

A History of the African Nova Scotian Community of Lower Horton, Kings County,
Nova Scotia

David W. States

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Slavery was a part of the culture of New England when white settlers from the New England colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut Rhode Island and New Hampshire migrated to the colony of Nova Scotia during the 1760s following the forced departure of the Acadians in 1755. A section of the second proclamation issued on 11 January 1759 by Charles Lawrence, Governor of Nova Scotia, offered those New Englanders who agreed to settle in the Province, “100 acres to every person master or mistress of a family, with 50 acres for every white or black man, woman or child.”¹ Among the Horton Township slave owners were Judge Elisha DeWolfe, formerly of Saybrook, Connecticut, who purchased a slave named Molly for 39 pounds on 2 March 1807 from the estate of Joseph Allison. Enoch Hunt, formerly of Lebanon, Connecticut owned a slave named Moses who was charged with petit larceny in Horton Township on 12 September 1792. Nathaniel Brown, another Horton Township Planter owned a slave named Philip.

In 1783 free Black Loyalists were settled in Nova Scotia while at the same time white Loyalists brought their black slaves with them. Presently, we do not know whether any Black loyalists or slaves of the white Loyalists settled in Horton Township. It is with the migration of former slaves from the southern colonies of the United States following the War of 1812 to Nova scotia that we can begin to see an increase in the presence of Blacks in Horton Township and environs for the first time. These Refugee Blacks were part of a group of approximately 2000 people who had arrived in the province between 1812 and 1816. The majority of these immigrants settled in Preston, Hammond Plains and Beech Hill in Halifax County. Although a large number settled in the Five Mile Plains area and the Falmouth area of Hants County, a small number settled in the Lower Horton area of Kings County. These Black settlers with such surnames as Kentle, Golar, Bush, Taylor, Williams, Jackson, Hall, Joseph, Lewis, Doleman, Neil, Parsons, Huston, and Martin made Lower Horton their home. By 1850 there were at least ten families with thirty-nine children of school age whose children were “growing up in ignorance” as ten male petitioners noted in their petition to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly dated 7 February 1850.²

¹ Esther Clark Wright, *Planters and Pioneers; Nova scotia 1749 to 1775*. (Hantsport: Lancelot press limited, 1978) p.7.

² Assembly Petitions, *Petition of the Coloured Inhabitants in Lower Horton on the South Side of Gaspereaux River in Kings County for aid to establish an Africa School*, NSA RG5 Serie P, Vol. 74, No. 122, 1850.

The African Baptist Church of Lower Horton

Peter Evander McKerrow, in his book A Brief History of the Colored Baptists of Nova Scotia, 1783-1895, gives the date 1859 as the beginning of the "Horton Church." McKerrow asserts, "*[This church] started with ten members. It was thought that her career would be one of usefulness to the settlement and a blessing to the members. It was while she existed, but the greatest portion of the members were seafaring people. Many went away and never returned in the flesh. Some met death in foreign lands; others found a watery grave. In process of time many of the leading families moved away to the United States. The church edifice has fallen into disuse. Fathers Preston and Thomas both visited them' they held profitable meetings there, on the way to and returning from the Associations in the western counties. Original Officers: Pastor: Rev. R. Preston; Deacons: Daniel Doleman, Dennis Doleman.*"

However, in perusing the extant Minutes of the Association held in the Baptist Archives at Acadia University, it would appear that the African Baptist Church of Lower Horton was organized sometime in 1858 since the Minutes of the African Baptist Association of Nova Scotia held at Granville Mountain Church from Monday, September 6th to Wednesday, September 8th, 1858 (page 7) acknowledges in the list of "Ministers, Licentiates and Deacons" for Lockerville (sic) the names of the ministers Rev. James Thomas and Rev. Richard Preston, the latter who was "requested to visit," even though the church was not mentioned in the Statistics section where the "State of the Churches – Increase and Decrease" for 1858 was listed. In the minutes of the following year, 1859, the Rev. James Thomas is listed as the Delegate for Lower Horton (previous year listed as Lockerville). The Statistics for 1859 list Lower Horton Church as having 14 members. The minutes for this year state "voted that the lower Horton Church be received in our Association, and the right hand of fellowship was given to the Rev. J. Thomas, in their behalf." In the list of Ministers, Licentiates and Deacons for 1859, Rev. J. Thomas is listed as Minister, D. Dolman as Deacon and J. Dolman as Counsellor. In the Circular Letter for that year, "*Brothrer Preston returning to Digby, and to the various Churches and settlements, on his way to Halifax*", obviously stopped in Lower Horton as "*Our Ministering Brethren met together at Lower Horton, where they had a refreshing time, with the Brethren and friends in this place, and finally arrived home on the 22nd of October. In 1859, 9 members were baptized while 1 person was received into the church. In a "Copy of the First Minute Book 1830-1855" of the Hantsport Baptist Church, the following information is contained in the Minutes dated 24 March 1860 – "The members of the church came together in conference on this day... It having been reported that brother Disman (Doleman?) had gone and united with another church not of our faith & order brethren Messenger & Lewis S. Payzant were appointed a committee to visit the brother to enquire into the truthfulness of the reports and to report at our next conference." The minutes of 21 April 1860, of this church reported: ... "The committee appointed to visit brother Disman (Doleman?) reported that he had united with the church (Coloured) lately organized by Mr. Thomas and that it was his wish to remain a member of that Church. It was therefore Resolved that he be no longer returned as a member with us."*

The settlement from which this congregation sprung began sometime after the War of 1812, when a number of families of African descent had located to different sections of Horton Township. From a petition sent to the House of Assembly for the province of Nova Scotia dated 29th January 1850, we find the names of some of the so-called founding families of this “coloured settlement.” : Daniel Dolman, Edward Edwardson, George Huston, John Huston, Daniel Bush, Nathaniel Cantle, Jeremiah Dolman, John Jackson, Jacob Hall, Robert Joseph. Justices of the Peace Edward P. Borden and Nathan Lockhart were witnesses to the petition.

From the Minutes of the Falmouth Baptist Church which began as an offshoot of the Windsor Baptist Church in 1830 and went by the name of The Particular Baptist Church of Falmouth, we find the following African descended persons of the Lower Horton Settlement:

- 15 June 1839 – resolved that...**Matilda Joseph & Miria Huston** be received members by baptism. (According to the membership list, Matilda Joseph died 17 March 1852 while Miria Huston died in 1851).

-29 June 1839 – resolved that... **Edward Bush** be received member by Baptism

-13 July 1839 – resolved that...**Margaret Doleman** be received by Baptism.

-10 August 1839 – resolved that **Lucy Hall** be received a member by baptism.

-21 May 1841 – At a meeting of the church on the road Jacob Hall came forward and offered himself to the Church and was received and was baptized the next day (Sunday) in Brown’s Brook by Mr. Burpy, it being the first time the ordinance being administered in that place.

-10 April 1847 – resolved that Brother Joseph Brown and Elisha Griffin be a committee to visit **Sister Huston** ... and to report at the next meeting.

-24 June 1849 - ...**Mary Robinson** ...received by baptism.

Table 1

State of the Churches: Increase and Decrease
(Lower Horton)

Year	Baptized	Received	Excluded	Removed	By Letter	Died	Total
1859	9	1	0	0	-	0	14
1860	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1861	11	0	0	-	-	1	25
1862	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
1863	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1864	0	0	0	0	-	0	25
1865	0	0	0	2	-	-	25
1866	0	0	10	1	2	-	11
1867	0	0	1	0	0	0	10
1868	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1869	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1870	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1871	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1872 (no letter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1873 (no letter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1874	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
1875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1877	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1878	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1879	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1880	(not listed)	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	(not listed)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 2

Ministers, Licentiate, Deacons, Counsellors, &
(Lower Horton)

Year	Minister	Licentiate	Deacons	Counsellors	Door Keeper	Clerk
1859	Rev. J. Thomas	-	D.Dolman	J. Dolman	-	-
1860	-	-	-	-	-	-
1861	Rev. J. Thomas	-	D. Doalman	-	-	-
1862	Rev. J. Thomas	-	D. Doalman	-	-	-
1863	-	-	-	-	-	-
1864	-	-	Daniel Doalman	-	-	-
1865	-	-	Daniel Dolman	-	-	-
1866	Rev. James Thomas	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1867	Rev. James Thomas	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1868	-	-	-	-	-	-
1869	-	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1870	-	-	-	-	-	-
1871	-	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1872	-	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1873	-	-	Daniel Doleman	-	-	-
1874	Rev. James Thomas	-	Dennis Doleman	Jos. Webber		
1875	-	-	-	-	-	-
1876	Sister Annie Doleman (Delegate)	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-

1877	Rev. James Thomas	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-
1878	Rev. James Thomas	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-
1879	-	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-
1880	Without Pastor	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-
1881	Without Pastor	-	Dennis Doleman	-	-	-