

Black History Month: Ingersoll

A new life in Ingersoll for Freedom Seekers



Harvey C. Jackson

Harvey C. Jackson, an abolitionist who lived in Port Burwell in the early 1850s drove the stagecoach from Port Burwell to Ingersoll; he aided many people fleeing enslavement. The Daly House, a hotel which played a key role in the protection of formerly enslaved people, standing at 130 Oxford Street, now the location of Ingersoll Library. Peter VanPatter ran the Daly House stables, himself an American freedom seeker, assisted with processing the influx of people. The Daly House started the stagecoach service from Port Burwell, meeting ships inbound from Sandusky and Toledo, Ohio which carried those seeking freedom to Canada. Ingersoll hotel owner Absalom Daly, was a sympathizer to the cause of abolition. Slave hunters watched the Daly House hoping to capture escapees to collect a bounty.

Ingersoll was a prime destination for formerly enslaved peoples because of employment possibilities. There was still much land to be cleared in the area as timber was in great demand for constructing buildings, roads and the Great Western Railway.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church, built in 1854, became a source of refuge on the arrival in Ingersoll of the formerly enslaved. The church had a second story where the minister lived and the basement was used as a hiding place until other accommodations could be arranged. This church was located in the area of 110 Oxford Street.

Daly House, 1850s



Daly House, 1930s



Oxford Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1950s



Above excerpt from:
"A Safe Haven: the story of the
Black Settlers of Oxford County
by Joyce A. Pettigrew