

It was discovered the house was built circa 1827 by John Lawrason, who sold the premises to George Hogeboom and his bride Henrietta Ryckman. It was later sold to the Griffins in 1834. HCA staff, archeologists and restoration specialists began investigating the property's significance in 1989. Archeologists found more than 3,000 individual artifacts, ranging from ceramics, metallic objects and glassware. A lithograph of Eastman Johnson's 1859 oil painting "Negro Life in the South" was found in a closet, linking the house and its owners to its Black heritage. Conservation of the print, more commonly called "Old Kentucky Home", was undertaken by the Canadian Parks Service, Ontario Region.



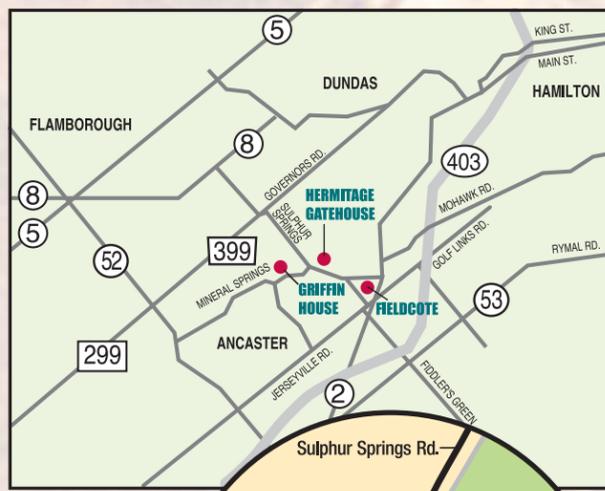
### To Learn More

The Griffin House is open on Holiday Mondays, May through October, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Group tours and educational programs can be arranged by contacting Fieldcote Museum at 905-648-8144.

Suggested donation: \$3 per person.

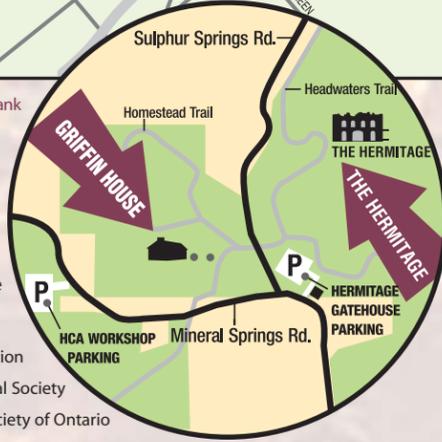
Please note: handicapped parking only at the Griffin House. All other parking at the nearby Hermitage parking lot (Please follow the signs).



The HCA wishes to thank the following for their contributions to the Griffin House project:

- Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation
- The Ontario Heritage Foundation
- The Hamilton Community Foundation
- The Ontario Historical Society
- The Multicultural Society of Ontario
- Stewart Memorial Church
- Town of Ancaster LACAC Committee
- Fieldcote Memorial Park & Museum

Managed in partnership with the City of Hamilton



For information about The Griffin House, call Fieldcote Museum, 905-648-8144.

For information about The Hermitage, call 905-627-1233

**The Griffin House was granted designation as a National Historic Site in 2008.**

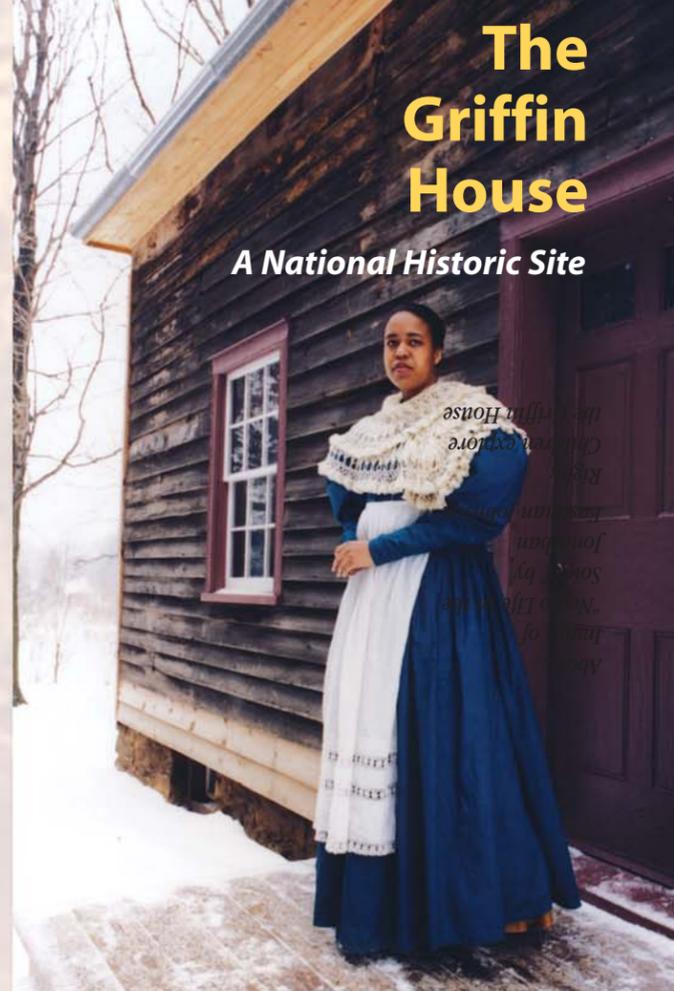
*The Friends of the Griffin House is a dedicated group of supporters who volunteer their time to provide site interpretation during open hours.*

*The group is a member of the Central Ontario Network for Black History.*

**How to get to The Griffin House & The Hermitage**

# The Griffin House

*A National Historic Site*



*The Griffin House stands today as a testament to the bravery & determination of Black men & women who journeyed to freedom in Southern Ontario.*

733 MINERAL SPRINGS ROAD, ANCASTER



**The Hermitage Brochure Inside**

## The Griffin House

Designated a National Historic Site, The Griffin House preserves the history of early Ancaster settlement and celebrates Black History.

The house was inhabited by Eneals Griffin, an early African American immigrant to Upper Canada, who possibly arrived via the Underground Railroad.

Located in the Dundas Valley Conservation Area, this one-and-a-half-storey home is situated near the Hermitage Ruins and Gatehouse Museum.

In 2008, Griffin House received National Historic Site designation.



## History

During and after the American Revolution, many British Loyalists fled the United States to Upper Canada, some bringing slaves with them. A 1793 bill was enacted, preventing the introduction of further slaves into the area. By the 1820s, slaves began following the North Star from the U.S. to escape slavery and formed what was called the "Underground Railroad". As many as 40,000 slaves escaped into Canada. As a result, a substantial population of Blacks established themselves in Southern Ontario.



## The Griffin Family

Eneals Griffin was born in Virginia and settled in the Niagara area in 1829 with his wife, Priscilla. They bought the house from George Hogeboom in 1834 and moved there with their one-year-old son, James. A headstone marks the graves of Eneals and Priscilla at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Sulphur Springs Road in Ancaster.

For more than 150 years, their descendants lived and worked on the beautiful valley farm and were members of the Ancaster community. The Griffins were one of only a few Black families in the area during those early years. As time passed, their identity by colour disappeared as they began to inter-marry. By the mid-20th century, their Black past was unknown to many descendants.



## The Griffin Homestead

The four-room house displays the solid, simple architecture once so common in Upper Canada. It includes two rooms on the main floor, two bedrooms on the upper floor and a white-



washed dry storage area in the basement. A large, open hall at the top of the enclosed stair may have also been used as a sleeping area. All rooms and halls were lime-plastered. Only the larger upper bedroom shows the remains of pre-1850 wallpaper treatment. The original exterior was renovated in 1870 and covered with stucco in the 1950s. The interior, with its two fireplaces, cupboards and wide trim, has survived intact. The early summer kitchen was demolished and replaced in the mid-1900s. The building remains in excellent condition.



## The Griffin Project

Hamilton Conservation Authority acquired the 18 ha (45-acre) property in 1988 to add to its Dundas Valley holdings. The parcel had remained intact since 1841 and included a house, privy, small barn and chicken shed. Soon after acquisition, HCA realized the house was associated with a special part of local history. *(Griffin Project continued on next panel)*



**Lift Here for The Hermitage Brochure**

