

Rev. Richard Preston

Born into slavery in Virginia, Richard Preston purchased his own freedom as a young man (in or around 1816) and came to Nova Scotia to find his mother who had migrated here as one of the Black Refugees of the War of 1812. He found her in the community of Preston and chose to live there with her, adopting the community name as his new surname.

Richard Preston was tall, poised, and inspired by religious faith. Already literate and a gifted orator, Preston became an apprentice minister in Halifax and then travelled to England to be formally ordained. On his return to Nova Scotia in 1832 he became the acknowledged leader of the African Baptists



in Nova Scotia and the founder of Cornwallis Street Baptist Church (now known as New Horizons Baptist Church). He travelled extensively throughout the province, establishing eleven African Baptist churches from Yarmouth to Halifax.

He also played a leading role in founding the African United Baptist Association (AUBA) of Nova Scotia in 1854. This association is now the oldest African Nova Scotian association that is still active today.

Beyond his work to promote the Baptist faith, Reverend Richard Preston was a great community leader who devoted himself to abolishing slavery and advancing

better relations between races. In 2005, the government of Canada declared Rev. Richard Preston a person of national significance.