

Browning Family involved in Harpers Ferry – Part 3

Within the Amherstburg Freedom Museum, the majority of documents concerning the Browning family discuss J. Lyle Browning. A member of the B.M.E. Church, he married Geraldine Marshall of Detroit, Michigan in 1945 and they had two sons: Joseph and Bruce. J. Lyle graduated from Patterson Collegiate Institute in 1941 and stood out in debating, public speaking, dramatics, as an assistant director, and in athletics, as an All City basketball player and WSSA & OFSSA Champion. He was also the first Black student to attend Assumption College, in Liberal Arts, from 1941-1943 and was also their first African-Canadian basketball player. He was a man of many firsts.

J. Lyle was a very active member of numerous organizations throughout Ontario. In 1943, Mr. Browning founded the first Young Liberal Club with Charles Clarke, in conjunction with the Honourable Paul Martin Sr. This club was called The Laurier-King Club of Windsor and he was this organization's first president. In 1945, he was the secretary of the Ontario Liberal Association in Toronto and the secretary of the Central Citizen's Association, which was Windsor's first Black Community Organization and lobbied for employment for African-Canadian citizens in Government. Do you remember the Central Citizen's Association? Because of this organization's work, Black citizens gained employment with City Hall and the Windsor Police. There's still more to come. Stay tuned for part 4.