

# The Street Cemetery – Canfield



# The Street Family Story

- By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Canfield had become one of Haldimand County's significant settlement areas along the Talbot Road (Hwy. #3).
- One of the first Black settlers to arrive, in the early 1840s, was West Virginia Freedom Seeker Stepney Street, who escaped to Canada with his family via the Underground Railroad.
- Stepney and his wife, Lucy, raised 14 children and were one of Canfield's long-standing families.



**Henrietta Street, Stepney and Lucy Street's oldest daughter. (Courtesy of Betty Browne)**

# The Street Family Story

- Stepney was a devout man who opened his home for church services and later donated land on which was built a brick church for the strong Baptist congregation in Canfield.
- The Street Cemetery was created on a small section of farmland owned by Stepney; it is the final resting place of Stepney and Lucy Street and several family members including Carrie Barnes, the niece of famed American abolitionist and political activist Harriet Tubman.
- A marker for Stepney reads: In memory of Stepney Street, died in the Township of North Cayuga, January 31, 1880 aged 72 years and six months.



# The Street Family Story

- Burials took place between 1846 and 1943, with the first being Stepney and Lucy Street's two-year-old daughter, Maryann, on September 10, 1846.
- The last burial was William Andrew Barnes—Stepney and Lucy's grandson and Carrie Barnes' husband—on February 18, 1943.



William A. and Carrie Barnes (Courtesy of Betty Browne)

# Significance of the Street Cemetery

- The Cemetery is integral to the community's collective heritage as it is one of the few remaining markers of Black history in the area.
- The burial ground is of great heritage value, locally and nationally, including as the resting place of American abolitionist and political activist Harriet Tubman's niece, Carrie Barnes.
- While records indicate 11 known burials in the Street Cemetery, the number of interments may be up to 26.



Portrait of Harriet Tubman (Source:, Powelson, photographer, [1868-1869]. Prints & Photographs Division. Collection of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture

# Saving the Street Cemetery

- By the 1990s the Street Cemetery, which was located on a private property, had fallen into disrepair.
- In 1993, Betty Browne, the great, great granddaughter of Stepney and Lucy Street and a former Cayuga resident, contacted the province to have the cemetery recognized and registered.
- Betty, along with several passionate community heritage advocates, persisted for many years to save the cemetery.
- In 2021, these efforts were accelerated when the County actively moved to secure ownership of the cemetery, which was granted by the Bereavement Authority of Ontario in 2023.



Betty Browne (Courtesy of Betty Browne)



# 2005 Site Visit



# Restoration of the Street Cemetery

- In 2021, Haldimand County Council approved \$100,000 towards the clean-up and restoration of the Street Cemetery.
- The work was to be completed in two phases:
  - Phase 1: Clean-up of the site to make it safe for public access; and,
  - Phase 2: In collaboration with descendants and community members, determine the next steps for revitalization of the cemetery.
- In 2023, Facilities, Parks, Cemeteries & Forestry Operations staff constructed a grass pathway from Haldimand Road #32 to the site and removed brush, unsafe trees and old fencing and undertook limited ground repair.



















# Restoration of the Street Cemetery

- In spring 2024, given the historical significance of the Street Cemetery, Heritage Haldimand undertakes the process to designate the site.
- In late 2024, staff from the Community Development & Partnerships Division will begin meeting with the Community Stakeholder Committee to discuss, collaborate and consult about the next steps of restoration and revitalization of the cemetery.
- Among the items for consideration are: determining the location of burials and other headstones which may be covered, restoration of headstones and markers, decorative fencing, seating and storyboards.
- It is anticipated some of these activities may be done in collaboration with the community and Haldimand County, through the Community Partnership Program.

# Stepney Street Headstone

2005



2024





# Charity M. Harper Headstone

2005



2024





# William A. Barnes Headstone



# Questions, Comments?

## **Thank you.**