

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

February 14, 2007

HISTORIC UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LIBERTY BELL ON DISPLAY AT QUEEN'S PARK FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Buxton Liberty Bell On Public Display For The First Time



As part of the Ontario government's celebration of Black History Month, the replica of the historic Underground Railroad Buxton Liberty Bell was put on public display for the first time at the Legislative building, where it will be displayed until March 23. The Buxton Liberty Bell was a symbol of freedom for hundreds of slaves escaping to Ontario in the late 1800s.



Buxton Historical Society Bryan Prince, and President of Buxton Historical Society Keenan Thomas.

QUEEN'S PARK — In celebration of Black History Month, a replica of the historic Underground Railroad Buxton Liberty Bell is on display for the first time at Queen's Park, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Mike Colle announced today.

"During the 1800s, the Buxton settlement represented safety and freedom for hundreds of American slaves escaping through the Underground Railroad," said Colle. "For the first time, here at Queen's Park, the Liberty Bell and its significance in

our history will be shared with Ontarians."

The Liberty Bell, on display until March 23, was rung every time a slave reached freedom in Buxton, which was the largest planned fugitive slave settlement in

Canada. This is the public's first view of the bell as it makes its way home to the Buxton Historical Museum where it will be dedicated on Labour Day.

The original inscribed brass liberty bell still hangs in the steeple of St. Andrews Church in South Buxton, calling the faithful to worship every Sunday morning.

Minister Colle is joined by Pat Hoy, MPP for Chatham-Kent Essex and Buxton community members to celebrate Black History Month with the unveiling of the replica of the Buxton Liberty Bell at Queen's Park.



The bell has been out of sight for nearly a century and a half.

“We, at the Buxton Museum, thank Minister Colle and everyone associated for helping us to create this replica of the Liberty Bell,” said Bryan Prince, Buxton Historical Society vice president and Shannon Prince, Buxton Museum curator. “The symbolism of the Liberty Bell represents more than just the Buxton story. It’s Ontario’s story.”

Last February, the Ontario government gave the Buxton National Historic Site the first Ontario’s Community Builders program grant to help build the replica. These grants are designed to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the diverse communities across the province.

“Black History Month is our time to remember our past and recommit to a future where all people are accepted,” said Colle.

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