

The Barton Family

By Erin Brubacher for Heritage Mississauga

The Barton Family was just like every other family who lived in northern Peel, with one exception, they were black. According the 1861 census, (Appendix one) the Barton's were living in Chinguacousy with five children in tow. Levi Barton is listed as a labourer, but it is unknown where he worked. The Bartons turn up again in the 1881 census, however this time they've moved to York West, what is now the Municipality of Toronto.

The information that sets this family apart from all the other black families only found in census data, is the Brampton Conservator Newspaper reference.

"The Barton's, a coloured family who lived near Pine Grove many years ago, and who, with their relatives in Toronto now number about 200 persons, have been granted the use of the Agricultural Society's grounds for Emancipation day and the week following. It is their intention to hold a big picnic and camp there for a week."¹

Emancipation day is a celebrated on August 1st in commemoration of the emancipation (freedom) of slaves in the British Empire.

There is reference of a Levi Barton who died on Aug 27th 1886, male, born in Kentucky, Methodist, living in York, died from Apoplexy (stroke). This is most likely the same Levi Barton.

¹ News, *The Brampton Conservator*, 3 June 1898, page 3, column 2. Indexed by Beettam, Margaret. Referenced at the Region of Peel Archives, Brampton, Ontario.