

## BLACK HISTORY COMMEMORATED ON HAMILTON MOUNTAIN

February is Black History month and Hamilton Mountain now has a beautiful commemorative plaque to recognize the community's black Canadian heritage. Mounted on the Concession Street wall of the public library, the plaque is in the heart of what used to be called "Little Africa".



Creating the plaque for the Hamilton Historical Board has been a long process. It was originally proposed and researched by Hamilton's cemetery historian, Robin McKee, when over a decade ago, he discovered that several black settlers were buried in unmarked graves in Burkholder Church cemetery on Mohawk Road.

Photo courtesy Chris Redford HHB



The focal point of the black community was Concession Street's Union Mission Hall that once stood directly opposite the present library. Built in 1860, the building served as a community hall and the genesis of Mount Hamilton's churches. For the growing enclave of immigrant blacks and slaves escaping the American Civil War at that time, it also served as a school.

Photo courtesy T.M. Bailey

The "Black Community" plaque could not be completed until 2012 when Adrienne Shadd, commissioned by the city's Black History Committee, completed her chronicle of the early life of the city's black community. She will be the **Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society's** speaker at their March 20, 7:30 p.m. general meeting at Olivet United Church. Everyone is welcome.

**Mountain Memories**, written by historian, Robert Williamson on behalf of HMHS, appears monthly. See the Society's website ([hamiltonheritage.ca](http://hamiltonheritage.ca)) for information on events and publications.

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