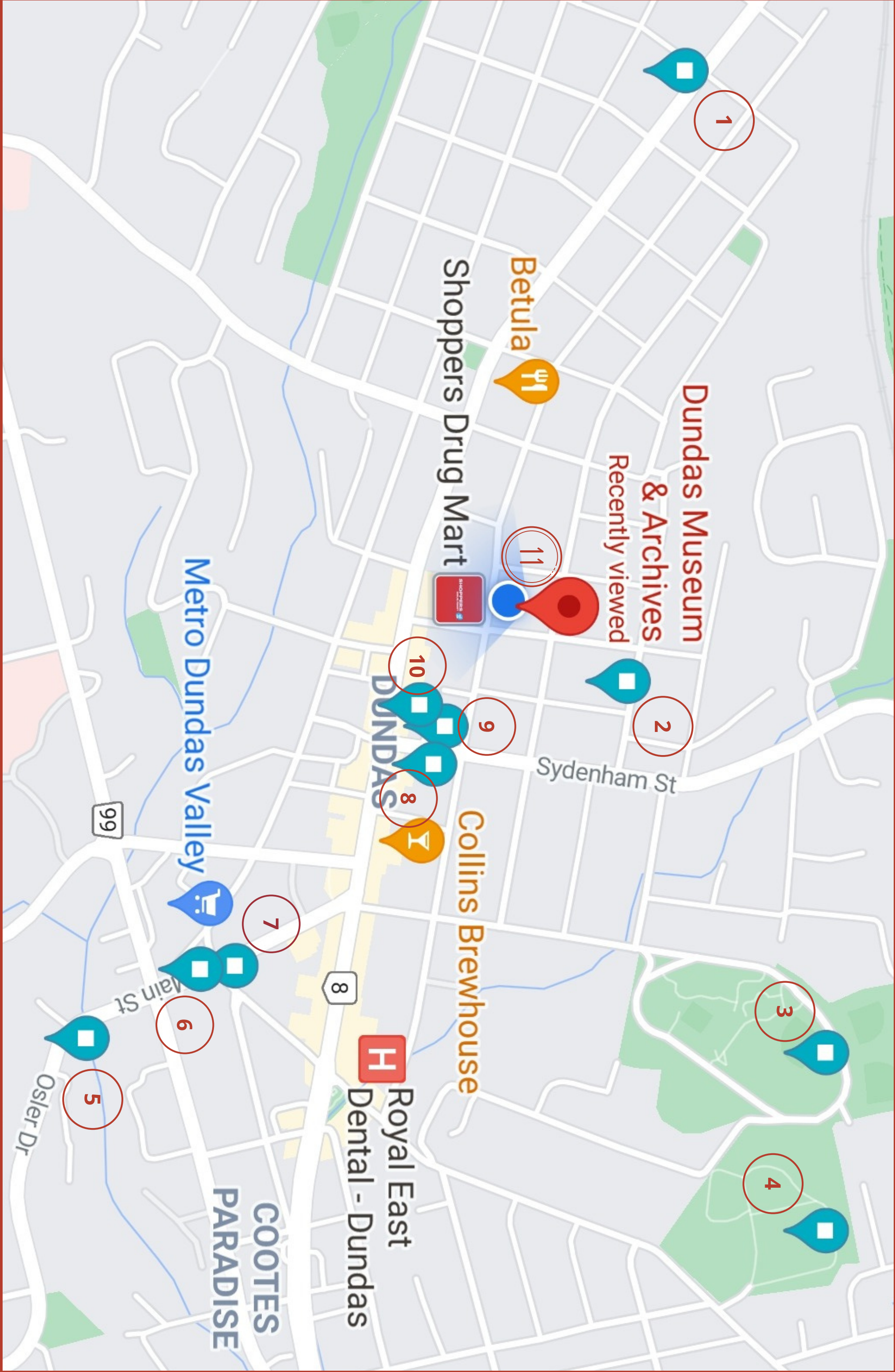


Black History in Dundas Walking Tour

11 Places to
Learn About
Black
History in
Dundas



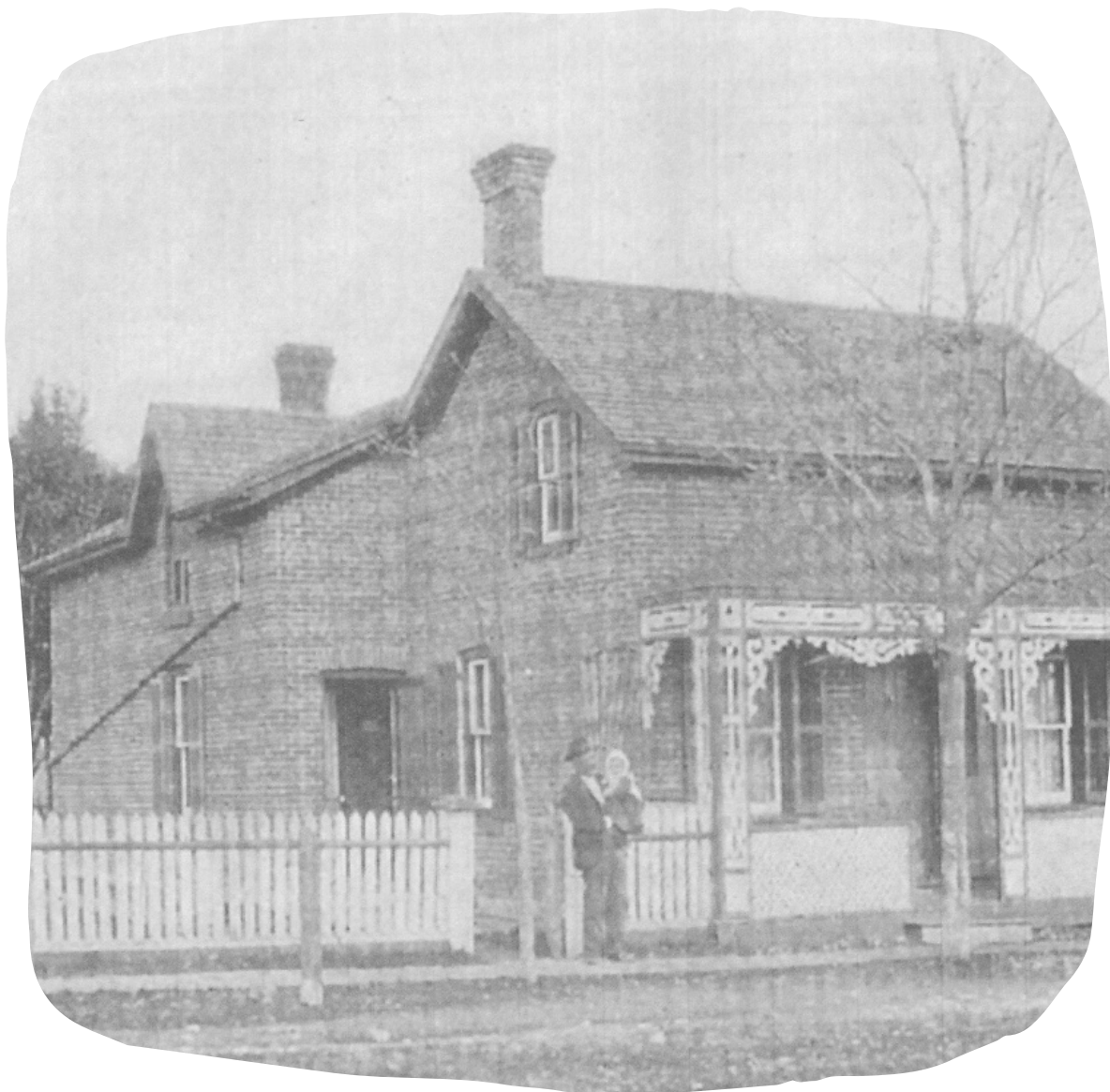
Black History in Dundas Sites



1

George Washington Ball's House

37 James Street



George Washington Ball was born in 1835 and came to Dundas in 1868. He inherited the Hamilton - Dundas stage route from Nelson Able in 1875 which he ran until 1879 when he became the conductor for the Hamilton - Dundas Railway. He was also appointed as Tax Collector for Dundas for several years before his death. He had four children with his first wife, Lucretia Page, and 10 children with his second wife, Elizabeth Denholm. He passed away in 1899 and is buried in Grove Cemetery.

2

Dundas Central Public School

73 Melville St



Dr. Anderson Ruffin Abbott was the first Canadian-born Black doctor in Canada. He served the Union army as a civilian surgeon during the American Civil War and attended to President Abraham Lincoln in his last moments. Afterwards, he returned to Canada and married Mary Ann Casey. He was a public advocate of integrated schools. He moved with his family to Dundas in 1881 where he held many prominent positions including as High School Trustee (1883) and became Chairman of the Internal Management Committee (the Board of Education) in 1885. First built in 1857, Dundas Central was expanded in 1885 as the population had grown. There were 458 pupils registered.

3

Dundas Driving Park

71 Cross St



The Dundas Driving Park has been a social meeting place in town since 1887, frequently used for recreational activities and gatherings. In 1904, an Abbott, Hubbard, and Lightfoot family reunion was held there. These were prominent Black Dundas families. Attendees included Mary Ann Abbott, wife of Dr. Anderson Ruffin Abbott and Lewis H. Douglass, son of Frederick Douglass.

4

Grove Cemetery

129 York Rd



When Dundas officially incorporated as a town in 1847 it required its own local cemetery. Grove Cemetery opened in 1852. In many places in the United States and Canada in the 1800s cemeteries were segregated - Black people were not allowed to be buried in the same cemetery as white people. However, Grove Cemetery was integrated and anyone could be buried there. This meant it was a very appealing place to be laid to rest for many Black individuals and families in Dundas. George Washington Ball, W.G. Brown, members of the Lightfoot family, and many other members of Black Dundas families are buried here.

5

Dundas Cotton Mills

1 Osler Dr

(Enterprise Rent-A-Car)



Dr. Charles Victor Roman's parents escaped slavery in the US and came to Canada via the Underground Railroad. The family moved to Dundas in 1876 where Charles worked in the cotton mill and attended classes at night. In 1881, Roman's leg had to be amputated at the knee after an accident at the mill. This ended his employment, but he was newly determined to pursue his passion for medicine. He became the first Black person to graduate from Hamilton Collegiate Institute. Dr. Roman went on to become a renowned surgeon, professor, author, editor, philosopher, and civil rights activist.

6

Hatt Building

2 Hatt St



Records of enslaved persons in this area are very rare. The first-hand account of Sophia Burthen Pooley is the only one to have survived. She was kidnapped from New York with her sister as a child and sold to Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant. After many years she was sold to Samuel Hatt of Ancaster Township. Samuel was the brother of Richard Hatt of Dundas and partner in his Dundas Mill operation. According to her own account, Sophia was enslaved by Hatt for seven years before being told that if she made her escape there would be no attempt to bring her back. Richard, with Samuel, built and ran Dundas Mills, named after the road it was on. Built in 1805, 2 Hatt Street was part of the Dundas Mills complex and is likely the oldest surviving building in Dundas. It is very likely that the Dundas area was home to many enslaved people whose stories have not survived.

7

Dundas

Town Hall

60 Main St



Samuel Pomphrey was born enslaved in the US around 1784 but escaped to Dundas via the Underground Railroad in 1843. He was the official bell ringer and announcer of coming events in Dundas and worked other odd jobs around town. He lost an arm helping to fire a salute from a cannon. He donated \$40 in 1848 to the building of the new Dundas Town Hall as a reported show of gratitude. This is equivalent to nearly \$1500 today. He was also the first person to be put in the jail in the basement of Town Hall for a night. He was known as "Old Pomp" or "Old Pomphrey" around town.

W.G. Brown's Barber Shop

75 King St W

(Eva Skin & Beauty)



William George Brown was born in Maryland, US in 1840. His parents, both African American, moved the family to Canada when William was young and settled in Dundas. He married Annie Elizabeth Lightfoot in 1864 and they had three children. He opened his barbershop in 1868 and would operate it successfully for the rest of his life. He was a member of the Baptist church and did not open his barbershop on Sundays. After the death of Annie he remarried in 1897 to Hannah Elizabeth Archer. They had one child together, Alden Brown, born in 1898. W.G. Brown was a barber to many in the community, including Dr. Charles Victor Roman.

Mechanics

Institute

83 King St W

(CIBC)

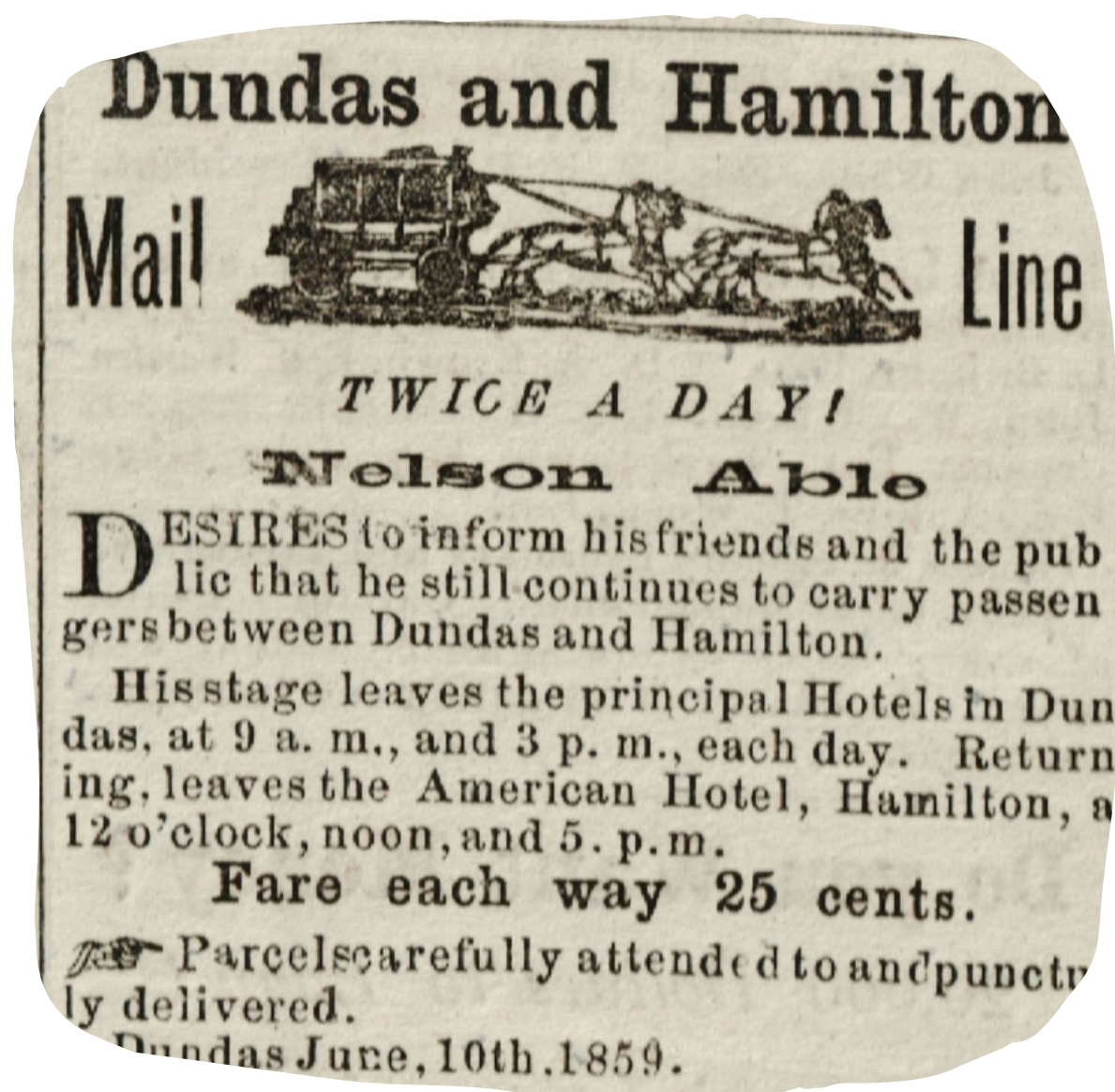


The Dundas Mechanics Institute was organized in 1841 by local machinists who wanted to bring knowledge to Dundas in the form of books. It was one of the town's earliest lending libraries as well as an elite men's club. Dr. Anderson Ruffin Abbott joined when he moved to Dundas. He served as the Director in 1881, Treasurer in 1883, and President in 1884. He was an advocate of a basic education for all. While living in Dundas Dr. Abbott also became the Church Warden at St. James Anglican Church and Assistant Editor of the Dundas True Banner. The youngest child of the Abbott family, Gordon Anderson, was born in Dundas in 1885. The family moved from Dundas in 1889.

Elgin House

92 King St W

(Vandeputte Law)



Nelson Able was born around 1822 in Virginia where he was enslaved until his escape in 1850. He arrived in Dundas around 1851 via the Underground Railroad. Just three years later he had established his successful stagecoach line which ran twice a day leaving from the Elgin House, "the finest hotel west of York". He conveyed passengers, luggage, mail, and parcels back and from Dundas to Hamilton. He lived in a two-story stone house on Foundry Street where in February 1863 he held a social dinner with fifty friends and 'elite' of the town. He continued to operate his stagecoach line twice a day, rain or shine, until his death in 1875. G.W. Ball took over the stagecoach upon Able's death.

11

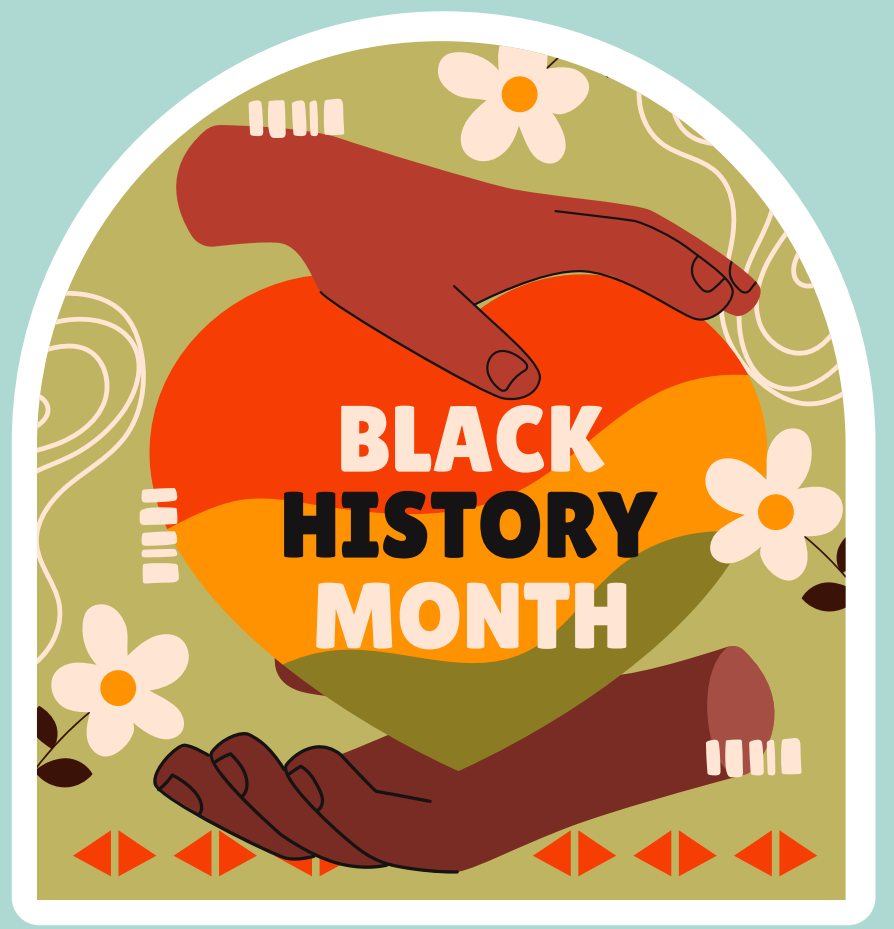
Dundas Museum and Archives

139 Park St W



Alden Brown was born in Dundas on May 8th, 1898 to William George Brown and Hannah Elizabeth Brown. Growing up he was part of the concert group at the Methodist Sunday School and attended Dundas Central School. He remained in Dundas his entire life and became a bookkeeper for the railway company. He was heavily involved with the Dundas Historical Society and the early years of the Dundas Museum. Many of our earliest records bear his signature and he personally donated over a dozen artifacts to the museum's collection. Today we are deeply grateful to Alden Brown for his contributions to the DMA during its early years. He was instrumental in developing the Museum we know and love today!

10 Ways to Help Your Community While You Explore!



1. **Pick up some litter. Use gloves!**
2. **Bring a book to a Little Free Library.**
3. **Donate food to the Food Bank or at a grocery store.**
4. **Write a friendly letter to your neighbour.**
5. **Say hello to people you pass on the street.**
6. **Write an inspiring chalk message on your sidewalk or driveway.**
7. **Send a card to a retirement home.**
8. **Bake cookies for someone you appreciate.**
9. **Make a craft and give it to someone to say thank you.**
10. **Share something you learned on this walk with a friend or family member!**

Thank you!

Information in this tour from:

Nerene Virgin and Alan Smith

Dundas Museum and Archives

**"Family Secrets: Crossing The
Colour Line" by Catherine
Slaney.**

**"The Journey from Tollgate to
Parkway: African Canadians in
Hamilton" by Adrienne Shadd**

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Rotary 
Dundas Valley Sunrise