



Quick Guide: Black History Resources at Simcoe County Archives

This quick guide will direct researchers to resources on Black History at the Simcoe County Archives. Black people have been building lives in North America for as long as there has been a colonial presence here, however, Simcoe County Archives hold very few records that predate the 1830's. For this reason, resources listed here will focus mainly on early Black settlements in the County following the War of 1812. These resources will also be useful for researching Black families and community members through the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

Resources at Simcoe County Archives

These resources are available for review on site at the Simcoe County Archives.

Land records

- Municipal Tax Assessment Rolls
- Simcoe County Patent Books
 - 972-86, Simcoe County Patent Book (page 298), features entries for early Black land patent holders in Oro Township, on what came to be known as the Wilberforce Street Settlement

School records, church records, cemetery records

- School, church, and cemetery records, particularly for the historic townships of Flos, Medonte, Sunnidale, and Oro

Fonds and collections

- Corporation of the Township of Oro fonds
- Gary E. French collection
- Eileen Murdoch collection

Finding Aids

- Township of Oro Thematic Finding Aid
- Town of Collingwood Thematic Finding Aid
- Medonte Township Thematic Finding Aid
- Sunnidale Township Thematic Finding Aid

Select Publications

- *The History of Simcoe County* by Andrew F. Hunter, 1909
- *The Oro African Church: A history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* edited by T. Crawford, 1999
- *Legend of the drinking gourd* by W. A. and M. W. Fisher, 1973
- *Men of colour: An historical account of the black settlement on Wilberforce Street and in Oro Township, Simcoe County, Ontario, 1819-1949* by G. E. French, G. E., 1978

Online Resources

Simcoe County Archives Exhibits

- Black Settlement in Oro Township
<https://www.simcoe.ca/Archives/Pages/black.aspx>
- Emancipation Day
<https://www.simcoe.ca/Archives/Pages/Blog/Emancipation-Day.aspx>
- Portrait of a Black Soldier who served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force: Private Jacob Courtney
https://www.simcoe.ca/Archives/Pages/Emancipation_Day_2020.aspx
- Simcoe County Remembers Database
<https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/arc/simcoe-county-remembers>

Township of Springwater

- History and Heritage – Davenport Homestead
<https://www.springwater.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/history-and-heritage.aspx#List-of-designated-properties>

Township of Oro-Medonte

- Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church
<https://www.oro-medonte.ca/Pages/Oro-African-Methodist-Episcopal-Church-Re-opened.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2Mj1dRkXKUz3c8oq4Jbedxm3lizm3tK-cLUyq6BZqZmn7jdVFhZKncFUA>

Neighbouring Regions

Sheffield Park Black History Museum - Clarksburg, Ontario

- <https://www.sheffieldparkblackhistory.com/>

Grey Roots Museum & Archives – Owen Sound, Ontario

- Black Roots in Grey County
<https://greyroots.com/story/black-history-grey-county>