



Underground Railroad Monument in Windsor

Underground Railroad

The Underground Railroad, an informal network of safe-houses and caring individuals, led escaping American slaves from the American South to Canada.

Mired in secrecy, few documents remain but the stories have captivated the imaginations of people locally, nationally and internationally.

Estimates suggest that 30,000 to potentially 100,000 slaves and free citizens escaped via the Underground Railroad mostly to the triangular region bounded by Windsor, Niagara Falls and Toronto.

Peaking at 1865, waves of individuals successfully travelled the Underground Railroad to Canada. Many returned to America after the abolition of slavery in 1865, but a significant number of free citizens settled in Upper Canada, with many in Windsor and Essex County.

Old Sandwich Town, located directly on the Detroit River on the west side of Windsor is home to Sandwich First Baptist Church.

The church was the first stop in Canada for many traveling

the Underground Railroad. The original log cabin church was rebuilt in brick in 1841 with many of the slave families supplying homemade bricks.

Some escapees who survived the journey were housed in military barracks on the site of the current City Hall Square.

The plaque at the site states "The Black community grew as the town prospered. By 1859 there were approximately 700-800 Blacks in a population of 2500."

The International Memorial to the Underground Railroad is a two part installation on either side of the Detroit River. Equally sited in Windsor and Detroit, the 22 foot high monuments face each other and pay tribute to the thousands that searched for freedom.



John Freeman Walls Underground Railroad Museum Site



Sandwich First Baptist Church



John Freeman Walls - Log Cabin