; 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 27; 1871 Census of Canada, Barton Township, Div. 2, 16; “Fire on the Mountain, Hamilton Spectator, January 9, 1882; Schedule C, Death Registration for the year 1887, #18875, Wentworth County, City of Hamilton. See also endnotes [19] and [20].

43 1881 Census of Canada, Barton Township, Division 2, 55; The Union Publishing Co’s farmers and business directory for the counties of Brant, Halton, Waterloo and Wentworth, 1884-5, Ingersoll, ON: 1884, 178; Wentworth County Estate Files, Archives of Ontario, RG 22-205, Letters of Administration #3436. See also Footnote ___.

44 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. B111, B118, B780, C118, 1176, 1852-1872; 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 41; 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 41.

45 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. C895, 1514,1852-1874; 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 29; 1861 Census of Canada, District 1, 38; 1871 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. Lawrence Ward, Div. 1, 9; Wentworth County Surrogate Court Index to the Estate Files, RG 22-204, 1877, p. 435-6. See also endnote 14 above.

46 William Mallory, Old Plantation Days, Hamilton, ON: 1902, 3, 5, 14-16, 16-19, 35-38. The text can be found on the “Documenting the American South” website at http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/mallory/mallory.html; Schedule C, Death Registration #32738, Division of Hamilton, County of Wentworth; 1871 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. Patrick’s Ward, Div. 1, 10; 1881 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, Ward 2, Div. 1, 61; 1901 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, Ward 2, Subdivision 4, 3. Mallory also mentioned that he
was a colonel in the Union army, but the evidence does not support his claim. See also endnote 30 above.


50 WCLRO, Barton Township, Deed Nos. A173, C851, C905, Will D26, 1849-1861; 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 29; 1861 Census of Canada, City of Hamilton, St. Mary’s Ward, 125.

51 1851 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 29; 1861 Census of Canada, Barton Township, District 1, 40. See also endnote 13 above.