

The Walking Preacher of the Binga Family – Part 2

It was a year after he arrived that Anthony Binga Sr. began formally preaching in Amherstburg. A few years later, in 1838, he, along with other Amherstburg residents, began building the First Baptist Church in Canada, on George Street in Amherstburg, which was completed in 1845. It was built with the assistance of master carpenters, Deacon George Crawford and Nasa McCurdy of the Methodist Church. Did you know that baptisms conducted by the First Baptist church occurred near the former Boblo Island Docks on the Detroit River? In 1851 there were 48 baptisms which increased to 75 in 1867. That would be an interesting sight to see.

The title of this article is “The Walking Preacher” which is a tribute to the missionary work of Reverend Binga Sr., who raised money to build the Baptist Church by travelling and preaching from Detroit to Toronto. It was also common for him to walk from Amherstburg to Buxton, where he would stop at homes along the way to pray, enjoy a meal and get some rest. The Rev. Binga Sr. also deserves credit for playing an integral role in uniting Black Baptist churches in the province. It was on October 8, 1841 that Amherstburg’s First Baptist Church hosted a meeting after the Second Baptist Church in Detroit put out the call to unite the Black churches in the area. It should be added that Reverend Binga and the First Baptist Church took a strong leadership position in this union of churches. As a result of his strong leadership, he was termed *Father Binga* and the Amherstburg First Baptist Church was designated the *Mother Church*. In the invitation to members, it said “Believing that the time has now come that we should form ourselves into an association because we cannot enjoy the privileges we wish with the white churches in Canada; centuries having rolled along since our fathers were organized as a church; and believing that many of our fathers have gone down to the grave not enjoying their

just privileges and rights in the Christian churches among the whites, we invite all the Christian churches for the same faith and order to unite with us in the great Celestial Union in strength, United we stand, divided we fall. Come up, Brethen from all parts of the province and let us see what we can do for ourselves and our children.” The result was the *Alliance of the Baptist Association for Colored People*, later named the *Amherstburg Regular Baptist Association* and then to the *Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association* (ARMBA). Did you know that Elder Binga’s father, Daniel Binga Sr. was a deacon at the First Baptist Amherstburg and was treasurer of the Association for twelve continuous years until his death in 1853? Don’t worry. There is still more to come next week.