



Crossing the Border: A Free Black Community in Canada

Sharon Hepburn

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Crossing the Border: A Free Black Community in Canada Sharon Hepburn **A story of freedom and flourishing in a community of former slaves**

In 1849, the Reverend William King and fifteen of his former slaves founded the Canadian settlement of Buxton on a 9,000-acre block of land in Ontario set aside for sale to blacks. Although initially opposed by some neighboring whites, their town grew steadily in population and stature with the backing of the Presbyterian Church of Canada and various philanthropics. A developed agricultural community that supported three schools, four churches, a hotel, and a post office, Buxton was home to almost seven hundred residents at its height. The settlement (which still exists today) remained all black until 1860, when its land was opened to purchase by whites. Sharon A. Roger Hepburn's *Crossing the Border* tells the story of Buxton's settlers, united in their determination to live free from slavery and legal repression. It is the most comprehensive study to address life in a black community in Canada.

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