

PARTIAL RESOURCE LIST

BOOK LIST

- ◆ FRENCH, GARY E: *Men of Colour: Kaste* Books, Stroud Ont. 1978
- ◆ HILL, DANIEL G: *The Freedom Seekers: Blacks in Early Canada.* Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1992.
- ◆ HOUSTON, SUSAN E. & PRENTICE, ALISON L.: *Family School & Society in nineteenth-century Canada:* Toronto, Oxford Press 1975,
- ◆ McCLURE GILLHAM, ELIZABETH: *Early Settlements of KING TOWNSHIP ONTARIO.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- ◆ WALKER, JAMES W. ST. G.: *A History of Blacks in Canada: A Study Guide.* Ottawa: Ministry of State - Multiculturalism, 1981
- ◆ WINKS, ROBIN W., *The Blacks in Canada: A History.* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1971

PERIODICALS AND OTHER RESOURCES

- ◆ Census Records, 1851, 61, 71, 81, 91, and 1901
- ◆ Early Newspapers on Micro film - Aurora & Newmarket
- ◆ Historical Society publications.
- ◆ Laskay Womens Institute

ARCHIVES, MUSEUMS & HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

- ◆ AURORA MUSEUM, Jacqueline Stuart Curator, 22 Church St. Aurora
- ◆ ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO, 77 Grenville St. Toronto, Ont.
- ◆ THE ELMAN W. CAMPBELL MUSEUM, 543 Timothy St. Newmarket, Ont.
- ◆ HERITAGE SCHOOL HOUSE, Bruce Richard - Curator, 2 Valleywood Drive, Markham, Ont.

- ◆ KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM, King City, Ontario.
- ◆ NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ont.
- ◆ THE NEWMARKET HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES, 543 Timothy Street, Newmarket Ont.
- ◆ NORTH AMERICAN BLACK HISTORICAL MUSEUM, Elise Davis - Curator, 277 King St., Amherstburgh, Ont.
- ◆ MULTICULTURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO, 43 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto.
- ◆ THE ONTARIO BLACK HISTORY SOCIETY, Rosemary Sadlier President, 10 Adelaide Street East, Suite 202, Toronto, Ont.
- ◆ THE ONTARIO GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY, 20 Toronto St., Suite 850, Toronto, Ontario
- ◆ ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION, Jan Schmidt, 252 Bloor St., Toronto, Ont.
- ◆ THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA ARCHIVES, Kim Arnold Archivist, 59 St. George St. Toronto
- ◆ CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES, Toronto City Hall.
- ◆ UNITED CHURCH ARCHIVES, Victoria University, 73 Queen's Park Cres. Toronto, Ont.
- ◆ UXBRIDGE-SCOTT MUSEUM, Alan MacGillivray - Curator

LIBRARIES

- ◆ AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY
- ◆ KING CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY
- ◆ NEWMARKET PUBLIC LIBRARY
- ◆ NORTH YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
- ◆ SCHOMBERG PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE ROLLING FAMILY AND EARLY BLACK SETTLEMENT IN KING TOWNSHIP



WALTER ROLLING
1873 - 1943
PRINCIPAL KINGHORN SS25
1895 - 1936

King Township Historical Society
February 1994.

THE ROLLING FAMILY & EARLY BLACK SETTLEMENT IN KING TOWNSHIP: A BRIEF OVERVIEW.

The Rolling family settled in the village of Laskay, in the late 1830's. The first generation to immigrate to Canada was that of Benjamin Rolling Sr. (1797c-1871) and his wife Almira (1801c - 1860c). An early 1837 survey list shows a Benjamin Roland (Roland was the spelling used in many of the early records for the Rolling family) at Lot 73, Con1, King Township, on Yonge just south of Aurora. However they must have moved on shortly after as the Township Land records do not show him at this lot in 1838. They probably settled in Laskay around this time. An earlier record from the black settlement in Oro Township shows a Benjamin Roulen on Lot 8 Con 5 briefly in 1831, if this is the same family it may give us some idea of the route they followed from the United States.

Around the same time another black family also settled in Laskay, Richard Barnhart (Barnard) (1811- 1895) and his wife Charlotte Rolling (1822 - 1900). Local oral tradition records that Richard was a runaway slave. Richard Barnhart is listed in the 1850 Toronto Directory at Lot 3 Con5 King Township. He purchased the lot from Jos. Baldwin in 1861. The Barnards attended the Laskay Methodist Church, which was next to their home and Richard was noted for leading the congregations hymns. Ellen Barnard Smith, Charlotte's daughter was born in 1837 and lived in Laskay until her death in 1925. Ellen was a member of the Epworth League in 1893 and of the adult Bible class in 1914.

The earliest Census data available is from 1851 and by this time it lists Benjamin and Almira (Rolling) Roland, along with six of their children. Their religion is recorded as Methodists but later records show them as Baptists as well. All members of the family are listed as Black except Almira who is listed as Indian.

Benjamin H. Rolling Jr., their oldest son, was born in Canada in 1835 according to Census information. Ben Jr. married Sarah E. Britton (1843-1925). Ben Jr. was a pedlar by trade and eventually had his own General Store in Laskay which was the major competition to the well known Laskay Emporium. By all accounts he was quite successful. In 1888 Ben was appointed the Postmaster for Laskay a position he held until his tragic death on August 13th 1897. Ben was killed when his horse and wagon were struck by a late train at the level crossing on Keele St. in Vaughan. Sarah and Ben had six children. Walter Rolling (1873-1944) their second child would go on to become the Principal of Kinghorn School from 1895 to 1936.

Walter Rolling started his education at Strange School under the instruction of Elizabeth Tinline. Elizabeth would teach all the Rolling children of this generation. He went on to Aurora High School in 1892, which was quiet exceptional at this time. It is estimated less then 6 percent of public school students ever enrolled in high school. As well few parents could afford the \$4.00 per term tuition fee which was a substantial sum at the time. Upon completion of high school he attended Newmarket Model School where he studied teaching. On December 22, 1893 the Newmarket Era records that "24 out of the 28 candidates attending at Newmarket passed,...the names being....W. Rolling....".

Somehow during this period Walter found time to play a major role in helping the 1893 Newmarket Foot Ball Team win the District championship. As well they beat several of the best teams from Toronto, including Varsity.

On January 3rd 1895 he began his career as the Principal of Kinghorn School a post he would hold until June 1936. In 1897 he attended Toronto Normal School where he received his Second Class Professional Teaching certificate. (It was a requirement of Normal school at this time that students have at least 1 year of teaching experience.) Although not the first black person to attend Normal school he was certainly one of a very small group.

On June 27, 1906 Walter married Eva Elizabeth Smith (1876-1916), the second daughter of Geo.W. Smith, a successful black barber from Toronto. Eva died ten short years later of heart trouble. In 1920 Walter married Laura E. Clark (1892-1978), a white teacher at Strange School. Laura was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Clark of Uxbridge.

On June 19, 1937 several thousand of Walter's former students and friends gathered at Kinghorn to pay tribute to him for his 41 years of service. He died in 1943, he was survived by his wife Laura, older brother George and youngest sister Florence. He had no children from either marriage.

Members of the Rolling family played a significant roll in the history of King Township and are but one small example of the rich African-Canadian heritage we all can share. Researched & Prepared by Carl Finkle, Feb.1994. King Township Historical Society Pub#94-1