

Samuel Carter

By Erin Brubacher for Heritage Mississauga

As a port town, Port Credit saw its fair share of people from many different places. It is intriguing to imagine how many fugitive slaves made this port a resting stop. There was one man, however, who stayed in Port Credit, and won the hearts of the residents. Samuel Carter, a fugitive slave, paid a high price for freedom. During his escape, he lost both his legs due to the exposure to cold.¹ Little is known of his life in the town, how long he lived there or where he worked. However we can be sure that whatever his place, it was one of warmth and kindness. One early resident of the area remembers old Sam sitting astride a white horse, pulling a wagon full of people.² When he reached the end of his life, the town residents banded together to make sure he was looked after. All through the year of 1887, it seems Sam Carter was having a hard time making ends meet. The Toronto Township Council on at least one occasion made money available for Mr. Carter, and later in the next year, when his condition worsened, the council took action.

“Moved by Mr. Jackson, and seconded by Mr. Price that the Petition of B.B. Lynd and 22 others be received and that Mr. Lynd and Mr. Oliphant be instructed to have Samuel Carter removed to some place of comfort and have his wants attended to for the present time.”³

When Samuel Carter died in October of 1888, the council looked after his needs and internment expenses.⁴ While it is not known where he was interred, before his death it is said he lived at the end of an alder-lined dirt road called “Old Sam’s Lane”.⁵ Today there is a modern subdivision there and the street is called Wesley Avenue.⁶ This story of residents banding together shows that while black settlers did indeed face racism, they also found kindness in our region.

¹ Betty Clarkson, *The Story of Port Credit: Credit Valley Gateway* (Toronto: Port Credit Public Library, 1967) 170.

² Clarkson 171.

³ Toronto Township Council, *Meeting Minutes*, 29 September 1888. Records were obtained at the Mississauga Central Library.

⁴ Toronto Township Council, 27 October 1888.

⁵ Clarkson 171.

⁶ Clarkson 171.