

the GRANGE



VOLUME
ELEVEN

LEGEND
OF THE
NORTH STAR





VOLUME ELEVEN

LEGEND OF THE NORTH STAR

WRITERS: JUSTINE LYN,
DANIEL WONG

ARTIST/LETTERER/LAYOUT: DANIEL WONG

TITLE LOGO: MIKE TRAN

CONTENT STORYLINE BY: HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA

SPECIAL THANKS TO KIM THOMAS,
MATTHEW WILKINSON, LISA SMALL, ERIN BRUBACHER,
REBECCA FLEMISTER AND PAMA

FUNDING PROVIDED BY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF MISSISSAUGA,
CULTURE DIVISION, CITY OF MISSISSAUGA,
AND HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA



WWW.HERITAGEMISSISSAUGA.COM



MISSISSAUGA

PRINTED IN CANADA BY NOVA PRINTING INC.

Copyright 2022 by Heritage Mississauga (Mississauga Heritage Foundation, Inc.) All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof are property of Heritage Mississauga. Any similarity between names, likenesses, persons living or dead, or institutions is coincidental. No part of this publication, including the logo and title, may be reproduced, distributed, re-published or transmitted in any form without the prior written permission of Heritage Mississauga.

MISSISSAUGA CITY CENTRE
ANTI-RACISM RALLY AND MARCH

.....WE MUST WORK
TOWARDS A WORLD
WHERE EQUAL RIGHTS
ARE GIVEN TO ALL NO
MATTER YOUR SKIN
COLOUR!

THANK YOU ALL
FOR COMING TODAY!
PLEASE STICK AROUND
TO WALK IN OUR
MARCH.

WHAT DID
YOU THINK
OF THE
RALLY?

IT WAS
EMPOWERING.
THANKS FOR
INVITING ME.

I THINK
THERE IS A
LOT MORE TO
LEARN HERE.

WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?

SINCE MY FAMILY'S
ARRIVAL IN CANADA A
CENTURY AND A HALF AGO,
WE'VE EXPERIENCED
DISCRIMINATION.

I WANT TO VOICE
OUR STORIES FROM
MISSISSAUGA'S PAST AND
PRESENT, SO THAT THEY
ARE NEVER FORGOTTEN.

COOL!

I HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY TO
WRITE AN ARTICLE FOR
HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA
ON WHAT LIFE WAS LIKE
HERE FOR EARLY
BLACK SETTLERS.

SO, I WAS
WONDERING...
DO YOU WANT
TO HELP ME
AND BE MY
EDITOR?

REALLY?
YEAH, OF
COURSE!

HAZEL MCCALLION CENTRAL LIBRARY

I MADE AN APPOINTMENT WITH A LIBRARIAN TO DO RESEARCH IN THE CANADIANA ROOM.

I HEARD THERE MIGHT BE GOOD INFORMATION HERE ON BLACK FUGITIVE SLAVES IN HISTORIC MISSISSAUGA.

THERE YOU ARE! I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

COME. LET'S HEAD UPSTAIRS AND SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND FOR YOU.

AH! HERE IT IS!

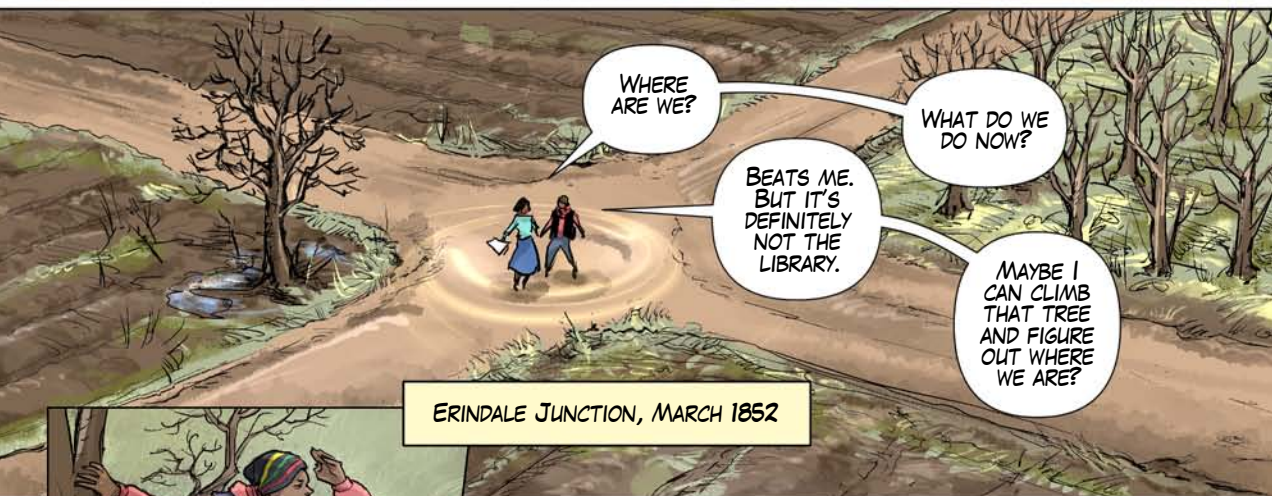
A COPY OF THE VOICE OF THE FUGITIVE NEWSPAPER FROM 1852.

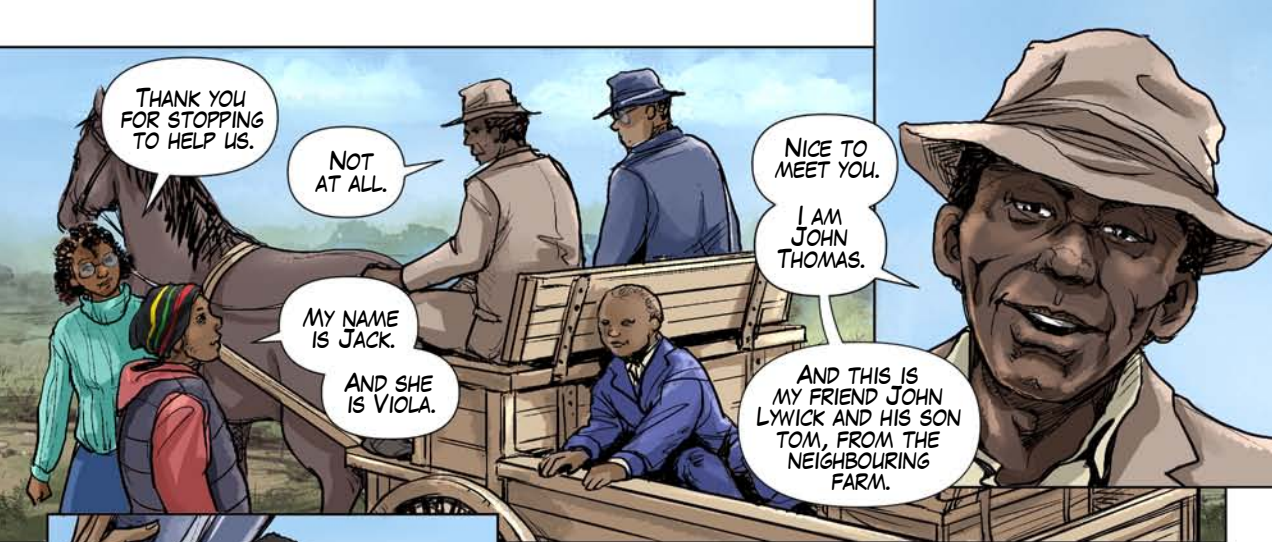
IT WAS PUBLISHED BY A BLACK ACTIVIST AND FORMER SLAVE AT THE HEIGHT OF THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.

SOME OF THE STORIES ARE ABOUT HISTORIC MISSISSAUGA, OR RATHER TORONTO TOWNSHIP, AS IT WAS KNOWN THEN.

HAVE A LOOK. YOU WILL MEET MANY WHO SHARE THE SAME DREAMS YOU HOLD DEAR.

"MEET"?





THANK YOU FOR STOPPING TO HELP US.

NOT AT ALL.

NICE TO MEET YOU.

I AM JOHN THOMAS.

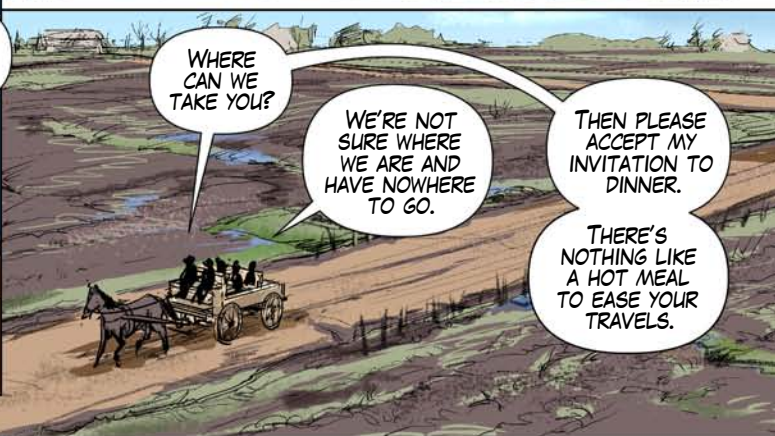
MY NAME IS JACK.

AND SHE IS VIOLA.

AND THIS IS MY FRIEND JOHN LYWICK AND HIS SON TOM, FROM THE NEIGHBOURING FARM.



HOW DO YOU DO?



WHERE CAN WE TAKE YOU?

WE'RE NOT SURE WHERE WE ARE AND HAVE NOWHERE TO GO.

THEN PLEASE ACCEPT MY INVITATION TO DINNER.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A HOT MEAL TO EASE YOUR TRAVELS.



MY WIFE WILL BE EXCITED TO HAVE YOU. SHE LOVES NEW PEOPLE- ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO WILL EAT HER FOOD!

BE CAREFUL NOT TO CATCH A CHILL IN THOSE WET CLOTHES.

USE THE QUILT BACK THERE TO KEEP WARM.

THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU BOTH! THANK YOU.



AFTER A SHORT RIDE...

WELCOME TO OUR HOME. IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT WE MAKE DO.

PAPA!

THIS IS MY WIFE CATHERINE AND OUR TWO CHILDREN, MARY AND GEORGE.



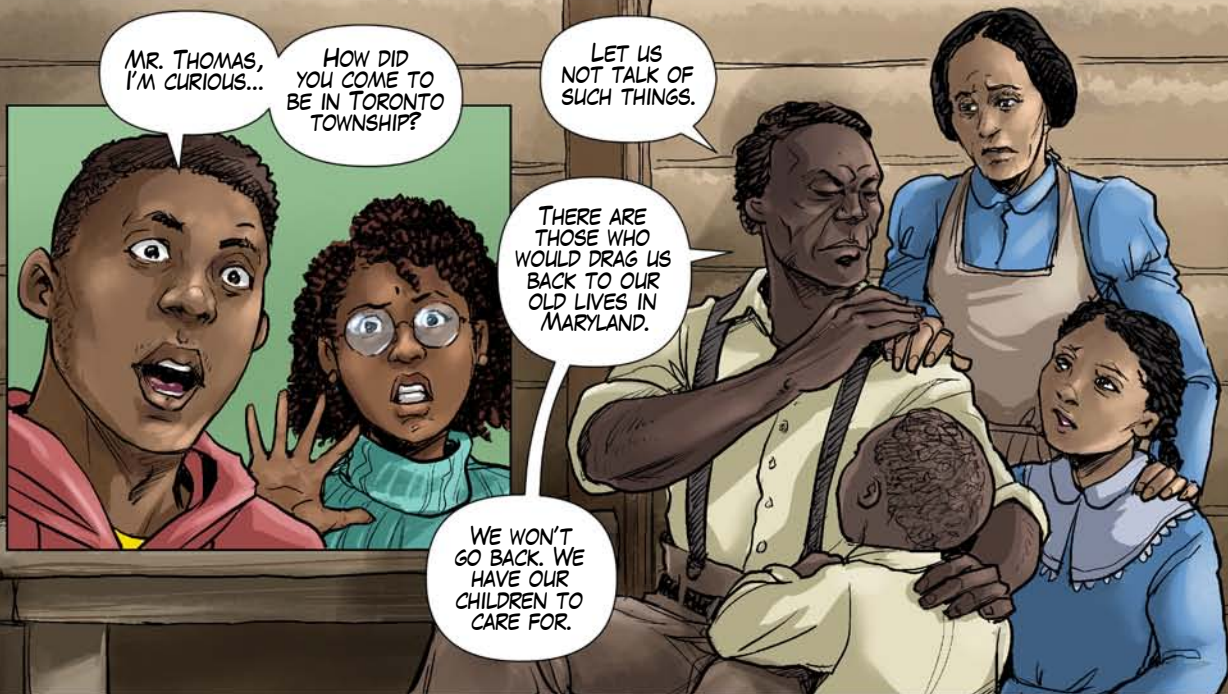
AND THIS IS MRS. SOPHIA LYWICK.

COME, SIT BY THE FIRE TO WARM YOURSELVES.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

MRS. THOMAS, THIS IS DELICIOUS!

EAT UP. THERE IS PLENTY MORE FOR SECONDS.



IT WAS A VERY HARD LIFE, YOU CANNOT EVEN IMAGINE.

WHAT MATTERS NOW IS MAKING A NEW LIFE HERE. THIS IS MY NEW DREAM.



WE ALL
HAVE DREAMS
HERE.



I HOPE OUR
SON WILL GROW
UP TO FOLLOW
HIS PASSIONS,
UNHINDERED.



ONE DAY,
I WILL CEASE TO
BE A LABOURER. I WILL
OWN MY OWN LAND,
AND BUILD A HOME
WHERE OUR CHILDREN
AND GRANDCHILDREN
WILL PROSPER.



WE ARE
DESTINED TO
BE MORE THAN
JUST FETCHERS
OF WATER AND
HEWERS OF
WOOD.



WE ARE GOING
TO YORK TOMORROW
TO THE ANTI-SLAVERY
SOCIETY MEETING AT
ST. LAWRENCE HALL.
YOU SHOULD COME.

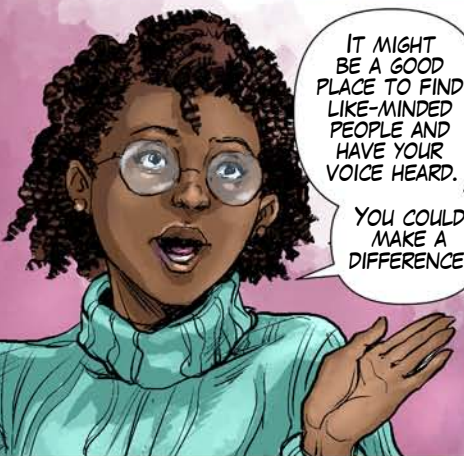
YOU
WOULD FIT
RIGHT IN!



NO!
I DON'T
THINK SO.



I SUPPORT
THE CAUSE, BUT
I DON'T SEE HOW
IT WILL HELP.



IT MIGHT
BE A GOOD
PLACE TO FIND
LIKE-MINDED
PEOPLE AND
HAVE YOUR
VOICE HEARD.

YOU COULD
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!



A GATHERING
LIKE THAT MIGHT
NOT BE SAFE.
WE DON'T KNOW
WHO MIGHT BE
THERE OR WHO
MIGHT SEE US.

WE SHOULD
LAY LOW AND
NOT ATTRACT
ATTENTION.

BUT VIOLA
IS RIGHT. WE CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
FOR OUR CHILDREN'S
FUTURE.



AND IF YOU
ARE WORRIED FOR
THE CHILDREN, I CAN
LOOK AFTER THEM
FOR THE DAY.



FINE!
I KNOW
WHEN I'M
OUTNUMBERED
...

...BUT I
STILL FEEL
UNEASY.

THE NEXT DAY

ST. LAWRENCE HALL,
TORONTO

TOO
MANY PEOPLE,
CATHERINE...

WHAT IF
WE ARE
RECOGNIZED?

DON'T WORRY,
WE ARE AMONG
FRIENDS HERE.
LET'S GO
INSIDE.

WOW! LOOK
UP ON STAGE!
I DIDN'T EXPECT
TO SEE SO MANY
PROMINENT
FIGURES AT THIS
MEETING.

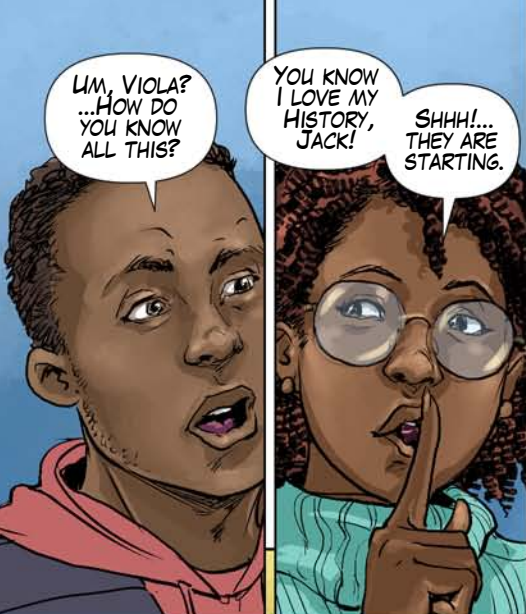
WHO ARE
THEY?

ON THE
LEFT IS
REV. SAMUEL
WARD.

HE
PREACHED ACROSS
THE CONTINENT FOR
EQUALITY ON BEHALF OF
THE ANTI-SLAVERY
SOCIETY.

IN THE MIDDLE
IS HENRY BIBB,
FOUNDER AND EDITOR
OF THE VOICE OF
THE FUGITIVE.

AND ON
THE RIGHT IS
REV. LIRE OF
STREETSVILLE'S
ST. ANDREW'S
CHURCH...
...I THINK.



UM, VIOLA?
...HOW DO
YOU KNOW
ALL THIS?

YOU KNOW
I LOVE MY
HISTORY,
JACK!

SHHH!...
THEY ARE
STARTING.



THANK YOU
FOR COMING TO
THE ANTI-SLAVERY
SOCIETY MEETING
TODAY.

WE HAVE A
SPECIAL GUEST
SPEAKER TODAY, THE
ESTEEMED REV.
SAMUEL WARD.

YOU MAY
KNOW HIM BY
HIS ELOQUENCE
AS A SPEAKER...

...AN ELOQUENCE
THAT HAS DONE
MUCH TO WEAKEN THAT
VULGAR PREJUDICE, WHICH
UNHAPPILY PREVAILS TOO
EXTENSIVELY EVEN
IN CANADA.



TODAY I
SPEAK TO YOU AS
A FREE MAN, BUT
I AM ONE OF THE
LUCKY ONES.

TWO YEARS AGO,
THE FUGITIVE SLAVE
ACT WAS PASSED. SINCE
THEN SLAVE CATCHING
PARTIES RUN IN THE
NORTHERN STATES
READY TO DRAG US BACK
TO OUR CHAINS AND
SHACKLES.

THEY FAIL TO
SEE THAT WE ARE
SO MUCH MORE
THAN THAT.

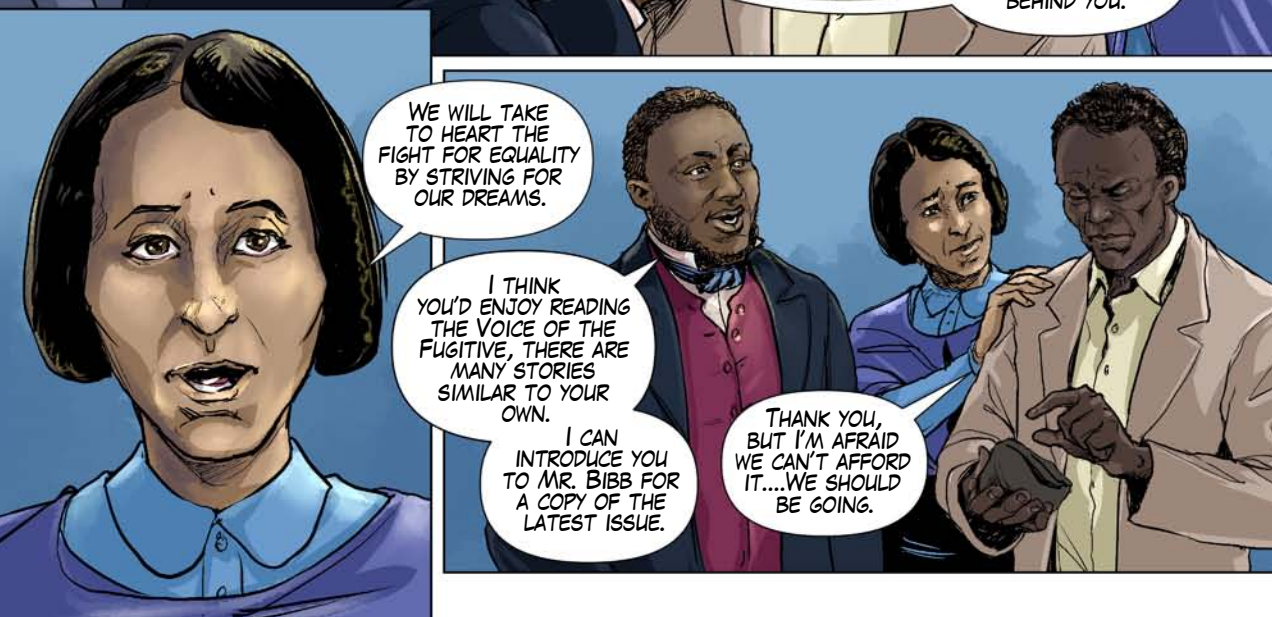
WE COME FLYING
INTO CANADA FROM
OUR INHUMAN PURSUERS
IN GREAT DESTITUTION
AS CARGO ON OUR
'RAILROAD', INTO THE
HANDS OF MOSES
HERSELF.

WE HAVE PROVEN
OURSELVES QUIET,
INDUSTRIOUS, AND
WORTHY CITIZENS. IT'S
TIME WE ARE TREATED
AS SUCH.

WE WILL
SHOW THEM THAT
OUR DREAMS ARE
AS BOUNTIFUL AS
THE STARS IN
THE SKY.

WE WILL
FOLLOW THEM JUST
AS WE FOLLOWED
THE NORTH STAR TO
THIS LAND OF
OPPORTUNITY.







I WAS SURPRISED AND GLAD TO SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE THERE TO SUPPORT PEOPLE LIKE US.

AND REV. WARD'S WORDS WERE SO INSPIRATIONAL.

THOSE ARE JUST WORDS! THEY CANNOT KEEP US SAFE OR FILL OUR POCKETBOOK.

WHAT IS IT ALL FOR? RUFFIANS MAY LIE AROUND ANY CORNER WAITING TO LURE US BACK.

HOW CAN I DREAM OF TOMORROW WHEN I DON'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT TODAY?



YOU ARE RIGHT, JOHN. MY HEART ACHES WITH WORRY SOME DAYS, BUT I KNOW I MUST NEVER GIVE UP THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

OUR BABIES WILL NEVER KNOW THE LASH OF THE WHIP. HERE THEY CAN BE FREE.



WE BELONG ONLY TO EACH OTHER. THAT IS STRONGER THAN ANY CHAIN OR SHACKLE.

TOGETHER, WE WILL BUILD A LIFE FOR OURSELVES. SOME DAYS WE WILL WANT TO GIVE UP, BUT WE MUST KEEP CHASING THAT NORTH STAR.

OUR DREAMS WILL LIGHT OUR WAY. IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT I BELIEVE IN US.







Legend of the North Star

BY VIOLA AND JACK



Catherine Ann Thomas and John Thomas.
Photo courtesy of the Thomas Family.

The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses used by freedom seekers to reach safety in the Northern United States and Canada between the 1830s-1860s. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act allowed slave catchers to roam free through all States to capture fugitives. No longer safe anywhere in the country, “conductors” along the railroad ushered slaves to follow the North Star to Canada. Refugees in the thousands were led into the country by Harriet Tubman, codenamed “Moses”, Oakville’s James “Canada Jim” Hill, and others.

It was in this climate that the Thomas-Dorsey family made their way from Maryland to historic Mississauga, then known as Toronto Township. Catherine Thomas (1827-1878) and John Dorsey (1828-1881) were born into slavery, and as was so often the case, Catherine was assaulted by her slave owner, which resulted in the birth of her daughter Mary (b. 1846). At some point, she was granted her freedom and later married the enslaved John Dorsey. The pair decided to run away with Mary and their infant son George (b. 1849) sometime between 1848 and 1851 via the Underground Railroad. To avoid detection, John Dorsey took Catherine’s maiden name “Thomas”.

In 1851, the Thomas family is listed as living in a log house likely along Southdown Road in Clarkson, Mississauga. While Canada was out of the jurisdiction of the Fugitive Slave Act, family stories suggest that Catherine’s former owner made

several attempts to reclaim her and her child. One can only imagine the fear that would have gripped the family, who were unsure if they were truly safe.

Meanwhile, abolitionist movements led by former slaves began to gain popularity in Canada. The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada was one such organization founded in Toronto in 1851 by prominent abolitionists. One such member was freedom seeker Henry Bibb, founder of the Voice of the Fugitive newspaper and the Refugee Home Society.



Henry Bibb.
Copper engraving by Patrick H. Reason

Another member was Reverend Robert Ure of Streetsville’s St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, who was known for his generosity and good deeds.

Former slave Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward, lectured for equality as an agent of the Anti-Slavery Society throughout Southern Ontario, including Toronto Township. He wrote to Bibb praising the farmlands, but also warned that, “anti-slavery finds enough work to do.” In 1852, the Society likewise emphasized refugees should be fairly treated as they are, “quiet, industrious and worthy citizens.”



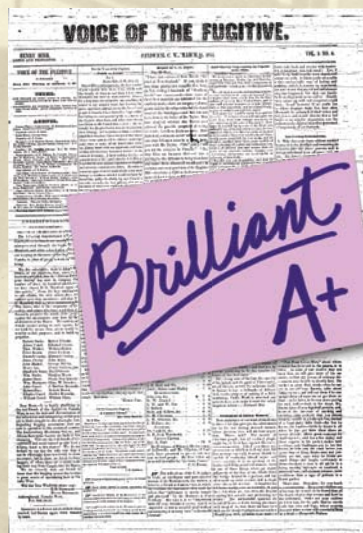
Reverend Robert Ure.
“History of St. Andrew’s Church, 1822-1908”, 1908.

For the Thomas family, however, their calling lay outside Mississauga. They moved to Brantford, then settled in Stanhope Township, Haliburton by 1871. It was here where John Thomas purchased land and built a large homestead for his family. They had achieved what many early black settlers dreamed of: safety, security, and independence. They had risked everything, so their family could be free.



Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Ringgold_Ward

While historically most black settlers remained only briefly in historic Mississauga, today our city is home to a large Black diaspora from every corner of the globe, including Africa and the Caribbean. Though much has changed since the Thomas family lived in Mississauga, the fight for equality continues.



Voice of the Fugitive newspaper, March 1852.
INK-Our Digital World Newspaper Collection.
<http://ink.ourontario.ca>

the GRANGE



FOUNDED IN 1960, HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CHARITY WHOSE FOCUS IS RESEARCHING, RECORDING AND CELEBRATING MISSISSAUGA'S VIBRANT AND DIVERSE HERITAGE. HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA IS KNOWN FOR ITS RESEARCH PROGRAMS, PUBLICATIONS, OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND UNIQUE EVENTS.

LOCATED IN THE HISTORIC ROBINSON-ADAMSON HOUSE, KNOWN AS "THE GRANGE" (BUILT CIRCA 1828), HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA IS A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR HISTORY AND HERITAGE IN THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA, OUR PARTNERS, MEMBERS, DONORS, CORPORATE SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS, HERITAGE MISSISSAUGA CONTINUES TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE OF PROMOTING AWARENESS OF OUR HERITAGE, AND A SENSE OF PLACE AND TIME IN OUR CITY.



WWW.HERITAGEMISSISSAUGA.COM