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Township of Camden *Kent*

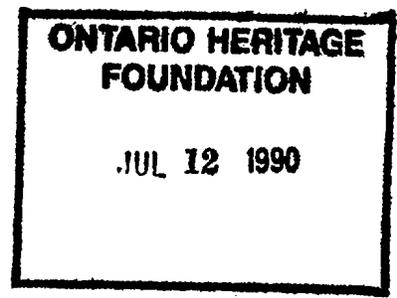
DRESDEN, ONT., July 6 1990  
NOP 1MO

Ontario Heritage Foundation  
77 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9

RECEIVED  
IN THE OFFICE

JUL 12 1990

ARCHITECTURE AND  
PLANNING  
HERITAGE BRANCH



Dear Sir:

Re: Passing of Bylaw  
Township of Camden

The Council of the Township of Camden, which met on July 3rd, 1990, passed Bylaw # 42-90, to designate Josiah Henson House (also known as Uncle Tom's Cabin) as a property of historical value and interest, and/or architectural interest.

Also, I can advise that an ad was placed in the local newspaper, the North Kent Leader, for 3 consecutive weeks on May 30th, June 6th & 13th, 1990 advising of the "Notice of Intention to Designate" this building, and the Township of Camden has received no objections, appeals, complaints, etc. as of this date.

The following resolution was passed by Council:

Moved By : Nevills  
Seconded By : Leeson

That; Bylaw # 42-90 of the Township of Camden, to designate the Josiah Henson House, known as Uncle Tom's Cabin, as a property of historical value and interest and/or architectural interest, under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1980, be read the necessary number of times and passed, signed and sealed,

and the Clerk be instructed to place an appropriate ad in the Leader Publications newspaper, for 3 consecutive weeks, advising of the passing of this Bylaw,

and that Arthur Pegg, Kent County Historical Advisor and the Ontario Heritage Foundation be advised of this action of Council.

"Carried"

Please let me know if there is anything further that is required to be done by the Township of Camden to complete this matter. If you require copies of the ads that were placed in the North Kent Leader, please let me know.

Sincerely

Carl McFadden, Clerk  
Township of Camden  
P.O. Box 130  
Dresden, Ontario NOP 1MO

cc: Arthur Pegg  
Kent County Historic Advisor

# Township of Camden

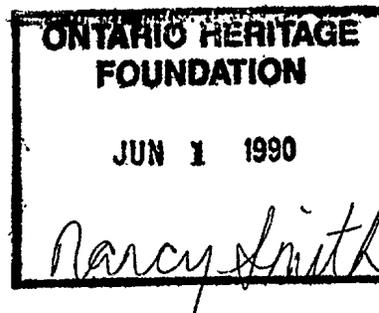
DRESDEN, ONT.,  
NOP 1MO

May 25 19<sup>90</sup>

Ontario Heritage Foundation  
77 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2R9

Dear Sir:

Re: Uncle Tom's Cabin  
Township of Camden



The Council of the Township of Camden, which met on May 7, 1990, discussed the matter of having Uncle Tom's Cabin designated as a property of historical value and interest and/or architectural interest or value.

Members of Council have met with the Kent County Historical Advisor, Mr. Arthur Pegg, to discuss the matter and have agreed to proceed to have this done. The following resolutions were passed:

- (i) Moved By : Graham  
Seconded By : Leeson

That; the Council of the Township of Camden approves of the designation of the building known as Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Josiah Henson House in the Township of Camden, Part of Park Lot 16, Plan 133, Township of Camden, County of Kent, designated as Parts 1,2, & 3 Reference Plan 24R3373, municipally known as R.R. # 5, Dresden, as a property of historical interest and/or value,

and that Arthur Pegg, Historical Advisor of the County of Kent be advised of this action of Council.

"Carried"

- (ii) Moved By : Graham  
Seconded By : Simpson

That; the Clerk of the Township of Camden be instructed to place an appropriate ad in the North Kent Leader, for 3 weeks duration advising that the Township of Camden intends to designate property known as Uncle Tom's Cabin or Josiah Henson House as a property of historical value and interest under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1980, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337,

and that any person has 30 days from the date of the first publication to submit an objection to this proposed designation,

and that the Ontario Heritage Foundation and the County of Kent be advised of this action of Council.

"Carried"

Ontario Heritage Foundation

Re: Uncle Tom's Cabin & Josiah Henson House

Township of Camden

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I have proceeded to place an appropriate ad in the local newspaper, for 3 consecutive weeks, advising interested persons of the intention of the Township and advising them of their opportunity to object.

I have also enclosed a summary of the "Reasons for Designation of the Josiah Henson House at the Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site, Dresden, Ontario" for your records.

If you have any further information or requests, please let me know.

Sincerely



Carl McFadden, Clerk  
Township of Camden  
P.O. Box 130  
Dresden, Ontario      NOP 1M0

Encl. - "Reasons for Designation ...."

cc : Arthur Pegg, Historical Advisor  
County of Kent

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION  
OF  
THE JOSIAH HENSON HOUSE  
AT  
THE UNCLE TOM'S CABIN HISTORIC SITE  
DRESDEN, ONTARIO

As part of the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act, 1980 R.S.O. Chapter 337

## NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

### **Township of Camden Gore: The Josiah Henson House:**

The Josiah Henson House at The Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site is recommended for designation for its historical and architectural significance as well as for its importance in the community and the heritage of Ontario.

Its specific location is described as Part of Park Lot 16, Plan 133, Township of Camden, County of Kent designated as Parts 1, 2 and 3 Ref. Plan 24R 3373 municipally known as R. R. 5, Dresden, Ontario.

### **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

The house has a connection with the early history of Fairport and Dresden and with a significant era in Afro-American history. Josiah Henson's affiliations with The British Methodist Episcopal Church, the Masonic Order and Abolitionist Movement make his history important to many people.

Known as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" throughout the world, the Henson House has been marked with a Provincial Historical Sites plaque since the early 1960's. The house was once the home of an historic person who had associations in the Dresden community, in the County of Kent's heritage, and provincially and world wide.

To refugee slaves in the 19th century, the site was a beacon in the wilderness towards the progress of independence.

Josiah Henson was among the founders of the Dawn Institute/British American Institute, described as a manual labour school designed for the advancement of refugee slaves near present day Dresden. It is suggested that this school was the first vocational school in Canada.

Josiah Henson was also very active in the "Underground Railroad" movement both in the United states and in Canada. He assisted many fugitive slaves in their escape to Upper Canada.

As Henson's years passed, his name became synonymous with the character "Uncle Tom" from Harriet Beecher Stowe's controversial novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" published in 1852. The novel had an impact on the view of slavery world wide, and the Henson House has become a symbol to that period; a representative landmark and visual artifact in the interpretation of the Henson era for the visiting public.

In relation to other components on site, the Henson House is situated on land formerly owned by Henson and his family; land which once adjoined property owned by the governing body of the British American Institute. Moreover, the Henson family cemetery and the British American Institute cemetery, both frequently visited properties, are in the immediate vicinity of the Henson House.

Historical research and oral tradition concur that the building known popularly as "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is the home of Josiah Henson who had moved to what is now the Township of Camden in about 1845. Research supports the fact that the Henson House was built either by Henson or a hired contractor in approximately 1877, and that Henson spent the last years of his life in the structure.

He and other Abolitionists developed the area of Lot 2 and Lot 3, Concession 4, now Camden Gore, as a negro colonization community in approximately 1845. The settlement became a haven for refugee slaves during the mid 19th century.

Presently the 4 acre museum property is believed to be a parcel of the original settlement where the Dawn Institute/British American Institute was opened.

The house was moved to its current location and is known to have been in two other locations in recent years in the immediate vicinity of its present situation. Its original site is not known but it is likely to have remained on the same property owned by Henson and now in part by the County of Kent as present-day museum property.

As an artifact, the house remains a symbol of the hardship endured by Henson and his contemporaries during this 19th century development of Canadian history.

**Architectural Significance:**

The design of the Josiah Henson house includes small rooms once used for heat retention, a stairway and closet design, and door and window design comparable with architecture at another Black historical settlement nearby that contains 19th century heritage buildings. This architecture is rapidly disappearing from the contemporary landscape of this area and few remaining architectural examples are present in the vicinity of Dresden.

The building is constructed of wood (possibly tulip wood) that existed in this area in the 19th century. It is a two storey framed building with a simple pitched roof with gables at the north-south ends; probably originally covered with sawn pine shingles. The main walls are of timber-framed construction. Siding is of clap-board. Windows, probably originals to the building consist of 2 six over six paned windows at the north and south second floor location and 5 six over six paned windows on the facade; three windows along the second floor and two more, one on each side of the present door entrance. There is also a central hall plan. Square cut nails exist in most of the building except the existing east side which has been altered. It is probable that there was once a porch and small additional building attached to the original house. This house may also have been attached to another house for several years in the immediate vicinity. Most of the original building remains, although some architectural alterations have been made, based upon existing photographic evidence.

Afro-American influences may be present in the design of small room sizes, doors, stove pipe accesses, and in stairway and closet design. These architectural vestiges should be considered for the benefit of the interpretation of the facility, as an example of local architectural history in the area, and to retain a visible artifact of the Henson period.