



Information Regarding the Remains Interred in the Christ Church Cemetery in 1977

In 2018 the Christ Church Historical Committee began searching its archives for information regarding persons of particular historical interest interred in the church's cemetery. Because of its existence since the 1780s as the Old Quaker Burying Ground and as the Christ Church Cemetery since 1817, we wished to bring attention to some of the more notable interred persons and their stories by creating a self-guided cemetery walk. During our research, we became aware of the work of Adrienne Lucas Sehatzadeh, who documented the history of the Black Settlement on The Avenue, including information regarding the exhumation of Black remains which were reburied in the Christ Cemetery. Below is an excerpt from her M.A. thesis document.

"The first Black Baptist Church in Dartmouth was founded by Rev. Richard Preston in 1844 and located in The Avenue. This graveyard was part of this institution. During development efforts to erect a townhouse complex in 1976, bones from this graveyard were uncovered. *(The church and its graveyard were in an approximate location that is now the corner of Crichton Avenue and Glen Manor Drive)* In 1977, the remains of the bodies that had not been destroyed by the bulldozers and that could still be located were removed to the cemetery across from the Victoria Road United Baptist Church in downtown Dartmouth. *(There is a Memorial in the VRUBC recognizing this historic graveyard.)* The Victoria Road Church replaced the "Coloured Meeting House" as the Church in The Avenue was called, after the Meeting House was lost to fire in 1896. *(The VRUBC building was originally the Sunday School structure on the Christ Church property. It was moved to the Victoria Road location after the current Christ Church Parish Hall was completed in 1906)* This graveyard was actually an historic site that few in The Avenue knew anything about. One resident in The Avenue tried for years to have the graveyard removed. Consequently, there was no discussion between City officials and the Black community to maintain this graveyard as an historic site."

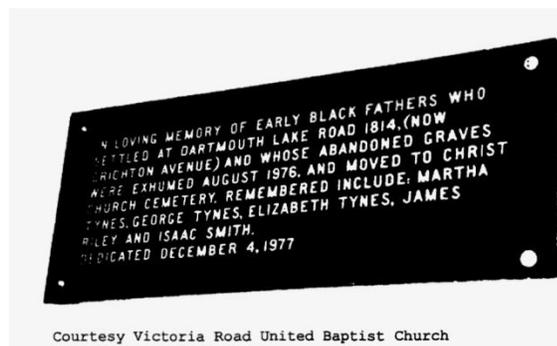
Taken from:

"Survival of an African Nova Scotian Community: Up the Avenue, Revisited"

Master Thesis by Adrienne Lucas Sehatzadeh,

Dalhousie University, September 1998

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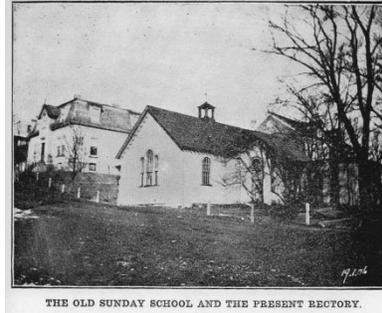


Courtesy Victoria Road United Baptist Church

We believed this re-interment site to be of historical significance and it is included as one of the gravesites highlighted in our Walking Tour brochure, copies of which were placed at the cemetery entrance in the summers of 2019 and 2020. (The grave of former VRUBC pastor, Rev. Donald Fairfax is also featured.) No stone marks the spot, but fortunately our

now retired sexton was able to pinpoint the area where the remains were interred. We believe that the burial site should be suitably recognized with an appropriate monument to honour the memory of the early settlers of The Avenue and its first Black Baptist Church, and would like to support any efforts to do so by the Victoria Road United Baptist Church.

January, 2021



Christ Church Sunday School building in early 1906



Sunday School building being moved to its current location as the Victoria Road United Baptist Church



Unmarked gravesite in Christ Church Cemetery



Grave of VRUBC Pastor Rev. Donald Fairfax