



1. James Curry

James Curry was born August 2, 1859 in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He moved to Hastings from Harrisonburg in 1885. He and Ella and their two daughters moved into the home of John and Nancy Wallace.

The Currys stayed with the Wallaces only long enough to get established. Jim worked many jobs from cook to farm laborer to carpenter. (As a younger man he even worked at a circus. He was known to boast of his acrobatic skills.) His first investment in Hastings was to buy a lot and he helped to build a house which he later sold. In 1889 he purchased two lots and built a fine nine room home at 801 W. 4th Street. Soon after he purchased eight adjoining lots and began farming. He built a barn, bought chickens, owned a horse and had a large garden.

In the summer of 1894 he began working at a summer resort at Prior Lake. He was the handyman and taught

swimming lessons for 19 seasons. Later, he worked as a Hastings Public Schools janitor for 15 years.

Ella and James celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1932. He died a year later. Jim's death caused great sadness in the community. All the Hastings newspapers carried articles about his life and death. Downtown businesses closed for his funeral and the Methodist church was packed for the funeral. Larry Ho, who grew up in Hastings, served two terms as mayor of St. Paul and wrote for the St. Paul Dispatch paid tribute to him in his column. He wrote: "One of the best friends of my childhood days - James Curry of Hastings is dead. This splendid colored man who was raised in the atmosphere of slavery, sang his gallant way through life... I am proud that so splendid a man loved me truly. I salute his memory and in reverence I tell this one incident of his glad and smiling life. One night he sang a song at the Hastings opera house at a church benefit. In the midst of his song the electric lights went out. Jim laughed and called out, 'Cheer up folks, we are all the same color now.'

No, Jim old pal, unfortunately we are not all the same color, though we should be. You were radiant gold all through while most of us are a drab yellow. I'd like to throw a rose to you Jim, but across the distance all I can throw is my heart - no less loving in this hour of our parting than on that first day 50 years ago, when you first held me on your lap."

2. John Wallace

John Wallace was born a slave in South Carolina in 1830. He came to Hastings from Kentucky with Company F, Third Minnesota Regiment in 1862. Mr. Wallace paid a white man to bring his wife, Nancy and their two young sons from Virginia to Minnesota. They got as far as St. Louis without mishap, but there, one of the children was taken from her. Nancy and one child arrived safely to their home in Lakeville. By 1870, they were living in Hastings on 4th Street.

John helped found the African Methodist Episcopal Church (Brown's Chapel). The following notice appeared April 10, 1897 in the Hastings Gazette. "John Wallace will give a history of his life, with a few plantation songs, at Matsch's Hall next Wednesday evening, at seven o'clock, the net proceeds going to Brown's Chapel. Admission twenty-five cents."

John Wallace died March 6, 1900 and the Hastings Gazette carried his obituary. "Mr. John Wallace died at his home on West Fourth St yesterday, half past eight a.m. after a protracted illness, aged about seventy years. He leaves a wife and one son, James Wallace. The deceased was one of our most widely known colored citizens and had formerly been a slave. He was brought here from Kentucky by Company F, Third Minnesota Regiment in 1862 and has ever since been a resident. He was a good citizen, and by his genial manner made many friends. His familiar figure upon our streets will be greatly missed.

He was a prominent member of the A.M.E. Church.” John was age 70 when died. He is buried in potter’s field.

3. William Douglas

William Douglas died on January 26, 1934 at the age of 68. The headline for his obituary read, “Former Mail Carrier Dies — William Douglas, Colored Resident Interred Wednesday.” He is buried in potter’s field.

4. Abraham Davenport

Abraham Davenport was born a slave in Raleigh, N.C. He served in Company H 11th Regiment, U. S. Colored Infantry and came to Hastings in 1869. The 1880 census lists him with his wife Lucy Ann, stepson John Goodman and mother-in-law Minerva Brown. He lived on 7th Street and his career was listed as gardener. He died on December 3, 1915.

5. Andrew Jackson (A. J.) Overalls

Andrew Jackson Overalls was born in Indiana in 1817. His father was a conductor on the underground railroad. He moved to Hastings in 1857.

A. J. Overalls was a civil rights activist who worked to achieve full rights of citizenship for black men. He was a statewide leader in the Sons of Freedom, an organization of Minnesota black men promoting suffrage, self-reliance and responsibility. As a result, the State of Minnesota adopted a constitutional amendment advanced by the Sons of Freedom two years before

the U.S. federal government. A.J. was also an officer in the Independent Order of Grand Templars, a black temperance society.

He died April 27, 1881. The obituary from the Hastings Gazette read: “One of Hastings’ old settlers, A.J. Overalls, has passed to the other side. He died on Tuesday after a long sickness. He was one of the first colored citizens of Hastings having come to this City in 1857. Jack was one of the boys in his day, but some years ago experienced religion and since then lived according to his lights. He had many friends in this city.”

Harrison Cook

Harrison Cook was born May 16, 1843 in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, and enlisted in the Union Army, Company B, 41st Colored Infantry on September 5, 1864. The 41st USCI was part of the military force that defeated the Confederacy at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia on April 9, 1865. They were then sent to Texas. Corporal Harrison Cook was discharged in Texas on September 5, 1865.

He later came to Hastings and married Ella St. Clair, who lived next door to the LeDuc family. Harrison and Ella lived in Point Douglas where they raised their three children. He died December 8, 1905, and is buried in Soldiers & Sailors Cemetery, located across the street from Lakeside Cemetery.



Lakeside Cemetery

Black Settlers Walking Tour



920 Nininger Road,
Hastings, Minnesota 55033
www.lakesidecem.org